Diaspora Destiny: Joseph Jessing and Competing Narratives of Nation, 1860-1899

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

In what is increasingly considered a post-secular age, the role of religion in immigrants’ negotiations of transnational identities and search for national belonging is once again thought to be a significant one. The growing presence of Islamic diaspora communities in Europe and America has brought to the fore questions of how a “foreign” religious faith and heritage can be reconciled with the modern and secular – and yet latently Christian – cultures of their host countries. This dissertation attempts to contribute to this discourse by shedding light on a somewhat similar chapter in American and German migration and religious history. Returning to the so-called era of secularization in the late nineteenth century, I investigate the problem of how religion and nationalism were reconciled in a transnational context, namely in a German Catholic diaspora’s emerging construction of German-American identity. The vehicle for this analysis is the rhetoric of a leading opinion-shaper in the German-American Catholic community, Joseph Jessing, as it was performed in his leading German language Catholic newspaper, the Ohio Waisenfreund. Focusing on the print medium that was so crucial for the spread of ideas in the nineteenth century, I research almost thirty years of Jessing’s newspaper, as well as other German-American newspaper of the time, and place Jessing’s contribution to the diaspora group’s identity construction in the context of his day. I argue that before the era of a more complete German assimilation in the twentieth
century, Jessing represented a more resilient diaspora element that resisted imposed Americanization and instead perpetuated competing narratives of national and religious identity.

I show how the phenomenon of transnationalism manifested itself in the importing by Jessing of the conservative and ultramontane variety of European Catholicism into the American setting. Forged in the Prussian and Catholic province of Westphalia during the 1860s, Jessing’s import of a culture war mentality into the German diaspora context in America was the foundation of national and religious narratives that countered the dominant American narrative of Anglo-American Protestantism, as well as the dominant German identity narrative of liberal secularism and Protestantism, which found its manifestation in the new Prussianized Germany. With a political ideal rooted in the past – German unity under Catholic leadership – and a view of the United States as a decentralized confederation of various nationalities, Jessing attempts to construct a German Catholic imagined community by inculcating a heightened sense of German nationalism and cultural maintenance. The emerging consciousness and construction of American national identity in the post-Civil War period, in which the Catholic Church also participated through Americanization and Americanism, created an identity crisis for Jessing and other conservative German-American Catholic leaders. But Jessing’s mission to create a German-American Catholic community also incorporated – somewhat unknowingly by Jessing – the simultaneous goal of finding national belonging in America. The result of this complex clash of national and religious missions was Jessing’s reluctant participation in an emerging American Catholic historical counter-
narrative that claimed the rightful belonging of Catholics in the American national community.
To my parents
Acknowledgments

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Peter directed me towards interesting material, often (and quickly) located particular articles or issues I needed, and also shared interesting stories from the Josephinum and Jessing past. Just like Peter, Beverly Lane was always ready to help, and for their help and kindness I am very grateful. The archivist, Michael Fry, patiently and enthusiastically spent hours digging through the archives with me, and for this, as well as for the discussions we held about the material I am also very grateful. I would also like to thank Alois Schmidmeier in Bavaria, who came out of retirement to transcribe for me a few more of Jessing’s letters written in the Gabelsberger shorthand. Without him some of the material would have remained inaccessible. The final thank you at the Josephinum is for Rev. Robert Gonzalez. It was Robert’s interest in Jessing that sparked my own, and his trust in my abilities, first displayed during my many translations of Jessing’s material, that encouraged me. His encouragement, kindness and warmth (he calls it “Mensch sein”) were a constant presence, even if he was across the ocean and contact was sporadic.

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I’m especially grateful to my parents, to whom this work is dedicated. As Catholic immigrants from Europe, their lives in America have reflected the difficulties, tensions, and contradictions discussed in this work, and their passing on of their cultures to me and their adoption of some of the best of American values has enriched my life. During the long road that is graduate study in the Humanities, they have always patiently supported me with love and encouragement. Words can’t express how grateful I am for them or how indebted I am to them. Finally, I’d like to thank my fiancée Kate most of all. She was with me for every step of this journey and I couldn’t have done it without her. Showing boundless understanding and patience, she graciously supported me during the good times and the bad and patiently endured a year of separation and long absences. Thank you for your unwavering kindness, friendship, support, and love.
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Introduction

Diaspora Life as Counter-narrative –
Culture War and Transnational Identity

On October 15, 1880, the new chapel at the St. Joseph orphanage in Columbus, Ohio was blessed. On the same day across the ocean in Cologne, Germany, a feast was held to commemorate the completion of its famous cathedral. Father Joseph Jessing, the founder of the orphanage, remarked on the differences in the two consecrations:

*In this matter, we in our free America have an advantage over Prussianized Germany. There, the beautiful temple of God on the banks of the Rhine may not be consecrated by a bishop of the Catholic Church; instead, to the sorrow of all Catholics in Germany, a celebration after the Protestant manner will be held – for thus have the anti-Catholic statesmen of Prussia decreed. Here in Ohio, the bishop*

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of the diocese comes to dedicate our chapel unhindered by the State. Must not we and all Catholics regret the sad condition of the Church in Germany? But let us also rejoice that in this free country we can practice our holy religion without interference.²

The passage is representative of the transnational existence that Jessing and other German Catholics in the United States led in the late nineteenth century. With one eye on the old country and one in the new, the German Catholic diaspora were pulled in different directions, trying to hang onto the familiar and simultaneously struggling to make sense and become part of the unfamiliar. They thus shared the experience of all diaspora groups – that complex crossroads of culture and religion that shaped their destiny and the destiny of their offspring. Despite the happy picture of life in America for German Catholics painted in the above passage, there were problems in this diaspora existence, even if of a different sort than those their brethren in Germany were facing. Of all the problems associated with migration, perhaps the most significant was finding a sense of belonging in their new surroundings – to find a way to bring their diaspora destiny closer to the national destiny at large.

As the historian Philip Gleason points out, German-American Catholics were not fully at home among any of their ethnic, religious, or national kin. They were different from most other Americans because of their German ethnicity and language and Catholic religion, different from other German-Americans because of their religion, and different from other “American” Catholics because of their German ethnicity. To use the language

² Ohio Waisenfreund, May 4, 1881.
of a slightly later era, they were not simply “hyphenated Americans”, but also “hyphenated Germans” and “hyphenated Catholics”. In an age where identities were increasingly tied to, and predominantly defined by membership in a nation, the “nationless-ness” of German-American Catholics was often a source of tension and conflict.

In this post-Civil War period in the United States, a new period of nation-building and national self-definition had begun, during which a dominant narrative of American identity was rooted in notions of Anglo-American and Protestant culture and heritage. It was also increasingly defined by a conceived providential purpose for the country – “manifest destiny” – that was rooted in Anglo-Protestant millenialism. The parameters of this national identity narrative narrowed in the mid-nineteenth century in response to the increasing ethnic and religious heterogeneity of the American population due to European Catholic immigration. Catholics were seen as not only foreign but also dangerous to American democracy, because of their allegiance to the Pope and the authoritarian structure of their religion. The fierce anti-Catholicism of the mid-nineteenth century, exemplified by the Know-Nothing party, also lived on in the late nineteenth century, even if somewhat diminished.

Similarly, a new Germany was being born – of which diaspora Germans also felt a part – and with it a German nationalism that seemed to have room for only one dominant narrative of national identity, to which Catholics also were not included. At the

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core of this nation building mission – a mission of political liberals as much as of Bismarck’s expanding state – was the idea that shared German national values would be synonymous with those of an enlightened, more secular Protestantism. In Bismarck’s new Germany, the Catholic Church was viewed by liberals as regressive, a medieval institution out of touch with modern times. In addition to their removal from the new idea of the German national community, the Catholic Church was also largely removed from the institutions of public life. Considered foreign because of its allegiance to Rome, the state also interfered with internal Church matters, such as the education of priests, banned certain Catholic orders, shut down Catholic institutions, and put numerous Catholics in prison for defiance.

This famous clash between church and state, the *Kulturkampf*, was not unique to Germany, but was representative of a clash of ideologies and institutions that was taking place all over Europe and beyond, even if it went further in Germany than anywhere else. In this work, I use the term “Kulturkampf” as it has traditionally been used, to describe this political and institutional struggle between the Catholic Church and the state in Germany during the 1870s; by “culture war” I mean the overarching ideological struggle between the Catholic Church and liberal modernity that took place throughout the West and beyond; and with the plural “culture wars” I refer to the various individual struggles.

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that occurred in different countries. Because of the global nature of this conflict, it is indeed useful to speak of multiple culture wars (*Kulturkämpfe*), as the Catholic reform theologian Albert Ehrhard did when in 1902 he described the preceding era as “the age of culture wars.”⁵ On the other side of the ocean in the United States, the Catholic religion had existed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century free from state interference and in general harmony with American culture and institutions. One of America’s most famous European tourists remarked during his tour in 1842, “I think that the Catholic religion has erroneously been regarded as the natural enemy of democracy.”⁶

That harmony was already changing with the massive waves of European immigration that came to America during the middle part of the century. A large number of these immigrants were Roman Catholics, the two largest contingents being from Ireland and Germany, and the European clergy who came brought with them a brand of Catholicism that was different from the American version. As the historian Jay Dolan points out, a defining feature of the European variety of Catholicism “was its emphasis on church authority, and the obedience this demanded stood in stark opposition to the American liberal tradition of intellectual independence.”⁷

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Aside from a few issues, the question of public and private school funding being the most prominent, an institutional culture war of the European sort did not really take place in the United States. But a culture war did take place in the ideological and rhetorical spheres of public and private life, where group identities were being formed and negotiated. More importantly, also for this study, a culture war took place on two internal fronts – within the emerging American Catholic Church on the whole and within the diaspora group of German-American Catholics. The culture war in the United States was in fact closer to the meaning of the term *Kulturkampf* as it was originally used in 1840, namely to describe the struggle of liberal Swiss Catholics with the Roman Curia and more conservative Catholics.\(^8\) Just as with that culture war, in America it was also mostly an internal war amongst Catholics. It was a question of how Catholics saw themselves and how they would continue to define themselves through the reconciliation of their religious faith and ideology with American culture. For the populous, influential, and proud German Catholics, the amalgamation with their American countrymen and coreligionists into a new nation and church proved to be a problematic venture.

The attacks on the Catholic Church in Europe prompted a fierce response from her. The Church, helpless to defend itself militarily, responded with a different type of war. It mobilized its people throughout Europe in what became known as the movement

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\(^8\) The term was not used for the first time, as is usually thought, by the German liberal congressman Rudolf Virchow in 1873. It was used in the Catholic “Zeitschrift für Theologie”, in an anonymous review of a work by the radical Ludwig Snell “über die Bedeutung des Kampfes der liberalen katholischen Schweiz mit der römischen Kurie”. Cited in Borutta, *Antikatholizismus: Deutschland und Italien im Zeitalter der Kulturkämpfe*, 11.
of Ultramontanism. Looking “beyond the mountains” to Rome, the movement was characterized by its absolute devotion to the Pope, its dogmatic orthodoxy, its devotional worship culture, and its rejection of compromise or cooperation with the increasingly liberal modern world. The ultramontane movement unified Catholics all over the world and galvanized them into an “imagined community” ready for war. Benedict Anderson’s well-known conception of modern national community construction is very relevant for this work, as it is at the very heart of transnational identity and community construction. Viewed through this lens, the conflict amounts to question of which community and identity took precedence for German-American Catholics. German-American Catholics had to negotiate between old conceptions of community and the realities of the new conceptions of community they were now a part of, whether they liked it or not. The result was the struggle to forge their own collective path, a struggle that left little room for middle ground. For German Catholics in Germany during the mounting Kulturkampf, the confessional and cultural polarization forced one to choose sides, which was a problem for many liberal Catholics, such as the Old Catholics (Altkatholiken), who split from the Church over the issue of Papal infallibility. As the historian Armin Heinen points out that…

\textit{Die nun folgende Eskalation war das Ergebnis der Mobilisierung gegensätzlicher Symbolsysteme: Rom-orientiert, rituell aufgeladen, emotional ansprechend, erfahrbar, widerspenstig hier, scheinbar bewußt national, rationalistisch und}

\footnote{The word “ultramontane” is from the Italian for “beyond the mountains,” and was originally used by Italians to refer to Catholics from north of the Alps. In the nineteenth century the meaning was reversed and came to refer to those Catholics who looked “beyond the mountains” to Rome for their direction.}
staatragend dort...Halbkatholisch, halbliberal meinte Verrat gegenüber der einen wie der anderen Seite, war in der Lebenspraxis, die entweder bewußt bürgerlich-rationalistisches Auftreten verlangte oder katholisch-jenseitsgewandtes, kaum vereinbar.  

This embattled either-or, “with us or against us” mentality that was predominantly imported by European clergy was out of place in America. With the state mostly playing a non-interference role in religious matters, and the law and culture of the land being a liberal and pluralistic democracy, Americans seemed to blend religiosity with liberalism. But for German Catholic immigrants, the line appeared blurred. How could one be a good Catholic, as one had learned in the old country, or from one’s immigrant parents, and yet be a good American? And since the ideologies were tied to national cultures, American-liberal, German-conservative Catholic, how could one be a good German and American at the same time? These are two of the main questions I explore and seek to answer in this study. And while my study pursues questions that relate to the reconciliation of transnational identity and culture in a religious and ethnic immigrant group, it does so by viewing the problems and questions primarily through the views and work of one individual, Joseph Jessing, a German-American Catholic priest who published a leading German language Catholic periodical in America for almost thirty years and who was a prominent member of the German-American Catholic organizational life (Vereinswesen). It is through the analysis of Jessing’s rhetorical reconciliation of these conflicts, also in

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comparison with the rhetoric of others involved in the conflicts, that I reach conclusions that I believe can help us better understand not only some facets of this chapter in German and American immigration, religious, and cultural history, but also some aspects of migration and the development of transnational identities in general.

**Jessing’s Mission**

The culture wars were defined by a clashing of missions. The redefinition of national identity taking place in both Germany and America took on the shape of missions to mold “Germans” and “Americans” according to a dominant national, ideological, and historical narrative. In both cases, German-American Catholics stood outside these dominant national narratives. Again, the emerging Prussianized Germany was not only characterized by liberal ideals, but also a progressive Protestantism, and the United States by an Anglo-American Protestantism that saw itself as part of a providential plan that was reflected in the famous “manifest destiny.” The clashing and reconciliation of national and religious missions in the construction of identity largely defined the life of Joseph Jessing, and his life was a reflection of the age he lived in. As a missionary German Catholic priest in the United States, Jessing had two missions of his own: the spread of the Catholic religion throughout America, starting with the Germans there, and the conservation of German language, culture, and identity in America.

Raised in a pious Catholic home by his widowed mother, Joseph Jessing’s experiences in Germany in the 1860s further cultivated in him a love for the Church, as well as for battle. He served five years in the Prussian army and then took leave to travel
to Rome to join the Papal Army and defend the Papal territories from Italian nationalists trying to forge their own nation. The army was defeated before he made it halfway there, but Jessing had found a cause he could fight for. For the next few years he worked with a group of men on secret plans to recruit a new European-wide Papal army, plans which ultimately, however, came to naught. Unable to become a priest in Germany due to his lack of a secondary education, Jessing dreamt of going to America to be a priest, and in the meantime sought out a career in teaching a form of shorthand called Gabelsberger, a skill which he had perfected during years of self-study. Called up for duty in the Prussian army again, he fought valiantly in the Danish War of 1864, earning numerous medals of Honor. In 1866 he was called up again, this time to fight in a war he was not fond of, against other Germans, the Catholic Austrians. Before they could call him up to fight against Catholic France, Jessing had left for America in 1867.

The combination of Jessing’s fiery devotion to the Catholic Church and his soldierly discipline, courage, and energy created a good candidate for a missionary priest in America, which is what he became in 1870. His ideology was shaped by the assault on the Catholic Church in Europe and the Church’s counter-attack against the modern world. Jessing brought the culture war with him to America and always had his “sword” within arm’s reach – the sword having been traded in for the pen. Jessing launched a German Catholic periodical that would become the leading German-language Catholic periodical in the country, and in which he sought to galvanize German-American Catholics in their Catholic and German identity. For the enemies of the Church, the label Ultramontanism was an invective. Jessing proudly accepted it, claiming ultramontanes were the truest and
most devoted Catholics – “…solche Katholiken, die die Gebote Gottes und der Kirche treu erfüllen, den unfehlbaren Papst, den Nachfolger des Apostelfürsten Petrus, als das Oberhaupt der ganzen Christenheit erkennen und die verlangen, daß die Rechte unserer alleinwahren Kirche Christi geachtet und nicht mit Füßen getreten werden.”

Jessing’s ultramontane mission of converting America into a Catholic nation, beginning with the Germans, ran into many obstacles. His old world religiosity and ideology were hardly compatible with the dominant ideas of the new world – liberalism, pluralism, and individualism. The coupling of religion and German national identity that he perpetuated along with other conservative German-American Catholics also ran into problems with an American Catholic Church that was trying to shed its image as a foreign institution and religion and forge a more unified, national church. The tensions between Jessing’s religious and ethnic identities came to the fore during this period of “Americanization”. The insistence on maintaining German religious and cultural customs, and most of all the German language, started to sound like the German nationalism that characterized his otherwise enemies, the liberal and secular German Free-thinkers. The “radical” Free-thinkers were influential in the United States through vibrant journalistic activity, which in turn sparked the launch of Catholic papers such as Jessing’s.

One of the keys to understanding Jessing’s reconciliation of his German nationalism with the Americanizing movement within and without the Church is understanding his conception of the American state. Along with many other German-

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11 “Zeitfragen”, Ohio Waisenfreund, April 22, 1874.
Americans, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, he viewed the United States not as a nation in the European, ethnic sense, but rather as a multi-national confederation. This view of the nation was Jessing’s attempt to reconcile the multiple contradicting loyalties and identities by separating a public from a private realm. In this conception of America, the various nationalities could be good citizens by performing their duties to the state but could also perform their language, culture, and religion as they wished in their own communities. Jessing’s political ideal was rooted in the past, in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, when Germans were united under Catholic leadership. He held on to this ideal long after arriving in America, and it served as part of his national and religious counter-narrative to the dominant narratives of national Protestantism and liberalism in both Germany and America. As the German historian George Windell points out, “[t]raditionally, German Catholics had looked both to Rome and to Vienna, viewing them as the twin pillars which supported their ideal of a ‘Christian-Germanic’ society, a federal union of princes and peoples under the leadership of the Habsburg Emperor.”

But this “golden age” Romanticism coexisted, however uneasily, with Jessing’s appreciation of the democratic liberty that America provided, especially since his brethren in Germany did not enjoy such freedoms. This conundrum – supporting religious liberty while simultaneously promoting the vision of a nation grounded in one’s religion – was not unique to Jessing or German-American Catholics, but was also part of

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the American Protestant dilemma. America, for Jessing, as for many Catholic immigrants, represented a paradox – it existed as a promise of new life and opportunity – a *tabula rasa* for the realization of Jessing’s religious and cultural goals of a new formation of German Catholicism, but at the same time it also represented the epitome of all the ills of modernity. Americanization within the Catholic Church – the movement that became known as “Americanism” in the 1880s and 1890s – was for Jessing an extension of the perils of Americanization on the whole, and he therefore resisted both through the perpetuation of national and religious counter-narratives.

The phenomenon of the culture war serves as a significant underlying theme in this study because it was a vital component of the cultural goods that Jessing took with him to the United States. This aspect of Jessing’s cultural transfer and transnational identity defined his mission to a large degree, as the Catholic clash with the new form of nationalism in Europe was exacerbated in the diaspora setting, where another nation-building project also had to be negotiated. As the historian Kathleen Neils Conzen points out, the immigration of such Catholic clergy over many decades resulted in the fact that German Catholicism in America usually looked back to the old country for its cues. “It was a consciously imported, cultivated, evolving, and like its German parent, increasingly ultramontane intellectual and spiritual tradition, accompanied by a set of institutional strategies often derived from homeland example.”

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13 Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Immigrant Religion and the Republic: German Catholics in Nineteenth-Century America”, *GHI Bulletin (German Historical Institute)* No. 35 (Fall 2004), 50.
The experiences of Jessing and other conservative German-American Catholic clergy in Germany, both real and vicarious (during the German Kulturkampf), made them hyper-sensitive to any perceived threats from their ideological opponents. Because of this sensitivity and because of the inherent ideological differences, Jessing saw a culture war almost everywhere he looked, and in the process of course was leading his own. With a bit of irony, Jessing’s Catholic mission against the revolutionary ideas of nineteenth century Europe was now being carried out in the country whose own revolution almost one hundred years earlier had sparked those of Europe.

Central Arguments and Key Questions

The key questions I seek to address in this work revolve around the relationship of religion and nationalism in a diaspora setting and include: How did Jessing reconcile his German nationalism with his Catholicism? What was the relationship between the two, and how did his “nationalism” differ from that of other German-Americans, if at all? How did he reconcile his nationalism and religion with their equivalents in America, i.e. American nationalism and American Catholicism? In what ways did Jessing participate in modernity, if at all? If the Catholic religion is universal and beyond the earthly realm, why did it matter so much to Jessing in which language it is performed and practiced?

My main argument in this work is that, to achieve his goals of spreading and defending Catholicism and maintaining and strengthening German culture and community, Jessing perpetuated competing, or counter-narratives of nation in his
periodical. Against the dominant narrative of the new, Prussianized Germany, Jessing countered with the narrative that this new Germany was imperfect and incomplete since it excluded Austria geographically and politically, and because it excluded German Catholics from national belonging, also through political oppression. His competing narrative was also rooted in history. In his German historical counter-narrative, Jessing demonized Luther and the Protestant Reformation as the evil that originally caused the division of the Germans. He portrayed Catholicism as not only the unifying and civilizing agent in German history, but also as the only hope as a cure to modern societal ills.

At the same time, to achieve his goal of unifying German-Americans, he appealed to German nationalism, which he also did during the Americanism controversy to defend German rights, revealing a more complex and intertwined relationship between his religion and his Germanism than he cared to admit. It becomes clear that this intermingling of Catholicism and Germanism is part of an old German Catholic narrative that Jessing perpetuates and that idealizes the political formation of a unified German population under a Catholic ruler. Much of Jessing’s national narrative is rooted in the idea of a multi-national confederation, especially in regard to life in America. This would allow German-American Catholics to be loyal citizens to the American state and at the same time loyal members of their ethnic communities.

But at the same time that Jessing seemed to promote an isolated “ghetto” life for German-American Catholics, he also participated in Americanization. Part of my main argument is also that a third goal of Jessing’s was to create a sense of belonging for German-American Catholics in their new homeland, even if this goal was never explicitly
stated and was pursued somewhat indirectly and even perhaps unknowingly by Jessing. He and other German-American Catholics resisted Americanization outside the Church because it was not a narrative they could feel part of. And although Jessing resisted the Americanism movement within the Church, he conceded that assimilation was inevitable.

Against the dominant narrative of the United States, Anglo-American Protestantism and “manifest destiny”, Jessing perpetuated a counter-narrative that argued that America was also a Catholic nation since its discoverer was the Catholic Columbus. And not only was America founded by a Catholic but it was also Catholic settlers in Maryland who were the most religiously tolerant, in comparison with the narrow-minded and intolerant Puritans of New England. Therefore, Catholicism was a religion that was not only compatible with American republicanism, but it was also the agent of liberty. But what is perhaps most interesting about these Catholic counter-narratives in relation to Jessing is that they were themselves “American” counter-narratives, mostly formed by Irish Catholics during the mid-nineteenth frenzy of anti-Catholic Know-Nothings, and that Jessing’s adoption and perpetuation of them tied him into an American narrative. Even if this Catholic narrative of American history and identity was itself a counter-narrative, for Jessing to adopt it was a small step in what eventually became the participation of German-American Catholics in the American national community.

He helped plant the seeds of what would increasingly occur in the twentieth century, namely a merging of Protestant and Catholic national narratives into a religious American narrative, which eventually would pit itself against a secular American narrative. With the secular creeds of liberalism and socialism as two of his primary
targets of attack, Jessing, despite his antagonism towards Protestantism, represents the contribution of the embattled German Catholic culture war mentality to the continued shaping of American religious and national identity. The implications of this for the American political landscape in the twentieth century and today are significant. The immigration historian Kathleen Neils Conzen’s assessment of these implications is relevant here. As she points out, German Catholic immigrants and their descendants

...developed a political culture at odds with that of other German Americans and a religious culture distinctive from that of other Catholics, nurturing a set of conservative, communal values that acquired significant influence within American public life. [They] formed a recognizable voting bloc as early as the 1850s, and remained one as late as 1970... The fact that their opponents among the liberal German immigration were often radical Republicans only intensified the German Catholic retreat into a defensive localistic opposition that lasted until the 1930s, and whose traces remain evident in the anti-statism of the religious right today.”

Some of the other larger questions that are implicated in this study are: What role religion does religion play in migration and diaspora life? What is the relationship between religion and nationalism in a diaspora group’s imported identity and how is each element

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reconciled with the host culture? How is a “foreign” religion based on hierarchical structures reconciled with a democratic and individualistic culture? These larger questions continue to be relevant today, as the religion of Muslim diaspora groups in the United States and Europe continues to be seen at odds with the host cultures.  

Methodology

The background reading for this study included works on the following topics: German and German Catholic history, American and American Catholic history, national identity construction, the role of print media in national identity construction, nationalism, German-American immigration, and immigration at large. I began collecting relevant articles and organizing them thematically. (The categories were: holidays/festivals; materialism; Luther; culture/ethnicity; Catholic/democracy; Native Americans; Schools; Language; Politics/Press; Americanization; Enemies – Freemasons, secret societies, and liberals.) As the work progressed conceptually, I then grouped and organized the various themes into chapters, which I outline below.

Another major component of the research included reading various documents contained in the Jessing archives. The majority of the documents are Jessing’s personal letters and those written to him, but there are also other documents, the most valuable of which were eye-witness recollections of Jessing by two of his former students. As is stated in the text at some point, there are big gaps in the availability, or existence, of

15 In a recent survey by the Public Religion Research Institute, 45% of all Americans claimed that the values of Islam were “at odds” with America’s way of life. Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, eds., American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).
Jessing’s letters. The large majority of them are from the 1860s, while he was still living in Germany and Austria, and the majority of them are to and from family members, mostly his mother and brother. After 1869 there are almost no letters in existence, and only a few from the 1890s. There is no known explanation for the lack of letters during these periods, as Jessing’s earlier biographers, Miller et al., also acknowledge. Most of Jessing’s letters were written in the shorthand he was so well versed in, Gabelsberger, which made them inaccessible for me. Luckily, however, many of the letters were transcribed into German. Since the letters are mainly from the 1860s, they are referenced almost exclusively in the first chapter.

As to the thematic approach I have taken towards the topic, the final framework was the result of many transformations and developments. I aimed to not impose a preconceived framework or interpretation onto the material, but rather tried to let the evidence speak for itself. My one guiding question from the beginning was the same basic one any researcher of cultural transfer and migration probably asks: How do immigrants reconcile two different cultures, worlds, religions, identities? After having seen ample evidence, I was convinced that the construction of these historical and political counter-narratives was the common thread in Jessing’s multi-faceted reconciliation of two cultures. It seemed to explain the story to me, even if the story is full of an individual’s – and a group’s – mixed feeling, contradictions, and divided loyalties.

Organization
As for the organization of the work, it was a challenging task to organize material that deals with what is often a nebulous area, namely identity. The identity of diaspora groups is particularly complex because of the many factors involved. I found that a division of the work into two parts, each focusing on one of Jessing’s two national identities made most sense. This allowed me to treat his Catholicism as a constant theme that was always present, which is how it was in reality. His Catholic identity was the link between the two cultures, and ultimately it was religion that served as the vehicle for assimilation, even if this assimilation was slight for Jessing himself.

Set in Germany during the 1860s, this first chapter investigates Joseph Jessing’s intellectual and ideological development against the backdrop of the emerging ideological and culture wars between Catholicism and secular-liberal modernity between the revolutions of 1848 and the Kulturkampf of the 1870s. Jessing’s conflicting loyalties to church and state during this period are most visible in the fact that he both served the Prussian state as a soldier in two wars but also supported and contributed to efforts of ultramontane European Catholics to defend the Pope, and even attempted to join the Papal army himself. By exploring Jessing’s journalistic endeavors and personal letters of the period in light of the historical background of these culture wars, I trace his development as a Catholic “culture warrior” who is part of the widespread Catholic revivalism and Ultramontanism that is occurring in many parts of Europe in reaction to the assaults on the Church. This chapter investigates the Catholic revival in terms of some its characteristically modernizing trends, namely the increasingly centralized and transnational organization of the Church and the use of the mass press to disseminate its
ideas. Also explored are the developments in the Catholic Church that assert its rejection of secular-liberal modernity, such as the 1864 *Syllabus of Errors* and 1870 declaration of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council. The chapter serves as a background to illustrate and help understand the origins of the embattled German-Catholic identity that Jessing would take with him across the ocean to his new homeland and attempt to transfer to the German diaspora in the United States.

The second chapter investigates Jessing’s early years in the United States and the mission he pursues with the launch of his newspaper to unify the German-Americans of the region on the basis of shared interests, common ethnicity and language, and basic religious and civic sentiments. Jessing’s agenda is also to ultimately bring German-Americans back to the Catholic religion, restoring German Catholic unity and essentially undoing the Protestant Reformation in the process. To achieve this end, Jessing makes Luther a primary target in his newspaper and exposes the harm and dangers of Protestantism. He sees this as a small step in the Catholic Church’s mission in the United States – the conversion of all and the creation of a Catholic country. To the dominant narrative of Protestant, Prussianized German nationalism that has just culminated in the birth of the German Empire, Jessing provides a counter-narrative that reinterprets German history and culture. But after the attempt to unify German-Americans in his local community of southern Ohio fails because of religious confessionism and the lack of strong local identity in America, his mission becomes to retain the loyalty of German-American Catholics through the heightening of their ethnic and religious consciousness. In this chapter I look at how the phenomenon of cultural transfer manifested itself in the
early stages of Jessing’s mission, i.e. how the culture war mentality that Jessing
developed in Germany was employed to try and construct an imagined community of
Germans living in the United States.

Chapter three examines the defining conflicts of American Catholicism in the last
two decades of the nineteenth century – Americanization and Americanism. During this
period, many leaders of the Catholic Church in America embarked on a nation-building
program that attempted to rid the Church of its fragmented and foreign identity and forge
it into a more uniform national church. A large part of this project was the insistence that
all American Catholics abandon the use of their native languages and quickly adopt
English as the national church language. As the largest foreign-language ethnic group in
the Church, German-American Catholics saw this program as an attack on their language
and culture. Jessing and other conservative German Catholics resisted fiercely and
launched a movement of their own to defend their language, culture, and mode of
worship. However, Jessing also concedes that the Americanization of all immigrants is
inevitable and only a matter of time. He nevertheless resists, pushing the inevitable off
onto future generations. The tension between Jessing’s Catholicism and Germanism is
also a main theme here, as he often allies himself with German Free-thinkers in this
defense of Germanism, who otherwise were his fiercest enemies.

In the fourth and final chapter I argue that Jessing does indeed contribute to the
Americanization of German-American Catholics, despite his rejection of imposed
Americanization and despite the tensions inherent in the reconciliation of his German and
Catholic identity with American culture. Jessing contributes to Americanization –
perhaps unknowingly – by joining an emerging American Catholic counter-narrative that laid claim to Catholic participation in American nation-building and therefore also a sense of rightful national belonging. He was part of the early stages of a process that increasingly occurred in the twentieth century and which is still occurring today – the merging of Catholic and Protestant national narratives into a religious narrative that pits itself against a secular national narrative. In this chapter I explore nineteenth century ideas about “American Exceptionalism”, or manifest destiny, and show how other German-American Catholics tie their immigration myth into the American myth of providentialism, thereby bringing their “diaspora destiny” closer to manifest destiny. With the secular creeds of Liberalism and Socialism as two of his primary targets of attack, Jessing, despite his antagonism towards Protestantism, represents a contribution of the embattled German Kulturkampf mentality to the shaping of American religious and national identity.

Finally, in the conclusion, I highlight the findings of the work and discuss the broader implications the work has for the study of religion in immigration on whole.

**Contribution to scholarship**

First of all, this dissertation contributes to the fields of American and German Catholic history by investigating for the first time the political and cultural attitudes of a leading figure in the German-American Catholic world. Joseph Jessing not only edited the *Ohio Waisenfreund*, by the mid-1880s the most widely distributed Catholic newspaper in the United States, but he was also very active in German-American
Catholic organizational life. He was a regular speaker at conventions such as the annual \textit{Katholikentag} as well as meetings of the \textit{Central Verein}. He also founded the Pontifical College Josephinum, a seminary intended to train German speaking priests, which to this day is the only pontifical college outside of Italy. Lastly, he pioneered ideas to form a German-American Catholic press union and university, both of which, however, never got off the ground. My work extends the work done by the biographers of Joseph Jessing in 1936 by addressing issues that they were unable to research in much detail, as they point out themselves. “Yet the contributors to this modest volume do not flatter themselves that they have written a definitive life of the Founder of the Josephinum, or passed final judgment upon his fruitful career. The material available suggests a more detailed treatment of his evaluation of contemporary personalities and events in Church and State, which may be taken at a later date.”\textsuperscript{16} It is this task which I set for myself here. To church and state, however, I also add culture, as it is my opinion that this was the most decisive factor in shaping Jessing’s worldview, as well as in reconciling his old world religion in the new world.

While located perhaps most directly in the field of Catholic history, this dissertation also contributes to the fields of cultural studies and immigration studies. Studies on the history of the Catholic struggles with the modern state and with liberal modernity at large in the late nineteenth century have traditionally been done on a nation-state level. The Kulturkampf in Germany, for example, has primarily been studied as a

self-contained and uniquely German phenomenon. Only recently has scholarship begun to look at the struggles between the Catholic Church and the modern state as a pan-European, and indeed global phenomenon. On the other side of the Atlantic, the study of the Catholic culture war in the United States during this period has focused on the “Americanism” debate, with little investigation of the relevance of the European culture wars for this discourse. Similarly, the study of the Kulturkampf and Kulturkämpfe had often focused on the upper realm of political and institutional battles between church and state. This trend has also changed in more recent scholarship, whereby an understanding of the cultural sphere – discourse, rhetoric, symbolism, religious practice, and identity construction – has increasingly been deemed critical in understanding the bigger picture.

In this work, I follow in both of these trends and approach the phenomenon of the Catholic culture war with liberal modernity in a broad sense. First, I approach the culture war with a transnational approach, investigating that bridge that brought the European culture wars, and more specifically the German Kulturkampf, across the Atlantic to America. That bridge was namely migration and the cultural transfer inherent therein. This work investigates one small piece of the global culture war between Catholicism and liberal modernity that took place through the influence of one individual. Secondly, I examine the culture war on the cultural level, from the bottom up, by studying how the rhetorical and symbolic devices crucial to identity construction were employed as part of this war of ideas, as well as how the culture war was in turn used in the process of national and religious identity construction among German-American Catholics.
Alon Confino’s work, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*, is also an example of this approach and his work was helpful for me in understanding how to think about nation. In this study that investigates the attempts to use the celebration of Sedan Day as a “nationalizing” tool, Confino’s aim is “to show how the everyday plane of the mental internalized and represented the abstract notion of nation.”[17] This is also my aim. I also share Confino’s opinion that “national belonging is essentially a problem of culture,” and that social and economic explanations were insufficient.[18] The vehicle for my study of the “everyday plane” is the newspaper. By studying the rhetoric in newspapers, I believe one has a good measuring stick through which one can gain a good understanding of attitudes, opinions, and moods of the time. As one American historian of the period claimed about editorials of the press, speeches in Congress, and “orations on the hustings,” the “[l]anguage found there is more indicative of public opinion and is fresher than any generalized phrases of a historian of a later day could be.”[19]

The investigation of the rhetoric and symbols of representation that fed the culture war – and newspapers are the best example of this – can provide for us a better understanding of this global conflict that was so significant for the development of Western culture in the last third of the nineteenth century. It aids us in gaining a better understanding how migration, cultural transfer, and transnationalism affected the building

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[18] Ibid., 5.

of diasporic identities and diasporic interaction with other ethnic and social groups in this period. In his work, *Religion and the People of Western Europe*, Hugh McLeod argues that ultramontane Catholicism was one of the three religious movements that flourished and defined the period of the late nineteenth century. He also argues that it was the employment of modern means – the press and mass mobilization – that allowed ultramontane Catholicism to wage this war successfully; the movement was “the most effective of the means devised by the older churches to broaden their popular appeal and strengthen their defenses against these hostile forces.”

Urs Altermatt, in his work, “Katholizismus: Antimodernismus mit modernen Mitteln?”, also highlights the significance of the ultramontane use of modern means to fight their culture war.

The role of print media in the Catholic culture war with modernity was enormous. Another work that takes the bottom up approach and investigates the use of newspapers in the culture wars is Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser’s edited volume, *Culture Wars, Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, in which they claim, “the importance of newspaper journalism in fanning the flames of culture war is a theme that

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runs through many of the chapters.” They go on to stress, that “these wars were primarily fought through the cultural media: the spoken and printed word, the image, the symbol…In the intermittent phases of rhetorical escalation that characterize this era, a key role fell to those ‘snipers’ on both sides of the divide whose intransigent appeals to prejudice and fear raised emotional temperatures in both camps,” and that “[o]f all the goods for which Catholics and anti-clericals contended during the culture wars era, the most encompassing was the nation itself and the collective identity that attached to it.”

Joseph Jessing was certainly one of these “snipers”.

One of the starting points of this dissertation is also the groundbreaking work from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, in which he also assigns great significance to the role of print media for the internalization, or imagining of nation. He wrote, that “[t]he convergence of capitalism and print technology…created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation.”

As stated earlier, Anderson’s idea of “imagined community” is useful here in understanding Jessing’s attempt to inculcate in his readers the prioritization of a Catholic and German identity and sense of community in face of the more “real” American and Protestant national community developing around them.

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23 Ibid, 5-6, 7.

Concerning the role of religion, specifically Christianity, in the shaping of nationalism, my dissertation borrows from the work of Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*. He explains how this occurred in seven different ways, and although I did not use this as a model, Jessing’s mission of identity and community construction coincides with Hastings’ criterion, which I will briefly list and then relate to Jessing. These seven ways are: “sanctifying the starting point; the mythologization and commemoration of great threats to national identity; the social role of the clergy; the production of vernacular literature; the provision of a biblical model for the nation; the autocephalous national church; the discovery of a unique national destiny.”

Jessing’s mission and counter-narrative perform all, or at least most, of these devices, as I show in this work. The “sanctified starting point” for Jessing was the conversion and unification of the Germans that occurred through the Catholic Church and that culminated in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, which serves as Jessing’s golden age and political ideal. The great threat to national identity that Jessing mythologized and commemorated was Luther’s Protestant Reformation, which is repeatedly exposed and condemned as the source of German division.

Jessing’s role as a member of the lower clergy is certainly significant here, although aside from his few years as a parish priest he seemed to have led a life somewhat cut off from that of the average German-American Catholic. Aside from the

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high subscription numbers of his newspaper, there is little else upon which to measure how much contact he had with people who were not his students. The strength of German-American Catholic organizational life, however, also seems a good indication that Jessing’s views resonated with a lot of people, as he seems to have been for the most part representative of the “movement”. Jessing’s newspaper could be considered the equivalent of a vernacular literature for the masses in his era. The one area of Hasting’s that does not correspond to Jessing’s story is the biblical model for the nation. Jessing made references to the Bible in his newspaper, but not in relation to national identity.

The “autocephalous church” was certainly a big part of Jessing’s narrative. Although he looked to Rome as the ultimate authority in religious matters, he saw no contradiction in perpetuating the campaign for German autonomy in the Catholic Church in America, often seeking Rome’s blessing for this mission. Lastly, the “discovery of a unique national destiny” summarizes all of Jessing’s efforts, and is the main topic of this work. The national destiny of German-American Catholics was a diaspora destiny that not only had the formation and strengthening of the diaspora community as its goal, but also the spread of the community through the conversion of other Germans and then members of their new “nation”.

The work of the immigration historian Jon Gjerde was very influential for this dissertation. Two of his works, Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America and The Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830-1917, were invaluable resources for me, as he also studied the transcultural interaction of European Catholicism and American national identity. Gjerde’s conception
of “complementary identities” explains the dual identity formation of immigrants in America as a parallel process in which the two identities, the ethnic and the American, do not conflict but rather reinforce each other. While I agree with him to some extent, that immigrants in America do develop dual identities, my work aims to show that the process was not smooth and easy but in fact full of conflict and tension. Another valuable work that approaches this phenomenon from a similar angle is Orm Øverland’s Immigrant Minds, American Identities: Making the United States Home, 1870-1930. In this work, Øverland explores the use of historical myth-creation by immigrants to find national belonging in America. A difference to my work, however, is that Øverland primarily focuses on immigrants’ attempts to connect their myths to the dominant Anglo-Saxon narrative of American history. Although there are examples of this in the German-American Catholic community, as I point out in chapter four, Jessing was not one of them. He insisted on a German Catholic narrative, and it was the (Irish) Catholic narrative that eventually proved the vehicle of his connection to an American national (counter) narrative.

The wish of German-American Catholics to remain distinct, maintain their culture, and not melt into the mainstream of American culture is often treated as a retreat into “the Catholic ghetto” in studies.⁵ This view, however, underestimates the

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⁵ See for example Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Immigrant Religion and the Republic,” 43-56. The literature on German-American Catholics has generally tended to follow the German discourse, which largely subscribes to the “ghetto” theory. For a discussion of the “German Catholic ghetto” in Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth century, as well as the recent state of German-Catholic historiography, see Oded Heilbronner, “From Ghetto to Ghetto: The Place of German Catholic Society in Recent Historiography,” in The Journal of Modern History, Vol. 72, No. 2 (June 2000), 453-495.
confidence and determination that German-American Catholics had in shaping their own America, as well as their desire to participate in national life, or at least “civic life”.

Viewing their new homeland not as a “nation” in the sense we have come to know, German Catholics saw America as somewhat of a blank slate whose culture and identity was variegated and malleable. Joseph Jessing was certainly interested in participating in American life and in shaping it.
Chapter 1
Prussia or the Pope?
The Training of a Kulturkämpfer

In September 1864, a few months after returning from a war in which he fought for Prussia’s cause against the Kingdom of Denmark, Joseph Jessing penned an article titled “Die Römische Frage” for the Catholic periodical *Tiroler Stimmen*, in which he wrote the following:

> Viele Tausende in der Diaspora unter den Protestanten zerstreut wohnende Katholiken müssen noch während des größten Teil des Jahres der Segnungen der Religion entbehren...Soll aber im nördlichen Deutschland in der Mitte des Protestantismus wieder katholisches Leben sich zeigen, so müssen diese Mission, diese einzelnen katholischen Glaubensoasen in der großen Sandwüste des

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27 In a letter (565) from Father Eugen Schratz to Jessing on the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, 1864.
Protestantismus, nicht allein erhalten sondern recht gepflegt und ausgebreitet werden.\(^{28}\)

For a recent and decorated Prussian war veteran who was now trying to become an “ehrsamer Spießbürger meiner Vaterstadt”\(^{29}\) by spreading the gospel of Gabelsberger stenography and thereby creating a career for himself, it might strike the observer as a bit odd that Jessing’s main concerns after and even during the war seem to have revolved around the plight of the Pope and those Catholics living as “diaspora” in northern Germany.\(^{30}\) This constellation of events and attitudes was characteristic of Jessing’s life.

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\(^{28}\) “Die Römische Frage”, September 25, 1864, letter 586.

\(^{29}\) Letter (724) from Jessing to Heinrich Lagemann of Januar 18, 1866. Jessing had written of his intentions to emigrate to the United States as early as 1860, and in this letter he repeats these intentions, should his career prospects not work out in Europe. Ich habe einmal, wenn es mir nicht gelingt, mich hier in Europa eine selbstständige Stellung zu erringen, die Absicht, mein Glück in Amerika zu versuchen und dort eine Stelle als Lehrer, woran großer Mangel ist, anzunehmen. On July 3, 1863, Jessing wrote his uncle in Indiana of his intentions to emigrate to the United States and inquires about the existence of German shorthand and the requirements to study theology (letter I-2): In Amerika wird die deutsche Stenografie noch wenig bekannt sein. Die in der englischen Schrift übliche Fonografie kommt der Gabelsberger Stenografie lange nicht gleich und es ist auch deshalb schon die Letztere auf die englische Schrift übertragen worden. Ich beschäftige mich jetzt eifrig mit der Stenografie und glaube, dass mir diese Kunst, wenn ich einmal zu Euch herü-berkomme, noch von Nutzen sein kann... Schon oft habe ich Euch geschrieben, dass ich noch mal nach Amerika kommen würde, bis jetzt ist mir jedoch allerhand in die Quere gekommen. Ich glaube jedoch Ihnen jetzt das Versprechen geben zu können, dass ich binnen spätestens drei Jahren, vielleicht auch noch früher, zu Ihnen herüberkommen werde. Der Krieg soll aber erst sein Ende erreicht haben.

\(^{30}\) Jessing’s attempt to spread Gabelsberger shorthand gave him training in the skills of persuasion and bringing people together. As he would later do in his religious mission, Jessing also attempted to spread the shorthand method by an appeal to German unity. True to the spirit of the times, this even applied to his beloved art of Gabelsberger shorthand. In the first issue of his journal, Die Stenografischen Blätter aus Westfalen, from 1865, Jessing wrote the following: Einigkeit tut uns Not in Deutschland, einig sind wir nur in der Sprache und Schrift, sollten wir nun in der Stenografie uns nicht auch einigen können? Sollten wir durch Uneinigkeit die Ausbreitung der Stenografie verhindern? Zwei Systeme streiten in Deutschland um den Vorrang, jedes davon hat seine Vorzüge und seine Mängel, welches soll nun zur Allgemeingeltung gelangen? Letter R-18.
and a foreshadowing of his future years in the United States: concern for the safety and thriving of the Pope and Catholic Church coupled with a zealous activism in regard to caring for Catholic minorities, coexisting with a loyalty to his state and German culture that sometimes strained a delicate balance between Church and State, or religion and nationalism.

If Jessing was more concerned with the “Roman question” than the “German question” in 1864, it was nothing new and would remain so throughout his life. At least this is what he claimed. As we shall see in later chapters, during the Americanism debate of the 1880s, Jessing’s detractors would accuse him and other conservative German-American priests of raising nationality above religion and the interests of the Church, and they had a point. But this was in America, where diaspora life changed everything, where his sense of Germanism was heightened because of the surrounding “otherness”. As Lord Acton wrote during this very decade of the 1860s, “exile is the nursery of nationality.”

While he was yet in the “German lands” of Prussia and the Austrian Empire, his Germanism took a back seat to his religious loyalties to the Catholic Church. Although he served three stints in the Prussian army, excelling and even earning medals of Honor for his courage and service during the Danish War, Jessing would’ve preferred to fight for


32 Jessing was decorated with the Allgemeines Ehrenzeichen II Klasse, the Dueppler Sturm-Kreuz, and the Kriegsdienst Medaille 1864 for his courageous service during the storming of Dueppel as well as for his voluntary caring for the wounded and burying of the dead. Miller et al., Jessing, 59.
the Pope, as we shall see. His heart was always more fully involved in the other war of
the era between the Catholic Church and her political and ideological enemies.

This was certainly the case in 1864, as is evident in this article, as it is in letters to
friends. In the summer of 1864, with the topic clearly having made a strong impression
on him during his war service, Jessing writes to the editor of the *Tiroler Stimmen*
requesting the publication of a fundraising campaign for the Catholics of Schleswig-
Holstein.\(^{33}\) Jessing’s greater concern for the gains of the Catholic Church than for those
of Prussia during the war are also evident in a letter he wrote to his friend and mentor,
Father Schraz, during that summer.

*Only now do I realize what it means to carry on warfare. War is truly the scourge
of God. But this war has brought good results for the Catholic Church in
Schleswig-Holstein, where it has completely changed the position of Catholics. All
Christian denominations are now on equal footing there. Mass was said in the
Protestant churches, and the Sisters of Mercy worked in all the hospitals.*\(^{34}\)

But how did this soldier, who later proudly donned his Prussian war medals on his
priest’s frock until the day he died (even after the Kulturkampf), reconcile his religion
with his loyalty to a (Protestant) state that would soon wage war against his Church? In
his correspondences and articles during this period Jessing is not very forthcoming with

\(^{33}\) See letter 569, which is the July 7, 1864 response of the editor, Friedrich Graf, to Jessing telling him that
he would prefer to delay the publication of the announcement, since he felt the Tyrolers were over-
burdened with charity campaigns at the moment.

\(^{34}\) Letter 459, which must have been written either in or shortly after July, 1864, in response to a July letter
from Father Schraz to Jessing. Cited in Miller et al., *Jessing*, 59.
his political views. As we shall learn, this was at least partly due to his activities before 1864 and his fear of certain people finding out about them. His letters during the war are largely factual and logistical, describing his movements and actions and those of his unit.

Since the war articles of Jessing are no longer in existence, it is hard to pin a more precise political position on him, but judging by the conservative Catholic nature of the periodical and the views of its editor, it is tempting to assume that Jessing’s views did not differ greatly from Friedrich Graf’s. In a response letter to Jessing on March 8, 1864, before the conclusion of the Danish War, the editor writes of his political opinions and those of “conservative Tirol”:

_Sie haben also den Beruf, Deutschlands Ehre und Zucht zu retten, vor allem gegenüber dem dänischen Trotz, der im Bewusstsein zu unterliegen sowieso seine letzte Karte ausspielt und womöglich durch Heraufbeschwörung eines europäischen Krieges profitieren will. Das konservative Tirol schaut mit unbeschreiblicher Freude, mit Bewunderung auf die Taten des österreichisch-preußischen Heeres. Das konservative Tirol ist mit der Politik Österreichs und Preußens bisher vollkommen einverstanden...Was das konservative Tirol ganz besonders freut, das ist, dass sich Österreich und Preußen und hoffentlich auch nach und nach das übrige Deutschland in Betracht der großen von allen Seiten drohenden Gefahren zusammengefunden haben respektiv zusammenfinden werden. Diese österreichisch-preußische Allianz ist allen Demokraten und Liberalen, also auch den Tiroler Liberalen, ein Dorn im Auge, und rastlos arbeiten sie mit, diese
Allianz zu lösen und durch das Ausland an den Jaden zu kommen und den Rhein, Schleswig-Holstein, meerumschlingungen, für sich auszuubeuten…Die "Tiroler Stimmen" haben vor drei Monaten den Kampf gegen die Demokratie (Liberalismus) aufgenommen und die deutsch-dänische Frage bisher nicht ohne Erfolg bearbeitet.  

As was indicated earlier, such views of a “greater German” (großdeutsche) solution to the problem of German division were typical of Catholic Germans, and Jessing’s affinity for the idea of a united German and Catholic empire became more apparent later, after he was already in America. His political ideals, even if he didn’t announce them too often in his new democratic homeland, revolved around the idea of German unity under Catholic leadership. Not unlike many other conservative Catholics of his generation, he saw the thousand-year Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation as the golden age. Later, in 1891, Jessing wrote that “während tausend Jahren waren unsere Vorfahren eben die Träger dieser katholischen Idee…da war die katholische Idee der Zusammengehörigkeit der Christenheit auf das Schönste verwirklicht.” This political ideal of his would have significant ramifications for Jessing’s view of America as a political and cultural entity and his reconciliation of his religious and national mission with the new nation.

But nowhere in his correspondences during this time does Jessing write of his wish for such a solution to the so-called German question or of any blatantly nationalist

35 Letter 544.
36 “Vaterlandsliebe,” Ohio Waisenfreund, May 19, 1886.
motivation for his service in the Prussian army. He often wrote of his “Vorliebe für den Militärdienst” and also often explained his signing into the army as a path to later securing a civil servant or other professional career for himself. Since he lacked a secondary education, most other paths to a professional career were closed to him. But his motivations do not seem to have been born of nationalist fervor. And one does not find in Jessing’s correspondence any critique of Prussia either, which is a bit surprising, considering his strong Catholicism and sense of kinship with his Austrian and German coreligionists. As the historian George Windell points out, such criticism would not have been unusual for Catholics.

*Most Catholics outside Prussia, and many within it, found themselves, therefore, unable to forgive the Hohenzollern monarchy for what they considered its anti-German policy, particularly after 1851. Prussia effectively sabotaged an all-German policy toward France during the Crimean War, she refused in the war of 1859 to go any further than ordering the mobilization of her army on the Rhine, and perhaps even more significantly, she watched complacently Italy’s absorption of the major part of the Papal State in 1860.*

Despite the lack of any written evidence of animosity towards Prussia on Jessing’s part, his decision to leave the Prussian Army and join the Papal Army in 1860 may

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37 Windell, *Catholics and German Unity*, 8.
have been influenced by a disappointment or disillusionment on his part with the above mentioned policies of the Prussian crown.

Jessing’s loyalties and ideal of German unity were therefore put to the test in 1866 when he was called up for service in the Prussian-Austrian war, in German known as the “German War” or “German Civil War” (Brüderkrieg). Jessing was against this war from the beginning, reflecting years later in his newspaper that “jener Krieg war mir schon in seinem Entstehen zuwider, weil ich ihn für unrecht hielt.”

Without going into detail as to why he found the war unfair – though we can surmise the reason from his generally positive regard for Catholic Austria –, he also writes that it ruined the professional plans he had been pursuing in his recruitment for the spread of Gabelsberger; plans which had of late found some success. Jessing, whom a former student of his later described as having had an “almost slavish respect for superiors and authority”, did what he could to avoid actual combat in the war, purposefully signing up for a reserve unit stationed in his hometown of Münster. Unable to avoid combat for very long, however, Jessing conscientiously objected to the war by doing what he otherwise would certainly have considered unsoldierly and unacceptable behavior. “Jedoch kann ich sagen, daß ich in diesem Bruderkriege persönlich selbst keinem Menschen auch nur ein Haar gekrümmt habe, sondern nur als uniformirter

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38 “Vor fünfundzwanzig Jahren,” Ohio Waisenfreund, June 24, 1891.

If fighting against other Germans was anathema to Jessing, the idea of fighting against Catholics was equally abhorrent, if not more so. About the Franco-Prussian war that came four years later and for which Jessing was no longer around, he explained later that after 1866 he went to America, “weil wir den deutsch-französischen Krieg voraussahen und gegen ein katholisches Volk nicht kämpfen wollten.”

Even if the idea of better work prospects in America was the reason he more readily gave to most others for his plans of emigration, his quiet but constant discernment of a religious vocation in the priesthood seems to have been just as strong a motivation. His background and personality made him well suited to the tasks of a mission priest. After the Danish War Jessing wrote to his former employer in Tirol, Herr Krahe (of whom we shall learn more shortly), of the usefulness of the war experiences for potential future, “nobler” causes:

Many a one of my comrades in arms was killed beside me, but through the providence of God I escaped unharmed. In this war I learned the practical side of soldiering, which I found very different in many respects than I had believed it to

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40 “Vor fünfundzwanzig Jahren,” Ohio Waisenfreund, June 24, 1891.

41 “Unsere Feinde,” Ohio Waisenfreund, September 12, 1894.

42 The fact that his mother was no longer living (she died on May 17, 1866, the day he was called up for duty in the German Civil War) was probably what finally led Jessing to emigrate, after 7 years of contemplation. He was very devoted to his mother and felt obligated to care for her, also financially.
be. If God should so guide my future years that I am to risk my life again in a nobler cause, I shall profit by the experience I have gained.⁴³

Later claiming to have decided to become a priest in 1860, during military drills, Jessing later reflected that after the German Civil War he had firmly made up his mind to leave the Prussian army and pursue his nobler goal.

Man bot nun alles Mögliche auf, mich zu bewegen, freiwillig noch länger in preußischem Dienste zu bleiben, machte mir die glänzenden Versprechungen, allein seit Jahren hatte ich mir einen bessern Dienst gewählt, ich wollte der heiligen katholischen Kirche dienen, und so verließ ich denn gewissermaßen fluchtartig Rendsburg und kehrte nach meiner westfälischen Heimat zurück, von wo ich acht Monate später nach den Vereinigten Staaten ging.⁴⁴

The “nobler” cause had presented itself to Jessing in a very real way just a few years earlier and to best illustrate this side of Jessing, which seemed to reflect his greatest loyalty and conviction, we must go back to 1860 and consider these defining events in his life. After having served five years in the Prussian army from 1855-1860, Jessing broke his promise to re-enlist in the Prussian army and decided to join the

⁴³ Miller et al., Jessing, 67, letter 571. I have cited the English translation of Jessing’s words from Miller et al. because the original letter is written in Gabelsberger and was not transcribed. (Miller et al. knew Gabelsberger and transcribed many of Jessing’s letters.) This is the case for all of the Jessing quotes that appear in English throughout the work. (See the Appendix for a visual of Gabelsberger shorthand.)

⁴⁴ Ohio Waisenfreund, October 14, 1891.
Papal Army’s fight against the Italian nationalists in 1860, as already indicated.

Reacting to Europe-wide recruitment for the Papal Army, Jessing – later ridiculed as “the Roman” by his Prussian compatriots on his return – arrived in Prague to find out the recruitment office had just been closed due to the defeat of the Papal Army.

Jessing later explained his motivations to a friend in a letter:


45 Letter (724) from Jessing to Heinrich Lagemann, January 18, 1866. Jessing’s letter to Lagemann had the purpose of inquiring about the requirements to study at the American Catholic seminary in Leuven, Belgium (Loewen), a seminary set up by the American bishops Martin J. Spalding and Peter Paul Lefevere to train European priests for mission work in America. This version of events therefore highlights his ideological and religious motivations for joining the Papal Army. In two other recaps of the 1860 event, both written for more professional reasons, Jessing highlights his love of military service. In a curriculum vitae written in January, 1866 (L-1), Jessing writes: _Die Veranlassung hierfür war folgende: Ich hatte mich_
The fact that Jessing sacrificed his career in the Prussian army – the best chance he had at a proper career – to defend the territory of the Holy See certainly speaks volumes about him.\textsuperscript{46} Being a careful planner from a very young age, not to mention that he was the primary caretaker of his small family – his mother and younger brother – since his early teenage years, Jessing’s decision was not that of an impulsive adventurer, but rather reflected his strong religious convictions. As we shall see, this was just the start of Jessing’s career as a soldier for the Pope. He never got to go to physical battle for the Holy See, but he would spend the majority of his life fighting the battle with his printing press and the recruitment of his own army of “warriors” for the Church. To better understand Jessing’s later work in America, it will be helpful to further trace his movements in the 1860s as well as the religious and ideological mood of the day. It was during this decade that he absorbed the Kulturkampf ideology that he would export to the new world with him.

\textsuperscript{46} In a letter (K-27) regarding his application for the position of castellan of a diocesan museum in Münster, Jessing wrote: \textit{Durch meine Expedition nach Italien im Jahre 60, um in die päpstliche Armee zu treten, und durch die Teilnahme an dem Unternehmen des Herrn Krahe, bei welchem ich drei Jahre gewesen bin, habe ich meine frühere Anstellungsberechtigung im preußischen Staatsdienst teilweise verloren und bin dadurch mehrmals schon in eine üble Lage gebracht worden.}
Shortly after returning from his disappointment in Prague, Jessing was hired as a personal secretary for the noble and Catholic Droste zu Vischering family in Darfeld near Münster. During his employment here, Jessing came in contact with a group of men who were involved in the formation of a military order meant to protect the possessions of the Holy See. On March 10, 1861 Jessing joined the St Michaels-Bruderschaft, whose purpose was to finance this military order. Shortly afterward, in June, Jessing accepted a new position as the “confidential secretary” of a Herr Krahe, “a pious and learned man, who had spent his personal fortune and about ten years of effort in promoting” the military order. While Herr Krahe travelled through Europe searching for moral and financial support, as well as soldiers, Jessing, whose enthusiasm for the cause of the Holy See was reawakened, resided in Krahe’s Schloss Thurneck, also called Rothholz, located between Schwaz and Rattenberg in Tyrol. The sole occupant of the one-hundred room castle for the majority of his three year stay there, Jessing spent his time perfecting his shorthand, gardening, and studying. Among other things he learned Latin, and wrote in December 1863 that he had done so with the intention of requesting

47 Two years later, in 1863, Maria Droste zu Vischering, was born. She became a Roman Catholic nun and is best known for influencing Pope Leo XIII’s consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Pope Leo XIII called to this consecration “the great act of my pontificate”. See the Catholic Encyclopedia at: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07163a.htm

48 See Miller et al., 16-36, for more details regarding this phase of Jessing’s life. I rely on these accounts for much of the following two paragraphs.

49 Miller et al., Jessing, 16-17. Miller writes that this “confraternity was approved by the bishop of Münster, and the proposed military order had the highest ecclesiastical approbation.” Indeed, as Jessing wrote in 1863, that “only last year the Holy Father expressed his full approval of our work.” (40) For a discussion of secretive Catholic attempts to create Papal militias see the unique and conspiratorial work, Emiel Lambert, ed., The Black International, L’Internationale noire: 1870 – 1878, The Holy See and Militant Catholicism in Europe. KADOC-Studies 29 (Leuven: University Press, 2002).
an audience with the Pope in order to present to him his “great plan”, of which no details can be ascertained.\(^50\)

It is also unknown if Jessing’s “great plan” was related to Herr Krahe’s “grosse Sache”, but it is pretty safe to assume that it is. Jessing was cryptic in his correspondence about both his own plan as well as Krahe’s cause, for fear of his letters falling into the hands of the enemies, the greatest of which was considered the Freemasons. But from his letters it is clear that he was recruiting young men between the ages of sixteen and eighteen for the proposed military order.\(^51\) To his mother he wrote, “If I had to remain in Berlin in the king’s service, we would have to resign ourselves to it. As things are now, we should be more easily resigned, because I am not separated from home to serve an earthly king, but am in the service of God.”\(^52\) In another letter he wrote of his dedication to the cause: “I shall remain loyal to the cause I have taken up. It is still uncertain whether we shall attain our aim, but so long as a single person remains loyal to the cause,

\(^{50}\) This was just one of many of Jessing’s entrepreneurial ideas, many of which he submitted to public authorities. The pursuits include the numerous attempts to bring Gabelsberger into Prussian and other states’ schools, courtrooms, and public offices, military plans for a new type of bomb, “Roll-Bomben”, which he envisioned being used for the military defense of the valleys of Innsbruck, his plans of which were submitted to the Austrian Kaiser, and of course his most successful plan of getting the Holy See to put his seminary under its care in 1892. In regard to the defense of Tyrol he wrote in December 1863, “I have made a new military invention, which will be of great use to the Emperor of Austria if it is found practicable. In January, I intend to send it directly to His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty in Vienna. If the Emporer accepts my proposals, my fortune is made.” (Miller et al., 40) Jessing also offered the services of the Josephinum facilities to the United States government during the Spanish-American War in 1898, once again proving that his loyalty to state was constant regardless of his frustrations with all those he saw as cultural and religious opponents. See Miller et al., Jessing, 46. Also see the Appendix for Jessing’s letter to the American President.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 34, (letter 21).

\(^{52}\) Ibid., (letter 26).
I shall stand by him." Despite his secretiveness, it seems the Prussian government was aware of Jessing’s associations with Krahe, as Jessing found out years later when he “found himself in a bad position several times,” and was even penalized, the details of which are unknown. The plans for a new Papal military order, however, came to naught and Jessing left Tyrol and returned to Münster in February 1864 to pursue a professional career as a shorthand teacher. But these plans were interrupted as ten days later he was called into service for the Danish War.

Despite the failure of the plans to help defend the Holy See, these years were definitive for Jessing. Although he still pursued the path towards a professional career, the thoughts of the “cause”, or mission, were very present in his mind, as were considerations of joining the priesthood, and emigrating to America. It was during these years that Jessing formed his ideological base, which was rooted in what became known as “Ultramontanism” – a strict devotion and attachment to the Pope and Holy See, in religious matters and increasingly in political and temporal matters. Now that we have traced Jessing’s personal movements through the years 1860-1867, it will be helpful to take a step back and paint a broader picture of these times during which he became one of the many European Catholics who were swept into the ultramontane movement. In investigating the ultramontane war with the modern world we will gain a better understanding of the cultural and ideological goods that Jessing took with him across the ocean in 1867 and how these goods were negotiated and reconciled in the New World.

53 Ibid., (letter 29).
The worldview of the ultramontanes – to which Jessing certainly subscribed – can be summarized in the program of a leading ultramontane in Germany, F.J. Buß, who in 1851 wrote this about the interaction of Church and State:


The Catholic emphasis on the primacy of natural and “vorstaatliche” laws began to clash with the emerging “omnipotent” European state in the second half of the nineteenth century – or perhaps vice versa, the emerging state began to clash with the Church. The state, especially in Germany, was increasingly involved in a nation-building project that was being dominated by forces opposed to Catholic influence in public life. As Helmut Walser Smith points out, the (approaching) Kulturkampf “was a strategy of nation-building, supported by the state and centered on an attempt to create a common high culture in which national values, largely synonymous with those of enlightened

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Protestantism, would be shared." And it was precisely the idea of the “omnipotent” state that Catholics in Germany were (eventually) fighting against. (When the state and Church worked hand in hand, there was little complaining about the state’s power.) Good examples of this are the remarks of the leader of the Catholic Center Party and main opponent of Bismarck, Ludwig Windthorst, during a speech in 1878:

Wir hören auf vielen Stellen die Lehren vom omnipotenten Staate: Der Staat soll alle Lebensverhältnisse der Menschen ordnen, außer ihm ist gar nichts...Wenn wir die Sozialdemokratie mit Erfolg bekämpfen wollen, dann müssen wir zunächst diese Lehre vom omnipotenten Staate aufgeben, dann müssen wir vor allen Dingen anerkennen, daß es Rechte, Institutionen gibt, welche eine andere Basis haben als die des Staates, wir müssen anerkennen, daß es Rechte gibt, die älter sind als der Staat, daß der Staat nicht der allein das Recht erzeugende ist, daß er vielmehr nur darum ist, um die gegebenen Rechte zu schützen, nicht aber um sie nach Willkür und nach Zweckmäßigkeitsgründen zu modelln.56

The transition facing the Church in the modern world was that it no longer had the backing of the state, a position it was still adjusting to since the French Revolution, despite intermittent realignments. Another considerable adjustment was that its message was now on the free market, so to speak, in competition with not only other

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denominations but increasingly other ideologies that were hostile to Catholicism and religion on the whole. No longer could it take for granted the certain allegiance of its flock. As one sociologist of religion points out, “[a]s a result, the religious tradition, which previously could be authoritatively imposed, now must be marketed. It must be ‘sold’ to a clientele that is no longer constrained to ‘buy’.”

The Church’s reaction to these realities of modernity was to fight fire with fire. Its ends remained the same, but its means became increasingly modern. Just as nations were modernizing through centralization and unification, and through the construction of national narratives and myths, the Catholic Church also realized the necessity of such measures if it was to maintain relevance. The “ultramontane Frömmigkeitsideal” that was propagated by the church after 1850, and that served to unify Catholic culture globally, relied on an increased centralization of the Church and the use of three primary weapons to fight this war of modernity: the Catholic press, mass club and political organization, and the dissemination of a popular religion through a culture of devotional worship.

These were the components of what came to be called Ultramontanism in the late nineteenth century.

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In an effort to win the hearts and minds of its followers, the press played a tremendous role in the strengthening of the Catholic consciousness, and mass club and political organization spurred the consolidation of political Catholic identity and influence. Also contributing to the centralization and consolidation of a Catholic identity was the promotion of popular religion, or a *Volksreligion*, that standardized prayer and devotional practices on a global scale. This revitalization of a devotional culture that took many cues from the Counter-Reformation period would “personalize religion and grip the popular imagination by restoring sentiment to the practice of Catholicism.”\(^{59}\) The result was a Catholic religious revival that lasted from 1850 through the Kulturkampf and beyond.

The promotion and inculcation of a popular religion by the Catholic Church seems to be the most striking symbol of its defiance against an accommodation with liberal modernity. Although it was not a new phenomenon but one that harked back to the baroque days of the counter-Reformation, its renaissance at this time hardly seems arbitrary.\(^{60}\) As one German historian points out, since the Catholic Church couldn’t find a political solution to its difficult situation in the 1860s, it went to the masses, in what was becoming a war of nationalism against Catholicism:

\[Es \text{ blieb nur ein ganz anderer Weg, wenn nicht den weltlichen Besitz, so doch den Unabhängigkeitanspruch des Heiligen Stuhles aufrechtzuerhalten, nämlich der}\]


\(^{60}\) For a discussion of Catholic revivalism in the Baroque period see Marc R. Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of Baroque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
Appell an die Völker, die Massen der kirchlich gesinnten Katholiken…Der kirchenfeindlicher Nationalismus, so einflußreich und werbekräftig er war, beherrschte nirgends das ganze Volk, sondern mehr oder weniger nur das höhere Bürgertum und die Bildungsschicht. Was das Oberhaupt der Kirche von den Katholiken erwarten mußte und auch erwarten durfte, war die kirchliche Bürgergesinnung, die von den Gegnern als etwas Verwerfliches, als unpatriotischer “Ultramontanismus” abgestempelt wurde. Um 1860 und noch lange darnach glaubte der Nationalismus allerdings an seinen Sieg und seine Alleinherrschaft. Aber die Kirche konnte und durfte ihm die Gesinnungen der katholischen Christen keinesfalls ausschließlich überlassen.61

The Catholic devotional culture, including numerous Marian devotions (e.g., the Immaculate Conception and the Sacred Heart of Mary), devotions to the Blessed Sacrament (e.g., the forty hours devotion and visits to the Blessed Sacrament), devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, devotions to saints and relics, and mass pilgrimages, was the surest and most visible way for Catholics to distinguish themselves from non-Catholics and draw clear lines of separation around themselves. Ann Taves, whose work has shown that these European Catholic trends were also occurring in the United States, points out how the promotion of a re-strengthened devotional culture by Pope Pius IX and the Church hierarchy accomplished numerous goals for the Church:

The devotional practices promoted during the mid-nineteenth century were thus promoted by the hierarchy to standardize practices within the church internationally; to relocate devotional practices in the parish church under the control of the priest; to distinguish Catholics from non-Catholics; and to rally the laity to the church and its hierarchy in the face of perceived dangers from without. In so doing, they directly and indirectly enhanced the hierarchy’s control over the laity, while fostering a distinctively Catholic identity with international as opposed to national or ethnic overtones.62

The renewed devotional culture went hand in hand with the Catholic religious revival that took place after 1850, and the ground in areas such as the Rhineland and Westphalia was very ripe for religious revival. Political circumstances had swung in the church’s direction, if not in the most desirable or lawful of ways. Election victories (for the Prussian legislature) by the democrats in many Catholic areas in January 1849 prompted uprisings that forced democratic leaders out of office, banned democratic clubs and newspapers, and revised the constitution in an anti-democratic fashion.63 The new Prussian constitution granted the Catholic Church many freedoms that had been denied it


during the *Vormärz*, the period between 1815 and 1848. This included the removal of state bureaucratic meddling in Church affairs (correspondence with Rome no longer had to be inspected by the authorities, for example), and the right of religious orders to settle freely in Prussian territory. In the always preeminent question of education, the church was now free to run Catholic schools, as the Catholic branch of the Prussian public school system was now largely administered and directed by officials and clerics of the Church. In short, the Catholic Church and Prussian state now cooperated to fight the common enemy of democratic radicals.

Along with the new freedoms and authority of the church, there was an anti-revolutionary fervor in the popular mood. The events of 1848-1849 were attributed to widespread irreligiosity, a point of view expressed frequently at the missions that were now taking place all over the Rhineland and Westphalia, indeed all over Europe. The missions were not only well attended, but due to their anti-democratic and counter-revolutionary message they were also often encouraged by the local authorities. In addition to the success of the (mostly Jesuit-run) missions, pilgrimages were also on the rise. Pilgrimages to the miraculous image of the Virgin in Kevelaer, for example, saw approximately 100,000 visitors in 1861, and at the beginning of the Kulturkampf in 1872, 400,000 pious had made the trek. Between the years 1816 and 1824, there were only 36,000 visitors to the shrine on average per year, reflecting the change in mood after 1850.

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64 According to Sperber, these were “systematically organized”, and during the course of twenty years every parish in the Rhenish and Westphalian dioceses had received at least one mission, and many had several. See page 57.
The state-approved Catholic revivals of the 1850s were the continuation and culmination of a process that over the next two decades saw the consolidation of a renewed and increasingly militant Catholic identity, an identity that Jessing at this time with little doubt felt to be his own. If the development of Ultramontanism can be categorized by phases, Eric Yonke’s breakdown of the movement into three periods does a good job of this: an initial growth phase lasting into the 1830s in small circles of pious, “Rome-oriented” individuals; a tumultuous middle period from the “Cologne incident” in 1837 through the 1848 revolution; and a “victorious period” from the 1850s to the First Vatican Council in 1870.65 The more liberal variety of Catholicism at the start of the nineteenth century that was influenced by Enlightenment ideals increasingly lost ground to Ultramontanism.66

In France, where Ultramontanism originated, “clergymen influenced by Jansenism or the Enlightenment had tried to dissociate the church from popular ‘superstition’” during the early part of the century, but the newer clergy, taken increasingly from the peasantry during and after the 1820s, contributed to the greater alignment with Rome – “out of sympathy with their [largely aristocratic] bishops, and after 1830 with the French government, they looked for inspiration ‘beyond the mountains’.”67 Ultramontanism had become the dominant flavor of Catholicism, and by

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66 For a detailed study of the rise and fall of German Enlightenment Catholicism, see Michael Printy, Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

67 McLeod, Religion, 48, 47.
the 1860s bishops were encouraging their clergy to “take an interest in pilgrimages and
the cult of saints, and a great many lives of saints were being published.”\textsuperscript{68} The
“devotional revolution” also took place in Ireland between 1850 and 1875 and was
largely orchestrated by the clergy as well.\textsuperscript{69}

In the provinces of the Rhineland and Westphalia it was not different, partly due
to the personality of Johannes von Geissel, who as Archbishop of Cologne and later
Cardinal, “launched a revolution in the German church that extended from the 1850s until
his death in the mid-1860s.”\textsuperscript{70} Jessing was very much a man of the times and the
movement in this sense. From what we can gather of his religiosity during this period, his
Catholicism, if a bit stoic and unemotional, was certainly infused with devotional
reverence. He sometimes made reference to pilgrimages, official and unofficial, which he
made during his time in Tyrol. He wrote of his visit to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin at
Absam, one of the most visited pilgrimage sites in Tyrol, his hike to the “Mariastein”
(Stone of Mary) in Woergl, his participation in the pilgrimage at Eben to commemorate
the feast of St. Notburga, and his frequent visits to the monastery at Georgenberg, of
which he wrote to his mother:

I went up to Georgenberg again during Lent. You cannot imagine how beautiful
and picturesque the country is. I would like to stay here forever – but I wrote all

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 48.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 50.

\textsuperscript{70} Yonke, “Cardinal Johannes von Geissel,” 13.
this to you last year. There I saw an abbot celebrate High Mass for the first time. He was vested like a bishop, but his crozier was of silver, not of gold, like that of a bishop. I was there also on the feast of the Seven Dolors in a large crowd of people. A picture of the church is enclosed in this letter.\textsuperscript{71}

Jessing was not only an active participant in pilgrimages but was also very interested in the details of the clergy’s rituals. He also firmly believed in the healing powers of such pilgrimages. After one of his more serious bouts with illness in 1862, he attributed his recovery not to medicines but rather to his mother’s pilgrimage to Telgte.\textsuperscript{72}

This victory of Ultramontanism, which culminated in the formation of the Catholic Center (Zentrum) political party in 1871, was also the result of the developments in the growing sphere of organized political Catholicism, which paralleled the changes occurring in the popular expression of religious sentiment. After 1850, many new Catholic groups were formed that were not yet of the political variety, the majority of which would be formed in the latter half of the 1860s.\textsuperscript{73} The new groups resembled the traditional Catholic brotherhoods, and many of them were Marian sodalities and congregations. In Jessing’s diocese of Münster, for example, ninety percent of the

\textsuperscript{71} Miller et al., \textit{Jessing}, 31-32.

\textsuperscript{72} He wrote to her, “I discontinued the medicine and promptly recovered. I am convinced that your pilgrimage to Teltge did me more good than all the medicine…I did not believe that I would ever see you again, but God and the Blessed Virgin came to my rescue.” Miller et al., \textit{Jessing}, 29. The Teltge pilgrimage, also known as the Osnabrück pilgrimage, went from Osnabrück to Teltge and was started in 1852. In 1856 it was led by a priest for the first time.

\textsuperscript{73} Sperber, \textit{Popular Catholicism}, 73.
diocese’s 490 sodalities had been founded after 1850, and of those formed before 1870, seventy-three percent had been formed in the two preceding decades.\textsuperscript{74} These sodalities, in which piety and moral behavior were strongly emphasized, and which reflected the mid-century growth of Marian devotion, were also social organizations organized around the clergy and the church. They sought to “do good service for religious and moral life, for the preservation of chastity and orderly family relations…”, and, as Sperber points out, were to play an important role in the origins of the Catholic Social movement around 1870.\textsuperscript{75} Other Catholic groups at this time included the \textit{Schützen} (which had been transformed from a sort of private club into a parish institution), Catholic miners’ associations (started in 1855), and the “journeymen’s” associations known as the \textit{Kolpingsvereine} (Kolping Clubs).

The \textit{Kolpingsvereine} are of particular interest here, because their story has many similarities to the story of Joseph Jessing. After returning from the Danish War Jessing “showed a lively interest” in the \textit{Kolpingsvereine}, as well as the \textit{Eintracht}, a Catholic club which he joined in 1864, and the \textit{Bonifatius-Verein}, which existed to support Catholics in Protestant northern Germany (and bore the name of the “Apostle of the Germans”, a symbol of the Catholic counter-narrative of national history).\textsuperscript{76} The \textit{Kolpingvereine} were the creation of one man, whose name they came to bear, Adolf Kolping. Kolping, like Jessing, was born to a poor family, became a priest, and after

\textsuperscript{74} This is according to the 1907 \textit{Schematism} of the Diocese of Münster. Sperber, \textit{Popular Catholicism}, 75.

\textsuperscript{75} From the letter of a parish priest, Pfarrer Dubelmann, in the town of Euskirchen. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76} Miller et al., \textit{Jessing}, 66.
witnessing the conditions of the working class, made it his life mission to minister to this class and train them, not only religiously, but also for careers as artisans. Like Jessing, who began his pastoral work in the poor mining region of Pomeroy, Ohio, and later ran a trade school as part of his larger educational institute, Kolping gave instruction to young artisans in reading, writing, arithmetic, bookkeeping, and other useful skills, preparing the journeymen for a future career as master craftsmen. Kolping, also like Jessing, also edited a popular magazine and spoke on social questions. At the time of his death, there were around 60,000 members of the *Kolpingsvereine* all over the German-speaking world. In short, Kolping was a model for Jessing. Jessing’s interest in Catholic solidarity and its perpetuation through “Vereine” was formed through these ultramontane developments in 1860s Germany and would be replicated by him during his later life in America, as we shall see.

Before turning to what for this study was the most significant means in the formation and solidification of ultramontane Catholic identity during this period, the press, I will briefly outline the common denominator in all of the developments of this time, the increasingly centralizing role of the Catholic Church and clergy, which all started in Rome. The developments of the two decades leading up the Kulturkampf cannot be understood without considering the decisive role of the Roman Curia and Pope Pius IX, who consolidated the church, galvanized the faithful, and led the war against liberal modernity. Faced with the dilemma of opening up and engaging in dialogue with


78 Ibid.
the Church’s competitors or fighting against liberal modernity, Pius IX ultimately chose the latter.

Although considered a modernizing and liberal Pope in his early years (1846 until the 1860s), Pius IX, or as he was popularly called in the Italian, “Pio Nono”, later changed course after frustration over the political conflicts with Italian liberal nationalists. In 1864 he issued the infamous Syllabus of Errors, which to this day remains one of his lasting legacies and one of the defining documents in the Catholic Church’s position of the time. In the Syllabus, eighty “enlightened” and “modern” suppositions were refuted as falsehoods. Amongst these condemned propositions were beliefs that “were not only generally held outside the Catholic Church but were also widely held within it, and the most controversial of these related to the concept of Toleration.”

The Syllabus condemned the propositions that: In the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship. (No. 77); that it is false that the civil liberty of every form of worship, and the full power, given to all, of overtly and publicly manifesting any opinions whatsoever and thoughts, conduce more easily to corrupt the morals and minds of the people, and to propagate the pest of indifferentism (No. 79).

But of all the condemned propositions, it was the last one (No. 80) that caused the greatest stir and seemed to sum


80 The Syllabus of Errors: http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9syl1.htm.
up all the rest: *The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.*

The Syllabus was received with shock in all of Europe, where Liberalism was becoming the dominant narrative of the day, and in America, it was taken as a condemnation of everything that was held most sacred. Those defining values of American society – freedom of religion and freedom of speech – seemed to be at odds with a Catholic Church that had seemingly not gotten over its loss of prestige and dominance. Despite attempts by various clergy to interpret the Syllabus to shocked Catholics all over the world and thereby mollify its effect, the damage had been done.

Although the irreconcilability of Catholicism with democratic pluralism was not an official position of the Church, as the Roman Curia had (and has) traditionally claimed indifference to forms of government, a close association was implied, and was now plain to see in the Syllabus. Pluralism and democracy was the program of the 1848 radicals, against whom both the church and the Prussian government had been fighting. The vigilance against the radicals was still very present during the 1860s, especially in Catholic parts of Germany, and political elections were still ideological wars between Catholics and liberals. After a string of liberal (Progressive Party) electoral victories in the early 1860s in the Rhineland and the areas surrounding Jessing’s hometown Münster,

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81 Ibid.

82 Many of the condemnations in the Syllabus were taken from earlier documents drawn up in reference to the church-state conflicts occurring in Italy in this period, and the apparent misunderstandings concerning its dissemination, as well as the shock it caused distressed Pius IX, who nevertheless retracted none of it. For a detailed explanation surrounding the context and circumstances of The Syllabus of Errors, see Hales, *Pio Nono*, 255-273.
the Catholic reaction was one of fear, as pluralism and democracy were associated with all sorts of moral and societal ills. The Sonntagsblatt für katholische Christen, Münster’s largest Catholic newspaper, which the 24-year old Jessing would have likely read, described the situation after the elections of 1861, when the victories of the Progressives had confirmed the Catholics’ worst fears:

*It is unfortunately true that ... at the elections many Catholics, as a consequence of their religious indifference, have left the field free for Jews and Freemasons. ... If the program of that [Progressive] party is ever carried out; if the king by grace of God becomes an official of the people, and the sovereign citizen can appeal to the will of the people against this unloved official; if the school is separated from the church and turned into a state institution in which Christians, Jews, and sectarians are taught and religious education excluded ... if all Christian institutions are robbed of their Christian character and a Jew can be judge and schoolteacher as easily as a Christian, finally, if in foreign policy the right of nations ceases, the ten commandments are no longer applied but are replaced by self-interest—then we will be on the edge of that abyss against which the watchman on the Throne of Peter has warned us time and again. Is it of no importance which conceptions dominate in the law books, Christian or anti-Christian? Of no importance if usury laws exist or not? Of no importance if commerce and the artisanate are protected in this time ... of the greatest crisis they have ever experienced? . . . Usurers, certain forms of state loans, distortion of marriage, “liberation” of the artisanate and commerce—all this, little by little, exploits the nation, ruins it morally and physically, and prepares the most dreadful catastrophe resulting from the impoverishment of the masses. This may be called freedom, but it is anti-Christian. There is the feeling in the air not of 1848 but rather of 1793.*
People take into consideration that . . . the end of Austria and the Papal State is decided . . .

Austria shall fall, the Pope shall fall.83

As Sperber points out, it is difficult to know how widespread these attitudes were, and if they were shared by the subordinate clergy and the Catholic lower classes. “The politically active minority of the Catholic population was probably acquainted with them, since the denunciation of liberals as atheists, Freemasons, and subversives was a common theme of Catholic election rallies and the clerical press.”84 It is also hard to say with certainty that Jessing would’ve agreed with such an outlook at the time, since he seems to have avoided overt political opinions. He did make very similar denunciations against liberalism, secularism, and the “godless schools” in his newspaper more than a decade later, but in his attempt to reconcile this critique with the foundational principles of his new homeland he stopped short of critiquing democracy.

The response of the Catholic population in this region was twofold. One was a retreat from politics into the organizational world of the church, resulting in many Pius Associations, who during the 1860s were busy with raising money for the Pope or distributing petitions defending the temporal power of the papacy, as we have seen in

83 Sonntagsblatt für katholische Christen 20 (1861):657-61. The Bishop of Paderborn expressed the same sentiments in a pastoral letter of 1865, which spoke of a universal battle between the forces of revolution and those of order: And the secret and open leaders or followers of the worldwide subversive party think only of how they may destroy all authority in the state or church and get rid of the entire Christian order and society. They wish to dethrone all the legitimate princes, so that they themselves may sit on their thrones; they wish to dispose of all existing authority, so they may take its place. All existing divine and human laws shall be trampled, so that they may dictate their own wretched truth to the world as a legal norm. Cited in Sperber, Popular Catholicism, 151-152.

84 Ibid.
Jessing’s case. The retreat from the public realm was also evident in efforts made to found a private, Catholic university in Germany on the Belgian model, a vision that Jessing would also pursue later in America. The second response was the attempt to transform political Catholicism along more modern lines that took the changing social and economic conditions into account – because “the old battle cry, ‘religion is in danger,’” had lost its appeal. This was also a lesson Jessing would put into action in his newspaper, albeit without abandoning this battle cry. In the United States religion and liberalism coexisted, whereas in Germany it was an either-or scenario.

The violent attacks on liberalism and other perceived threats to religion made by Catholic clerics, politicians, and journalists in the Kulturkampf era – including Jessing in America – must be understood in the context of the twenty-five-year-long history of tension and hostility between clerical and liberal-democratic elements which had been the dominant factor of political life in the Catholic areas of Prussia’s western provinces. As has already been indicated, the Rhineland and Westphalia region in which Jessing grew up was a hotbed of Catholic anti-liberal (and anti-Prussian) sentiment and rhetoric. This is evident in the increasing politicization of Catholic clubs and journalists. For example, in September, 1868, the first meeting of the newly formed “Zentralkommittees der Katholischen Vereine Deutschlands” took place in Münster. The “Association of German Catholics”, formed in 1872 and commonly known from the location of its

85 Ibid., 153.
86 Ibid.
87 Christoph Weber, “Eine Starke, enggeschlossene Phalanx”: Der politische Katholizismus und die erste deutsche Reichstagswahl 1871 (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 1992), 14.
headquarters as the “Mainz Association”, probably had the largest membership of any political organization in Germany up to that time, ninety percent of which was accounted for by these two western provinces of Prussia.\textsuperscript{88} The goal of the almost 60,000 member strong association was of “defending the freedom and rights of the Catholic Church and bringing Christian principles to bear on all aspects of public life.”\textsuperscript{89} And as Sperber points out, the significance of the journalistic arena was closely intertwined with Catholic “Vereinsleben”:

*No Mainz Association meeting was complete without an exhortation to read Catholic journals and avoid the ‘wicked’ liberal press. ... One clerical speaker proclaimed at a Mainz Association meeting that ‘he who lets a godless newspaper into his house on a daily or weekly basis lets the devil in just as often.’ The constant reiterations were not without effect: clerical newspapers flourished, and the Kölnische Zeitung, against which the clergy and politically active laity had been inveighing for decades, appears to have lost circulation.*\textsuperscript{90}

The Mainz Association spurred the formation of many other Catholic political clubs, forming a network of political Catholicism that survived and even grew in size during the 1870s, while the Mainz Association itself suffered state suppression and eventually was forced by the Prussian Supreme Court to shut down in 1876. It also

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\textsuperscript{88} Sperber, *Popular Catholicism*, 211-212.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 211.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 221.
contributed to the perpetuation of a local Catholic press. Along with the large Catholic dailies in the region – the Kölnische Volkszeitung, the Essener Volkszeitung, the Westfälische Merkur in Münster or the Echo der Gegenwart in Aachen – there now were a large number of small-town and rural Catholic weeklies.\(^{91}\) We know very little about Jessing’s reading habits during this period, but we do know that in addition to his study of shorthand and Latin he also studied history and practiced his writing. A dozen written exercises of his from 1862 remain, some of which are based on Cantu’s Weltgeschichte, other are exercises in description, and some about manners and customs in Tyrol. Not surprisingly, he read the Pope’s allocution and wrote home asking for a copy of the Bishop’s Lenten Pastoral. Perhaps most interestingly, among his books a copy of St. Alphonsus’ Homo Apostolicus was found, which, written in 1759, was sort of a manual for pastoral theology, i.e. a job manual for priests basically.\(^{92}\) This is yet another indication that Jessing was considering and even preparing for a future in the priesthood.

The conflict between Catholicism and liberalism in the period leading up to the Kulturkampf quickly brought about polarization and conflicted loyalties within the Catholic milieu itself. Some liberal-minded Catholic newspaper editors tried to resist taking sides in the battle between Ultramontanism and liberalism. Josef Bachem, editor of the Kölnische Volkszeitung, was perhaps the most well-known, and serves as a good example of the difficulties liberal bourgeois Catholics faced in reconciling their religious and class identities. This problem was particularly pronounced for Catholic newspaper

\(^{91}\) Ibid., 214.

\(^{92}\) Miller et al., Jessing, 35-36.
editors because of their public presence and influence. Bachem, whose newspaper was independent, ran into problems with both his advertisers, liberal Catholics whose contributions largely financed the paper, and Church officials, who increasingly tried to steer and control the Catholic press through various attempts at forming watchdog committees. At the 1865 Trier Katholikentag, a proposal to form a “Zentralbüro” was made, whose members would be appointed by the bishop and which would determine which newspapers “should be recognized and promoted as mouthpieces of the Catholic press.”93 The newspapers would have to pledge “to remain conscientiously loyal to the program of the Catholic press.”94

The formation of such committees in Bavaria prompted a frustrated response from Bachem:

_Also das ist klar: Es sollen nur Schonfärberei-Institute errichtet werden, nach der Art derer, wie sie in den Residenzen bestanden und von deren Mittheilungen das Publicum stets das Gegentheil glaubte. Welches Glück, daß ich nicht nach Innsbruck gegangen bin, wo man die Redakteure und Zeitungsverleger principiell von den Berathungen über die Presse ausgeschlossen hat! Also Zeitungen schreiben sollen die Geistlichen allein ... Da hört sich aber doch alles_ 

93...“als Sprechorgane der katholischen Presse anerkannt und gefördert werden sollen”. Thomas Mergel, _Zwischen Klasse und Konfession. Katholisches Bürgertum im Rheinland 1794-1914_ (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 200. Much of this paragraph relies on Mergel’s information, and citations are noted in the text.

94...“dem Programm der katholischen Presse gewissenhaft treu zu bleiben”. Ibid.
Bachem’s Catholicism did not prohibit him from believing in democratic pluralism and the “bürgerliche values like hard work, honor, and love of truth.” (206) Amidst pressures from the ultramontane positions, Bachem temporarily changed course and replaced his liberal Catholic editors with a priest, Majunke, who followed the ultramontane line. Within a year, however, Bachem became frustrated with the young cleric and fired him, because he ignored all instruction in his reporting and put “geistliches Selbstverständnis” and “ewige Wahrheiten” above accurate reporting. (ibid.)

During this ideological war it became increasingly difficult to walk the tight rope between the two sides that were hardening their stances, as “the liberal discourse of opinion shaping conflicted with the interest of bringing ‘church truths’ onto the market unabbreviated.” (195) Bachem, again, exemplifies the struggles liberal Catholics of the bourgeois class faced in maintaining their identity during this time of ultramontanization. As the title of Mergel’s study on this particular group accurately explains, they were torn zwischen Klasse und Konfession. As he explains in the case of Bachem, the middle ground had no [foreseeable] future at that time.

Aus Bachems Gestus der Mitte wurde eine Attitüde der Unentschiedenheit, die sich nicht eingestand, daß diese Mitte, die bürgerlich-liberale Absage an jede Radikalität, im ultramontanen Katholizismus keine Zukunft haben werde. Von der

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95 Ibid., 202.
Hoffnung, mittels der Presse den Katholizismus einigen zu können, verblieb lediglich der schmale Grat, in der zerrissenen »katholischen Partei« einen Minimalkonsens bieten zu können: Aus dem Zentralorgan wurde ein Kompromißorgan, das sich deutlichen Standpunkten durch Abstinenz entzog und deshalb politisch einflußlos blieb.  

The survival of the Kölnische Volkszeitung, however, was ensured by the start of the Kulturkampf. Bachem’s paper was forced into the “Catholic camp”, although it exhibited a somewhat moderate tone in comparison to more conservative papers, such as Germania in Berlin or the Deutsche Reichszeitung in Bonn. (207)

The culmination of the ultramontane victory, which more than any other event or proclamation divided Catholics amongst themselves and Catholicism from non-Catholics, was the Pope’s declaration of papal infallibility at the First Vatican council in July 1870.  

96 It was seen by German and European liberals as the final provocation by Rome. For national liberals in the new German empire that was forged the following year, papal infallibility seemed to require the allegiance of German Catholics not to the new Kaiser but to the Pope. At this time of heightened German national unity and pride, and in this age where faith in science and progress grew ever stronger, it was seen as a challenge to the sovereignty of the new Empire and reinforced Protestant and national liberal stereotypes of Catholics as backwards and as enemies of progress. The age old German confessional war now reached a watershed, as the new Prusso-German Empire, having

96 Ibid., 207.

97 This occurred just one day before France’s declaration of war on Prussia.
defeated its greatest external enemies, France and the Catholic Habsburg Empire, began
its Kulturkampf to subjugate its greatest internal enemy, the Roman Catholic Church.

The infallibility doctrine was a disappointment for liberals, because it, along with
the other pronouncements of the First Vatican Council, reaffirmed the position of the
Church as expressed in the Syllabus of Errors: the Council did not, as they had hoped,
show any willingness of the Church to compromise. The hope of the national liberals was
for the splitting of the Roman Church into national churches⁹⁸, as this would reduce the
power of the Church and allow the liberal nation-building project to proceed as they
dreamed it. The Church, however, was digging in its heels,

[dn]enn das katholische Kirchentum mußte sich keineswegs den Entwicklungen des
modernen Zeitgeistes anpassen, es löste sich wegen seines – in den 1850er und
1860er Jahren noch weiter radikalierten – Widerspruchs gegen den liberalen
Fortschritt keineswegs auf, worauf doch so viele Liberale im Vorfeld und während
des Vatikanischen Konzils wieder einmal gehofft hatten. Tatsächlich konsolidierte
es sich, wie schon gesagt, in neuartiger, ’ultramontaner’ und papalistischer
Ausrichtung. Es bezeugt seinen Rückhalt in den katholischen Massen ausgerechnet
in jenen Aspekten katholischer Frömmigkeit, welche den Liberalen wie allen
aufgeklärten Köpfen moralisch, besonders auch nach den Begriffen der
bürgerlichen Arbeitsethik, am verächtlichsten erscheinen mußten: in Prozessionen

⁹⁸ “Ein Zweifel an der Zertrümmerung der katholischen Kirche in einen Haufen von Nationalkirchen galt
damals als Anmaßung”, Bruno Bauer, Zur Orientierung über die Bismarck'sche Ära, Chemnitz, 1880 (new
religiös begründete Gegensätze und nationalreligiöse Ideen in der Geschichte des deutschen Nationalismus
(Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald Verlag, 1992), 197.
The declaration of infallibility of course also disappointed liberal German Catholics. As indicated earlier, the “Enlightenment Catholicism” of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, favored by liberal Catholics, had been losing ground to a more ultramontane Catholicism around mid-century, and now the conflict seemed to reach its apex. During the early 1870s, the beginning of the Kulturkampf, a splinter was driven into the German Catholic population, which was now forced to choose its loyalties. According to one German historian, the main proponents of an enlightened German Catholicism, the liberal Catholic Bürgertum, split up into three groups: those who took sides with the national-liberal Kulturkämpfer, those who outwardly went along with the Church but were at times critical, and those who through participation in the Catholic Zentrum party tried to defend the rights of the Church. But on the whole, many German Catholics rallied to the Church’s defense and participated in the continuing and strengthened Catholic revival, which relied upon the press to spread its ideas, as well as those symbols of Catholic Volksreligion that also grounded Catholics in their very distinct identity. Although Jessing aspired toward membership in the Bürgertum – eagerly having pursued a professional career, obsessively studied, and even having rubbed elbows with semi-high society men in Tyrol and Munich through his somewhat prolific rise in the Gabelsberger community – his religiosity never seems to have faced

99 Altgeld, Katholizismus, 197-198.

100 Heinen, “Umstrittene Moderne,” 152.
the crises of the Bürgertum. It could be called soldierly and devotional, or in short, ultramontane.

The significance of the mass-circulation press during the culture wars of the late nineteenth century has been well established.\(^1\) The role of the weekly journal in the construction of national myth and identity, essential to the nation-building project of Bismarck’s new Germany, has also been explored in recent scholarship.\(^2\) Just as liberal and anti-clerical identity construction was strongly aided by certain negative depictions of Catholics, Catholic identity construction and its counter narrative also relied heavily on the vilification of the enemies of the Catholic Church and way of life. And, again, if Catholic ends were anti-modern, their means were not. The pope himself realized the value of the press as early as 1853 in an address to French bishops:

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\begin{quote}
Along with Us, you detest the great number of pestilential books, pamphlets, magazines, and posters which the virulent enemy of God and man incessantly spews forth to corrupt morals, attack the foundations of faith, and weaken the most sacred dogmas of our religion. Therefore, never cease to lead the flock entrusted to your care away from these poison pastures. Never cease to instruct, defend, and
\end{quote}
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\(^{101}\) See, for example, Clark and Kaiser, *Culture Wars*, 23-24, or Borutta, *Antikatholizismus*.

confirm them against the deluge of so many errors; use salutary and opportune admonitions and publications to do this.\textsuperscript{103}

Jessing would soon make it his life work to follow these instructions. The spirit of ultramontane Catholic revivalism and activism had clearly resonated in him in the 1860s. The combination of his piety, discipline, militarism, along with his general entrepreneurial nature made him a good candidate for the Church’s mission work. Even when he was serving the Prussian King his thoughts were on serving the Catholic population that needed help. Again returning to the article he wrote in 1865 about his observations during the Danish War, we see Jessing’s participation in the democratization and modernization of the Church through his activism.

\textit{Wäre es nun nicht möglich zu machen dass einzelne Gemeinden, Dekanate oder auch noch größere Bezirke, die am geistlichen Brod Überfluss haben, sich dahin einigten für eine bestimmte Missionsgemeinde ihre unter den Protestanten lebenden Glaubensgenossen durch eine bestimmte Reihe von Jahren einen Betrag zu sammeln und mit diesem und mit Gebet dieser einen Gemeinde zu Hilfe zu kommen? Wenn jeder auch nur einige Kreuzer gibt so machen solche kleinen Gaben von vielen doch schon etwas Erträgliches. Möge dieser Vorschlag Beachtung finden.}\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Inter Multiplices}, Encyclical of Pope Pius IX, March 21, 1853.

\textsuperscript{104} “Die Römische Frage,” September 25, 1864. Letter 586.
Taking the developments and rhetoric of the 1850s and 1860s into consideration – the centralization of the Catholic Church and its use of modern weapons to defend its role and the role of religion in public life – it is no coincidence that Joseph Jessing started his newspaper, originally called Ohio, in the month of May, 1873. It is in this month that the Kulturkampf reached, if not its pinnacle then certainly its crescendo. The infamous Maigesetze, or “May Laws”, were passed and were amongst the most damaging of the numerous Kulturkampf legislation which began in 1871 and which took away the rights of the Catholic Church in Prussia and Germany. The first of the May Laws revised Articles 15 and 18 of the constitution that since 1850 had granted to the churches the right to manage their own affairs independently. \(^{105}\) The Prussian state now had the responsibility for the training and appointment of Catholic clergy, and henceforth all aspiring clergymen were required to attend German universities and to pass state examinations in German philosophy, history, and literature as prerequisites to their appointments to parishes as priests. By April, 1875, the height of the Kulturkampf, the new German Empire had fined or arrested 241 priests, 136 newspaper and journal editors, and 210 other Catholics; in addition, 20 newspaper operations were confiscated, 74 houses searched, 103 individuals expelled or incarcerated, and 55 public meetings closed down. \(^{106}\) Over 900 parishes were without priests. Of the 12 Prussian dioceses, 5 were without bishops due to judicial removal, and 4 others were vacant where the bishops had

\(^{105}\) Gross, *War on Catholicism*, 256.

died and not been replaced. A year later, across Prussia 1,400 parishes, a third of those that existed did not have incumbent priests.

All too well aware of the persecution of the Catholic Church in Germany (and other parts of Europe), Joseph Jessing decided to fight back in this culture war, now trading in his soldier’s uniform for a printing press. In the very first edition of his Ohio, of May 2, 1873, he realized that the prelude of the culture war was coming to an end and that the real battle was just beginning. The warrior priest from Münster welcomes the fight and, always optimistic, already predicts Bismarck’s defeat. The first entry of his news from abroad section ("Wochenschau – Ausland") reads:

In Deutschland wird das Vorspiel der ausbrechenden Religionsverfolgung bald ausgespielt haben, und dann muß der Spektakel losgehen. Das Herrenhaus in Berlin hat jetzt auch die religionsfeindlichen Gesetze angenommen und wenn dieselben mal in Kraft treten, muß sich ein Feuer entzünden, das Bismarck wohl schwerlich wird löschen können. Er führte einen glücklichen Krieg gegen den Herrscher Frankreichs, aber den Krieg gegen den Herrscher der Welt, gegen Gott und Seine Kirche zu führen und dabei zu siegen, dazu ist selbst der im gewaltigen neuen deutschen Reiche allmächtige Bismark zu schwach. Dieses so viel versprechende Neudeutschland bietet überhaupt jetzt einen traurigen Anblick. Die riesige Armee raubt dem Lande die besten Kräfte, die Steuern sind trotz der


französischen Milliarden drückend, die Pressefreiheit und Versammlungsfreiheit ist fast verschwunden, und zu all’ diesem Uebel will man auch noch die Gewissen bedrücken und eine Staatsreligion einrichten. Tausenden von ‚Unterthanen’ verlassen daher die alte Heimath, um über das Meer zu gehen und hier in Amerika das zu finden, was Fürst Bismark ihnen in Deutschland nicht gönnt: Religiöse, politische und sociale Freiheit.

Jessing would continue to keep a close eye on events in Germany throughout the Kulturkampf and beyond. The Weltanschauung he inherited and adopted during the two decades preceding the Kulturkampf, along with his continued participation in the ideological wars of Germany, would play a defining role in his mission in the United States. The freedom-loving and democratic language used towards the end of this passage represented a large part of Jessing’s migration myth – the escape from a dominant and oppressive national identity narrative and the freedom to be who they (German Catholics) were. This being, however, would change and would have to partly be constructed in the new environment. The democratic language is also at odds, as we shall see, with some of Jessing’s other ideas about community construction and national identity narratives. The tension between Jessing’s Catholic and ultramontane mission in the United States and the liberal and democratic American culture is one of the main issues here and prods us to keep the question in view of how did Catholicism respond to modernity?

According to the historian Buchheim, the mobilization of the laity of the Church, brought about by the loss of the Papal States and the subsequent movement of popular Catholicism, amounted in essence to a democratization of the Catholic Church.
Therefore, he claims, “‘Ultramontanismus’ war als solcher schon nichts anderes als eine Form der christlichen Demokratie.” 109 The ultimate test of this theory – the reconciliation of Catholicism and Democracy – would be played out in the new world, in the United States, where no less an observer than de Tocqueville declared the two completely compatible. In chapters three and four we shall look at this question in the framework of the activities of Jessing, a European ultramontane in the United States. During the 1860s, he was torn between pursuing a professional life, represented by service to the state, and the pursuit of a religious life serving God, the Catholic people, and the Holy See. In the new world, where German nationalism would play a bigger role in his life, he would be torn between the ideals of his new homeland, his religion, and his ethnicity. But before encountering these tensions during their crescendo during the emerging American nation-building project of the 1880s and 1890s, Jessing first takes his mission to the German diaspora living in America.

109 Buchheim, Ultramontanismus, 517.
“Viele Feinde, viele Ehre”

“Der rechte Zweck ist die Erhaltung und Ausbreitung der katholischen Kirche in diesem Lande zunächst unter den Deutschen, dann auch unter allen anderen Nationen.”
Joseph Jessing

“Die Yankees zu bekehren ist sehr schwer...”

Chapter 2

A Different Kind of Deutschtum:
German Unity and Division in the New World


111 From a reader’s letter to the Ohio Waisenfreund, “Brief über die deutsche Frage”, Ohio Waisenfreund, March 5, 1890. The entire sentence reads: “Die Yankees zu bekehren ist sehr schwer; am sichersten geschieht für deren Bekehrung etwas durch das Beispiel eines christlichen Familienlebens, wie es in deutschen Familien Gebrauch ist, und durch Gebet.” The best way to convert the Yankees is “by good example, such as is customary in German households,” according to the letter writer. In the letter, the reader supports the view that German Catholics need to pass their language on to their children so that they can defend themselves against German Protestants. This is typical of the German Catholic view, including that of Jessing, which implies that the non-German world is for the most part inaccessible and all interaction takes place amidst other Germans.
Als alle alten Völker im Laufe der Zeiten allmählig ihrer Nationalität
verloren hatten, und im römischen Volke aufgegangen waren,
sang der lateinische Dichter Rutilius:

Formasti patriam diversia gentibus unam
Urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat!

Zu Deutsch: “Du hast für die verschiedenen Völker ein einziges Vaterland
gebildet; zu einer Stadt hast du gemacht, was vorher der Erdkreis gewesen.”

While reading this passage, taken from an article written by Jessing during his
seminary days in the July 14, 1870 issue of Der Wahrheitsfreund (The Friend of Truth),
one might assume that Jessing, who had been living in the United States for around three
years now, was speaking of his new heterogeneous and pluralistic country of residence in
the manner in which it is, and was, often described. This would be a mistake, however.
Jessing continues:

112 Jessing wrote articles for Der Wahrheitsfreund, the oldest German Catholic newspaper in the United
States, first published in 1837, and at this point still one of the leading, during his seminary days, often
under the pseudonym “Tiro”, as in this case. The choice of pseudonym is fitting, as Tiro is believed to have
invented a form of Latin shorthand, and Jessing still held hopes of spreading the Gabelsberger shorthand he
had spent numerous years perfecting and promoting in Germany. He later taught every pupil in his school
the art of Gabelsberger.
Was Rutilius in Bezug auf das römische Reich gesagt hat, das können wir mit mehr Recht von der katholischen Kirche sagen. Der Katholik, auch wenn seine leibliche Heimath in weiter Ferne liegt, wenn er die trauten Berge und Wälder, die seinen Geburtsort umsäumen, nicht mehr sieht, wenn anders redende Menschen an ihm vorüber ziehen, hat dennoch sein wahres Vaterland nicht verlassen; denn überall findet er die katholische Kirche, überall findet er das wieder, was die tiefsten Gefühle seines jugendlichen Herzens erregte; dieselbe eine, heilige, römisch-katholische Lehre, dasselbe Opfer, dieselben Sakramente. Die Heimath des Katholiken ist überall, wo eine katholische Kirche sich findet.

In this description we find a telling picture of Jessing’s conception of diaspora life in the new world and indeed of his new homeland on the whole. In Jessing’s strong associations of the Church with “home” (Heimath) and the “true fatherland” we can point to a couple of motivations he may have had in his role as a missionary priest serving the German Catholic diaspora. One is the very practical one of comforting the German Catholic immigrant and aiding his transition into a new country by insisting that a good part of the life and identity he or she had at home will find continuity here in the new world. Another intention seems to be that of emotionally connecting the immigrant to the Church, to keep the flock near the shepherd. Interestingly, this is done through language that is usually reserved for the description of nations.

In light of the centralizing ultramontane culture of the Church that Jessing and other conservative Germans brought with them to the United States, its presentation as a
global, unified, and uniform “Vaterland” is significant because it belies the dominance of
the nation-based paradigm that seemed to define the age. The loss of the Church’s
temporal power created a longing amongst Catholics to find compensation through the
conjurings up of images and notions of a spiritual homeland. Perhaps most significantly
for our purposes, Jessing’s representation of this spiritual “Vaterland” is interesting
because it so starkly speaks to the homelessness, or “uprootedness”, of Catholic
immigrants. German Catholic immigrants, with their outsider status in both the German
and American context, must have felt particularly nation-less.

But what such a representation also meant was the setting up of a clash between
religion and nation, or religious and national identities, and inevitably a somewhat
problematic hierarchy of identities. “What Rutilius said about the Roman Empire, we can
say with more justification about the Roman Catholic Church”. The message is that
identities linked to nations are inferior and secondary to their identity linked to the
Church. Jessing often endorsed a Catholic view that chided the evils of nationalism. He
often reprinted articles from Catholic journals in Germany, such as the famous
Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland, which considered
nationalism “die große Ketzerie des 19. Jahrhunderts.”

In an article titled “Vaterlandsliebe” from 1886, Jessing gladly accepts a critique
made by Bismarck about German Catholic priests. He claimed that German priests, in
contrast to their Spanish, French, Italian, and Irish counterparts, were priests first and

113 “Katholisch und der Nationalismus” (“aus den Historisch-politischen Blättern”), Ohio Waisenfreund,
September 23, 1891.
Germans second, that their “Nationalgefühl” was weak. Jessing takes this critique as a compliment, because he believes the sort of “Nationalgefühl” that one encounters in his day is a sort of bogus and second-rate comfort. Bashing nationalism in this manner, implying it is for modern people who lack intelligence, Jessing is aligning himself with a Catholic tradition that includes Joseph Görres, whom he mentions, and who was the founder of the *Historisch-politische Blätter*.

_Daher haben schon vor dreißig Jahren große Denker und Asceten, wie Balmes, Faber, Görres und Andere behauptet, daß für die gedankenlose Menge der modernen Welt, ein engherziges Nationalgefühl ein viel annehmbareres und anziehenderes Ding sei, als die weite und umfassende Theorie des Katholicismus._

Sounding like what one might describe today as a multiculturalist or globalist – or a liberal Catholic – Jessing describes this “comprehensive theory of the Catholic Church” thus: “…daß die ganze Menschheit eine einzige große Familie [ist].” As we shall see, Jessing’s approach to interaction with this great big family was in reality a bit more stand-offish.

114 Bismarck’s words were: “Die spanischen, französischen, italienischen, irlandischen Priester sind Spanier, Franzosen, Italiener, Irländer in erster Linie, in zweiter Linie Priester; der deutsche Priester macht der Religiösität seines Standes alle Ehre, aber sein Nationalgefühl ist schwach, er ist in erster Linie Priester und in zweiter Linie Deutscher.” “Vaterlandsliebe,” _Ohio Waisenfreund_, May 19, 1886.

115 “Vaterlandsliebe,” _Ohio Waisenfreund_, May 19, 1886.

116 Ibid.
For Jessing, the chiding of nationalism depended on whose nationalism was up for discussion. If it was Bismarck’s nationalism, or the American nationalism that had little patience with foreign elements, he was very condemning. In the article cited above from the *Historisch-politische Blätter*, the hostility towards nationalism was also implicitly directed against American nationalism. The rest of the article attacks the “panamerikanischen Bestrebungen” of the Americanists, just as Jessing and most German Catholics would do. Again and again during the Americanism controversy Jessing insisted that German Catholics aimed to retain their German culture and language not out of nationalist motives but rather religious ones, but there is reason to question the accuracy of that claim. Jessing’s relationship towards German nationalism changed considerably after arriving in the new world.

Slightly altering Lord Acton’s maxim, *diaspora life* became “the nursery of nationality” for Jessing. As we shall see in the following chapter, when German Catholics become the targets of a forced Americanization campaign, Jessing’s rhetoric often gave credence to the Catholic maxim (and admonition) that “blood is thicker than (baptismal) water”. And when it came to the “German question”, German nationalism under Catholic auspices was an entirely different matter for Jessing than Protestant or secular nationalism. In Catholic Germanism Jessing saw a potential return to the golden age of German unity in politics and religion, as we shall see in the counter-narrative that Jessing perpetuates. But before we deal with Jessing’s encounter with Americanization and the Americanism controversy of the 1880s and 1890s, and his perpetuation of a German and Catholic counter-narrative in those contexts, I’d like to return to Jessing’s early years in
America, during which he was on a mission to unify German-Americans, for which a German counter-narrative was necessary.

Uniting them was no easy task, as German-Americans carried into the new world their old world animosities and divisions. The religious and political groups that composed the German-American population – which can broadly be divided into three larger groups, the Catholics, the Protestants, and the Free-thinkers – generally defined themselves in a negative relation to each other, and it is this point that ultimately explains the pliable and shifting positions of Jessing and other German Catholics in regard to the reconciliation of their religious and national identities. German nationalism was the trademark of the liberal German Free-thinkers, and therefore something with which German Catholics did not want to be labeled. But when their Deutschtum came under attack, they often used language indistinguishable from the liberals and therefore appeared just as nationalistic. The “identity constellation” that Jessing officially promoted was the one that gave “Catholic” precedence over both “American” and “German” in the multi-layered identity of German-American Catholicism. But again, this cannot be taken at face value. Jessing begins his newspaper project with strong appeals to German nationalism and would continue to see in his Germanism a counterweight to the Anglo-American narrative of national identity.

The coupling of religion and nationalism was certainly not a rare phenomenon in the nineteenth century. As discussed in chapter four, this was (and is) a major component of American nationalism. And as we shall see in this chapter, for Jessing and many other German Catholics, religion and nationalism – under the guise of cultural maintenance –
often went hand in hand. This can be seen in Jessing’s partaking in that German Catholic and Romantic myth that the golden age was to be found in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, when all Germans were united under Catholic rule.

Some scholars have claimed that, despite ultramontanization, European Catholics simultaneously underwent the process of nationalization that defined the era. Clark claims that ultramontanization did not “displace the nation as an object of increasing emotional attachment in the minds of many European Catholics,” and that “Europe remained, despite the homogenizing efforts of the ultramontanes, a continent of national ‘Catholicisms’, and the great struggles of the culture wars were fought within the framework of the nation-states and their distinct political cultures.”

In her article, “Nationalisierung trotz Ultramontanisierung oder: ‘Alles für Deutschland, Deutschland aber für Christus’,” Babara Stambolis argues that the nationalization of German Catholics started in the early nineteenth century and only ended with the defeat of Nazi Germany. In other words, German Catholics, for all their supposed rejection of nationalism, were no exception to the “nationalization of the masses” that occurred in the nineteenth century.

Although Jessing’s official mission in the United States was to spread Catholicism, his unspoken and parallel mission, fueled by a Germanism that seemed inseparable from his religion, was in many ways the creation of a new Germany. By recreating the cultural and religious conflicts of Germany, perhaps he felt he could sway

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117 Clark, “New Catholicism,” 35.

German-Americans Catholics to react as German Catholics had done back home, with renewed religious feeling, devotion, and loyalty. By bringing the culture war to America, he sought to create soldiers, like himself. And by exposing the “truth” of German religious history (Luther’s heresy as the source of German division) through the construction and perpetuation of a German historical counter-narrative, he seemed to think he could undo the Protestant Reformation and bring German believers back into the unity of the Catholic Church. Before exploring the content of the counter-narrative in more detail, I’d first like to illustrate Jessing’s attempts to unify German-Americans through the launching of his newspaper, which happened shortly after his ordination to the Catholic priesthood.

It didn’t take long for Jessing to achieve his goal of becoming a priest in the United States. After teaching in a school in Hamilton, Ohio for one year he studied at Mount Saint Mary Seminary in Cincinnati from 1868-1870, and it was during this time that he returned to what seemed to be his greatest passion – writing – in order to carry out what he felt his calling to be, to educate and defend the Church from its enemies. It was also during this time that Jessing seems to have developed his fiery style of writing, which somewhat surprisingly does not always seem to have been his way. After submitting an article draft to the Wahrheitsfreund, his uncle, one of the editors for the paper, rebuked him for his “soft” writing:

119 Unfortunately, not one single letter written by Jessing’s hand during the six years he was Pomeroy has been found and very few of Jessing’s letters from his many years in America have survived. For reasons that are unclear, Jessing’s successors at the Josephinum burned many of his letters and records shortly after his death. See “Conclusions” (210) for more detail in this regard.

Two weeks later Jessing’s uncle again chides him for ‘beating around the bush’:

Sag, ist, was Du sagst und meinst und schreibst, erwiesene Sache? Oder ist’s nur so glatt geschrieben, damit es ebenso glatt gelesen werde. Nichts kommt heraus, Joseph, bei mir nicht. – Meine Begriffe nehmen nur bare Münze an, ich wollte nur einmal gern einen Overberg sehen – werde Du einer und dann kannst Du wieder Vertrauen in mir erwecken, doch eher nicht, ich will Dir Tatsachen aufrücken nächstens, die Du mir zu widerlegen haben wirst, oder ich fange an laut zu lachen,

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120 Letter 348, November 3, 1867.
so oft ich lesen muss, wie Du so sanft und fromm um den lieben Brei herumgehst, aber daran zu rühren eher schön bleiben lässt.\textsuperscript{121}

Jessing probably didn’t need to hear that advice many more times, for he soon was writing with the force for which he became famous (and infamous), and later it was he who chided other German Catholic newspapers, including the \textit{Wahrheitsfreund}, for not taking strong enough stands on political issues.\textsuperscript{122} This seems not to have been the only advice from his uncle that Jessing took to heart. The mention of Joseph Görres, one of the greatest heroes of Catholic Germany in the nineteenth century, as a role model for Jessing to emulate may have fanned the flames of Jessing’s determination to defend and promote the Church. As we have already seen, Jessing was an admirer of Görres, and on occasion reprinted articles from the periodical founded by Görres in 1838, the \textit{Historisch-politische Blätter}, which became famous for its skillful defense of the rights of Catholics and its intellectual rigor. The periodical was founded in response to the increasing attacks on the religious liberty and interests of German Catholics, the same impulse that

\textsuperscript{121} Letter 349, November 22, 1867.


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motivated Jessing in the launching of his newspaper. Like Jessing later, Görres was a zealous contributor to his publication until he died (in 1848).

After his ordination in July 1870, Jessing was moved to the parish of Pomeroy, a poor mining town in southeastern Ohio, where, no longer writing for an established Catholic newspaper with a Catholic readership, he launched his newspaper with the zeal of a missionary. But before Jessing could start his newspaper a competitor had beaten him to it. Published anonymously, the *Pomeroy Volksfreund*, which didn’t last past its first issue, expressed the sort of anti-clericalism that Jessing was very familiar with and which of course prompted a heated response from him. Within twenty-four hours he had printed a one-page paper in retaliation, which began with the announcement: “As occasion may arise, the *Wächter* will continue to appear and throw light on the *Volksfreund*. This paper and numbers to follow will cost nothing, being delivered free to

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123 The particular event that sparked Görres’ periodical was the “Cologne Troubles” of 1837 (*Kölner Irren*), when the Archbishop Clemens Augustus, Freiherr von Droste zu Vischering, was imprisoned by the Prussian government for his vigorous opposition on the question of mixed marriages. This event caused an uproar amongst Catholics throughout Germany and contributed to the Catholic revival of the mid- and late-nineteenth century. Jessing wrote of this event on August 25, 1875, “Das war der Anfang einer innerlichen Befreiung der Kirche und eines Aufschwunges des religiösen Lebens.” Görres biography can be painted in broad strokes by listing the various publications he wrote and edited – as a young republican in support of the French Revolution he published a journal called *Das rote Blatt* (later *Rubezahl*); then as a leading member of the Heidelberg Romantic group, he edited together with Klemens Brentano and Ludwig Achim von Arnim *Die Zeitung für Einsiedler* (later re-named *Trost-Einsamkeit*), and in 1807 he published *Die deutschen Volksbücher*; in 1813 he founded the newspaper *Der Rheinische Merkur*, which campaigned against Napoleon (who supposedly called the paper the “fifth power” with which he had to contend) and for a united Germany under an emperor; in the early 1820s he went into exile, fleeing a Prussian arrest order, and became an ultramontane writer, disillusioned with political realities and the lack of liberties in the German lands. His 1837 polemic work *Athanasius* reflected his turn to Rome, as did the *Historisch-politische Blätter*. He later wrote a collection of biographies of saints titled *Christliche Mystik* (1836–1842) that also explored Catholic mysticism. Earlier, Görres had also written works on the myths of the Persian and Asiatic regions.
the door. The people are going to find out who is friend and foe. We shall not run out of ammunition.”

Two months later Jessing launched the *Ohio*. His stated goals for the paper were to represent the interests of the German-Americans in Pomeroy and surrounding area of southern Ohio, trying to forge a community on the local level. His other agenda was unspoken. Well aware that the historical and ideological disunity of the Germans would be the primary obstacle to his paper’s success, Jessing is explicit in his appeals to the would-be audience, written in an address in the second issue of the *Ohio* on May 9, 1873, titled “Wie and Warum alle Deutschen die „Ohio“ unterstützen sollen”:

Wir älteren Deutsch-amerikanischen Bürger sind aus allen Gegenden unseres großen deutschen Heimathlandes hier zusammen gekommen... Als wir die alte Heimath verließen, war die deutsche Uneinigkeit im getheilten Deutschland sprichwörtlich geworden...Ein Stücke von diesem großen Deutschland ist jetzt einigermaßen geeinigt, aber noch ist die Deutsche Uneinigkeit auch im geeinigten Neudeutschland vorhanden. Als echte Deutsche haben wir auch diese deutsche Uneinigkeit mit nach Amerika gebracht. Das macht aber nichts, denn die echten Deutschen lassen sich nicht treiben wie eine Heerde Schafe, sondern jeder davon ist selbstständig und will und mag seine eigene Meinung haben. Aber als Deutsche sollten wir doch nicht in allen Dingen uneinig sein, und besonders in solchen Dingen nicht, die unsere engere Heimath betreffen. Zu diesen Dingen, worin wir

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124 Miller et al., *Jessing*, 129.
nicht uneinig sein sollten, gehört auch die „Ohio“ die wir zum Organ der Deutschen im südlichen Ohio machen möchten. Bleiben wir uneinig im Bezug auf eine deutsche Zeitung, so werden wir niemals eine solche auf die Dauer haben können, denn eine Zeitung ohne thätige Unterstützung des Publikums kann nicht bestehen. Haben wir aber keine eigene deutsche Zeitung, so können wir unsere deutschen Interessen gegenüber dem mit Blättern aller Farben reichlich versehenen Nicht-deutschen Element nicht wahren, bei Wahlen, bei Angelegenheiten des Staates und unserer engeren Heimath, die für jeden aus uns von der höchsten Wichtigkeit sind.\textsuperscript{125}

Jessing is eager to avoid the mistakes of earlier German-language papers in the region, which, as he pointed out, were that they wrote “for a particular class of like-minded people”.\textsuperscript{126} To counter this and attempt to ensure the success of his paper, he claims to represent the common interests of all German-Americans in the region, a goal he would not be able to live up to, because of the division of the German-Americans into ideological camps and Jessing’s own staunch positions. Another important reason may have been the weak sense of local identity that seemed common in the United States. One observer claimed in 1849 that the American “exhibits little or none of the local

\textsuperscript{125}Ohio, May 9, 1873, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{126}Ohio, May 2, 1873, p3. “Die Fehler unserer Vorgänger, auf diesem Felde die nur für eine gewisse Klasse geistesverwandter Leute schrieben, wollen wir durchaus vermeiden.”
attachments which distinguish the European.”\textsuperscript{127} The well-known immigration historian John Higham remarked about this American phenomenon that, “it was the erosion of traditional loyalties by mobility and acquisitiveness that left Americans dependent on ideology for their sense of identity. Travelers noticed that a truculent, gasconading patriotism was especially characteristic of newly settled parts of the country, but everywhere ideological commitment compensated to some extent for the weakness of local ties.”\textsuperscript{128}

The already existing German divisions along ideological lines, coupled with the transformation of their old local identities in the old country into a broader German \textit{ethnic}, i.e. national, identity in the new world, likely contributed to the transfer of this mode of identification to the German-American population. This also helps explain why Jessing’s paper failed locally but later succeeded on a much broader, even national, level.

Likely aiming to reduce fears of non-Catholic Germans that a newspaper edited by a Catholic priest would run along more dogmatic and authoritarian principles, Jessing also appeals to their reason and highlights the intellectual independence of “real Germans”. And in separating the German element from the non-German element in the region in his appeal, Jessing focuses on that one great common denominator, Deutschtum:


\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
Wir hoffen nun, daß das deutsche Publikum dieser Gegend uns die nöthige Anerkennung in unserem Bemühen schenken wird... und wünschen, daß in kurzer Zeit die ‘Ohio’ in allen deutschen Häusern dieser Gegend gefunden werden möge. Neben den Privatschulen sind ja die deutschen Zeitungen es hauptsächlich, die unsere herrliche deutsche Muttersprache in diesem Lande erhalten. Ihr deutschen Mitbürger habt diese unsere Muttersprache über das Meer gebracht; sorgt nun auch dafür, daß dieselbe hier für eure Kinder erhalten werde. Es gibt keine andere lebende Sprache, welche der deutschen gleich kommt, an Bildsamkeit und Tiefe, an Ernst, Kraft und Innigkeit. In der deutschen Sprache und deutschen Literatur wurzelt deutsche Art, deutsche Gesinnung und deutsche Gesittung; geht den deutschen Kindern aber die deutsche Sprache verloren, so verlieren sie damit auch das deutsche Wesen; es ist daher der deutsch-amerikanischen Jugend die Bewahrung der schönen deutschen Sprache nicht genug zu empfehlen. Unsere „Ohio“ aber soll zu diesem Zwecke recht viel beitragen.129

Jessing’s appeal to the national pride of Germans in their language and culture was not only an effective strategy to gain subscribers and readers because of the nature of diaspora life, but also because at this time, just two years after the birth of the German Empire, national pride amongst Germans of all religious and ideological persuasions was particularly strong and often manifested itself in diaspora groups in feelings of defiance, even superiority, towards the local culture. In the hope of fostering unity among German-

129 Ohio, May 2, 1873.
Americans, Jessing claimed that religious topics and polemical disputes would be avoided, as mentioned earlier. “Unser Blatt ist für alle Deutschen bestimmt, welche die Wahrheit und das Recht lieben... religiöse Abhandlungen und unfruchtbare Polemik gegen Andersgläubige sollen in der „Ohio“ keinen Platz finden.”

In the second issue of the Ohio Jessing is even more explicit in his wish to be non-sectarian and inclusive:

> Unser Blatt kümmert sich nicht darum, ob die Leser protestantisch oder katholisch oder sonst was sind, ob jemand Demokrat oder Republikaner ist. Alle diese Dinge haben mit dem Abonnement auf die „Ohio“ nichts zu thun. Die „Ohio“ ist kein Parteiblatt, sondern sie soll das Organ derjenigen Deutschen hiesiger Gegend sein, welche die Wahrheit und das Recht lieben. So möge sich denn in dieser deutschen Zeitungsache der Parteigeist nicht geltend machen. Wir Deutschen in dieser Gegend haben ja in der That nichts Gemeinsames als unsere Muttersprache und unser deutsches Wesen, die beide auch bei manchen schon abhandengekommen sind. Die „Ohio“, die wir für alle unsere Landsleute hiesiger Gegend gründeten, ist gerade dazu geeignet, der Mittelpunkt, aller Deutschen zu sein... Die „Ohio“ erscheint nicht, um die Deutschen am Gängelband zu führen, sondern sie ist gegründet auf den Principien der Wahrheit und des Rechts als ein Blatt, das den Willen der hiesigen deutschen Bevölkerung zum Ausdruck bringen soll.  

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130 Ohio, May 2, 1873.

131 Ohio, May 9, 1873.
This was a big net intended to catch the large majority of German-Americans in the region. But as the reader may have already noticed, the inclusivity does have its limits. Jessing claims the paper is for *all Germans who love truth and justice*, and although you wouldn’t find many who claimed to *not* love these things, these words, found in the subtitle of the *Ohio*, carried certain connotations of German middle-class conservatism. If you were a secular Free-thinker, you probably wouldn’t be inclined toward the *Ohio*, despite any shared civic, social, or business interest.

The fact that Jessing was counting on this German conservatism and religiosity for the resonance and support of his paper was clear right from the beginning. In the first issue of the paper Jessing attacks Bismarck and the Kulturkampf, but does so with language that is inclusive, using phrases like “persecution of religion” and “anti-religious laws”. There is no specific mention of the Catholic Church as the target of Bismarck’s laws, but rather an appeal to the indignation of all Germans, at least the religious ones, or *Kirchendeutsche*, as they were also known. Another tool Jessing uses to unify German-American readers of his paper is to inculcate a certain pride and sense of justification in their immigration. Those who had to flee oppression in Germany now enjoy the freedoms in America that they were denied back home. In a way, this is a sort of reversal of the usual condescending attitude “real” Germans took towards those who emigrated. Now the émigrés can look down at the countrymen they left behind. Jessing continues with a depiction of a continued flood of immigrants to the United States, pointing out religious oppression as the main catalyst for their departure and signaling in particular the shared fate of the “Old Lutherans” and the Catholics:
Die Auswanderung ist jetzt fortwährend im Wachsen begriffen. Vom 1 Januar bis zum 22 April 1873 landeten in New York 54,489 Auswanderer. Die meisten davon sind Katholiken oder Altlutheraner, die sich vom Kaiser-König ihre Religion nicht wollen vorschreiben lassen. ¹³²

In the second issue of the Ohio Jessing is more direct in his attempt to foster unity amongst German Catholics and Protestants in disdain for Bismarck’s anti-religious laws. He writes: “Man glaube aber ja nicht, daß die jetzige Religionsverfolgung in Deutschland blos die katholische Kirche treffe; die gläubigen Protestanten sind ebenso bedroht wie die Katholiken.” Jessing was wise to appeal to German Protestants, and must have been well aware that the orthodox Protestants in Germany were in principal opposed to Bismarck’s Kulturkampf. As Becker points out, any associations the Kulturkämpfer had with Protestantism mostly served as a disguise for nationalist and liberal agendas.

Doch die evangelische Orthodoxie hat sich dem Kulturkampf bekanntermaßen häufig widersetzt. Eine eigentliche Kulturkampfmentalität bildete sich vorwiegend in intellektuellen Kreisen vor dem spezifischen Hintergrund eines radikal bibelkritischen liberalen Protestantismus und kulminierte in einem orthodoxiefernen, machtstaatlich aufgefaßten Nationalismus mit ersatzreligiösen Zügen. ¹³³

¹³² Ohio, May 2, 1873.

In 1873, Jessing was trying to arouse similar sentiments from German-Americans Lutherans and other Protestants when he announced these views from Germany in his *Ohio*, citing two Protestant papers in Germany that were critical of the state’s Kulturkampf, the *Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* and *Neue Preußische Zeitung*, and pointing out that, “[a]ehnliche Jammertöne erheben andere protestantische Zeitungen über die jetzigen Zustände im neuen deutschen Reiche. Armes Deutschland!” Such attempted solidarity with Lutherans would not be repeated very often later by Jessing.

Jessing had done his homework in studying his would-be audience. The appearance in Pomeroy of the anti-clerical *Volksfreund* in February 1873 triggered not only Jessing’s anger but also his action. In assessing the ideological and religious affiliations of the region surrounding Pomeroy, and the local reaction to the paper he called the “Volksfeind” (“enemy of the people”) and “Lügenblatt” (“paper of lies”), Jessing recorded the following in his notebook:

> At the most, 700 families live in Pomeroy and vicinity. Among these we have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dreadfully ultramontane</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-ultramontane</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodists maligned by “Volksfeind”</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devout Protestants</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other opponents of the “Lügenblatt”</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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134 *Ohio*, May 9, 1873.
Sum total – 540 families that do not subscribe to the “Volksfeind”.¹³⁵

Based on these numbers he must have been quite confident that a religious German periodical would be successful. But, again, the paper was not a success on the local level, and would only achieve its success when it reached out to its ideological kin across the entire United States, forming an “imagined community” of German-Americans Catholics, most of whom would never lay eyes on each other. From the beginning of the Ohio, Jessing’s claim to neutrality in religious matters was not upheld, nor can we conclude that it was meant to be, probably a major reason the paper was not successful locally. This lack of transparency, or honesty, in the paper, pretending to be something it wasn’t, certainly would’ve annoyed some readers. Jessing’s attempt to foster unity amongst German-Americans was infused from early on with a subtle, defensive, and enlightening tone about Catholicism and Catholics, trying to convince non-Catholics that they were in fact nothing to fear.¹³⁶

But Jessing’s paper would find its success after it’s “coming clean” as a Catholic paper. Jessing’s move to Columbus, from where the newspaper had much better transportation and distribution opportunities, also helped. It was not only the ideological content, which we will get to in more detail towards the end of the chapter, or the

¹³⁵ Miller, et al., Jessing, 131.

¹³⁶ One of Jessing’s favorite ways to do this is to find news items in which Catholics were falsely accused of crime or scandal and pointing out the truth of the matter. In the May 9 issue, Jessing reports about false accusations against an order of brothers who ran a Catholic boys’ school, and who supposedly beat a boy to near death, only to find out it was not true. In the May 16 issue he reports about the alleged attempted assassination of the German Kaiser by a Catholic priest, which the press had in the meantime verified as false.
increased marketing and distribution options that helped Jessing’s paper succeed. It was also the format of it. The format and style of the *Ohio* followed the German journalistic tradition of the *Familienblatt*, or “family journal”, an early-nineteenth-century creation that combined “entertainment” (*Unterhaltung*) with news reporting and educational writing, and it will help us understand Jessing’s project better if we take some time here to lay out this model of popular literature/journalism. It was not only the content of Ultramontanism that Jessing imported from Germany but also the form and strategy of spreading it. The rise of the *Familienblatt* is part of the story of the rise of the *Massenpresse* in Germany (press for the masses), which by definition aimed to reach a broad audience. In Dieter Barth’s study of the *Familienblatt, Zeitung für Alle: das Familienblatt im 19. Jahrhundert: ein sozialhistorischer Beitrag zur Massenpresse in Deutschland*, he defines *Massenliteratur* thus: “journalism that is tailored for the broad masses and that to a great extent aims to adapt itself to the needs and expectations of the readership”.

Jessing’s *Ohio* fits the description of the German “family journal” to a great extent, as we shall see, and based on the eventual success of his paper, becoming the

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137 According to one historian, the first time the word “Familienblatt” was used in a title was in 1817 in: *Caecilia, ein wöchentliches Familienblatt für Christen und Christenfreunde*. Journals that addressed the family in their titles already existed in the late eighteenth century, such as the *Bürger-Journal oder Kleine Familienbibliothek für Schweizer*, 1790-1792. The use of the term *Familienfreund* (*Family Friend*) in the titles of newspapers could be found even earlier. Cited in Barth, Dieter, *Zeitschrift für Alle: das Familienblatt im 19. Jahrhundert: ein sozialhistorischer Beitrag zur Massenpresse in Deutschland* (Münster: Institut für Publizistik der Universität Münster, 1974 ), 2. The information related to the history of the “Family Paper” (*Familienblatt*) in the following pages is borrowed from Barth and referenced with page numbers in the text unless otherwise noted.

138 Ibid., 3. “Publizistik, die auf die breite Masse zugeschnitten ist und sich den Bedürfnissen und Erwartungen der Leserschaft weitgehend anzupassen sucht.”
most widely circulated Catholic newspaper in the United States with a subscription of 35,000 by 1885, it is clear that Jessing adopted a proven and winning formula for his paper. Jessing, especially in the early weeks of his newspaper, certainly did try to tailor his paper to what he deemed the expectations of the German-Americans of the region, but this, again, was either naive or dishonest, as Jessing’s mission of proselytizing – even if only to German Catholics – was hard to reconcile with non-Catholic German-Americans who in many cases had brought over the ocean with them strong religious or ideological convictions of their own.

Jessing’s broad appeal was also intended to reach a new class of readers who most likely did not normally read much, and if they could, the language they could read in would be German, not English. This was characteristic of the family journal genre, which, as Barth points out, “sich insbesonders Zugang zu solchen Bevölkerungsschichten verschaffen wollte, die bislang kaum oder gar nicht mit publizistischen Erzeugnissen in Berührung gekommen waren, hauptsächlich darin begründet, daß die herkömmliche Presseerzeugnisse – trotz wachsenden Lesebedürfnisses – für das breite Publikum unerschwinglich waren. So bahnte das Familienblatt durch einen wohlfeilen Preis den Weg zu bildungsfreudigen Bevölkerungsschichten, überwiegend bürgerlichen Kreisen.”

At a price of one dollar for a year’s subscription, Jessing certainly made his paper affordable for the local German-Americans, and the attempt to reach an audience that was "bildungsfreudig" perhaps fit no other newspaper editor on either side of the Atlantic better than it did Jessing. Having grown up without a formal education and having
educated himself with remarkable vigor, Jessing was always more than eager to give the gift of education, through his newspaper and later through his orphanage and college. His newspaper could be said to have contained primarily two things – Catholic news and opinion, and miscellaneous and encyclopedic articles on topics ranging from machines of all sorts (one of Jessing’s favorite topics) to gardening (another favorite). The fact that it was the middle class (bürgerliche) that was usually the target audience of such papers was not lost on Jessing, who included in his manifesto, “Es ist unsere Absicht, daß die „Ohio“ den bürgerlichen, gesellschaftlichen und geschäftlichen Interessen der hiesigen deutschen Bevölkerung dienen soll.“

Thus far, the picture we get of Jessing’s hoped for audience and community, based on what he has written in the first few issues of the Ohio, is a non-sectarian community united simply in their common German ancestry and common political and business interests. The very name of his paper belies his intentions of aiming at a broad and civic minded audience. The language of the “manifesto issues” is decidedly of a secular and even liberal slant in the sense that it appeals to the reason of the reader and proclaims its respect of all opinions. Although this pluralism of opinion and avoidance of polemics and religion would not last long in the Ohio, Jessing’s paper would achieve great success, as already indicated. This was due to a number of reasons, one of which was simply its adaptation of the family journal elements. (Jessing’s writing style and flare for polemics probably helped as well.) Reflecting on the success of his paper in a letter to a fellow German-language newspaper editor in 1892, Jessing attributed the success of his paper to its existence as a “general, illustrated periodical” (allgemeine, illustrierte
Zeitung), and contrasted it to the Catholic paper of a competitor, which lacked the broad appeal of Jessing’s paper:

...mache ich denn eine Zeitung wie Sie und die anderen? Hat mein Blatt nicht ein ganz spezielles Feld?...Habe ich Ihnen nicht schon vor fast neun Jahren geschrieben, dass mein Blatt von anderen abweichen sollte, und ich eine illustrierte Zeitung machen wollte?...Machen Sie eine allgemeine Zeitung, wie ich es thue, so erhalten Sie bald eine allgemeine Verbreitung, machen Sie aber eine locale Zeitung, wie Sie und andere es thun, so können Sie auch nur auf locale Verbreitung rechnen...Ich bin mir bewusst, dass ich die gute Sache fördere nach zwei Richtungen, ohne alle egoistischen Zwecke, noch viel besser wie irgendeine Zeitung in Deutschland.139

Jessing does not elaborate on these “two directions”, but we can surmise that he means the Catholic content combined with the educational and entertaining elements of his paper. In its appeal to conservative and religious Germans, the family as a targeted

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139 Letter 160, October 2, 1882. This was one of a few letters in which Jessing defended himself to other newspaper editors against their accusations that he was imposing on their turf with the spread of his newspaper through his “Agenten”, i.e. salesmen/distributors. To the editor of the Columbia newspaper in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Jessing writes (in letter 164, Nov. 22, 1882): “Wir bestreiten entschieden, dass wir unseren Agenten beauftragt haben, unter dem Vorgehen, es handle sich um eine ‘dringend nothwendige Unterstützung der Waisenkinder’ Propaganda zu machen für unser Blatt, obwohl jeder Gewinn davon den Waisen zugute kommt. Wir suchen und behalten unsere Abonnenten aus dem Grund hier, dass unser Blatt dem Volke gesunden katholischen Lesestoff bietet, denn auf keinen anderen Grund hin kann eine Zeitung eine große Abonnentenzahl behalten und stetig vermehren.”
social group likely also contributed to its success. As the name of this genre of journalism indicates, this was at the heart of all family papers, as Barth points out:

In dem Anspruch, eine Zeitschrift für alle zu sein, lag denn auch das publizistisch Neuartige. Wohl lassen sich unterschiedliche ideologische Standorte bei verschiedenen Familienblattredaktionen bzw. –Verlagen nachweisen, jedoch sind sie so fein nuanciert, daß sich an der eigentlichen Zielsetzung kaum etwas änderte. Familienblätter wollten zugleich unterhalten und belehren, allgemeinverständlich und volkstämmlich sein, somit lesbar auch für jene Kreise, die nach Status und Bildung nichts mit höheren Ständen gemeinsam hatten. Illustrationen und Abbildungen waren populärwirksame Gestaltungsmittel, auf die kein Familienblatt verzichten mochte. Der Ton, besonders der der aufklärenden Aufsätze war erzieherisch-belehrend wie plaudernd-humorvoll gehalten.140

Jessing’s strategy with the launch of the Ohio on the whole seems closely aligned with those defining characteristics of the general family journal as Barth describes them: “das besonders enge Verhältnis zur Leserschaft, das ethische Prinzip (keine anstößige Darstellung/Themen, keine Politik), das Zusammenspiel von Text und Abbildung, die Verwendung bestimmter publizistischer Darbietungsformen (Erzählung, Aufsatz, Bericht) sowie Zielgruppenausrichtung auf alle, auch nicht gebildete Publikumskreisen,

140 Barth, Zeitschrift, 6-7.
insbesondere die Familie.” Jessing’s style of depiction was “volkstümlich”, and his style of writing was “dichterisch” and “populärwissenschaftlich”. (12)

To understand the transition that Jessing’s paper would undergo shortly after its launch – from a general family journal to a Catholic family journal – it will help to understand the development of the family journal in Germany during these years. As one can imagine, and as already briefly indicated, the 1870s and the start of the Kulturkampf in Germany in 1873 spurred the launch of numerous Catholic family journals, whose goals were to give a counter voice to the liberal journals of the day and defend the Church. Until the 1870s, the only Catholic Familienblatt in the German-speaking realm was Alte und Neue Welt: Illustrierte Monatsschrift zur Unterhaltung und Belehrung, published in 1867. In 1874 another German Familienblatt was founded, the Deutscher Hausschatz in Wort und Bild, which shared the words in Jessing’s subtitle in one of its mottos: “Für Wahrheit und Recht”, and whose editors had the same frustrations that Jessing had earlier had over the lack of Catholic entertainment and educational papers. (210)

In the mission statement of the first issue of the Deutscher Hausschatz, titled “Was wir wollen”, the editors complained about the lack of an “illustrierten Unterhaltungsblattes, von dem äußeren Umfang, der literarischen Bedeutung, künstlerischen Ausstattung und raschen Erscheinungsweise, wie sie mehreren

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141 One of the first attempts to define the family paper was in the field of literary studies. The literary historian Hanna Meuter called it the “volkstümliche, in der Regel illustrierte Zeitschrift, die durch dichterische und populärwissenschaftliche Beiträge unterhaltend und belehrend wirken will.” See Barth, Zeitschrift, 13.
ausgesprochenen Organen unserer Gegner eigen sind“. (211) While there was a massive increase in the production of Catholic (political) newspapers in Germany during the period leading up to and during the Kulturkampf, the Belletristik (fiction and poetry) was an area that was heavily neglected by Catholics. This condition was considered a sign of intellectual and spiritual poverty (eine Art geistigen Armuthszeugnisses) by the editors of the Deutscher Hausschatz. (212)

Two years earlier, Jessing had complained about the same lack of Catholic literature in the German-American context, claiming that it was “preventing conversions” because “protestantische Verläumdungen bleiben lebendig durch die schlechte Presse,“ and Catholics had nothing with which to counter this. 142 Jessing wrote of the secret war against Catholics that was being waged in America and the need to combat it.

_Dieser heimliche und nichtswürdige Krieg gegen unsere heilige Religion wird in allen Theilen des Landes geführt, es mag kaum ein Haus gefunden werden, wo nicht irgend ein nichtsnutziges Buch oder Zeitungsblatt gefunden werden könnte...Ja, viele Katholiken haben die Schlafmütze so arg über die Ohren gezogen und sind manchmal unempfindlich genug, daß sie die Schläge nicht fühlen, die gegen unsern h. Glaube geführt werden und so bezahlen, besitzen und lesen sie derartige Blätter und Bücher._

142 “Deutsche Literatur in Amerika,” Der Wahrheitsfreund, October 23, 1872.
It is in these words, written about six months before Jessing’s *Ohio* was launched, that we discover Jessing’s true motives. If there was any doubt, it is removed when reading this article from 1872. Jessing, like other German Catholic newspaper editors, looked to emulate the “enemies” of the Catholics, which included liberals and Protestants, who were much more active than German Catholics in their publishing. In Germany, the largest and most significant of the liberal papers was *Die Gartenlaube*, which in addition to being representative of the class of the liberal *Bildungsbürgertum*, was also anti-Catholic.

*In diesem Missionslande, wo noch Millionen Deutsche ausserhalb der katholischen Kirche stehen, an die Massen-Verbreitung guter Bücher, Broschüren und Traktate ist gar nicht einmal gedacht worden. Man hat diese wichtige Sache der Privatspekulation überlassen. Wie beschämt müssen wir deutsche Katholiken dastehen, wenn wir auf nur eine Klasse unserer Gegner, auf die Methodisten blicken! Diese haben Traktatgesellschaften, die jährlich Tausende von Traktate vertheilen; sie haben sich von Anfang an bestrebt, Bücher ihrer Sekte unter das Volk auszustreuen. Schon im Jahre 1789 gründeten sie einen methodistischen Bücherverlag in Philadelphia....Mehrere Millionen deutsche Nichtkatholiken dieses Landes müssen noch durch uns belehrt und bekehrt werden, mag dieses früher oder später, wenn auch erst nach Jahrhunderten geschehen; Andere Millionen deutscher Katholiken müssen vor dem Gifte des Unglaubens..., das durch die schlechte Presse allenthalben verbreitet wird. Das beste Mittel dazu ist wieder die Presse, die wir in*
The Catholic family journal differed from the non-Catholic family journals only in the “confessional ingredients” they contained, according to Barth. (210) The structure, design, and tone were the usual type found in most family journals, but the stories and reporting contained Christian ethics and morals. Common subject matter was biographies of great figures in church history, such as saints, popes, cardinals, and bishops, all of which appeared in great quantity in Jessing’s paper. From the early 1880s onward, every issue of Jessing’s Ohio Waisenfreund contained the biography of a Pope in the running chronological series “Geschichtliche Nachrichten über die Römischen Päpste”. In the late 1880s another long-running series began, in which readers could read biographies of “Die Heiligen des deutschen Volkes.”

It didn’t take long for Jessing’s Ohio to turn into a Catholic family paper, even if it essentially was a Catholic paper from the very beginning. Even when Jessing does announce the change of direction in the journal six months after its start, he never directly says what had seemed obvious. Instead he attributes the change in direction, and its lack of success in the region, to the hostility of some of the locals toward the paper because its publisher is a Catholic priest. In the October 20, 1873 issue he writes:
So hat sich die Zahl unserer Leser zwar fortwährend vermehrt und vermehrt sich noch von Woche zu Woche, jedoch die lokale Unterstützung, die zum Bestande des Blattes erforderlich ist, haben wir bis jetzt nicht gefunden. Von verschiedenen Seiten hat man uns sogar erklärt, das Blatt sei zwar gut und interessant, aber man könne es nicht halten, weil ein katholischer Priester der Herausgeber sei!! ...Es wird daher die „Ohio“ in Zukunft ein Lokalblatt für Pomeroy nicht mehr sein, sondern wir wollen dieselbe zu einem allgemeinen Familienblatt machen und für dieselbe ein ganz neues Programm aufstellen, das wir hier vorläufig nur andeuten wollen.143

The paper’s new direction is defined thus:

Neben der Mittheilung der wichtigsten politischen Ereignisse des In- und Auslandes soll die Verbreitung nützlicher Kenntnisse unsere Hauptaufgabe sein. Unermeßlich ist das Reich des Wissens; es umfaßt den Himmel und die Erde, das Land und das Meer, die Vergangenheit und die Gegenwart. Und aus diesen Regionen des Wissen wollen wir das Nützlichste und Beste auswählen und dasselbe in einer Weise unseren Lesern vorführen, welche Verstand und Phantasie gleich angenehm beschäftigt.144

143 Ohio, October 30, 1873.

144 Ibid.
The only indication in Jessing’s new manifesto that the Ohio might be affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church is the announcement that the profits from the journal will now be put toward the establishment of a Roman Catholic orphanage for boys, a decision that is also reflected in the future name of the journal. Starting with the issue of February 18, 1874, Jessing changes the civic sounding Ohio for Der Ohio Waisenfreund. The new program of the journal, to be a “general family journal”, actually represents the original program a great deal. If there is any change in the direction of the Ohio, it is that it is even more unabashedly ferocious in its attack of the “enemies of truth and justice” and the Catholic Church. But in many ways the Ohio was from its beginning a Kampfbrett, or “fighting journal”. This name German immigrant workers often gave to their socialist newspapers could also be applied to Jessing’s paper, as it too was the mouthpiece of a movement that was involved in a struggle with the mainstream.145

Jessing’s failure to unify the local German-American community is not surprising. Not only was his tone polemical, but the ideological divisions within the German-American community were famously stark, as could be seen in their voting habits. Paul Kleppner’s study of the social and cultural roots of Midwestern politics highlights the fact that the defining feature amongst German-American groups was their acting as “negative referents” in relation to each other. Kleppner claims, for example, that German Lutherans, regardless of synodical affiliation, voted Democratic in much lower percentages when they were brought into social interaction with German Catholics, who

consistently voted Democratic in high percentages.\textsuperscript{146} The phenomenon of was not specific to one or a few locations, but happened wherever the two groups were in close proximity. This was true even though the Old Lutherans shared similar cultural experiences with the German Catholics, foremost the cultural and religious antipathy of evangelical natives, and also had similar world views. Both were religiously conservative and sought to preserve their old world German ways. The phenomenon of “negative referents” was also not unique to German Lutherans and Catholics. As Kleppner also points out, the German Sectarians also tended to follow this trend. “When in a German ‘atmosphere,’ they took fellow Germans of different religious faiths as negative referents and voted anti-Democratic. In a social context in which a non-German element dominated, the orientation was entirely different.”\textsuperscript{147}

On this note, it may be of interest to comment on how Jessing stood toward American politics, and why German-American Catholics heavily voted for the Democratic party. Jessing supported the Democratic Party and encouraged his readers to also do so, because in his view the Republican party was where all the enemies of Catholics resided. In 1888 he wrote: “Sollen insbesondere Katholiken eine Partei unterstützen, die alle Kirchenfeinde und Katholikenfresser, alle Prohibitionisten, verbissene Fanatiker, und unbußfertige Zöllner und Sünder in ihre Arme schließt? Diese

\textsuperscript{146} Paul Kleppner, \textit{The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics 1850-1900} (New York: The Free Press, 1970), 47. “Regardless of urban or rural residence, degree of prosperity, size of place, or occupational group, German Catholics in the Midwest were loyal to the Democracy. Most convincing is the fact that no German Catholic unit registered an anti-Democratic percentage between 1876 and 1888.” Ibid., 42.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 50.
Jessing’s American political views reflected his general views of cultural life, and as we shall see during the Americansim controversy, religious life in America. Just as he would argue for the rights of German Catholics to exist as a sort of enclave church, worshipping in their language and manner and having little to do with other Catholics, Jessing supported states’ rights in the political arena and was against a heavily centralized government. These views also speak to the geographical differences in the United States. With New England as the center of Anglo-American culture, and Republican support, Jessing seemed to see the immigrant-heavy frontier states of the Middle West as a counterweight to New England dominance. In the same article he writes of the Republican Party’s wish to dominate national life in America:

"Es besteht jedoch dieser Unterschied zwischen demokratischer und republikanischer Regierungsweise, daß bei der letzteren meistens das vornehme, reiche und geld-adelige Element das Heft in der Hand hat und, um es in der Hand zu behalten, es auf eine starke Central Gewalt, auf eine, die einzelnen Staaten und Gemeinwesen unterdrückende, Alles beherrschende, Bundes-Regierung abgesehen hat; während in der demokratischen Regierungsweise nicht so sehr die"

Geldproben, Eisenbahnkönige, Fabrikherren, Trust-Tyrannen, Schußzöllner, Schmerzbäche, Shoddy-Aristokraten und alle finanziellen Blutsauger und Monopolisten das große Wort führen, sondern vielmehr dem schlichten Bürger, dem eigentlichen Volk Gelegenheit gegeben wird, in localer Selbstregierung und Decentralisation, die Rechte und Vortheile der einzelnen Gemeinwesen und der einzelnen Staaten gegenüber der erdrückenden Central Regierungsgewalt zu wahren.\footnote{Ibid.}

The opposition to a centralized state was also something that Jessing imported to the American context based on his experiences in Germany and the continued developments in Germany after he had emigrated. It was part of a counter-narrative that had been developing in Catholic parts of Germany, with the growing dominance of Prussia and the creation of the Norddeutscher Bund, and that would of course only gain momentum once the Kulturkampf began in 1873. A political ideal that still found resonance amongst German Catholics was the idea of a “Reich”, as opposed to a centralized state. The adherence to this ideal, which Jessing also held, as we shall see, and the rejection of Bismarck’s idea of Reich can be seen in an article in the Historisch-politische Blätter from 1870.

\textit{Ich sage mit Absicht: in einen national-liberalen “Staat” des Namens Norddeutschland; denn auch dann wäre der Name “Reich” nur eine um des}
vollern Klangs und des Wohllauts willen beliebte Täuschung. Alle die Mächte und Kräfte welche jenseits des Mains, im preußischen Landtag wie im Reichstag, auf die Umwandlung des Norddeutschen Bundes in einen Einheitsstaat hinarbeiten, sind jeder Spur von einer Reichsidee baar und ledig. Sie alle, von Bismarck bis Lasker, kennen nur den mehr oder weniger centralisirten Staat...

As we have indicated already, Jessing’s German counter-narrative was not anti-nationalist per se. It simply opposed the German nationalism that was associated with Bismarck, Prussia, Protestantism, and secular-liberalism. Drawing from the tradition of an old conservative German Catholic narrative, Jessing also dreamt of a reunification of the German people, but his version of the nation was united in the Catholic religion. As the name “conservative” implies, Jessing’s vision of a reunified nation looked to the past to find its ideal. One American historian calls this method of historical narrative the “declension model”, and defines it as, “that construction of the past, in which historical

150 “Die Eröffnung des Norddeutschen Reichstags und die preußische Thronrede; die Schattenseite des norddeutschen Bundes,” Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland des Jahrgangs 1870, erster Band, 376. On the connection of Protestantism and Liberalism, however, Jessing’s views, which linked the two strongly, differed from those found in this periodical. In 1870, in an article title “Staat und Kirche”, one could find the explicit uncoupling of the two: Man kann nicht sagen, daß dieser Liberalismus aus dem Protestantismus erwachen, etwa eine Fortbildung desselben sei. Der Liberalismus ist das Kind der sogenannten Philosophie des 18. Jahrhunderts. Die hauptsächlichen literarischen Vertreter derselben, namentlich in Frankreich, gehörten durch ihre Geburt der katholischen Kirche an. Es darf dabei nicht außer Acht gelassen werden, daß die katholische Kirche in Frankreich durch den Gallikanismus an ihrem Rechte und ihrer Freiheit erheblich beeinträchtigt war. Der Gallikanismus, welchen Ludwig XIV. durchsetzte in der Fülle seiner Macht, stellt sich uns dar als die höchste Entfaltung der Tendenz des Cäsareopapismus in einem katholisch-kirchlichen Reiche. Ein solcher Boden war günstig für das Keimen und die Entwicklung der neuen Philosophie. Ibid., 897.
figures occupy a pinnacle from which the present has fallen and to which the nation is
implored to return.”

For Jessing, the Catholic Church was the original force that not only unified the
Germans, but also civilized them. In 1875 he wrote, “die katholische Kirche hat
Deutschland christlich und civilizirt und zur ersten Nation der Erde gemacht.” By
“first” here, Jessing means “greatest”, and it was his belief that only by returning to the
Catholic Church could the Germans find their greatness again. The German Romantic
longing for the Middle Ages and its unity of life was alive and well in Jessing. In 1886 he
claims the idea of the unity of mankind and national feeling were perfectly combined
during the days of the old Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, “denn während
tausend Jahren waren unsere Vorfahren eben die Träger dieser katholischen Idee…da war
die katholische Idee der Zusammengehörigkeit der Christenheit auf das Schönste
verwirklicht.” Jessing aims to correct the image of what he calls these “much maligned
times”, before the Protestant Reformation spoiled things, when in actuality “herrschte in
Deutschland nicht nur Wohlstand, Bildung, edle Gesittung und Lebensfreudigkeit, wovon
unsere Zeit weit entfernt ist, sondern auch ein inniges Glaubensleben und ungetrübte
Liebe zur Kirche.”

151 Ben Railton, *Contesting the Past, Reconstructing the Nation: American Literature and Culture in the

152 “Die Geschichte der katholischen Kirche Deutschlands im neunzehnten Jahrhundert,” *Ohio


154 “Die Geschichte der katholischen Kirche Deutschlands im neunzehnten Jahrhundert,” *Ohio
In Jessing’s time, church and state were united in Germany once again, but for Jessing it was an unholy alliance with the Protestant Church. In 1891 Jessing found another opportunity to present the German Catholic counter-narrative and criticize this unholy alliance that excluded Catholics from the national community. The occasion that drew Jessing’s scorn was a toast made at a military banquet by Kaiser Wilhelm II to Martin Luther, in honor of the anniversary of Luther’s declarations to the Reichstag at Worms. This state-sponsoring of Protestant Germanism must have really gotten Jessing riled up. His response, which is worth investigating at length, displays some of Jessing’s most heated writing.

To the Kaiser’s claim that Prussia became great because of the Protestant Reformation, Jessing responds by essentially questioning the Kaiser’s legitimacy in his role, as well as his knowledge of history:

Der junge Mann, welcher jetzt dort im Preußen-Reiche den deutschen Kaiser spielt, muß ein schlechtes Verständnis von der Geschichte haben, sonst hätte er nicht solche taprige und ungeschickte Redensarten vorbringen können.

To correct this lack of knowledge, Jessing continues with his narrative of German history and “the greatest enemy of the German people,” Martin Luther:

Der deutsche Kaiser sollte sich schämen, daß er sich auf Martin Luther beruft, welcher der größte Feind des deutschen Volkes gewesen ist, der je gelebt hat.
dessen böser Einfluß noch heutzutage fortduert, und dem das deutsche Volk nichts als Trennung, Zwiespalt, Erniedrigung, Jammer, Elend und Noth verdankt. Wahr ist es, daß Preußen durch Luthers Angriff auf die christliche Wahrheit und auf die Kirche Gottes und die dadurch bewirkte Spaltung des deutschen Volkes groß geworden, und endlich in unsern Tagen an die Spitze eines deutschen Reiches gekommen ist, welches einen großen Theil des alten Deutschlands umfaßt, aber das durchaus das ganze Deutschland nicht ist, das jeder echte Deutsche in einem Reiche und Volke, wie in einem Glauben geEinigt sehen möchte.

Jessing bemoans the reality of German division and especially the relegation of Catholic Austria to an inferior position. He again tries to raise the position of Catholic Austria and Germany up, while chipping away at the legitimacy of the Prussian Kaiser. He continues:

Statt dessen sehen wir in unseren Tagen das deutsche Volk getheilt, indem ein Theil unter Preußens König steht, der den Titel Deutscher Kaiser führt, während ein anderer Theil des deutschen Volkes unter dem Kaiser von Oesterreich steht, welcher der Familie der Kaiser von Deutschland entsprossen ist, der also ebensogut ein deutscher Kaiser ist, wie der Preußen-König; wir sehen aber das deutsche Volk nicht allein politisch, sondern auch religiös getheilt, indem ein Theil der alten römisch-katholischen Religion der Väter, die das deutsche Volk ursprünglich einig gemacht und zivilisirt hat, treu geblieben ist, während ein
anderer Theil vom wahren Glauben der Väter abgewichen ist und eine neue von
Menschen erfundene Religion, den Protestantismus angenommen hat... ¹⁵⁵

The Kaiser’s coupling of religion and nationalism, Jessing implies, is a highly
dubious undertaking. Jessing’s accusations of dynastic chauvinism on the part of the
Prussian King/German Kaiser paint him as a völkisch populist of sorts, an image he liked
to foster.

In den kaiserlichen Worten wird ja angenommen, daß Deutschland und das
deutsche Volk nur zu dem Zwecke vorhanden seien, um Preußen, d.h. das Haus
Hollenzollern groß zu machen, Deutschland muß Preußen dienen und der
Protestantismus hat wiederum kein weiteres Verdienst, als daß er Preußen groß
gemacht hat. So unklug hat doch der alte Wilhelm, der Großvater des jungen,
niemals gesprochen, wenn gleich er vielleicht ebenso gedacht haben mag.

The article does not stop there but is rather lengthy, especially in comparison to
its provocation, a one-line toast. Jessing goes on to relay what was his oft-repeated
version of the “Luther-Märchen”, painting him as a devious, plotting rebel. About the
famous words attributed to Luther during his trial – “hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht
anders”, Jessing claims it has been proven to be fictitious. Alluding to one his favorite
accusations against Luther, his supposed suicide, Jessing claims Luther’s deeds at Worms

¹⁵⁵ “Wilhelm und Luther,” Ohio Waisenfreund, April 29, 1891.
completed the division of the German people. “Infolge dieses harten Verhaltens, wobei Luther sein Leben lang geblieben ist, bis er endlich, vom Satan getrieben, sich wie Judas erhängt hat, wurde die vollständige Spaltung des deutschen Volkes im Glauben vollständig.” In 1891 Jessing ran a series of articles, lasting numerous months, titled “Die Todesakt Martin Luthers”, which investigated the circumstances of Luther’s death and argued it was a suicide. Returning to the present day, Jessing, in his most excitable form, as he often was when the topic was Luther, decries the Kaiser’s celebration of Luther and questions its wisdom and usefulness:

Und nun kommt der junge Kaiser des neudeutschen Reiches und feiert in einer öffentlichen Rede die Verbindung Preußens mit Luther, mit diesem Feinde des deutschen Volkes, mit diesem Unheilstifter, mit diesem starrköpfigen Ketzerfürsten! Das ist in der That erstaunlich! ... Weiß denn der Kaiser nicht, daß ein Drittel jenes Volkes, über welches Gott ihn gesetzt hat, katholisch ist? Weiß er nicht, daß in den Befreiungskriegen gegen Napoleon im Anfange diese Jahrhunderts katholische Soldaten ebenso für Preußen gefochten haben, wie protestantische?

Jessing continues in this vein, pointing out that the majority of the army that fought against the Danes in 1864, also allied with Catholic Austrian troops, were Catholic; that it was primarily Catholics, including himself, who stormed the Düppeler Schanzen, went over the Sund, and took Alsen; that it was also Catholics who, if reluctantly, fought loyally for Prussia against Austria and other German princes in the civil war of 1866, and
who also fought, alongside Catholic Bavaria, against France in 1870. Obviously agitated,
Jessing ends the article with open antagonism toward the Prussian state and the German
Kaiser. Finally, in a rare revelation of what seem to be his underlying sentiments in
regard to the “German question”, Jessing gives a warning that Prussia’s days might be
numbered, as a current legend circulating in Catholic parts of Germany (Jessing’s home
region) foretells. Going hand in hand with Prussia’s decline would be the reemergence of
the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.

_Dann aber ist es eine Selbstüberhebung und Rücksichtslosigkeit gegen alle
Deutsche, welche dem katholischen Glauben ihrer Vorfahren treu geblieben sind,
daß er jenen Mann, den Ketzerfürsten Martin Luther, feiert…Durch solche
Identifizierung des Preußentums mit dem Protestantismus erreicht der Kaiser gar
nichts weiter, als daß er sich den katholischen Theil des deutschen Volkes
entfremdet, die durch Luther hervorgehende Spaltung schroffer macht und ihre
längere Dauer gibt, was für das preußische Reich und für das Haus Hollenzollern
in der Stunde der Gefahr verhängnisvoll werden könnte, so daß die im
nordwestlichen Deutschland umgehende Sage sich bewahrheiten möchte, daß
Preußen, wie es groß geworden ist, auch wieder klein werden soll, ganz klein, und
daß dann ein deutsches Reich erstehen soll, in welchem alles deutsche Land und
das gesamte deutsche Volk unter einem Kaiser stehen wird, der seine Weihe und
Salbuna vom Nachfolger des Apostelfürsten Petrus in Rom erhält, unter dem das
heilige römische Reich deutscher Nation wieder auflebt._
The fact that a missionary priest in the United States seems rather preoccupied with ideas of restoring the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation paints a stark contrast to the political realities of his new homeland. This religious and political discourse is also a stark contrast to the discourse in American religion and politics, even amongst Catholics. In the United States, Catholicism had had a history of relatively harmonious cooperation with the republican values of the young country, and many observers, including the famous de Tocqueville had commented on the complete compatibility of Catholicism and American liberty and democracy. The assimilation of religious and ethnic minorities usually occurs rather slowly, but the nation-building project in the United States in the late nineteenth century would try to speed that up. It is because of this that the old world religious and political discourse, in which Jessing seems to have been wrapped up, collides with the new world discourse, creating quite a conundrum for him.
[T]he German language is no foreign language but is one of the authorized languages of the country. And the American State consists of citizens speaking different languages of which the German language is one of the most important...Germans coming to this country forswear their German allegiance but not their German nationality, customs or language.

Illinois Staats Zeitung, March 3, 1873

Es ist nämlich der Charakter und der unveränderliche Grundsatz des katholischen Glaubens, so zu bleiben, wie die Väter waren, da wir Katholiken wissen, daß auch diese das Verbleiben beim ererbten Glauben als die erste und wichtigste Pflicht der Religion betrachtet haben.

Joseph Jessing

Chapter 3

The Struggle against Americanization and the Americanism Controversy

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156 This issue and its translation was part of the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey, which aimed to gain a better understanding of the foreign language press in Chicago. See: [http://uiuc.libguides.com/cflps](http://uiuc.libguides.com/cflps)

157 "Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch", *Ohio Waisenfreund*, June 22, 1887.
By the mid-1880s it was no longer the divisions within the German-American community that took center stage for Jessing but rather those between German Catholics and their American coreligionists. The issue that caused the divide was the continued German Catholic insistence and effort to establish their own church life separate from that of other American Catholics, and in the eyes of their antagonists to dominate church life. For their part, German Catholics felt they were not given due representation in the Church hierarchy and were unfairly attacked for simply wishing to worship in their manner and tend to their immigrant flock. Furthermore, convinced that the Irish-American hierarchy was "acclimatizing the Church to the American scene at a reckless rate," German Catholic leaders and opinion shapers believed that the Church was not prospering but moving in the wrong direction, causing the loss of millions of Catholics.158

The German Catholics had been used to Nativist anti-Catholicism from outside the Church, but in the 1880s many, like Jessing, believed that a sort of Nativism had now entered into the Church itself. The church historian Gerald Fogarty gives credence to the German Catholic view, claiming that, “[i]n their resistance to the Germans the Americanizers often magnified and sometimes falsified their proposals as if they were measures in a conspiracy to preserve German colonies in America.”159 Having studied the


rhetoric of Jessing, however, it is hard to argue that he was *not* attempting to create something similar to a German colony.

For the Americanizers, the conflict with the Germans was not about race or ethnicity, they claimed, but instead was a battle between the forces of progress and those of regression, for the ultimate good of the Church in America. This claim is captured in a letter from Bishop Denis O'Connell to Bishop John Ireland in January 1897:

> With Germans as Germans, you have no contention whatsoever. You never failed in all your life to express yr. repulsion for war of race on race, and you never intended to promote such medieval vulgarity. Your contention is for an idea. That idea is progress, and that’s yr. battle cry. You have as many & more friends in Germany as in Ireland. Your only opponents are the reactionaries, wherever they be. In America, some of your most bitter opponents are among the Irish. The little clique of Germans that attacked you in America do not represent the Germans. ...You only made war on that narrow clique because they attacked you when you spoke for progress. Even among the Jesuits you have sympathizing friends. Your war then is not a way of race on race of community on community [sic] but of progress vs stagnation.\(^{160}\)

The pitting of the struggle in terms of progress versus stagnation was familiar territory for the old soldier Jessing, as the culture war in Germany had been pit in the same light. But

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unlike in Germany, where Catholics had been at odds with the state over religion, in America they were at odds with their religion, or church, because of their ethnicity. The “German Question”, as it was known early on during the 1880s, had by the 1890s transformed into an even much bigger problem. It was no longer only about ethnic differences and representation in the Church hierarchy, but now had doctrinal significance attached to it. In what became infamous as the “Americanism” controversy, those who wanted a unified American Church also tended to promote, naturally, a more “American” style of Catholicism, which clashed with the old world variety. Since the German Catholics were predominantly conservative and ultramontane, their resistance to cultural Americanization went hand in hand with their resistance to the religious and institutional “Americanism”.

When in 1878 the choice of the successor to Bishop Martin Henni of Milwaukee (a German immigrant priest who had started Der Wahrheitsfreund in Cincinnati), the ethnic battles between the Germans and Americanizers began. Painting a picture of what German priests in Wisconsin, for example, were like, an American priest from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin wrote to Archbishop James Gibbon of Baltimore, later the leader of the “Americanizers”, to sway his opinion in the direction of choosing a non-German to replace Henni:

...these German priests have frequent meetings, the principal and ulterior object of which is to perpetuate a young Germany here...These priests seem to forget the Unity and Catholicity of the Church to perpetuate the curse of Babel in Language.
Their great endeavors are to make everything foreign and German, to make them obnoxious to Americans. So long as the priests care more for sauerkraut and its concomitants than they do for the souls of the Americans, they are not very likely to convert them. And thus practically one great object of the existence of the Church of God here is frustrated. Over one half (by far) of the inhabitants of the state are Catholic. The great majority of the Catholics speak English. Only a small minority in comparison are real Germans. The work of the Church here is twofold: to convert the Americans and preserve our own. By this way of acting neither of these objects can be well gained.\textsuperscript{161}

The Catholic Church in America was coming of age during this time and there was a growing desire within it to not only shed its image as a foreign institution but also to forge itself into a more unified and national Church. In this regard the Church was not acting independently of the national mood in America but instead in the same spirit. As the religious historian Gerald Fogarty points out, one of the main motivations of the progressive American Catholic leaders, later called “Americanists”, was to “establish a dynamic rapport between Catholicism and American culture.”\textsuperscript{162} During this period it was not only Germany that was experiencing a national birth, or rebirth, but also the United States. With the national trauma of the Civil War over, the seeking and defining

\textsuperscript{161} Colman J. Barry, O. S. B., \textit{The Catholic Church and German Americans} (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1953), 46.

of a national identity seemed to characterize the mood in the young country. One American politician claimed that “[e]ven if among us in the earlier day there was no occasion for the word Nation, there is now. A Nation is born.” Many of the leaders of the Catholic Church in America wanted the Church to be part of this nation, and the Germans, as the second largest but most vocal and active element in the Church, were playing the part of spoilers.

The problem with the German Catholics from the point of view of the Americanizers was that they stubbornly refused to get on board with the program of creating a national Church. Some scholars argue that this was due to a lack of comprehension or cognizance of the emerging national consciousness in late nineteenth-century America on the part of German Catholics. Barry writes of the German-Catholic lack of understanding:

…it was in regard to this outlook on the American nation that the German group was in fundamental error. It was apparent…that the European Catholic leaders of the St. Raphael societies did not view the United States as a nation with its own characteristic homogeneity. They were not cognizant of or did not understand the strong current of national feeling that was then surging through

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163 The politician was Charles Sumner. J.H. Elliott, “Afterword: Atlantic History: A Circumnavigation,” in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddock, eds., The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800 (New York, 2002), 247. Cited in Susan-Mary Grant, “Americans Forging a New Nation, 1860-1916, in Don H. Doyle and Marco Antonio Pamplona, Nationalism in the New World (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 80-81. Henry James said about the quest for American identity ten years after the Civil War, that “nothing could be well more characteristic of our nationality than the sight of a group of persons more or less earnestly discussing it.” He was referring to Americans abroad, but it could have been applied to Americans at home too, according to Grant. (Ibid., 81)
American thought and action. They were conscious only of the parts which composed the whole, and these parts, either Italian, Belgian, Austrian, French, or German, were viewed from their own frame of reference, not in terms of the new world. Several German Catholics in the United States revealed the same attitude, and certainly there was evidence enough in the foreign-language Catholic newspapers of this group consciousness rather than an American consciousness.\textsuperscript{164}

This lack of awareness in regard to the national mood in America by German Catholic opinion shapers may have indeed been to some extent true. The United States was sufficiently different from what they had known in Germany and they were so preoccupied with their own agenda that a full awareness or comprehension of the nuances of American life and national feeling was perhaps unlikely. They left a world of enemies and attackers of their religion, and perhaps in their re-creation of this world in the new world they were blind to attempts at unity. At the same time, however, I think this point is overstated. Their resistance to the Americanization project was done more knowingly than Barry implies.

Although Jessing may have underestimated the attraction of American culture and the significance of its individualism, also in its spiritual life, he was usually pretty keenly aware of political and cultural trends, even if he had little sympathy for many of them. He and the conservative German Catholic contingent resisted this movement, or dominant national narrative, conscientiously. Jessing accused the Americanists of elevating their

\textsuperscript{164} Barry, Catholic Church and German Americans, 152.
American nationalism above their Catholicism, claiming they were those, “die sich mit Vorliebe amerikanische Katholiken nennen, meist aber Ausländer sind, welche ihren Amerikanismus ihrem Katholizismus vorziehen… Jene Partei will die Kirche nach ihren angeblichen amerikanischen Ideen eingerichtet und verwaltet haben.”\textsuperscript{165}

Jessing and the conservatives, on the other hand “glauben und halten daran fest, daß sich die katholischen Grundsätze nicht der Politik, der sozialen und anderen Fragen anpassen müssen, sondern daß sich das ganze innere und äußere Staatswesen der kirchlichen Lehre anpassen muß.”\textsuperscript{166} His claim that most American Catholics are foreigners reveals his suspicion of the very existence of such a category as “American”, as does of course his labeling of “so-called” American ideas. The ultramontane view on church and state expressed in the second excerpt, which will be dealt with in more detail later in this chapter, again shows Jessing’s subordination of the American nation to the Catholic Church.

As Barry accurately points out, the German Catholic resistance to Americanization was rooted in this different conception of what the American “nation” was, as was also indicated in chapter two. Jessing did not see it as a unified culture or “melting pot” – although he on occasion did give lip service to this narrative – but rather a confederation of ethnicities. What ultimately determined Jessing’s view of nation in the American context was his wish that German Catholics not lose their identity in the “Völkergemisch” of American culture, which he must have known, even if he wouldn’t

\textsuperscript{165} “Der Amerikanismus,” \textit{Ohio Waisenfreund}, April 6, 1898.

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
outright admit it, was dominated by the Anglo-American culture. The rhetoric he used, however, was that “America was not England”, and that the German language and culture had just as much a right to flourish and prosper as the English/Anglo-American. Jessing was not alone amongst German-American Catholics in this view. The German-Catholic newspaper Buffalo Volksfreund, for example, wrote on Feb. 17, 1890 that,

*The principal error of Archbishop Ireland lies in his ideas of America, Americans, [and the] American Church. America is no nation, no race, no people, like France, Italy, or Germany... We have citizens of a republic, but no nation and, therefore, no national language outside the languages which the races immigrated speak in their families.*

During the Americanism controversy, as we shall see, German Catholics to a large degree forgot about differences with their fellow Germans and made common cause with them. During this attack on Germanism it wasn’t the conservative *Kirchendeutsche*, such as the Old Lutherans, with whom Catholics found the most common ground, but rather the Free-thinking 1848ers. They would use similar lines of defense and similar language, as we can see in this 1871 excerpt from the liberal *Illinois Staats Zeitung*, which also took the same view of the American nation.

We simply deny that English is the language of the country. It is recognized as official because it is the native language of a majority of the inhabitants. And that is all! For more than a million of American citizens German is the native language. The United States are not a part of England. It is true that in the course of time the numerically weakest nationalities have dissolved into the by far stronger English, but that does not mean that all other nationalities must follow the same course. The Germans at any rate will not do so. Their co-nationals have had a great part in the original settlement of the country; Germans have populated Pennsylvania and the Mohawk Valley possibly before the ancestors of Wilbur F. Storey had emigrated from England. If they were all living together in one state, like the Italians in Switzerland in the Canton of Tessin, then even the most hidebound Anglo-Celt would not think of disputing the designation of German as one of the American languages of the country.\textsuperscript{168}

In his work, \textit{Understanding Nationalism}, Patrick Hogan discusses two different models of nationalism that are relevant here. In the “alignment model”, the nation is imagined along lines of a common language, ethnicity, religion, and so forth. And because all categories usually cannot be aligned, nationalists, or nation-builders, usually focus on a few selected characteristics. This was the model of the nation envisioned by Nativists, for example, in the mid- and late-nineteenth century, and is still envisioned today by many nationalists all over the world.

\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Illinois Staats Zeitung}, July 21, 1871.
The second model is one that “accepts the diversity of identity categories in the nation, but tries to manage that diversity.” These two models of nationhood have often served as a point of tension, especially in immigrant countries such as America or Canada, where the two models have famously been defined as the “melting-pot” on the one hand (dominant in America) and the “mosaic” on the other (dominant in Canada). As Hogan points out, a nation can “sustain a certain amount of internal identity conflict…It is crucial, however, that the conflict not be frequent enough and public enough to inspire large subgroups to reject national identity in favor of some other identity – religious, ethnic, regional, or whatever.” With Jessing’s counter-narrative of German Catholic identity and his rejection of the dominant Anglo-American cultural narrative, the tensions within this internal and multi-layered identity ran pretty high, thus leading to the controversies that took place in the 1880s and 1890s. As Moreau points out in his article “Rise of the (Catholic) American Nation”, these two competing national narratives were incompatible.

This vision of America as a federation of national communities could not co-exist peacefully with the nationalism that developed in the United States after the Civil War. At their best, nationalists conceived of Americans as a unique people, drawn together by something more than common laws, the mere apparatus of a central state, or common commitment to democratic ideals. The vision could be broadly

169 Patrick Colm Hogan, Understanding Nationalism: On Narrative, Cognitive Science, and Identity (Columbus, The Ohio State University Press, 2009), 56.

170 Ibid., 57.
inclusive – racially, ethnically, politically, and geographically. At their worst…nationalists turned xenophobic.\textsuperscript{171}

To ease these tensions, at least in his mind, Jessing, like other German-American Catholics and other immigrants, made a distinction between public and private spheres, in each of which a sort of separate identity could exist. He saw no contradiction between being a full-fledged American and proud German at the same time. This also applied to the religious sphere, where he also saw no contradiction in being a good American Catholic and a proud German. “Diese treue Anhänglichkeit an die katholische Kirche und deren Hierarchie braucht uns jedoch nicht zu verhindern, als Deutsch-Amerikaner unsere Sprache und das deutsche Wesen unserer Voreltern zu achten und zu bewahren. Beide Dinge...können recht gut neben einander bestehen, auch hier in diesen Ver. Staaten.”\textsuperscript{172}

Jon Gjerde describes these parallel developments amongst immigrants in America as “complementary identities”.\textsuperscript{173} But whereas Gjerde argues that there was little or no tension in the construction of these parallel identities, I argue there was quite a bit of tension in the case of Jessing and the conservative German Catholic group of which he was an important representative.


\textsuperscript{172} “Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch,” Ohio Waisenfreund, June 8, 1887, 5.

The clear separation of the two spheres was highlighted by the different approaches to Americanization that German-American Catholics took in each sphere. German-American Catholics were much more willing to Americanize in the public realm than they were in their private religious and cultural realm. Against accusations of disloyalty toward America by old-stock Americans, German-American Catholics were defensive and eager to declare their loyalty to the new adopted homeland. Just as he had proclaimed the loyalty of Catholics to Prussia by fighting in its army, Jessing often remarked that Catholics had fought and died for the Union during the American Civil War, just like Protestants. But a clear distinction must be made between citizenship and membership in a national community, because this distinction defined Jessing’s reconciliation of the conflicting identities. In 1891 Jessing gave a speech to the Central Verein in Louisville explaining the tenets of socialism, and ended the speech, as he did most speeches, with a plea to German Catholics to maintain their Germanism and faith.

_Ich kann euch nur zurufen: haltet fest am deutschen Wesen und an der deutschen Sprache, und überliefert auch euren Kindern und Nachkommen diesen Schatz. Hört nicht auf jene Leute, die euch zurufen, daß ihr Amerikaner sein sollt, und daß ihr deswegen die deutsche Sprache wegwerfen und verachten müsset. Gewiß wollen wir treue Bürger dieses Landes sein...aber dazu gehört durchaus nicht, daß wir die Sprache unserer Väter wegwerfen, die Sprache des größten Kulturvolkes der Welt, die Sprache des Volkes der Denker, die in ihrer Literatur so reiche Schätze der Wissenschaft bürgt. Haltet sie fest und vererbt sie auf eure Kinder, die auch gute_
Jessing’s formula is that one should be a “good citizen of this country,” not an
“American.” When German Catholics were asked by the leaders of the Catholic Church in America to join an American community by compromising their ways and their language, the defense of their German identity, language, and culture is defiant and fierce, and takes on the tone of a life or death struggle for German-American Catholics. Towards the end of his life, however, we can at times find a slightly warmer rhetoric of being American in Jessing’s writings. In this 1897 article, Jessing again makes reference to this famous distinction between the public and private realms, but also uses different language in regard to his American identity.

Wir Deutschen machen einen Unterschied zwischen Deutschländisch und Deutsch. Wir haben Deutschland verlassen und haben mit deutscher Politik nichts mehr zu thun, als da wir von dieses des Oceans Zuschauer sind. Wir sind keine Deutschländer mehr, sondern Amerikaner, aber Deutsche können wir dabei doch sein und wollen wir sein, das heißt, wir wollen unsere Sprache und alles Gute, was mit derselben verbunden ist, beibehalten und unsern Kindern überliefern. Dabei wollen wir die besten Patrioten sein, rechte Amerikaner, uns wohl bewußt, daß die Einrichtung dieses Landes uns volle Freiheit lasse, unsere Sprache, unsere Sitten

174 “Vortrag über die Grundsätze des Sozialismus,” Ohio Waisenfreund, April 22, 1891.
und unsere Gebräuche beizubehalten. Und auch die katholische Kirche steht
diesem unserm Entschlusse nicht entgegen, denn sie, als die allgemeine Kirche,
spricht alle Sprachen. Wie albern klingt es doch, wenn der Irländer O’Rourke
meint, daß “Amerikanisieren” bestehe darin, daß in den Kirchen der Deutschen in
englischer Sprache gepredigt werde!\(^\text{175}\)

Even though Jessing would never waver from his insistence on the right of the Germans
to preserve and perform their language and culture, this explanation reveals a small
concession by him. Earlier in his life he never made an explicit distinction between
“Deutschland” and “Deutsch”, and he rarely, if ever, used the phrase, “Wir sind
Amerikaner” without the word “Deutsch” connected to it with a hyphen, not to mention
his use of the phrase “rechte Amerikaner.” Americanization was happening even with
someone like Jessing, to whatever little degree, as we shall further see in chapter four.
But his mission of cultural and religious maintenance, and resistance to Americanization,
which was in full force in the 1880s, still serves as the defining characteristic of Jessing
on the whole, and it is this which we want to investigate in more detail.

The dispute over German language and culture in the Church reached one of its
boiling points in 1887. The provocation was the publication of a forty-page pamphlet
titled: “The Church and the Various Nationalities in the United States. Are German
Catholics Unfairly Treated?” The pamphlet was written by Reverend John Gmeiner, a
German priest and professor at St Francis Seminary in Milwaukee who edited the

\(^\text{175}\) “Ein Argument der Amerikanisirer beleuchtet,” *Ohio Waisenfreund*, June 23, 1897.
German Catholic periodical Der Seebote. Gmeiner was the most vocal German proponent of a quick Americanization for German Catholics, and would therefore become a sort of Judas figure (“Störenfried”) for Jessing and other conservative German Catholics. In the pamphlet, he argues for a quick assimilation of German Catholics to a dominant, English language Catholic Church for the sake of Catholic unity and the benefit of the Church on the whole. He wrote:

*The Catholic Church is no literary club to foster peculiar linguistic tastes, nor any ethnological society to advance any particular national cause, but a divinely instituted organization to bring men of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, to eternal salvation. She, indeed, encourages the study of languages, as she uses other temporal means, in their relation to her God-given mission – not for the sake of languages themselves...Let our German infidels who ignore the One True God, worship their idol ‘Deutschtum’. To us Catholics our German language is not an object of religious veneration.*

Gmeiner’s pamphlet sparked an outrage amongst more conservative German Catholic leaders and many German Catholic newspaper editors, a number of whom responded with editorial pieces. Jessing’s response was a five-part series of articles in the Waisenfreund during the summer of 1887 titled, “Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch”, in which he counters the arguments of Gmeiner and outlines his ideas on Catholic

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176 Cited in Barry, *Catholic Church and German Americans*, 77.
German-American identity. Always quick to distance himself from the Free-thinkers, Jessing agrees that German Catholics are indeed Catholic first and German second and therefore that the German language is not an object of veneration on their part. At the same time, those who are accustomed to worshipping in the German language should continue to do so and also have the right, and indeed the duty, to pass this tradition on to their children. In response to Gmeiner’s claim that the English language is the strongest bond that should bring Catholics of various nationalities into unity and harmony, Jessing points out that the bond that unites all Catholics of all nations is certainly much stronger than the English or any language, a line of reasoning he certainly did not accept when applied to the German language.

The fact that Reverend Gmeiner wrote the pamphlet in English, made it available to English newspapers, and said it was in the best interest of all German Catholics to keep the dispute out of German Catholic newspapers also triggered a poignant response from Jessing, one which reaffirms Jessing’s fundamental view of the nature of American society. Jessing argues it that it is of no concern to anybody outside the German Catholic community whether German Catholics aim to preserve their language and culture, reaffirming his insular conception of German Catholic community in America:

...denn was geht es dem nur englisch Sprechenden Publikum an, dass wir deutsch-amerikanische Katholiken, die wir alle mit einander entweder Englisch können oder lernen, dabei auch unsere deutsche Sprache und deutsche Sitten beibehalten wollen? ...Kein kirchliches und politisches Gesetz hindert uns hier in diesem Lande,
das wir als unsere Heimat betrachten, wo wir leben und sterben wollen, uns und unsere Kinder deutsche Sprache und deutsche Sitten zu bewahren, und es wird dadurch keines Menschen Recht beeinträchtigt, und am allerwenigsten wird dadurch dem Geiste der katholischen Kirche entgegengetreten, die ja eben, weil sie katholisch ist, alle Völker und alle Sprachen umfasst.  

Again, we see that Jessing’s conception of the United States was closer to the idea of a loosely affiliated confederation of individual states. We could even say it wasn’t terribly different perhaps than the idea of a multi-national empire, such as the Holy Roman Empire or the Catholic Habsburg Empire of his time. The idea that the matter didn’t concern the “English-speaking public” – and with this we can assume it is English-speaking Catholics who are meant here – reveals Jessing’s complete lack of interest in mingling with his “Glaubensbrüder”. Jessing’s attitude towards the English language also often indicated an attitude that considered it a necessary evil in a way. He often spoke of the learning of English as a means, “um vorwärts zu kommen”, and accordingly encouraged his students at the seminary to be bi-lingual by forcing them to alternate languages every two weeks. Learning English was only a means to an end, however, and any further association with it seems to have been completely absent from Jessing’s conceptions of German-American identity.

The ideas of conservatives such as Jessing seemed to encourage a closed and defensive conception of community and they had little use for ideas of a common ground,

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177 “Katholisch und deutschamerikansich,” *Ohio Waisenfreund*, June 15, 1887.
or a public sphere amongst Catholics of different nationalities, at least not one in which different Catholics had to interact much with each other. In response to Gmeiner’s reference to the language situation in the American Catholic Church as a “babylonische Sprachverwirrung”, Jessing again refutes, claiming that such a “babylonische Sprachverwirrung” could only exist “wenn eine Menge von Menschen mit verschiedenen Sprachen dicht zusammengedrängt sind und mit einander Verkehr haben müssen. Das ist aber bei den Katholiken der Ver. Staaten ebenso wenig der Fall, wie bei den Katholiken der ganzen Erde.”

Jessing was not interested in the American Catholic Church’s nation-building project and therefore saw no need for interaction with other nationalities. Jessing’s stance on these internal Church matters also reflects his general assessment of Anglo-American culture and the unsavory prospect of being absorbed into it. In a strange new land marked by its freedom and pluralism, Jessing saw mostly dangers to the German Catholic way of life. These dangers included the great number of non-believers and members of “all kinds of sects”, as well as the “Anglisierung” or “Yankisierung” of Germans. Though it is unclear whether Jessing himself wrote the following excerpt himself or not, it appeared in his paper, and can be taken as representative of the view of cultural interaction which he endorsed. This view acknowledges the inevitability of assimilation, but prescribes a certain path towards it. The good “German American” is contrasted with the bad “Amerikanisierte Deutscher”:

178 “Katholisch und deutschamerikansich,” *Ohio Waisenfreund*, June 15, 1887.
Ein amerikanisierter Deutscher verspottet deutsches Gemüth; er schämt sich seiner Abstammung; er ersticht alle Regungen des Gewissens... Er wird ein eifriges Kirchenmitglied einer amerikanischen Sekte... Sein Sinnen und Trachten ist nur – “Geld machen”. Von Anglo-Amerikanern, von denen er nur die hochachtet, welche am rücksichtslosesten viel Geld erwerben, ohne dafür zu arbeiten, nimmt er nur die schlechten, unwürdigen Eigenschaften an... Ein Deutsch-Amerikaner erhält sich ängstlich die Eigenart seines Volkes, das treue deutsche Gemüth, den Sinn für alles Edle und Schöne. Er verkehrt gern mit gebildeten Anglo-Amerikanern, sucht ihnen ihre ‘Schrullen’ zu nehmen, ihre Vorurteile – besonders durch sein eigenes Beispiel – zu beseitigen. Er sucht vornehmlich alles Gute, was er im Character der Amerikaner willig anerkennt, mit seine Ansichten zu vereinigen, um seinen eigenen Character dadurch zu vervollständigen – vermeidet aber eine Verschmelzung mit allem Uebeln und Nachteiligen... So bilden die Deutsch-Amerikaner in ihrer Sammtheit die beste Klasse der hiesigen Bevölkerung....

Although this article was printed in 1874, in the early days of Jessing’s immigration and newspaper project, his views had not changed a great deal by the 1880s. For Jessing, Gmeiner represented one of the “Anglo-Americanized”, noting that he was born in Germany but brought to the United States at a young age and was “scheinbar ‘anglisirt’”. The instincts of the old Prussian soldier were heightened by Gmeiner’s attack and Jessing’s counter-attack aimed to paint Gmeiner as an “other” to German-American

179 Ohio, March 18, 1874.
Catholics, thereby protecting what Jessing liked to see as the unity of the German Catholic community in America. As the historian Adrian Hastings points out, “[t]here is nearly always a traitor in the story…and this sharpens up the sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’, the absolute duty of loyalty to the horizontal fellowship of ‘us’, and the moral gap separating us from the other, from the threat to our ‘freedom, religion and laws’ that they constitute…”180 These were the same instincts for unity, hierarchy, and authority that Jessing brought to everything he did. The splitting off of the “liberal” Old Catholics (Altkatholiken) in Germany from the Roman Church in the early 1870s after their rejection of papal infallibility, for example, was treated as a heretical act by Jessing, and there was no shortage of articles in the Waisenfreund pointing out the traitor status of these German Catholics and their leader Döllinger.

All of Jessing’s undertakings in the United States were aimed at this goal of German-Catholic unity, organization, and community maintenance, a “Bewegung zu einer Vereinigung der deutschen Katholiken der Ver. Staaten.” He constantly wrote of German Catholic plans, and his involvement in them, to form unity and combat the threats to it, such as the start of the annual Katholikentag by the Priester-Verein, the growing strength of the Central Verein, and the eventual unification of the German Catholic press in a union, for which he himself had drawn up a constitution. Always aware of good standing with the authorities, Jessing goes to great lengths to show that the German Catholic efforts at organization and aid for incoming German immigrants (through Peter Paul Cahensly and the St. Raphaelsverein) had the full backing of the

180 Adrian Hastings, Construction of Nationhood, 190-191.
Bishops and Church hierarchy, that it violated nobody else’s rights, and in which “ist nicht der Schatten einer Widersetzlichkeit gegen die bestehenden Kirchengesetze zu entdecken.”

The most effective and damaging way to ostracize Gmeiner, to Jessing’s mind, was to paint him as not only “Anglicized” but also “un-German” and “Protestantized”. In this condemnation we see the two main targets of Jessing’s counter-narrative. In an obvious appeal to nationalist sentiment, Jessing claims that Gmeiner was guilty of “superficiality” and the lack of that famous “German thoroughness” in his analyses of the German-American situation. German-Catholic identity is reinforced for the community of Jessing’s readers (of which there are 35,000 at this point) by “othering” Gmeiner and implicitly those that share his views. Not only does the “Anglo-Americanized” Gmeiner “have no idea of” German thoroughness, a German thoroughness, that according to Jessing “shines throughout the entire world and will last until the end of time”, but he also uses a “Protestant tactic” by using extracted bits of data and ignoring the whole. As Protestants do with the Bible, Gmeiner has done by citing the examples of various German-American communities of the northwest that have switched to the usage of English in their parishes.

Jessing also attributes Gmeiner’s lack of German thoroughness to the fact that he was raised in America and therefore did not learn it in Germany, thereby demoting Gmeiner’s German pedigree and revealing Jessing’s condescension towards Anglo-American culture. To Gmeiner’s statement that he was not “burdened by any views I

\[181\] “Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch,” *Ohio Waisenfreund*, June 1, 1887, 5.
have imported from Germany, having made all experiences I possess in America“, Jessing responds with the boastful claim that these imported views are not a burden but a virtue. Contrasting this Anglicized absence of thoroughness and logic, Jessing informs the reader who the possessors of this virtue are:

Gerade wir deutsche Katholiken sowohl in Deutschland selbst, wie in irgend welchen anderen Ländern, „wo die deutsche Zunge klingt und Gott im Himmel Lieder singt“, wir sind die rechten Träger der deutschen Gründlichkeit, die mit klarem Auge und mit Umsicht die Dinge anschaut und mit zwingender Logik dann das Urtheil spricht.\textsuperscript{182}

The rhetoric of Jessing not only separates “us” from “them”, but bolsters the national and religious pride of German Catholics and connects them to their brethren in Germany and across the world, creating a global and imagined, yet closed community. Gmeiner and the like have been Anglicized, lack “our” German traits, and to boot are also not good Catholics, since they use Protestant reasoning.

When considering the combination of factors – the strong numerical, organizational, and intellectual position of the German element in the United States; the nineteenth century “nationalization of the masses”; the strong missionary zeal of the Catholic Church at the time; Jessing’s own background; and the inherent defensiveness of diaspora existence – it is in many ways not surprising that Jessing felt a strong impetus to

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.
preserve the only way of life he knew and view it as a life or death struggle. Jessing’s language use in these matters, which can be described as a call to arms, belies primarily fear. It was fear of losing his way of life, his identity. To justify his position of a fierce defense of German customs, Jessing often reported cases where other German-American communities had suffered the fate of assimilation and a loss of their identity. In describing two German settlements in New York that had completely abandoned their Germanism in exchange for “Yankee culture” and the English language, Jessing believes only the bad characteristics of the culture were adopted. “Das Deutschtum ist dort todt ganz und gar; alle amerikanischen Unsitten hat jenes Volk von deutscher Abstammung angenommen, und wenig von den Vorzügen des englischen Elements.”

Jessing’s culture war mentality and language come to full force at the end of this article. He describes the program of the Americanizers as nothing short of war, and claims they wish for the eradication of the German language.

\[Jahrzehnte lang haben wir deutsch-amerikanische Katholiken mehr oder minder heftig den stillen Krieg, welchen, durch Verhältnisse begünstigt, eine gewisse mächtige Partei gegen unsere deutsche Sprache und Sitte geführt hat, mit Geduld und ohne Murren ertragen... Da nun aber Professor Gmeiner verlangt, daß dieser Krieg, der auf Ausrottung der deutschen Sprache und Sitte abzielt, mit Gewalt soll geführt werden, so wacht endlich der deutsche Michael auf und wehrt sich mit\]

\[183\] “Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch,” Ohio Waisenfreund, June 1, 1887, 5.
In differentiating the current German-American Catholics of his day with the earlier groups who had lost all their Germanism, Jessing continues his call to arms, with more appeals to German nationalism and even classism. The newer German-American Catholics are not part of the lower classes who escaped misery in Germany, but rather representatives of all classes “des deutschen, mächtig emporstrebenden Culturvolkes.” Another major difference to previous generations, as Jessing points out, are the modern capabilities of mass media that allow the “regsten geistigen Verkehr mit unseren deutschen Stammesgenossen in der alten Welt.” (Ibid.) Again we are made aware of the significance of the spread of print media in the creation of this imagined community that stretched across the ocean and across the entire United States – a significance Jessing was also very well aware of. He continued, that “[a]uch sind wir heut’ zu Tage nicht mehr wie im vorigen Jahrhunderte abgesperrt von der alten verlassenen Heimat, von Deutschland, sondern durch die Erfindungen der Neuzeit ist uns Deutschland so nahe gerückt, wie das eine Ende unseres Landes dem andern ist.” (Ibid.) The linking with the old country is of primary importance for this story of transnational identity. Despite what Jessing wrote in 1897, which we saw above, that German-American Catholic are only “observers” of political life in Germany, the fact was that Jessing continued to look back to Germany for influence, often reprinting articles and editorials form Catholic periodicals in Germany.
The argument of the German-American Catholics was that it wasn’t German nationalism that they were promoting, but rather that they wanted to retain their language and church culture for the sake of ministering to their people. They argued that with the loss of the German language and customs, the loss of their religion was inevitable. In 1894 he wrote:

_We, together with all discerning Catholics of German stock in the United States, stand up for the German language and for good German customs not out of ‘Germanism’, not out of a lack of American patriotism, but because we know and realize that through a vigorous suppression and repression of the German language of the Church and our fellow countrymen, a great injustice will be done because many people will thereby be estranged from religion...After the elimination of the German language among Catholics, the Church would have no means to instruct and convert the great multitude of German non-Catholics._

And Jessing pointed to history to back this claim up. He argued that 3 million German-American Catholics had left the Church, more than the number who had remained faithful to it (2 million). And he cited the German-American Catholics in New York as an example. “Zum Theil sind sie sind gar nicht mehr erkennbar, weil sie ihre Sprache,

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184 _Ohio Waisenfreund_, January 12, 1894, 4-5.

185 “Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch,” _Ohio Waisenfreund_, June 1, 1887, 5. Jessing expected the German community in America to grow even bigger through an even bigger influx of immigration in the very near future, because there was “the smell of gun powder in the air” in Europe, meaning he was expecting a big European war to occur. He was right.
ihre Sitten und in vielen Fällen sogar ihren Namen gewechselt haben und dann mit
diesem Abwerfen alles Dessen, was sie zu Deutschen machte, warfen sie auch ihre
Religion von sich.\textsuperscript{186}

The German Catholic loss of members was not considered unique. For the Catholic Church at large in the United States, some Germans claimed that about half of the fourteen million immigrants who were Catholic when arriving in their new homeland were believed to have left the Church afterward. But the statistics on these numbers are unreliable, according to many scholars, and some even argue that immigrants became more religious after their arrival in the United States.\textsuperscript{187}

The Americanizers argued that many immigrants, and especially the children of immigrants, left the Church because they were assimilating into American culture. As to the reasons that many Catholics, including Irish, French, and others, had left the Church in America, Jessing does not comment. He is only interested in those reasons particular to the loss of German Catholics. Of the first two historical reasons that Jessing cites from an 1847 source, namely the lack of German-speaking priests and the settlement of new immigrants in places where there are no priests, Jessing says the first is no longer the case (due to the influx of German-speaking priests from Germany during the Kulturkampf)

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{187} These numbers have famously been disputed in Gerald Shaughnessy’s landmark work, \textit{Has the Immigrant Kept the Faith}? He argues that significant numbers were not lost at all. Gerald Shaughnessy, \textit{Has the Immigrant Kept the Faith}? (New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1969). See pages 250-251. Cross states that the Germans claimed even greater losses, despite unreliable statistics. “Unhindered by reliable Statistics, they regularly asserted that as much as two-thirds of the potential Catholic population of America had been lost,” \textit{Liberal Catholicism}, 26. Finke and Starke claim that Catholic immigrants from Germany, Italy, and Poland were only nominal Catholics in their homelands and became more religious in America. See Roger Finke and Rodney Stark. \textit{The Churc}hing of America, 1776-1990 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 115.
and the second will soon be remedied with the setup of an organization for this purpose (the Leo Haus). As for the suppression of the German language and German being, Jessing, being diplomatic, does not point fingers, but simply says that this is how the system in the United States developed and will continue to develop. But he argues that this suppression of the Germans is the main reason for the exodus of German-American Catholics and claims that all German Catholic newspapers, and “nine-tenths” of German priests in the country, agree on this. “Der Mangel an deutsch sprechenden Priester und die anglisirende Kirchenpolitik, die vor vierzig Jahren viel schlimmer war, als heute, hat den Abfall jener Millionen bewirkt.”

Against Gmeiner’s claims that many German Catholics were leaving the Church because of the influence of the Free-thinkers, Jessing counters that if this true, the reason was that the Free-thinkers spoke their German language, while a German Church was not available to them. Otherwise the radicals would have no success in recruiting Catholics, he claims.

Wäre es nämlich möglich, daß eine Gesellschaft von radikalen und religionslosen Menschen, die aus Deutschland flüchten mußten, hier in den Ver. Staaten eine solche geistige Macht auf deutsche Katholiken ausüben könnten, so lag der Grund offenbar darin, daß sie mit den deutschen Katholiken die gleiche Sprache redeten und schrieben. Jene Radikalen haben hier Unheil genug angerichtet, aber ihr Einfluß ist nicht die Hauptursache, daß so viele deutsche katholische Familien im

188 “Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch,” Ohio Waisenfreund, June 22, 1887, 4.
Jessing’s assessment that the lack of “religious leadership” had led to people leaving the Church reveals his old world, ultramontane, and authoritarian conception of religious life, and his fundamental misunderstanding of religion in the new world. Much more plausible is that German Catholics who fell into the arms of the 1848ers did so out of a wish to be a part of a dynamic American society and culture, in a way that the conservative Catholic milieu did not cultivate. The Free-thinkers were well known to have been much more progressive and open-minded in their approach to American culture and the use of the English language, as is evident by the many newspapers they started and their active participation in American political life, exemplified by the famous German-American Senator from Missouri, Carl Schurz.

But curiously, after all his vehement opposition to Gmeiner and his message of Americanization, through three and a half long articles, Jessing concedes that Gmeiner is ultimately not wrong, that the yielding of German to English is inevitable. Jessing realized that such a “Verschmelzung” would occur in America. He wrote:

> Im Ganzen ist gegen die von Professor Gmeiner darin ausgesprochene Ansicht Nichts einzuwenden, und die allmäßige Verschmelzung aller verschiedenen

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189 “Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch,” Ohio Waisenfreund, June 22, 1887, 4.
The fact that Jessing foresaw this process taking “centuries” either belies his underestimation of the pull of American culture and nationhood or is simply a self-serving method of avoiding the issue in order to continue in his mission as he wishes. At the end of the day the John Gmeiners and other Americanizers in the Church were proven right. The American Catholic Church grew together in the English language and American culture, and it didn’t take centuries, but only decades.

Almost as curious was the fact that Jessing, to support his concession, quoted the famous German-American Free-thinker, Friedrich Kapp, who edited a radical newspaper and also argued for a quick assimilation of the German-Americans. Jessing even groups Kapp with Gmeiner and all “vernünftig denkenden Deutsch-Amerikaner”, without a trace of that distinctive irony of which Jessing was so fond. It is curious because, even if Jessing was conceding the point that assimilation was inevitable, the spirit of Kapp’s ideas about German life in America is not the spirit of Jessing’s view as seen in his entire body of work. The passage of Kapp’s which Jessing quotes seems a direct condemnation

190 “Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch,” Ohio Waisenfreund, June 22, 1887, 4.

191 Kapp believed that “vollständige Verenglischung der Deutsch-amerikaner sei unvermeidlich und nicht zu bedauern.” But not all radicals were for assimilation. Karl Heinzen, for example, was fiercely opposed to it. See Heinz Kloß, Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums: die Geschichte einer unvollendeten Volksgruppe (Berlin: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1937), 218-219.
of Jessing’s conservative and culture war mentality. It is also a well written manifesto of sorts for the peaceful collaboration and cooperation between the Germans and the Anglo-Saxons in the United States, and worth quoting in length to contrast its spirit with what we have seen of Jessing’s rhetoric.

*Im vorigen Jahrhunderte gelangte die Union zur Gründung des freien Staates; das gegenwärtige verlangt, daß er mit dem ihm entsprechenden freien Geiste erfüllt wird. Jedes europäische Volk, welches seine Söhne hinübersendet, bringt ihm in seinem physischen und moralischen Eigenschaften ein besonders werthvolles Kapital, welches es zum Gesamtvermögen der jungen amerikanischen Nation beisteuert, eine ihm eigenhümliche, am Baume seiner Geschichte gezeugte Frucht. Die beiden verwandten germanischen Stämme, der angelsächsische und deutsche, treffen sich nach fünfhundertjährigen Trennung wieder auf dem amerikanischen Continent zur gemeinsamen Arbeit, zur Erweiterung des Reiches der Freiheit. Der Deutsche gibt sein reiches Geistes- und Gemüthsleben zu den Culturelementen, welche sich auf dem Boden der neuen Welt frei vermählen und stets höhere Bildung erzeugen...*

*Nicht in der Absonderung von den amerikanischen Bildungselementen liegt das Heil der deutschen Einwanderung, nicht in phantastischen Träumen von einem in Amerika zu gründenden deutschen Staate, einer deutschen Utopia, kann sie gedeihen, nicht abseits vom Wege, sondern mitten im Leben und Streben ihrer amerikanischen Mitbürger ist ihr eine erfolgreiche uns Segen bringende Thätigkeit*
vorgezeichnet. Eine deutsche Nation in der amerikanischen kann es nicht sein, aber
den reichen Inhalt ihres Gemüthsleben, die Schätze ihrer Gedankenwelt kann sie
im Kampfe für die politischen und allgemeinen Interessen in die Waagschale
werfen, und ihr Einfluß wird um so tiefer gehen, ein um so größeres Feld der
Bethätigung sich verschaffen, je weniger tendenziös sie auftritt, je mehr sie aber
zugleich an dem festhält, was Deutschland der Welt Großes und Schönes gegeben
hat.192

We should not make too much of Jessing’s concession. Compared with this
manifesto, Jessing’s approach throughout the years on the whole did amount to the
“Absonderung” of German Catholics and would certainly fall under the category of
tendentious. Despite his concession, Jessing still claims that these men are nevertheless
making “eine grobe Fehler,” the greatest of which is that they want to artificially speed
up a natural process, advancing this “naturgemäßen Vorgang mit Gewalt.” There are
certainly things that can be said in favor of this argument of Jessing. His main principle,
“daß gerade die Sprache der Gebetbücher, welche das Volk in Händen hat, jene Sprache
ist, in welcher ihm die Religion am zugänglichsten ist, und in welcher gepredigt werden
muß,” is not unreasonable. But when considering Jessing’s life work and rhetoric of
numerous decades, the overriding impression that is made is that his insistence on the
long-lasting natural process of assimilation was simply lip service to the idea and a self-

192 “Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch,” Ohio Waisenfreund, June 22, 1887, 5.
serving way to push the problem off onto future generations while his generation could continue the fight for cultural preservation and the perpetuation of a counter-narrative.

Jessing’s view of the interaction of German-Americans and Anglo-Americans is one of competition, unlike Kapp’s, which is of collaboration. Jessing does not see the formation of a new American culture as one composed of the various elements in the country, but rather as one in which the eventual consumption of the peripheral cultures by the dominant culture occurs. He calls it the “process of gradual Anglicization, which will happen all on its own.” As we have seen, he also believed only the worst characteristics of the dominant culture were adopted by the assimilated cultures, belying his distrust of the whole enterprise as motivation in his fight against it.

Although Jessing believed that the assimilation of diaspora groups was a natural and inevitable process that was proven by history, he resisted it all the same. Maybe he resisted it so fiercely precisely because he believed in its inevitability. In an 1885 issue of his Waisenfreund, we catch a glimpse of what was perhaps a role model in Jessing’s idea of maintaining cultural integrity, the original diaspora, the Jewish people. Responding to a reader’s question in regard to the Jewish people, Jessing comments on the uniqueness of the Jewish people in their ability to maintain their distinctive culture.

_Sicherlich ist die Erhaltung des jüdischen Volkes unter den Völkern der Erde eine der merkwürdigen Erscheinungen in der ganzen Geschichte der Menschheit._

_Niemals hat ein Volk, welches sein Land verläßt und sich unter andere Völker zerstreut, seine Nationalität bewahren können, sondern früher oder später haben_
Jessing waxes poetically about the Jewish people and their distinctiveness, belying his admiration for this group of people who were essentially the “proto-nation” and who maintained their nation despite exile and diaspora life. “Das Dasein des jüdischen Volkes unter den Völkern der Erde ist gerade so wunderbar, als wenn ein kleiner Bach sein Bett im Weltmeer hätte, dasselbe nach allen Richtungen durchliefe, und dabei doch immer die Eigenthümlichkeit seines Wassers bewahrte.”194 It’s not a stretch to imagine that Jessing wished the Germans could be more like the Jews in this regard and therefore fought so hard to heighten their religious and national consciousness.

Jessing’s relationship towards other nationalities, especially the Irish, is also an important factor to consider in Jessing’s mission of German Catholic cultural maintenance and resistance to Americanization. It was also characterized by its competitiveness and defensiveness. In an 1897 article in the English language Catholic Telegraph, a certain O’Rourke (June 10, 1897) bemoans the fact that Catholics are seen as foreigners in America, and goes on to claim this is not the fault of the American government or people, who are the most liberal and just in the world, but rather it’s the

193 “Auskunft”, Ohio Waisenfreund, July 1, 1885.

194 Ibid.
fault of the foreign Catholics (Germans) who refuse to adopt “the language of the land”, English, as their church language. He also blames the loss of ten million Catholics in the United States on this foreign image. Jessing counters by throwing the blame back at the Irish. The exaggerated nationalism of “our brethren from the green island,” seen by all on St. Patrick’s Day when they parade their national colors all through the streets, “contributes considerately more” to the foreign image of the Catholic Church in America.¹⁹⁵

When pointing out that German Catholics are always obedient to the Church hierarchy and never cause a ruckus, Jessing opposes the German virtue with their coreligionists. “Wir erinnern uns nicht, daß irgendwo in den letzten zwanzig Jahren unter deutschen Katholiken solche Krawalle und solche Widersetzlichkeiten gegen die Autorität eines Bischofes vorgenommen wären, wie sich leider an mehreren Orten unter katholischen Polen und in letzter Zeit unter katholischen Irländern in der St. Stephans Gemeinde zu New York sich gezeigt haben.”¹⁹⁶

Other German Catholic priests took a different, more cooperative, and temperate approach towards the Irish and towards the Americans. Travelling to Jessing’s home town of Münster in 1885 to give a report on the state of the Catholic Church in the United States at the Katholikentag, Bishop Martin Marty, O.S.B., Vicar Apostolic of the Dakotas, spoke with much more understanding for the German Catholics’ main


¹⁹⁶ “Katholisch und deutschamerikanisch,” Ohio Waisenfreund, June 8, 1887, 5.
counterpart in the American Church. He praised the work of German Catholics in their establishment of schools, parishes, societies, social aid institutions, and a press, but went on to also praise the Irish:

...the missionary work and growth of the Church in the United States, through the efforts of the Irish, through their colonies, has universally a peaceful nature. They amalgamate easily with the Americans, and the influence which they exercise is always for the welfare of the Church...

Marty painted a different picture than men like Jessing. He told his audience in Münster that there was increasing cooperation between Irish and German Catholics in America, and that the Irish, not accustomed to building schools because they were forbidden to for hundreds of years, were now imitating this habit of the Germans. Bishop Marty also spoke much more favorably of the American character than what one could read in newspapers like Jessing’s.

The American is reasonable in his judgments; he is not intolerant; he does not believe that he knows and understands everything; he willingly listens and accepts things from others... The American, because he has freedom, is a lover of order, a friend of the law; accordingly he observes that the Catholic Church adheres to principles and has laws which have universal worth... The American is an empirical man of experience, not of theory. He sees effectiveness, results. If he

197 Cited in Barry, Catholic Church and German-Americans, 38.
realizes that the Catholic Church really makes men better, then he will also be a Catholic...\textsuperscript{198}

Archbishop John B. Purcell of Cincinnati, the man who ordained Jessing into the priesthood, also held a more accommodating and temperate view of America and his Church’s position in it. Such views reflected the older tradition of the Catholic Church’s more harmonious relationship toward American values of pluralism and freedom, dating back to the time of John Carroll.

... all we want is a free field and no favor. Truth is mighty and will prevail; and as we are here side by side with every sect and denomination of Christians, it is for the people to judge which of us is right, which of us teaches that which is most conformable to the Holy Scriptures. If they approve our religion, they will embrace it; if not they will stay away from it. I believe that is the best theory.\textsuperscript{199}

Jessing could at times also take a very positive view of his new homeland, although not in the area of religion. Despite his antagonism toward the Americanizers’ project and his heightened Germanism during this period, there is another, more subtle side to his diaspora story, in which admiration and jealousy are mixed in with fear and competition. Even in Jessing’s condemnations of Prussia we could detect a certain

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 39.

admiration that existed simultaneously. Jessing wore his Prussian war medals pinned to his frock out of his strong attachment to the military life and his fond memories of it, but likely also out of this admiration for the new and impressive embodiment of German unity and strength. In the American context, his admiration was less subtle, but no less mixed with antagonism.

The one area in which Jessing could not hide his enthusiasm for the new world was its technology, innovation, and machinery. If Alexander Hamilton’s observation was accurate, that the genius of the American people included “a peculiar aptitude for mechanic improvements…,” then Jessing was among kindred spirits in the new world. Higham claims that the love of technology went hand in hand with the American “ideological cast of mind”, which ran counter to the existence of strong local identities, since it had been precisely the local particularistic identities that had been “the principal obstacle to industrialization and modernization.” This aspect of modernization was adopted as a means by the Catholic Church to spread its ultramontane movement, and it was certainly a major component of the growing nature of American life.

As we have seen, strong attachments to a local community or region, such as Jessing had had to his native Münster, became less and less a part of his life. He doesn’t seem to have developed an emotional attachment to his new home of Columbus, Ohio, and as we saw with his newspaper, he quickly gave up on the idea of it being a local community periodical. Already of an ideological state of mind, Jessing was well suited


201 Ibid., 20.
for a national mission. As for Jessing’s love of technology and innovation, there are many examples of this, from the many enthusiastic write-ups about the printing presses he used to the educational articles about all sorts of mechanical inventions. One could also often find a criticism in Jessing’s newspaper about the poor state of local infrastructure and how it could be improved. Giving advice on how to improve the roads and other things in Pomeroy in an issue of the *Ohio*, Jessing claims that they are things “that every city in civilized countries also possesses.”

In the early days of his immigration, Jessing often enthusiastically commented on the state of practical life in America, although in his descriptions one already see the tensions and contradictions of his mixed feelings on the whole. Jessing praises America for its industriousness and liberty, but he also criticizes the religious culture of his new homeland:

*...in allen Dingen des Geschäftslebens, in Maschinenbau, in der Anwendung neuer Erfindungen und Entdeckungen, die auf das praktische Leben abzielen, kann kein Staat Europas, selbst das stolze Britannien sich messen mit dem freien Amerika. In politischer Hinsicht steht unsere unabhängige Republik, bei aller Corruption im Einzelnen, dennoch als Unikum da, und in keinem Lande erfreut sich der einzelne Bürger einer größeren Freiheit, als in Amerika. Doch gehen wir auf das religiöse* 

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202 *Ohio*, May 2, 1873, 4.
His praise of American innovative and technological prowess, as well as the political liberty in the United States, reflects an admiration for America that Jessing seems to have had from the moment he set foot in the country and even before that. Even in his letters dating back to 1860, Jessing wrote with a subtle excitement about the opportunities he might find in America. Jessing’s preoccupation with machinery, technology, and the practical life is not something one might expect to see in a Catholic newspaper, but sooner in a liberal one. One American Catholic priest, the famous progressive Isaac Hecker, remarked in 1869 that the Church was opposed to the doctrine which held that “the chief end of man is to establish railway and telegraph lines.”

The high regard for technological progress and mass education on the one hand and simultaneous ultramontane piety and obedience on the other was a particularly American blend of temporal and spiritual, and Jessing was well suited to this mixture, perhaps owing to his unconventional path to the priesthood, having had the careers of a soldier and language teacher prior.

Jessing’s vague reference to the shortcomings of American religious life perhaps represents a reluctance to offend his new homeland, having only been here for two years.

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203 Der Wahrheitsfreund, July 14, 1870.

at that time, and with it those whom he would try to bring together in his mission. As we have seen, Jessing’s ideal political scenario was that of a Catholic empire or confederation. In this same article he writes of the strides the Catholic Church had made in the United States, but also wrote of the work left to do to achieve this goal.

_Aber welch ‘unermeßliche Arbeit bleibt der katholischen Kirche noch übrig, bevor unsere große Republik, die aus so vielen heterogenen Elementen zusammengesetzt ist und wo die Bevölkerung im beständigen Fluß sich befindet, katholisch genannt werden kann! Doch unverzagt schauen alle Katholiken in die Zukunft, denn die Verehrung des göttlichen Heilandes ist auf unserer Seite: Alles soll und wird früher oder später ein Hirt und eine Heerde werden._

Jessing’s counter-narrative of national identity saw religion as the vehicle for the coming together of all into “one shepherd and one flock,” but the dominant narrative, not only in America but on a global scale, was that of nationalism. The alignment of nations, or ethnicities, with states, was also occurring in the United States. America had been made, now Americans had to be made, and it was under the banner of the nation that unity would be found. As a missionary priest with European, pseudo-restorative and ultramontane sensibilities, Jessing sees the American religious landscape as a detriment as well as an opportunity for the spread of Catholicism. In his optimistic, grand, and perhaps naïve vision for this young country, he compared the spread of Catholicism and

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205 Ibid.
the building of churches in the United States to the spread of Catholicism in Europe many centuries earlier, again envisioning a sort of multi-national empire united in the Catholic religion. Despite his appreciation of American religious freedom, we can point to numerous aspects that he found lacking in American religious culture. The lack of privilege that the Church enjoyed vis-à-vis the state, the Protestant dominance of the religious mood of the country, and the general prevalence of liberalism and materialism that colored American life were certainly amongst the most important.

Jessing’s view of the separation of church and state is therefore similarly a bit vague. In an article in which he criticizes the Liberal claim that the separation is the cornerstone of liberty and freedom, Jessing gives his standard response, claiming this separation is ok for here and now, but it’s not an ideal setup. “Es ist die gänzliche Trennung von Kirche und Staat nicht für alle Länder und Verhältnisse der beste Zustand, wenn das gegenwärtig auch für unsere Verhältnisse so ist.”206 This, not surprisingly, was right in line with the official Catholic position on the issue given from Rome. In his 1895 encyclical, Longinqua Oceani, in which he condemned certain liberal and “American” trends in the Church, Pope Leo XIII wrote this about the separation of church and state (to American Bishops):

Yet...it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America,

206 “Die Liberalen,” Ohio Waisenfreund, June 28, 1876.
dissevered and divorced. The fact that Catholicity with you is in good condition, nay, is even enjoying a prosperous growth, is by all means to be attributed to the fecundity with which God has endowed His Church, in virtue of which unless men or circumstances interfere, she spontaneously expands and propagates herself; but she would bring forth more abundant fruits if, in addition to liberty, she enjoyed the favor of the laws and the patronage of the public authority.  

In his refuting of liberal claims that religious oaths violate the separation of church and state, infringe on individuals’ rights, and are ultimately dangerous for the republic’s future health, Jessing states that exactly the opposite would be a danger for the nation, although with some reluctance. “Durch die Verbannung aller Religion aus den Staatsanstalten geschieht den Insassen derselben Unrecht und durch die Abschaffung des Eides entsteht die größte Gefahr für die Republik, wenigstens eine viel größere als durch die Beibehaltung desselben.” The fact that Jessing states this opinion somewhat reluctantly reveals his double-mindedness and uncertainty on the matter. He normally argued in favor of the separation of church and state as Catholic interests were generally served by this. But here we see Jessing taking the position often promoted by Protestants, a position that was (and is) in and of itself a contradictory one, since it argued for

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208 “Die Liberalen”, *Ohio Waisenfreund*, June 28, 1876.
religious freedom but at the same time for a role of religion in public life.\textsuperscript{209} The Catholic conundrum was not too different, and in the twentieth century the two confessional narratives would begin to verge together and share the same conundrum.\textsuperscript{210}

Jessing didn’t understand the connection of liberalism and liberty in American life, railing against the former while praising and fighting for the latter (especially when it was the Church’s liberty). At the heart of the matter was not only his underestimation of American nationalism, but also his fundamental misunderstanding of the religious mood and culture in the new world. It also hampered his mission. Later, in 1885, during one his historical denunciations of Protestantism, Jessing frustratingly wrote: “Man mag dieses tausend Mal erklären, so hat es doch wenig Wirkung.”\textsuperscript{211}

The questions I aimed to answer here were: How did Jessing reconcile the Catholic religion with American culture and society? How did he reconcile his Germanism with the American national project? How did he interact with the dominant narrative of American culture? Did he promote a positive interaction of German Catholics with the culture surrounding them, or did he see the surrounding culture as hostile and encourage German-Catholics to hide from it? Was he like the American Catholics who felt that America was uniquely suited to Catholicism and whose greatest goals were a Catholic Americanism and an American Catholicism, or did he have more in


\textsuperscript{210} See Moreau, “Rise of the (Catholic) American Nation.”

\textsuperscript{211} “Das Sektenwesen,” \textit{Ohio Waisenfreund}, May 6, 1885.
common with men like Father Anton Walburg of Cincinnati, who attributed all the Church’s problems, including the loss of its members, to the radical anti-Catholicism of American culture, and whose disparaging view of American culture is summed up in the words: “a hotbed of fanaticism, intolerance, and radical ultra-views on matters of politics and religion. All the vagaries of spiritualism, Mormonism, free-lovism, prohibition, infidelity, and materialism, generally breed in the American nationality. Here also we find dissimulation and hypocrisy.”

Jessing was somewhere in the middle of the two poles. Although he was often critical of Anglo-American culture, he certainly did not disseminate the sort of attitude that is contained in the above vituperation. Jessing recognized that Anglo-American culture had some good qualities, even if he was pessimistic about the adaptation of these during assimilation. Although he seemed to realize that the “melting” of cultures would eventually occur, he resisted it out of fear and liked to think of it happening at some unknown and distant time in the future. He certainly did not want to see it happen in his time. His sense of German pride was heightened because the already defensive and vulnerable position of the diaspora group was further agitated by the rhetoric of forced Americanization. Jessing reacted to the programs of Americanization and Americanism by perpetuating the counter-narrative that America was not and did not need to be a homogenous culture. He viewed the United States as a multi-national confederation in which the Germans had every right to maintain and promote their language and culture.

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212 Cross, Liberal Catholicism, 26.
The Americanization project was seen as an assault on everything German Catholics held dear, on all they knew. For Jessing and like-minded German Catholics, it was nothing short of a cultural war, and they were about as inclined to replace their Germanness with imposed Englishness as Germans living in Germany would be to an invading and occupying English army. Their experiences as an oppressed minority faith in the old country, along with their overall view of the modern and new world as one filled with threats and enemies, strengthened their resolve to persist in their identity. Jessing had never known a role different than that of perpetual outsider. At the same time, however, German Catholics in America genuinely wanted to become Americans, even if their behavior looked like stubborn nationalist particularism to their detractors. And even if they were not aware of it, they were in a way becoming American, not based on the dictates of others, but on their own terms. With the help of national myths and narratives – partly their own, partly existing myths that they would latch onto – Jessing sowed the seeds of participation in the national conversation and contributed to the long process of finding national belonging.
I think that the Catholic religion has erroneously been regarded as the natural enemy of democracy.  
Alexis de Tocqueville

Mögen sie auch Reden halten in Philadelphia, aber einen Culturkampf werden sie doch nicht in Amerika heraufbeschwören.  
Joseph Jessing

Chapter 4

Seeking National Belonging – The Counter-narrative

To find national belonging in their new homeland, German-American Catholics and other ethnic groups needed to feel some ownership of the country. They needed to know that their kinsmen or ancestors in some way or another played a role in the development of America. In short, they needed a myth that would justify a rightful claim to national belonging – not just citizenship – without sacrificing their ethnic identity. If Benedict Anderson was right about the nature of nations, that even “if nation-states are


214 “Die Liberalen”, Ohio Waisenfreund, June 28, 1876.
widely conceded to be ‘new’ and ‘historical’, the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past…”215 – if a nation’s past lives in the present, then claiming participation in or ownership of this past is indeed crucial to participation in the present, and future.

Just as in today’s America, where myths about the founding fathers and founding documents are at the center of political and religious disputes, late nineteenth-century America also constructed and perpetuated historical myths in its continued search for national identity. After the national traumas of the Civil War, sectionalism, and slavery, there was a need to get America back on track towards its “destiny”, and the industrial boom of the Reconstruction period helped the national psyche in the regaining of a sense of national purpose. As Ben Railton points out, in the final quarter of the nineteenth century, “American culture returned to and reified a monologic national historical narrative, a unifying, triumphalist vision of the past and its progressive relationship to the nation’s present prosperity and future glory.”216

Amidst the debates concerning church and state and the religious or secular nature of America’s identity that have largely characterized the American national dialogue since its beginning, there is one narrative strand of American nationalism that most seem to agree on – that America holds a special place in the world, and perhaps to an only slightly lesser extent, that this special place has been ordained by Providence. Today captured in the phrase “American Exceptionalism”, the idea of America’s special mission

215 Anderson, Imagined Communities, 11.
216 Railton, Contesting the Past, “Introduction”. 
has a long history, and to better understand the destiny of diaspora groups it’s helpful to take a brief look at the history of what one historian has called American “providentialism”. In his book, *Providence and the Invention of the United States 1607-1876*, Nicholas Guyatt shows that the idea of American “providentialism” – a combination of the ideas of manifest destiny, millennialism, and American mission – has its roots in British religious nationalism and goes back to the colonial days, before America was even a nation.\(^{217}\) The dominant American version of this religious nationalism, or “nationalistic theology”\(^ {218}\), started in New England, where, R. Laurence Moore points out, the Puritans “began writing a sort of history as soon as they disembarked from the *Mayflower*, and their New England descendants for a long time had an unchallenged hand in constructing America’s national past.”\(^ {219}\)

During the middle of the nineteenth century the myth of American providentialism took its most visible form in calls for territorial expansion, which gave the myth a new name – “manifest destiny”.\(^ {220}\) The myth was propagated by men like the Presbyterian clergyman Lyman Beecher, who believed that the arrival of the millennium

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would result from the (evangelical) Christianization of the West.\textsuperscript{221} Fiercely anti-Catholic – “No human means can so certainly meet and repel this invasion of Catholic Europe as a competent evangelical ministry and revivals of religion”\textsuperscript{222} – Beecher argued for a nation strengthened by the unifying mission of manifest destiny: “The integrity of the Union demands special exertions to produce in the nation a more homogenous character and bind us together with firmer bonds.”\textsuperscript{223}

In his book, \textit{Redeemer Nation}, Ernest Lee Tuveson expounds on the religious origins of the idea of manifest destiny and agrees with the wide consensus that the narrative is Anglo-Protestant in origin. He argues that it stems from Protestant millennial theology and that its expression represents a reversal of the Augustinian interpretation of history, according to which the City of God exists separate from the City of Man.\textsuperscript{224} In nineteenth-century America, the two realms now merged. As historian James Hennesey points out, “[t]he era was inspired by the country’s conviction of its ‘manifest destiny’ to Americanize and Protestantize the world. For American Protestantism these were golden years of crowded churches and broad influence, a complacent time when God’s kingdom

\begin{footnotes}
\item[221] Lyman Beecher, \textit{Plea for the West} (Cincinnati: Truman and Smith, 1835). Beecher, the father of Harriet Beecher Stowe, settled in Cincinnati and became the president of Lane Seminary, which was founded in 1829 for the purpose of bringing evangelical Christianity to the West. See Gjerde, \textit{Catholicism}, 96-99.

\item[222] Lyman Beecher to Albert Barnes, July 11, 1842, cited in Gjerde, \textit{Catholicism}, 96.


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on earth and the American way of life became indistinguishable…”

Signaling the start of a new era of American military interventionism world-wide at the end of the nineteenth century, the United States turned its expansionist drive off shore, setting its sights on Hawaii, the Philippines, and Cuba. The mission of the United States, now in a very practical sense, became “the redemption of the world”, as the statesman-historian Albert J. Beveridge claimed in a speech during the build-up to the Spanish-American war in 1898:

> God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation and self-admiration. No…of all of our race He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the redemption of the world.

John Higham also writes of the significance of this essentially Protestant ideology for American national identity, claiming it “offered Americans a collective task and a sustaining hope. Aiming at nothing less than the redemption of mankind, it held that God had assigned to America the leading role in the enterprise.” Vital to the millennial Protestant theology at the root of manifest destiny was the belief that mankind, with

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America leading, would achieve a new Golden Age.\textsuperscript{228} And as one can surmise in the words of Beveridge, the idea of manifest destiny was also closely linked to race and the alleged superiority of Anglo-Saxondom that was very commonplace. Depending on the speaker, this racial superiority and “chosenessness” was sometimes also extended to the “Teutonic” (German) people by virtue of their historic links to the Anglo-Saxons.\textsuperscript{229} The fluctuating definitions of “whiteness” through the nineteenth and twentieth century also determined who was permitted to participate in national life as a “real American”. This was still a time when distinctions were made between European ethnicities, before “white” came to include most groups of European ancestry, especially northern European. As Jacobson points out, “[i]n general a pattern of racially based, Anglo-Saxonist exclusivity dominated the years from 1840 to the 1920s, whereas a pattern of Caucasian unity gradually took its place in the 1920s and after.”\textsuperscript{230} Another historian also points out the very clear connection between race, religion, and narrative of American mission, also in the minds and rhetoric of the leaders of the country: “A national narrative in which the United States was represented as the embodiment of Manifest Destiny was

\textsuperscript{228} Mark Twain’s well novel known novel of and about the period, \textit{The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today}, is an ironic and critical play on the phrase “Golden Age”, implying the gold does not go very deep. In the novel, Twain pokes fun at the unbridled American striving for material wealth that also characterized the era, and although not explicitly meant in a religious sense, the coupling of religious piety and material wealth in American Protestant theology in a way gives Twain’s critique a broader meaning. Certainly in the political sphere Twain rejected the American expansionism at the end of the nineteenth century that was carried out in the name of manifest destiny.

\textsuperscript{229} “By longstanding tradition in the high discourse of race, the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic traditions were closely aligned; indeed, by many accounts Anglo-Saxondom represented one branch of a freedom-loving, noble race of Germanic peoples.” See Matthew Frye Jacobson, \textit{Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 46-47.

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid., 91.
popularized…Roosevelt and other expansionists drew parallels between the ‘savage’ Filipinos and apaches, recasting the Spanish-American War in terms of a struggle between Anglo-Saxon progress and the forces of reaction.”

If the narrative of Protestant, Anglo-American providentialism enjoyed little competition during the early decades of the Republic, this began to change around the middle of the nineteenth century, when the massive influx of immigrants from Europe – many of them Roman Catholic – quickly changed the complexion of the American populace, ethnically and religiously. This changed complexion also triggered a change in perceptions of patriotism and nationality. As Kathleen Neils Conzen points out, “American nationality in the immediate post-Revolutionary period was defined largely in ideological terms. An American was someone who abjured foreign loyalties and volitionally subscribed to the basic tenets of republican self-government. While nationality so defined rested on assumptions of a general uniformity of values as well as conditions, there was no constitutional effort to defend against the consequences of cultural heterogeneity.” It was this condition that created the increasing tension as American society became more heterogeneous, or “multicultural”. Job Gjerde calls this problem of the Protestant reconciliation of pluralistic and free population with a unified national narrative and identity the “Protestant conundrum”.

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But how did manifest destiny look and feel for those “Americans” who didn’t necessarily fit into the grand narrative of Protestant and Anglo Saxon “chosenness”? How did Catholic immigrants deal with this grand narrative that seemed to exclude them, and nevertheless attempt to find their way into the American nation? These were fundamental questions and the answers to them determined to a large extent the attitudes of German American Catholics in regard to their national identity.

It didn’t take long before the ethnic diaspora groups settling in the Middle West of America began to develop their own American myths, sometimes as part of a larger migration myth. As numerous authors have argued, the creation of myths by ethnic groups in America was part of the process of “homemaking”, as Orm Øverland calls it\(^2^3^3\), or of the development of “complementary identities”, as Jon Gjerde describes it in his book, *The Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830-1917*.\(^2^3^4\) For Gjerde, an enhanced allegiance to America went hand-in-hand with an enhanced allegiance to the particular ethnic subgroup. He writes that this process of ethnicization “did not nullify the development of loyalties to the United States. Rather than competing, the dual loyalties to nation and subgroup, invented under the auspices of an American creed, could be complementary.”\(^2^3^5\) Although Gjerde’s analysis is fundamentally not inaccurate, in certain groups, such as the German-American Catholics, there was much more tension and competition than he allows for between the two

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\(^2^3^4\) Gjerde, *The Minds of the West*, 54.

\(^2^3^5\) Ibid., 59.
emerging identities, as this work aims to show. German-American Catholic conceptions of identity and national narrative were in fact competing.

In the case of Jessing, we can say that the development of dual and relatively complementary identities took place. This occurred through a clean separation of public and private realms and an understanding of American nationality that more resembled that of the immediate post-Revolutionary war period, as Conzen described it above, where an American was someone who simply “volitionally subscribed to the basic tenets of republican self-government”, even though this is at least somewhat debatable with Jessing, since he seems to have still dreamed of a Catholic empire. We can also describe this division as that between an American civic patriotism and an ethnic sense of nationalism. But the identities were only relatively complementary in the case of Jessing and some other German Catholics because their mission of spreading their religion and seeing it define the nation’s character contradicted the American creed of church and state separation. This contradiction, which existed for Protestant Americans as well, was simply an imperfect aspect of the political and cultural reality – both sides claimed to play by the rules of separation of church and state while pushing their religious agendas and crying foul when the other side does so.

Therefore, the much more interesting tension on which I wish to focus is that between these competing visions. As was indicated in chapter three, as the American nation-building project reached this new stage in the late-nineteenth century, the tensions between the narratives of nationhood increased accordingly. Jessing and other German-American Catholic leaders were amongst the most vocal and outspoken competitors to
the dominant narrative, often turning the table on their attackers and claiming to be better Americans than them. Gjerde also takes notice of this phenomenon, mentioning, albeit rather innocuously and in passing, that “[p]articipants in the complementary identity often found it simple to proceed one step further and stress that they were better Americans than the native-born who questioned the extent of their loyalty.” This one-upmanship, however, is a crucial factor in understanding Jessing and conservative German-American Catholics during the late nineteenth century, as it characterized their entire approach to matters of church, state, culture, and national life on the whole. The idea that the assimilation of ethnic Americans was a seamless and smooth process where everyone happily melted into the dominant cultural pot is flawed, as the scholarship of more recent years has shown.

The questions that arise in regard to the perpetuation of national counter-narratives are: How did Jessing create, or perpetuate, an America that his audience could feel part of, and what did this America look like? How did he Americanize his audience, if that is what he indeed did? If “Americanizing” simply meant “to acquaint them [immigrant journal readers] with the republican institutions of America and make those institutions respected and loved”, as it did for the editor of a Swedish-American journal in the mid-nineteenth century, Jessing was also an Americanizer, even if using the word love were going a bit far – the more tender emotions seemed reserved for things German. But Jessing consistently writes of his respect and admiration for the freedoms of

236 Gjerde, Minds of the West, 62. (My italics)

237 Den Swenske Republikanen, August 21, 1857, cited in Gjerde, Minds of the West, 60. The editor of the newspaper explicitly stated that he indeed intended to “Americanize” his readers.
America in his newspaper, as he does in his book dedicated to instructing German Catholics in how to become good American citizens, *Bürgerrecht und Bürgerpflicht: Ein Wegweiser und Rathgeber für Deutsch-Amerikaner und Einwandernde.*

But there is also something else going on here. Jessing admired and cherished American freedom, but he was also busy creating a different America than the one he saw around him and considered being imposed on him. As Gjerde points out, the ethnic minds of the Middle West cherished American freedom precisely because it allowed them to live out their own destinies: “One sense of ‘freedom’, after all, implied the liberty to maintain patterns of life that varied from those of native-born Americans.” Borrowing from (other) American Catholic writers of the nineteenth century, Jessing perpetuated a national counter-narrative that laid a claim to Catholic participation in American history and hence a sense of national belonging. Similarly, in addition to this “Catholicization” of American history, he also perpetuated a “Germanizing” myth, although to a lesser degree. I argue that it is through two vehicles that Jessing, and others like him, can ultimately be seen as having participated in Americanization: 1) through a molding of America in the image of “his people” through the perpetuation of a “Catholic history of America” and 2) through his very participation in the developing American Catholic counter-narrative, which brought them to the table of the national American dialogue. Even if it was as outsiders, it was as American outsiders.

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In his book *Immigrant Minds, American Identities*, Orm Øverland has collected examples of how various ethnic groups in America have perpetuated their own American myths. As most of the ethnic groups were small in number, most of these efforts involved tying themselves into the dominant Anglo-American founding myth. For example, Greek-Americans claimed that “true Americanism” was actually Greek, because the Anglo-Saxons came closest to the ideals of ancient Greece; Armenian-Americans described themselves as “the Anglo-Saxons of the East”; Swedish-Americans were cast by some as resembling more closely than any other ethnic group the “sturdy pilgrim fathers of New England”; Norwegian myths stressed the close blood relationship between themselves and the English who established the colonies.\(^{240}\)

Some Germans also reached far back into history to show their contribution to the Anglo-Saxon founding of America. A speaker at a German-American celebration in New York in 1912 claimed that German tribes had paved the way for the Anglo-Saxon conquest of North America by defeating the Romans in the Battle of the Teutoberg Forest in A.D. 9.\(^{241}\) The same speaker also insisted that without Martin Luther there would have also been no Pilgrim settlement of America. In Chicago’s *Die Abendpost* of March 9, 1906, it was expressed thus: “Doubt it, ye of little faith! As for me, I see as clearly the hand of compelling fate in Isabella’s signing the order for Columbus’s voyage of discovery on the very day she signed the expulsion edict of the Jew, as I see the hand of Providence manifest in the afflictions that, in our days, have come upon the house of the Romanoffs and upon the Russians for the afflictions they have brought upon the house of Israel.”

\(^{240}\) Øverland, *Immigrant Minds*, 57. Øverland discusses more examples of ethnic myths of their connection to the founding, including Jewish, Polish, Italian, and Croatian myths. The role of Providence also plays a significant role in some of these myths, for example in the Jewish-American myth. At a celebration of the 250th anniversary of Jewish settlement in the United States in 1906, it was expressed thus: “Doubt it, ye of little faith! As for me, I see as clearly the hand of compelling fate in Isabella’s signing the order for Columbus’s voyage of discovery on the very day she signed the expulsion edict of the Jew, as I see the hand of Providence manifest in the afflictions that, in our days, have come upon the house of the Romanoffs and upon the Russians for the afflictions they have brought upon the house of Israel.” Ibid., 64.

1930, a German commentator argued that the German language had a “legitimate position in the national life” of America and indeed possessed a “birthright, wherever the English language is spoken”, because the German language is the mother of the English language.

In February 1898, Jessing, again made strange bedfellows with German liberals in regard to German nationalist chest-thumping when he reprinted an article from the Michigan Volksblatt, because “diese mit unseren Anschauungen und Erwartungen durchaus übereinstimmen”. In the article, the unnamed author responds to alleged claims that the German nationality in America is dying out. Reflecting the increasing jingoistic mood of the day, and the increasing rivalry between Imperial Germany and the United Kingdom, the author claims the equal right of German and English “tribes” to participate in “world dominion”. “Die Deutsche Auswanderung, diese Ueberproduktion von Menschen beweist, daß der deutsche Stamm, gleich dem angelsächsischen, zur Theilnahme an der Weltherrschaft geboren und berufen ist.”

To his credit, Jessing never spouted such blatantly nationalistic slogans, even if he did on occasion endorse them. In this view we see a growing confidence of Germans to compete with the Anglo-Saxons, also emulating them in the perpetuation of such a national destiny. As Øverland points out, of all the various ethnic groups, it was only German-Americans who “felt confident enough to challenge the basic belief in the Anglo-American foundation of the United States.” This was particularly true of German Catholics, as they countered the

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242 Ohio Waisenfreund, February 16, 1898.

243 Øverland, Immigrant Minds, 56.
dominant narrative on two fronts, religion and ethnicity. Confidence was certainly not something that Jessing lacked.

One of the most popular themes of Jessing’s Catholic counter-narrative was that of Christopher Columbus and the Catholic discovery of America. Jessing would again and again reiterate the Columbus myth, as he did in the August 3, 1887 issue of the Ohio Waisenfreund. Dedicated to the celebration of Pope Leo XIII’s fiftieth anniversary as a priest, Jessing includes various images to honor the pope and symbolize his authority and majesty. These include the proverbial keys of the church, handed down from Peter, and a bible with the tiara crown worn by the pope. At the bottom of the page are two images representing the bearers of this praise – a bald American eagle atop the crest of the “glorious republic of the United States” and one of Christopher Columbus on his ship approaching the coast of the new world, imagery often found in the Waisenfreund around Columbus Day every year. The eagle stands as a symbol of the loyalty of German-American Catholics to their new homeland. Jessing states his stance on these loyalties to both church and state in a formula that is defensive, reflecting the consistently and strongly felt need by ethnic Catholics in America to defend themselves against attacks of foreign allegiance:

Wir treten vor ihn hin als Deutsch-Amerikaner und unsere Liebe und
Anhänglichkeit an den von Gott gesetzten Oberhirten seiner Kirche thut es keinen
Eintrag, daß wir Bürger dieser großen Republik sind; und umgekehrt sind wir bei
aller Anhänglichkeit an den heiligen Vater voller Patriotismus und Liebe zu dem
Lande, in welchem wir wohnen. Gerade jene Glieder der Kirche, welche voll
Zuneigung und Liebe gegen den obersten Hirten, den Papst sind, sind auch die besten Katholiken, und diese sind auch die besten Bürger.

Not only is Jessing’s declaration of loyalty to both the new homeland and the pope defensive, it goes on the offensive. Against the old and popular claim of Protestant Americans that Catholics are not good citizens because of their loyalty to the pope, Jessing proclaims that it precisely these Catholics, i.e. the ultramontane variety, who are the best Catholics and citizens.

The presence of Columbus, “the great Catholic hero”, amongst the imagery is the most interesting aspect of the article. In Jessing’s explanation of the images chosen for the title page of this particular issue, he attempts to correct what he considers a misunderstanding of American history and lay claim to a rightful sense of belonging for (German-) American Catholics. Since Columbus was a Catholic, as were many other discoverers of the new world (since the “poison of Protestantism” had not yet risen), Jessing claims America as an originally Catholic country. In the image, Columbus is seen in his boat, which is named after the Virgin Mary, under the banner of the Church, with the blessing of the Church from the old world. According to Jessing’s narrative, every evening during the journey Columbus sang the Salva Regina in honor of Mary, and when he set foot on land he prayed Catholic prayers. Jessing’s narrative of American history then continues with the pope’s issuing in 1493 of the first bull in regard to America, Inter cetera, the sending of Catholic missionaries to the new world, and in 1494 the presence of the first Catholic church in the new world. America was Catholic before the “poison of
Protestantism started to confuse spirits and destroy the unity of Christendom”, and therefore, Catholics have no reason to feel like outsiders:

*Wir Katholiken sind in Amerika keine Fremdlinge, sind keine später gekommene, die von den früheren erst das Gastrecht erbetteln müssen. ... die Entdeckung Amerikas war ein katholisches Unternehmen, und mit diesen ersten katholischen Anfängen hat Amerika bis zur gegenwärtigen Zeit nie gebrochen. ... Ebenso wie in Europa ist auch hier die katholische Kirche die älteste aller Institutionen.*

By claiming the discovery of America as a “Catholic enterprise” and stressing the continuity of a Catholic presence in the young country, Jessing is combating against dominant conceptions of American history and the domination of American culture by what Mark Noll calls the “informal Protestant establishment”. Jessing’s attempts at inculcating in German-American Catholics a rightful sense of belonging in their new homeland are in his usual competitive style. By selectively focusing on the “Catholic founding” of America and ignoring the subsequent 350 years of Protestant domination, along with his usual attacks on Protestantism in general, he seems to be saying that America is more Catholic than Protestant, or at the very least that Catholics have a *more* legitimate right to feel at home in America.

But Jessing is not coming up with something entirely new here. With his veneration of Christopher Columbus and the narrative of the Catholic discovery of America, Jessing is tying himself into the recent tradition of American Catholic

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spokesmen and historians in creating a Catholic counter-narrative. Indeed, he must have been well aware of this tradition as his words echo – word for word at times – those of his American forbearers. Compare the above passage to the opening of the chapter on Columbus and the discovery of America in Thomas D’Arcy McGee’s 1855 book, *The Catholic History of North America*:

*I have publicly announced for some time that I am prepared to prove in these discourses three propositions, to wit: First. – That the discovery and exploration of America were Catholic enterprises, undertaken by Catholics with Catholic motives, and carried out by Catholic cooperation. Second. – That the only systematic attempts to civilize and Christianize the aborigines were made by Catholic missionaries. Third. – That the independence of the United States was, in a great degree, established by Catholic blood, talent, and treasure... If I can show – as I believe I can – that since its discovery America has never been wholly broken off from its Catholic commencement, - that saints, popes, cardinals, and all the religious orders are associated inseparably with its annals, - then may I not hope to satisfy you, and through you to persuade your children, that the church is no stranger, no intruder, neither unknown nor untried here, but that as certainly as it is the oldest institution in Europe, so it is the oldest in America?*

McGee’s book is one of the definitive examples of the Catholic counter-narrative in the mid-nineteenth century. It is representative because it concisely and systematically

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captures the structure of the emerging counter-narrative of Catholic America. Jon Gjerde succinctly outlines the three main elements of this myth: “When Catholics wrote their specific myth, their story was a three-part history that illustrated the beneficial attributes of Catholicism, the injuries to society stemming from the rise of Protestantism, and the inevitable triumph of the Church in the United States.” 246 For clarity, I will also follow this three part structure in analyzing Jessing’s perpetuation of the Catholic counter-narrative. As we shall see, Jessing was much more willing to perpetuate the first two parts of the counter-narrative and a bit reluctant about the third part, which seemed to remain a privilege of “more American” Catholics. As an immigrant he must have felt that speaking of the eventual Catholicization of America fed Nativist fears of a foreign, Catholic takeover.

Returning to Columbus and the founding myth, the celebration of America’s first centennial in 1876 provides a good opportunity to measure Catholic German-American reconciliation of Americanism and Catholicism. 247 Many German Catholic papers took the chance to celebrate the Catholic contribution to American Independence. The Katholischer Volkszeitung of Baltimore writes:

Wir Katholiken haben ganz besonders Ursache, uns an diesem Tage zu freuen und zu jubiliren, denn ein Katholik war es, der diesen amerikanischen Welttheil

246 Gjerde, Catholicism, 68.

247 For a detailed analysis of how ethnic celebrations of holidays and festivities contributed to the “invention of ethnicity”, see Kathleen Neils Conzen’s chapter “Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German America on Parade” in The Invention of Ethnicity, edited by Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
entdeckt hat. Die ersten europäischen Einwanderer waren Katholiken, katholische Franzosen und Spanier; die katholische Colonie von Maryland zählt zu den ersten und besten des Landes. Als die Habinger und der Despotismus der protestantischen Engländer die dreizehn Colonien zwang, ihre Unabhängigkeit zu proklamieren, trat der erlauchte Katholik Carroll von Carrollton, dessen Enkel heute an der Spitze des Staates Maryland steht, sofort an die Seite des unsterblichen Washington, indem er freudig und muthvoll feierlich gelobte, Leben und Eigenthum auf den Altar des Landes niederlegen zu wollen.248

In just a few lines the writer covers two parts of the Catholic myth in its tribute, highlighting the Catholic discovery of America, the Catholic contribution to America’s independence and success, and the condemnation of Protestantism. This formula was repeated by others again and again, including Jessing. The Wahrheitsfreund of Cincinnati, the paper Jessing wrote for during his first years in America, takes a more inclusive tone that doesn’t seek to highlight Catholics but instead celebrates the freedom of America and weds it to the Christian religion in general.

Wird das Volk der Ver. Staaten sich fest auf den Boden dieses einen wahren Christenthums stellen, und niemals ob seines Glückes und seiner Glorie vergessen, daß auch das mächtigste Volk in der Hand des Herrn steht und seinen ewigen Gesetzen demüthig unterworfen sein muß, dann mag der 4. Juli des Jahres 1876 in

noch manchem Jahrhunderte froh und frei begangen werden; dann mag man mit dem ehrwürdigen Jesuitenmissionär P. Weninger prophezeien: America erit in orbe ultima.\textsuperscript{249}

The implied heralding of the American people as the “most powerful people on earth” and the invocation of the Jesuit missionary and his prediction of American greatness attest to a Catholic version of “American Exceptionalism”. The combination of these elements in a celebratory piece about the country’s founding also seems to attest to a converging of Protestant and Catholic narratives of American mission, or at least a sort of parallel narrative of the Christian underpinnings of the nation.

The antagonism between Catholics and Protestants during the nineteenth century was too great to speak of a willful convergence. This would have to wait until the twentieth century. Other papers took a more defensive tone. The \textit{Katholische Glaubensbote} of Louisville had a very short write up for the occasion, basically just mentioning that German Catholics held a celebration in a local church, and concluding with an attack on their enemies: “Die rege Beteiligung an der kirchlichen Feier des Unabhängigkeits-Festes zeigt, daß die Katholiken doch nicht so ganz ohne Patriotismus und Vaterland sind, obschon unsere Culterkämpfer hüben und drüben sie gerne als solche hinstellen möchten.”\textsuperscript{250}

\textsuperscript{249} “Zum hundertsten Geburtstage der Vereinigten Staaten”, \textit{Der Wahrheitsfreund}, July 5, 1876.

\textsuperscript{250} “Der Vierte Juli”, \textit{Katholische Glaubensbote}, July 5, 1876.
Jessing also belonged to the more combative celebrants who took such opportunities to attack the “culture warrior” enemies. Aside from a rather neutral, historical piece on the events of 1776 (“Vor hundert Jahren”, July 5, 1876) – a practice that was common for the history-obsessed Jessing, as well as other German Catholic editors – Jessing wrote a preemptive piece the week before the holiday about a Liberal conference to be held in Philadelphia during the week of the centennial. The conference’s aim was to highlight the separation of church and state as the cornerstone of American liberty and freedom, a premise that Jessing and other Catholics agreed with when it suited them (allowing Catholic freedoms) and disagreed with when it didn’t. And when it didn’t, Jessing accused the Liberals of “revealing themselves as proper American Kulturkämpfer”. Against the accusation that the Catholic Church is a foreign and dangerous political power, Jessing responds, again, with the Catholic counter-narrative, in which he defends Catholic participation in American nation-building and attacks his two biggest enemies, Protestantism and Liberalism:


251 “Die Liberalen”, *Ohio Waisenfreund*, June 28, 1876.

The Columbus myth was emerging as the definitive Catholic narrative in the late nineteenth century and could be found in many places. The largest American Catholic fraternal group, the Knights of Columbus, chose Columbus as their patron at their formation in 1882 with the hope that this would combat anti-Catholic sentiment. “As Catholic descendants of Columbus, we are entitled to all rights and privileges due to such a discovery by one of our faith,” one founder said.253 By 1892, the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ discovery of the new world, Columbus Day had turned into a prominent holiday on the calendar, and in 1893 the celebration of Columbus’ discovery achieved its peak at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago (also known as the Chicago World

252 “Die Liberalen”, Ohio Waisenfreund, June 28, 1876.

Fair). What began as a primarily Italian-American effort to perpetuate their founding myth had become a Catholic founding myth that served to bring ethnic Catholic Americans together. One journalist observed during the 400th anniversary celebration:

*Columbus was the first immigrant to America. He was Italian; he was Catholic.*

*Italians, Irish, French, Spanish, Hungarians and all the rest marched by nationalities. While the constituents of the magnificent processions are of differing nationalities, the one thing that unifies them is their religion. They are all Catholic.*

The Columbus myth was also brought to life through the arts. Statues of the discoverer were popping up all over the United States. And in the main building of one of America’s most representational Catholic educational institutions, the University of Notre Dame, one can find another sign of the Columbus myth and its significance in the late nineteenth century. When the university’s main building began reconstruction after a 1879 fire, the new walls were to be “adorned with images consonant with the mission of an American Catholic educational institution.”

It was decided that the Vatican portrait artist Luigi Gregori would paint ten Columbus murals that would stretch from floor to ceiling. The massive and vivid murals, completed between 1882 and 1884, highlight

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255 Cited in an unpublished brochure on the murals available at the University of Notre Dame. For more literature on the Notre Dame Columbus murals see Thomas J. Schlereth, *The University of Notre Dame: A Portrait of Its History and Campus* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).
Columbus’ Catholicism and serve as a tribute to the era when Catholics began their long journey towards national acceptance.

Jessing also participated in the Catholic mythologizing of Columbus in numerous ways. Not only did it feature prominently in his writings, but in 1892 he also commissioned one of the eventual 158 Columbus memorials that would be built in the United States. In 1932 this statue that stood in front of Jessing’s Josephinum was given as a gift to the state of Ohio where it stood in front of the State Capitol building. Jessing also participated heartily in the celebration of Columbus Day. In a letter to a friend back in Germany, Jessing writes of how he marched with his students in the Columbus Day parade in Columbus, Ohio in 1891:


256 For information about Columbus statues all over the world see [http://columbus.vanderkrogt.net/texts/shd_paper.html](http://columbus.vanderkrogt.net/texts/shd_paper.html).

257 Letter (942) to Leopold Heeger, January 31, 1892. Apparently, holidays were not the only time that Jessing marched “his boys” through the streets of Columbus. In this recollection of a former student, Jessing dresses up the boys in “10-gallon” felt hats with a grey cord around them, making the boys look like “Jesuit missionaries in Africa”, and marches them to the Centennial Fair. Passersby commented that the “bachelor priest” resembled George Washington with his troops, a comment that would’ve certainly
The Columbus myth may have been the most popular Catholic counter-narrative to the Anglo-Protestant dominant narrative of Americanism, and it was certainly one of the most effective in bringing ethnic Catholics together under the American flag, but the counter-narrative also claimed the revolutionary period as part of Catholic American history. As we have already seen, Jessing and other Catholic writers stressed the fact that it was Catholic France that played a pivotal role in securing American independence, and that this independence was declared from Protestant England. But it was the other great leader of America’s beginnings, George Washington, who Jessing would also incorporate into the myth. And with Washington, it was not only the Catholic myth that was propagated but also the myth of German contribution.

In the March 5, 1890 issue of the Waisenfreund, Jessing printed an article titled “False und True Americanism” with the stated intention of giving his readers a comparison of two different versions of American spirit (“Amerikanismus”), and with the unstated intention of perpetuating the narrative that Catholic Americans are in fact better...
Americans than nativists. Jessing describes the first version of American spirit, represented at a meeting of the Patriotic Order of Sons of America (POSA), a nativist organization, in Columbus, Ohio. The main speaker at the POSA meeting was the vice-president of the group, L. R. O’Brien, who, according to Jessing, showed himself to be a “bitter and fanatic enemy of the Catholic Church.”

O’Brien, evoking the typical Nativist fears of Catholic immigrants, claimed the mission of his organization was to fight against the priest craft of the Catholic Church, an institution that he describes as a “multi-headed snake that gnaws on the life of the American constitution.”

Jessing accuses O’Brien, the POSA, and implicitly all anti-Catholic Nativist Americans of having a “false Americanism”, pointing out that such types must be completely ignorant of American history – again, that the discoverer of America, Christopher Columbus, was a pious Catholic, and that France, a Catholic country helped America gain its independence. Jessing’s picture of “true Americanism” could be found at a recent celebration of George Washington’s birthday by the Saint Aloysius Orphan Club in Cincinnati, a German Catholic group, and in the words of the main speaker, Dr Gustav Brühl, in order to demonstrate that German-American Catholics display American ideals and patriotism much more than the anti-Catholic secret society members.

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258 The POSA was founded in 1847 as part of the Nativist and Know-Nothing movement that feared the effects of mass immigration, especially Catholic, into the United States. The organization still exists today.

259 „eine mit hydrakopfe versehene Schlange, die an dem Lebensmark der amerikanischen Constitution nage.“ Ohio Waisenfreund, March 5, 1890.
Doppelt erfreulich ist die Thatsache, daß deutsche eingewanderte Katholiken die Feier veranstalten. Es ist ein Beweis, daß sie die Freiheit schätzen, die Tugenden ihres Erkämpfens hochhalten und die Abwege und Ausschreitungen der Gesellschaft verdammen. Wer will Angesichts dieser Thatsachen die Loyalität der deutsch amerikanischen Katholiken anzweifeln? Sie gehören mit zu den besten und treuesten Patrioten. Auch sie fochten in der Reihe der Union. Oder lieben die deutschen Katholiken ihr neues Vaterland weniger, weil sie die Sprache und Sitten ihrer alten Heimat bewahren wollen [...]

The speaker very purposefully declares German-American Catholic loyalty to the United States, including the usual mention of German-Catholic service during the Civil War and stressing good civil attitudes of law and order on the part of German-Catholics. They love freedom, in contrast to the nativists, who are exclusionary in their vision of what America represents and who belongs to it. But the development of a “complementary identity” of course also included the insistence on the right to perform one’s ethnic culture. This wish to remain distinct and the strong German ethno-nationalism are expressed during this same speech. After the opening remarks that emphatically declare the American patriotism of German-American Catholics, the speech takes a turn, and it is a strong sense of German nationalism that receives the much more eloquent and emotional language.

...sind sie ihrem Glauben weniger treu, weil sie Gott in den Lauten der Muttersprache verehren und nicht im amerikanischen Völkergemisch spurlos
verschwinden wollen?... Der Deutsche darf stolz auf seine Abstammung sein.

Deutschland schreitet an der Spitze der Civilisation. Die deutsche Sprache ist die reinste und edelste, die Sprache der Denker und Gelehrten, die Sprache der erhabensten Ideen und tiefssinnigsten Empfindungen.

The German Catholic attitude toward language is a good indicator of the split that was performed between American patriotism and German ethno-nationalism. While the German language is the “purest and noblest”, the English language is simply useful and necessary to get by in this country. At another point in this speech the speaker declares, “Ferne sei es von mir Euch und Eure Kinder vom Erlernen der englischen Sprache zurückzuhalten. Sie ist die öffentliche und Umgangssprache, sie ist zum Fortkommen nöthig.”

At the heart of the two competing versions of Americanism that are set up by Jessing in this article are questions concerning what is meant to be American at the time. The old-stock American view considered ethnicity, religion (Protestant), and language to be essential and defining features of American identity, while immigrants and diaspora groups, again, separated civic duty and patriotism from what they considered the more private spheres of religion, ethnicity, language, and culture. The promise of America for German-American Catholics and other immigrant groups was the freedom to perform this split. They took this promise literally, and had no reason not to. They resisted the existence of the “informal Protestant [and Anglo] establishment”, choosing instead to
create their own America, as Kathleen Neils Conzen puts it. The Americanism of conservative German-American Catholics is rooted in practicality and civic duty, while their Germanism is part of their culture and their very being. The speaker, and many like him, including Jessing, see no contradiction between a strong sense of German pride and nationalism and a civic American loyalty. He believes one can be a good American without giving up one’s culture and language and “disappearing into the mixed peoples of America”.

Finally, the speaker ties the two strains of thought together and comes up with a seemingly puzzling conclusion. Only by keeping the language and morals of your (German) father, and the morals of George Washington, can you honor the memory of the first American president. In other words, you become like George Washington and a good American by learning your father’s language (German), retaining his culture, and going to a German church and school:

\[ Gewiß ein triftiger Grund, warum Ihr Eure Muttersprache bewahren, Eure \]
\[ deutschen Kirchen und Schulen, die Ihr mit so großen Opfern errichtet, erhalten \]
\[ sollt. Dort lehrt man Eure Kinder diese herrliche Sprache, dort wird ihnen die \]
\[ Fülle deutschen Geistes erschlossen, dort unterrichtet man sie in den Tugenden \]
\[ Eurer Väter, denselben Tugenden, die den großen Mann, dessen Geburtstag wir \]
\[ heute feiern, auszeichnen. Ihr könnt sein Andenken nicht höher in Ehren halten, \]

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For modern day observers, the contradictions of this formula for becoming a good American hardly need to be pointed out. The speaker seems to obviously be making great stretches to connect the two ideas. What the speaker is essentially doing at the end of his speech is making George Washington German, or Germanizing the American historical and cultural narrative. This merging of German and American culture is an attempt to make German Catholics feel justified in their German ethno-nationalism, because Germanism is virtuous and therefore also American, in a sense. However twisted the method seems to us today – being on the other end of a century in which the pot has significantly melted – the fact that a bridge is drawn between the two – unwarranted cynicism aside – points to the wishes of German-American Catholics to indeed become “good Americans”, on their own terms.

Another prominent part of the Catholic myth was the association of Catholicism with American liberty. As we have already partly seen this went hand in hand with Catholic efforts not only to defend their American patriotism but also to outdo Protestantism as the confession most inclined to defend freedom. This was often manifested in the history of the Catholic colony of Maryland, whereby the religious toleration of those settlers was juxtaposed with the intolerant religious laws of many of the New England colonies, where “Papists” were often exempt from freedom of religion laws. McGee stressed what would become a foundation of the Catholic myth: “One of their [Maryland Catholic settlers] earliest legislative acts was ‘the toleration act of 1649,’
the first ordinance of its kind in America, which granted freedom of worship ‘to all who believed in Jesus Christ’.” 261

Although with hindsight the differences in Protestant and Catholic narratives of nation in the nineteenth century may seem trivial, since they both argued for the necessity of a Christian underpinning for the American nation, the differences were indeed stark and tension-filled. The Catholic narrative sought to expose the cracks in the dominant Protestant narrative by highlighting the alleged poor track record of Protestantism as a national religion. The assessment of Protestant intolerance in America was only part of this. Catholic writers looked further into the past and across the ocean to Europe to draw the lessons intended for their Catholic American readers. Two of the leading defenders of Catholicism in the United States beginning in the 1840s were John Martin Spalding, later Archbishop of Baltimore, and Jaime Balmes. As one historian concludes, both of these men “outlined nothing less than a counter-ideology; and against the dominant Protestant views of history they asserted a counter-history, portraying Catholicism as the true promoter of political, social, and cultural progress in the modern world, fostering justice and liberating thought.” 262

Spalding’s works reads like a manual for the superiority of Catholicism over Protestantism. According to Spalding, both Luther and Calvin “crushed the liberties of

261 McGee, Catholic History, 70.

262 Hartmut Lehmann, Martin Luther in the American Imagination (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1988), 167.
the people in the countries which were the respective theatres of their labors.”263 Aside from the coupling of Protestantism with the loss of liberty, another one of Spalding’s main critiques of Protestantism was its effect on social well-being. Protestantism “fosters a spirit of isolation, of individualism, of selfishness, of pride” and therefore had led to the mistreatment of the poor in Protestant countries.264 He states: “[T]here is much more real charity exhibited towards the poor in Catholic countries than in Protestant countries.”265 In his work, “Catholic and Protestant Countries”, Spalding takes aim at a favorite target, England, admitting that England was the most advanced country in Europe, but questioning the moral character of the country. He asks whether its commercial thriving was due to the fact that England was “emancipated by the reformation from the harassing thralldom of conscience.”266

In his critique of Protestantism, Jessing also seemed to follow in the footsteps of these Catholic writers, who created a “remarkably consistent narrative that told a story almost diametrically opposed to the views of Protestant with regard to their religion and state.”267 Jessing continued this counter-narrative in regard to England and the alleged


265 Ibid.

266 Ibid., 460.

267 Gjerde, Catholicism, 70. Some of the people that were employed during the mid-nineteenth century to help in the Catholic mythmaking included the European scholars Jaime Balmes, Joseph de Maistre, and Johann Joseph Ignaz Döllinger, American historians William H. Prescott and Hubert Howe Bancroft, and
superiority and progressivism of Protestantism. In an 1891 article titled “England vor und nach der Reformation”, Jessing paints a bleak picture of life in England at the time, where moral decay has led to widespread crime and poverty. In contrast, before the Reformation, when England was still Catholic “war das Verbrechen und Armut dort fast gänzlich unbekannt.” Jessing tells the story of (pre-Reformation) King Alfred testing the honesty of passers-byers by placing a golden bracelet in plain view to see if someone would steal it. After nobody had taken it for three days, the king declares: “Die katholische Religion muß göttlichen Ursprungs sein, da sie eine ganze Nation ehrlich und tugendhaft zu machen vermag.” Jessing then describes what he calls the “Früchte, welche diese nicht Re- sondern Deformation über England brachte”, and lists numbers that depict the “moralisches und physisches Elend” of England. And yet, Jessing sarcastically ends the article, “geht trotz alledem die Sonne im brittischen Reiche nie unter und England ist in geschäftlicher Hinsicht der finanzielle Diktator der Welt.”

The critique of social conditions in Protestant countries was part of Jessing’s larger and manifold critique of Protestantism. In it he saw the source of all that was wrong with modern society, including the two ideologies of liberalism and socialism. At an 1891 convention of the German American Catholic Central Verein, the largest

the authors James Fenimore Cooper and Herman Melville. For a detailed discussion of the construction of this myth during this period, see pages 67-82.

268 Ohio Waisenfreund, Jan. 21, 1891.

269 "700,000 Verbrecher; 22,000 junge Diebe; 100,000 Prostituirte; 500,000 Trunkenbolde, von jährlich 60,000 sterben; der jährliche Verbrauch von gebrannten Getränken gehen auf $750,000,000; die Zahl der jährlich durch Gewalt oder Bloßstellung umgekommenen Kinder überschreitet 10,000; die Zahl der Heimatlosen in Großbritannien geht über 100,000; die Zahl der gänzlich Verarmten in England beträgt mehr als 3,000,000; die der Arbeitslosen 100,000; die der in Arbeitshäusern 190,000." Ibid.
association of German-American Catholics, Jessing gave a speech on the principles of socialism, in which he condemns both socialism and liberalism for their desired removal of religion from the public sphere. While Jessing argues that socialism is not feasible in the long run, he reserves his harshest critique for that old enemy of the Church, liberalism.  

But plenty of scorn is also reserved for what Jessing considers the origin and foundation of both of these systems and of “unsere gesellschaftlichen Uebelstände” – the Protestant Reformation. For Jessing and other Catholic writers, Protestantism represented the original breakdown of authority and societal and religious unity, and only in the Catholic Church could a nation be on sure footing. To the question, “wie die verkehrten Zustände unserer Zeit verbessert werden können”, Jessing responds, “sie liegt einzig und allein in der katholischen Kirche… die katholische Kirche ist keine Privatsache, wie die Sozialisten sagen, nein, sie ist vielmehr eine Anstalt, eine Einrichtung, nach welcher alle anderen menschlichen Einrichtungen sich richten müssen. Ihre Grundsätze müssen den Staat, die Familie durchdringen. Je mehr und je vollständiger dieses der Fall ist, umso besser wird es mit der menschlichen Gesellschaft.”

270 “Vortrag über die Grundsätze des Sozialismus”, Ohio Waisenfreund, April 15, 1891. Jessing argues that liberalism is the father of socialism, as socialism was an understandable and inevitable response to the devaluation of human labor that liberalism had brought about. “Der Liberalismus hat eine neue Sklaverei auf die Bahn gebracht, welche sowohl der Gerechtigkeit, wie der christlichen Liebe geradezu zuwider ist…Der Liberalismus lehrt ja, daß alle einzelnen Menschen das Recht haben, für sich selber zu sorgen und zwar ohne alle Rücksicht: Warum sollen dann nicht die Arbeiter einmal Gewalt gebrauchen und das für sich nehmen, was sie unter dem liberalen Systeme sonst nicht erhalten können? Solche Gedanken und solche Schlüsse folgen mit Nothwendigkeit aus dem überall herrschenden gottlosen Systeme des Liberalismus und so hat dieser den Boden bereitet für ein anderes System, welches gerade entgegengesetzte Wege einschlägt, für den Sozialismus.”
Jessing sees no room for dialogue between Protestants and Catholics, because in his opinion any compromise by Catholics would require them to deny the fact that the Catholic Church alone contains the one true religion. In 1895, a reader from Bay city, Michigan wrote to the Auskunft section of the Waisenfreund with a question about an ecumenical group formed by Catholics and Protestants, clergy and laity. With the main tenets and goals of their collaboration being the promotion of Christian love, tolerance, and union, the group can be seen as a typically American phenomenon that attempts to unify and compromise. Jessing’s answer to the reader, on the other hand, is not very “American”. Tolerance, Jessing claims, “ist ein Wort, das erst mit dem Protestantismus in die Welt kam”, because before the division of the Christian world, “hatte man keinen Anlaß, von Toleranz zu sprechen.”

To defend Catholics as the most tolerant and patient people, and implicitly condemn Protestants as intolerant, Jessing highlights the victimization of Catholics in America. “Wo hat man denn jemals gehört, daß die Katholiken sich vereinigt hätten, damit sie Andersgläubige angriffen, wie die Knownothings es gethan haben vor vierzig Jahren, und wie es die Apeasten es jetzt thun? Wo sind Katholiken hingezogen und haben nichtkatholische Kirchen und Anstalten gestürmt und in Brand gesetzt, wie dieses hierzulande schon vorgekommen ist?”

In short, such collaboration is not an option in Jessing’s world and he sees it as dangerous, because Catholics will either have to abstain from ever speaking the truth that the Catholic Church is the only true church of Christ, “und das wäre eine Feigheit”, or

271 “Auskunft”, Ohio Waisenfreund, March 6, 1895.
they will speak this truth and be judged intolerant by the Protestants. Finally, on the topic of the Christian love that was promoted by the ecumenical group, Jessing’s response highlights what is perhaps one of the major differences in religious attitudes between the old and new worlds. Jessing declares that only the Catholic Church makes it a duty to love all people (“auch die Protestanten”), while the Protestants do not have this duty, since they do not believe in good works as required for holiness, but only faith. Jessing’s emphasis on duty is of course not the only marker of his old world, soldierly mentality in this case. His complete rejection of the idea of dialogue between Christian confessions highlights his conception of the United States as a collection of disparate groups who are battling for influence.

Despite the gulf that existed between Catholics and Protestants, and the gulf between the manifest destiny of the dominant narrative of American culture and the diaspora destiny narrative of German-American Catholic immigrants, a merger was already beginning to take place. Some German Catholic voices, as we have seen, were more inclusive and eager to attach their fate to the American nation. The best example of German-American Catholic emulation of the dominant American narrative of manifest destiny was in a speech held at the annual deutschen Katholiken Versammlung of 1891 in Buffalo. Here we see the significant and unmitigated perpetuation of a German-American Catholic version of manifest destiny that seems to have been developing at this time. In this German Catholic migration myth, the speaker actually implores his German-American Catholic audience to adopt a providential interpretation of their immigration and destiny in the new world.
In dem Völkerstrom nach der neuen Welt bildet die deutsche Einwanderung eine gewaltige, schäumende, leuchtende Woge. Und dieser gewaltigen, ja vielleicht reinsten Woge dieses Stammes einzelne Tropfen bilden Sie alle deutsche Adoptivbürger diese Landes...Auf diese hohe providentielle Anschauung meine verehrten Adoptivbürger dieses Landes müssen Sie sich schwingen. Es ist kein unbegründeter Idealismus, sondern ein auf Vernunft und Glauben fußender Realismus, wenn ich sage, daß jeder, der Vater und Mutter verlassen, um Amerika zu seiner Braut zu machen, einem Impulse der Vorsehung gefolgt, und deshalb, sich seinem Stamme, seinem Adoptivvaterlande, Gott, dem Lenker seiner Lebenswege dafür verantwortlich ist.272

The speaker links all three identity markers of German-American Catholics and anoints them with providential significance. By doing so, the German Catholic migration myth of “diaspora destiny” attaches itself to and converges with the American myth of manifest destiny. The speaker, who interestingly uses Carl Schurz’s famous analogy of German diaspora life in America – “Deutschland ist meine Mutter und Amerika meine Braut” for his entire speech on the German Catholic relationship to America, another instance of Catholic adapting from German liberals – also has a more cooperative view of other American Catholics than we have seen from others.

272 “Festpredigt bei Eröffnung der deutschen Katholiken-Versammlung” of September 21, 1891, in Buffalo, New York, *Ohio Waisenfreund*, October 14, 1891.
Und wir deutschen Adoptivbürger dieses Landes haben uns wahrhaft unserer Bestimmung hier zu Lande nicht zu schämen. Wir lassen den Franzosen die Ehre, die ersten Pioniere des Glaubens gewesen zu sein und wir leugnen dem geborenen Amerikaner nicht den Scharfsinn und Spekulationsgeist ab, wir anerkennen in dem Iren den Enthusiasmus, der zumal für katholisches Wesen öffentliche Meinung zu machen wußte, aber wir wissen auch, daß die deutsche Woge im Völkerstrom dem Leben dieses Landes und zumal der katholischen Kirche das gebracht, was man gediegenes Wesen, systematisches Handeln, planmäßige Erziehung, innerlich tiefes katholisches Leben, Beharrlichkeit und Ruhe nennt.273

What must be noted here is that everything is framed within the Catholic context, which, along with everything we have presented here, seems to confirm the theory that religion proved to be a stronger bond for diaspora groups in America than ethnicity. If we compare the above passages from the speech at the deutsche Katholiken Versammlung with the views of the man whose name came to be the first associated with liberal American Catholicism, Isaac Hecker, we see that a convergence of missions is indeed in the making. The German-American Catholics are coming closer to an American Catholicism, a process that would only continue after the turn of the century, despite condemnations from Rome. Hecker wrote in 1879 of the relationship of the Catholic Church and the American nation:

273 Ibid.
He who does not see the hand of Divine Providence leading to the discovery of the western continent, and directing its settlement and subsequent events towards a more complete application to the political society of the universal truths affirmed alike by human reason and Christianity, will fail to interpret rightly and adequately the history of the United States. It is also true that he who sees Heaven’s hand in these events, and fails to see that Christ organized a body of men to guard and teach these universal truths to mankind, with the promise of his presence to the end of the world, will fail to interpret rightly and adequately the history of the Catholic Church…But he who sees all this will not fail to see that the republic and the Catholic Church, under the same divine guidance, are working together in the United States, forming the various races of men and nationalities into a homogeneous people, and by their united action giving a bright promise of a broader and higher development of man than has been heretofore accomplished.274

Jessing never went to the lengths that his colleague in Buffalo did in inculcating a providential interpretation to the German Catholic immigration to America in his audience, but he seemed to endorse similar positions by printing them in his paper. As we’ve seen, the negotiation of his ultramontane German Catholicism with American Catholicism was a process that seemed difficult for Jessing. He was pretty away from the Americanizers’ attempts to bring the Catholic Church closer to American culture, although he ultimately conceded that it was inevitable and natural, as we saw in chapter

three. And as we have seen in this chapter, he was also a bit removed from some of the more inclusive trends of late-nineteenth century American Catholicism that eventually led to the merging of Catholic and Protestant national narratives. This merging, and the loss of a distinctly Catholic history of America, is illustrated by Moreau in his discussion of competing historical narratives in Catholic school textbooks. As he points out, the 1920s witnessed a hastened “movement of White, ethnic Catholics into the American mainstream. The history curriculum followed. After 1930 the market for Catholic histories shrank, in part because public school textbooks integrated Catholics into their narratives…By 1960, the year an Irish American would win the White House by convincing voters that his national loyalties did not conflict with his Catholic ones, that market had virtually disappeared.”

Despite Jessing’s rejection of imposed Americanization and his complete rejection of compromise with Protestantism, his perpetuation of a Catholic American historical narrative contributed to the Americanization of German American Catholics by giving them a sense of national belonging and by wedding Catholicism to a sense of American mission, or destiny. These were the seeds that led to the merging of the narratives in the twentieth century.

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Conclusion

Jessing must have felt some vindication and validation when in January of 1899, ten months before his death, Pope Leo XIII published the encyclical *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae*. The encyclical’s main purpose was to condemn Americanism, the perceived overreaching of the American Catholic Church to accommodate liberal American culture. It condemned any efforts at ecumenism as well as any insistence on the supremacy of individual conscience over the authority of Rome – positions to which Jessing held fastidiously throughout his life. Jessing always sought the favor of the Popes, most famously when he went behind the backs of American bishops to get Pontifical backing for his Josephinum College in 1892. And in 1894 the Holy See’s acknowledgement and praise of his life works came in the bestowing of the ecclesiastical honorific title of monsignor upon Jessing. Despite whatever small concessions Jessing made in the assimilation debate, and despite whatever struggles he had in separating his Germanism from his Catholicism, ultimately he was always in line with the doctrine of the Holy See. If he went too far in insisting on the significance of retaining Germanism, even making common cause with his German-American Free-thinking foes at times, it was because he associated the German language and culture with a more authentic Catholicism and indeed saw the two as inextricably linked. Assimilating to Irish or
“American” Catholicism – which was viewed by Jessing as watered down Catholicism – would have in his eyes been a betrayal of his religion and his vows.

After Jessing’s death and the turn of the new century, the Catholic Church’s war against modernist thought and progressivism only intensified. Leo XIII’s successor, Pope Pius X, published the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* in 1907, which followed in the same footsteps as its predecessor, and in 1910 issued the “Oath against Modernism”, forcing all clergy, pastors, confessors, preachers, religious superiors, and professors in philosophical-theological seminaries to swear to it. But if Rome’s condemnations of the American brand of Catholicism seemed to mark a victory for conservatives, the victory was an illusion. These were attempts to stop or slow down a movement that would only gain momentum, and ultimately achieve victory in the twentieth century. The era of the immigrant church in America was ending, and with it the immigrant brand of Catholicism that was imported from the old world. Replacing the combative European variety was a form of religion much more accommodating to American culture and its tenets of liberalism and individualism. The Catholic Church would in the long run be changed by American culture more than it changed American culture.

Although it sought to preserve, or restore the old, in its means the movement of Ultramontanism kept step with the modern world. Although not an end within itself, this mobilization of the Catholic masses inevitably did to some extent modernize and democratize the Catholic Church. Since the Church in the nineteenth century had to increasingly compete for adherents with the emergent ideologies of liberalism and nationalism, which had state sponsorship, the Church had little choice but to fight fire
with fire through the modern means of newspapers, social organizations, and public
initiative. The battle cry of progressive French priests in the mid-nineteenth century who
wanted to reinvigorate the Church was Allons au peuple (let’s go to the people), and it
was precisely this that the Catholic Church did. And though he considered the authority
of the Church absolute, Jessing was in many ways representative of this modernization.
Just like the Church on the whole, he employed all the modern means available to carry
out his mission. Of all these weapons, his newspaper was the greatest. In addition to
Jessing’s mission of forging a German-American Catholic community through the words
in his newspaper, he also aimed to educate a class of readers that was largely uneducated.

His enthusiasm for learning and education, which for the poor, fatherless, and
underprivileged Jessing became his ticket to a productive and fulfilling life, was one of
Jessing’s defining features and his attempt to pass it on to others one his greatest life
works. Although he still viewed the Christian religion in terms of authority and ascribed
the modest role of obedience to the “common man”, he certainly sought to teach his
readers how to think for themselves and discern truth. In this sense he certainly had
adopted modern means. The free-market of ideas in America forced him and other
Catholic clergy to market their religion to a more discerning audience who were less
likely to keep the religion of its parents.

Ultimately, however, the changes in the German-American Catholic community
after the turn of the century – this meshing of cultures and religions that largely defined
their diaspora destiny – pushed Jessing aside into the annals of history, even toward the
end of his life. In the recollections of one of Jessing’s former students, Rev. M. Haas, we
find evidence that Jessing’s prestige was already waning, even in his innermost circles. In 1934, Hass recalled and reflected:

Later on it came to me that he died not prematurely, as many said, but at the providential time when his star was in the zenith and in much danger of being darkened. Already there was an apparent undefined disregard for his leadership. As other men had been gathered around him who excelled him in learning and scholarship, his prestige was diminished, even in the minds of his own boys. How long that could have continued without serious damage to the institution no one knows but God. What happened immediately after the other forces were put in charge seems to prove my point. His letters and effects were scattered and burnt so that it will be hard to compile a true account of his labors. There is less material available for his biography than for any man of less importance and less activity than his. As we saw the bundles of letters and stacks of manuscripts assigned to the fires of the rubbish pile, those of us who valued his memory and should have wished to see everything concerning him preserved could only sigh and say: “Sic transit gloria mundi” and “Undank ist der Welt Lohn.” [“Lack of gratitude is the world’s wages.”] 276

Jessing’s story is in many way like every other story of American immigration. His life spanned two continents and it spanned two worlds, the old and the new, and the worldviews represented by each. He lived through an era of great upheaval in the religion and culture of the Western world and took an active role in preserving and perpetuating the old – what he believed was an eternal and immutable order to human life and society. At the end of the day Jessing was perhaps still more conservative than modern, if that binary is helpful in understanding the man and the times. His conservatism was purposeful and knowing, his modernization was in a way coincidental and unknowing. The same could be said about the construction of national narratives and identity that he perpetuated in his newspaper during the late-nineteenth century, as this work has attempted to show.

While Jessing sought to preserve the distinctiveness of German Catholic identity in his construction of an imagined community within a broader and heterogeneous society, the unspoken and perhaps unknown goal he was moving towards was the attainment of a sense of a national belonging for German-American Catholics. His strong sense of identity and his culture war mentality would not allow him to accede to the dominant national narrative of Anglo-American Protestantism, but the longing for national belonging combined with his Catholic mission compelled him just enough to merge his narrative with that of the emerging American Catholic counter-narrative. This aspect of this history gives credence in a general way to one of the foundational ideas of immigration sociology, as expressed for example in Will Herberg’s classic work from the

Herberg argued that religion was the meta-category that remained after other categories of identity were reshuffled in the new circumstances of life in the United States.

But even if the seeds of this realignment are visible in Jessing’s rhetoric, the story is not as neat and tidy as that. The “complementary identities” developed by Jessing and other German-Catholic immigrants in the United States were not as harmonious and peaceful as some historians would have us believe. Jessing represented just one group of people that existed on the periphery of national life, or at least the dominant narrative of national life. Former slaves, Native Americans, women, and the working class shared this outsider and underprivileged existence in many ways and it is only recently that scholarship has taken an interest in these outsider stories and narratives. I believe the outsider status and competing national narratives of Jessing and the German-American Catholic milieu on the whole has found expression in its shaping of political movements in the Midwestern region of the United States. The decentralized view of American society and life that Jessing and other German-American Catholics had, along with a certain distrust of the old-stock (New England) establishment, seem to have contributed to an anti-statism that has played an increasingly strong role in the political movements of those regions.

These are only speculative remarks and a detailed exploration of these more political phenomena was not the aim of this work. But by shedding further light on the

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immigrant mind and immigrant identity construction, my hope has also been to raise questions in this relationship of old-world beliefs and modern day practices in America, because the American culture of today was largely shaped by the immigrants of the past. The implications of this research for today’s issues of immigration and religion are also significant. Although some argue that Islam cannot be assimilated into American society as Catholicism had been, the evidence seems to speak against it. Catholicism was seen as no less incompatible with American values as Islam is today, in fact the reaction to Catholicism was much more hostile than the latent antagonism many Americans feel towards Islam today. If history is any lesson here, Muslim immigrants and immigrants of other religions will find a way to amalgamate their faiths with American culture, discover myths that unite rather than divide, and negotiate new identities.
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* The Jessing papers were compiled and organized by the four 1936 biographers of Monsignor Jessing, Leo. F. Miller, Joseph C. Plumpe, Maurice A. Hofer, and George J. Undreiner. They travelled to Germany at the time of their writing and presumably collected everything there was to collect. They also transcribed many of the letters written in Gabelsberger shorthand into German and English. Alois Schmidmeier of Munich has transcribed further Gabelsberger letters since 2001. Based on the sheer number of letters and records from Jessing’s time in Germany and Austria, as well as his habits of diligent correspondence and record keeping, it is safe to assume that the fires that consumed his letters and records from his time in the United States (see page 210) destroyed a great wealth of material. The Jessing papers are located in the library at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio.

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Appendix

(Letter 340 – from Jessing’s Aunt Clara and Uncle J.P. Vesque in Indiana, USA).

May 13, 1860. Den Brief lasse ich unfrankiert seine Reise machen, um so größere Sicherheit zu erzielen, dass er euch bald und richtig treffen würde. ... unsere Adresse ist diese: United Staates of Amerika J.P.Vesque Lawrencebourg Dearborn County Staate of Indiana. –

Gedicht auf der rechten Seite:

Ich komme euch zu grüßen, den Freund im deutschen Land, und lege ihm zu Füßen, ein Lied, ganz unbekannt.

Das soll ihn recht erfreuen, es soll ihm teuer sein, weil es den Freund den neuen, bei ihm ja führet ein.

Der weiß ihm nie zu sagen, wie er es gerne hört, und möchte euch eines fragen, das seine Ruhe stört.

Deshalb allhier die eine, um die ihr bange seid, und die wie sonst keine, erfreuet Glück und Freud.

Sie hat nach Schmerz und Leiden, und langer Trauer Nacht, nach bitterm Kampf und Scheiden, den Frieden sich gegönnt.

Und was man sonst mag glauben, von Irren, Unrechttun, das weiß ihr nicht zu rauben, der Ruhe Eigentum.

Die weiß sie im Belohnen, für Tränen die sie weint, als keiner sie geschonet, da sie es gut gemeint.
So war sie denn geraten, in Demut tief und groß, 
der Lohn für schöne Taten, ein traurig, traurig Los.

Sie hatte nicht gefunden, was ernstlich sie gesucht, 
und s'Herz nun voller Wunden, war sie dann auf der Flucht.

Dort hab ich sie erreicht, als müd sie niedersank, 
hab ihr die Hand gereicht, und sie sprach freundlich Dank.

Dann sind wir fort gezogen, fort aus dem armen Land, 
des Meeres muntere Wogen, führten zum teuern Strand.

Wo uns nur Gott ein Richter, und nicht die arge Welt, 
wo neu all die Gesichter, und uns noch keins gequält.

Fortan die Ruh beschieden, und frische Lebenslust, 
mit neuem, stillen Frieden, erfüllt uns neu die Brust.

Wir haben einen Namen, erworben uns allhier, 
zu dem ein frohes Amen, man jüngst gewünschet mir.

Was nun der Vater mache, wie es seither ihm geht, 
das ist die liebe Frage, die um Erwidrung fleht.

Wir senden euch dann wieder der frohen Botschaft Preis, 
und suchen andere Lieder, von denen niemand weiß.

Bis dahin habet alle, lebt alle, alle wohl, 
mit diesem frohen Schalle, mein Lied nun enden soll.

J.P. Vesque
Cranenbourgh, den 15. Mai 1860. – Clara Schlusemann.
(Ohne Nummer) Letter of Pfarrer Lenter to Jessing’s mother of June 27, 1860.


Die Stenografische Blätter aus Westfalen.

Indem wir mit dieser Nummer eine neue stenografische Zeitschrift in die Welt hinausschicken, rufen wir allen unseren Lesern ein herzliches Willkommen entgegen. Unter allen deutschen Ländern schien bisher Westfalen am wenigsten geneigt zu sein, der Kunst Gabelsbergers eine Stätte zu bereiten. Doch wie das Bessere sich ohne Geräusch allmählich Bahn bricht, so auch hier: Die Zahl derjenigen, die sich Jünger Gabelsbergers nennen, vergrößert sich von Jahr zu Jahr, das Interesse für die Stenografie nimmt in weiten Kreisen mehr und mehr zu und hoffentlich wird in kurzer Zeit auch auf der roten Erde die Redezeichenkunst ebenso zur Blüte gedeihen wie an anderen Orten unseres deutschen Vaterlandes. Um nun den in Westfalen zerstreuten Stenografen Gelegenheit zu geben sich zu einigen, ihre Ansichten und Wünsche auszusprechen und mit den Kunstgenossen im weiten deutschen Vaterland in Verbindung zu treten wurden die Stenografischen Blätter aus Westfalen gegründet, die auch zugleich passenden Lesestoff bringen wollen.

Zwei Mal sind wohlgemeinte Versuche hier in Westfalen eine Zeitschrift für Gabelsberger Stenografen herauszugeben teilweise durch äußere Umstände gescheitert. Soll uns nun nicht ein ähnliches Schicksal und soll unsere Zeitschrift auch noch den zweiten Jahrgang erleben, so ist es nötig, dass die geehrten Kunstgenossen uns beim begonnenen Unternehmen durch Abonnement, Beiträge und Nachrichten, wie sie für unsere Blätter passen, unterstützen. Klein, sehr klein ist bis jetzt noch das Häuflein derjenigen, die in Westfalen zur Fahne Gabelsbergers halten, aber wenn alle Stenografen mit Eifer und freudig daran gehen, unsere schöne Kunst zu verbreiten, wenn sie das Publikum von dem Wert der Stenografie überzeugen und ihm zugleich beweisen, dass
das Erlernen dieser Kunst nicht sehr schwer ist, wenn sie durch Aufnahme von Vorträgen den Beweis für die Leistungsfähigkeit des Systems geben und sich selbst in der Stenografie vollständig ausbilden, wenn sie die Mittel, die wir in diesen Blättern angeben werden, anwenden, so wird auch das kleine Häuflein sich vergrößern und das Bäumlein wird zum Baum werden und sich über alle Städte und Dörfer Westfalens ausbreiten und die Stenografie wird allen von Nutzen sein.


Von dem so erbitterten Streit über die Vorzüglichkeit des Gabelsbergerschen oder Stolzeschen Systems werden wir uns so viel wie möglich fernhalten und namentlich nie in einen so grob der Sache unwürdigen Ton verfallen wie gewisse Pamphlete und Zeitschriften der gegnerischen Schule dies gewohnt sind, die nicht Person und Sache unterscheiden, die fast nichts zu behandeln wissen als Leute, die anderer Ansicht wie sie sind, zu verunglimpfen und herabzusetzen. Wenn je Einigung zwischen den deutschen Stenografen erfolgen soll, so müssen erst alle Übereilung, alle Vorurteile und jede Parteilichkeit beiseite gesetzt werden und unbefangen müssen die Systeme untersucht


Protest. In Nummer 190 des Berliner Archivs veröffentlicht die Prüfungskommission des Berliner Stolzeschen Stenografenvereins unter der Überschrift „Anzeige“ folgenden Nachtrag zu ihrem Programm:

„Wenn jemand, der sich zur Lehrerprüfung meldet, mit einem anderen System außer dem Stolzeschen bekannt ist, so kann er verlangen, in beiden geprüft zu werden. Es wird ihm dann die Aufgabe gestellt, die betreffenden beiden Systeme in Bezug auf einen Abschnitt zu vergleichen und ein Schriftstück des fremden Systems in Stolzescher Schrift zu übertragen. Auch über den Ausfall dieser Prüfung wird ihm ein Zeugnis ausgestellt. Selbst schon geprüfte Lehrer können über die Kenntnis eines anderen Systems sich ein Zeugnis erwerben.“

Reise nach Amerika 1867 – Joseph Jessing


Am Sonntag Morgen um 5 Uhr wurden endlich die Anker gelichtet und wieder wurde ein Schleppdampfer an unser Schiff gehängt oder vielmehr unser Schiff wurde an den Schleppdampfer gehängt und von diesem in die hohe See gezogen. Während dieser Fahrt wurden die Segel gespannt und da ein frischer Ostwind blies, so füllten sich die Segel bald und der Dampfer kehrte zurück und überließ uns den Winden, die unser Schiff in die Neue Welt tragen sollten. Wir hatten den ganzen Tag ruhiges Wetter, die See war spiegelklar und bald entschwand das Land unseren Blicken.


8. Juni. Heute Morgen ist ein junges Mädchen, welches schon einige Tage krank war, gestorben und wird heute Abend begraben, d. h. über Bord geworfen. Seit acht Tagen habe ich stets im Bett gelegen und konnte nichts essen, die Schiffskost widert mich an
und ich weiß nicht wie ich es noch bis zu Ende aushalten werde. Unsere Fahrt ist in der
letzten Zeit nicht sehr günstig gewesen, wir hatten mehrere Tage ungünstige Winde und
sind wenig vorwärts gekommen. Wir werden uns gegenwärtig nach den Angaben der
unser Reiseziel dagegen liegt auf dem 75. Grad, wir müssen also noch etwa 45 Grad
durchsegeln. Der Wind ist jetzt ziemlich günstig und der Kapitän sagte mir heute Mittag,
dass wir bei diesem Wind die Küste von Amerika in etwa 16 Tagen erreichen können.

10. Juni Pfingstmontag. Heute haben wir wieder ungünstigen Wind. Wir befinden uns auf
dem 37. Grad westlicher Länge von Greenwich. Es ist äußerst langweilig auf dem Schiff
und ich bin nicht ganz wohl, weil das Essen mir gar nicht schmeckt.

Sachen, welche man auf dem Schiff mitnimmt: Kaffee, Zucker, Hafergrütze, getrocknete
Pflaumen und Äpfel, Essig, Honigkuchen, Weizenmehl, Hering, einige Flaschen guten
Branntwein; ferner Rotwein, Zitronen, Zwiebeln, Zitronat, einige Abführmittel - Messer,
Gabel, Löffel, Zinntablet und Schüssel, kupferne Kaffeekessel, Kaffeebrenner, eiserne
Pfanne, einige Hemden, Betttücher, Handtücher, Waschbecken, Nachtgeschirr,
Handspiegel, Kleider- und Schuhbürste, großer und enger Kamm, Rasierzeug, Schere,
Knöpfe, Nadeln, Zwirn und Seide, an den Seiten der Kiste um Ordnung zu halten zwei
kleine Kästchen, die Kiste unten mit Leisten versehen zur Abhaltung des Wassers, oben
in die Kiste einen Beutel zur Aufnahme der schmutzigen Wäsche.

Bei heftiger Seekrankheit wirkt Zitronensaft wohltätig. Es bleibt fast niemand davon
verschont. Übermäßig Essen und Trinken muss man vermeiden und namentlich genieße
man keine fetten und keine süßen Speisen. Nach überstandener Seekrankheit dient ein
Hering mit Essig und Pfeffer zur Erfrischung und ein Glas Rotwein zur Stärkung des
Körpers. Das Gepäck für Auswanderer ist so klein wie möglich einzurichten, leichte
Bekleidung für den Sommer, willene Kleider für den Winter. Hohe Stiefel sind
zweckmäßig in den Prärien oft selbst im Sommer. Pelzmützen sind in den nördlichen
und westlichen Staaten während des Winters gut. Jagdgewehre sind besser in Amerika zu
kaufen. Die Kosten für Gepäck sind groß und es ist in vielen Fällen vorteilhafter, Geld als
Gepäck mitzunehmen.

glaube dass ich auch nicht früher gesund werde bis unser Schiff in Baltimore anlangt. Die
sehr schlechte Schiffskost sagt meinem Magen nicht zu und ich kann nichts davon
genießen, alle Speisen die auf dem Schiff gereicht werden widern mich an. Das schwarze
Brot ist zu grob, das weiße Brot zu hart und widerlich, das gesalzene Fleisch schmeckt
sehr schlecht und es wird das ganze Essen damit verdorben, der Kaffee, welcher morgens
gereicht wird, besteht größtenteils aus Zichorie und der Tee, der als Abendessen dient,
eignet sich zum Brechmittel. So vereinigt sich alles um mir das Essen zu verleiden. Ein wenig Faulwasser mit etwas erbetteltem Brot, das sich einige Passagiere von der Heimat mitgenommen haben, bildet meine Nahrung. Seit gestern haben wir jedoch guten Wind und unser Schiff segelt schnell, wir sind heute schon 31 Tage auf dem Wasser, wenn der Wind so anhält so werden wir wohl in acht Tagen das Land erreichen, alles sehnt sich das Schiff bald zu verlassen, besonders seit wir gestern die Entdeckung machten, dass wir unsere Hemden voll Läuse hatten.


Joseph Jessing
*Ohio Waisenfreund*     Nov 26, 1890
“*Auskunft*” (Information)

(Translation: Thomas Stefaniuk)

**Question:** Is it good and functional when in a parish consisting of two-thirds German and one-third Irish Catholics, catechism is learned by the children only in the English language, and is only offered in the English language? We were told that teaching the children in two languages would be too strenuous, and the children could also better defend the Catholic religion in the English language when they leave their parents. We therefore request that you give your opinion on the matter.

**Answer:** We consider it absolutely wrong that children of German parents learn the catechism in the English language. It harms the children themselves and in the long run harms the parish. The large majority of all German priests in this country agree with us on this. For German children, the German language is the link that holds them together with their parents and their people. When children learn religion in a language different from the one in which they learned from their father and mother, the word of truth is not brought deep into their hearts, rather it stays on the surface and can easily be erased. When children already learn their first prayers, their first knowledge of God – on the knees of their mother, as it should be – in the German language, and later receive religious instruction in the English language, the earliest efforts of the parents are thereby rendered fruitless, for the English instruction in the church and in school does not attach itself to what the parents have already built as a foundation, instead it destroys it. In every well-ordered catholic group, praying is done communally, religious books are read aloud, and discussions about the truth of religion and about everything that goes along with this are held. In a family, however, where parents speak German but the children learn religion and the catechism in English, all of this is impeded or made impossible. The parents don’t understand the English prayers and the children don’t understand the German ones. Should a religious book be read, the same applies, and in discussions about religious matters, the parents and the children cannot understand each other. This is even the case when the parents understand the English language, for this language has the peculiarity of containing expressions that are used in religion but are very rarely used in everyday life. The exclusive use of English in religious training for children of German parents therefore separates them from each other in a sense. They can no longer understand each other in matters of religion. Furthermore, it is a duty of the parents to observe and make sure that their children are working hard and learning the catechism
properly. If the parents want to take part in their children’s learning, a word of encouragement or rebuke from time to time, depending on the circumstances, motivates the children and is a help for the teacher. If, however, children of German parents learn the catechism in the English language only, the parents lose all control over the learning of their children, they can no longer recognize if the children are hard-working or lazy, and the result is that the children demand independence from their parents much too early, which can only harm them. If the children of German parents learn religion in school only in the English language, they will easily fall away from the faith if they don’t learn religion in the German language, as numerous examples have unfortunately proven, for religion and the mother tongue are closely linked together. The matter can also be explained very simply. A person who as a child speaks German with the mother and father, but learns religion in school and church in English only, will leave school and enter life with a lack of knowledge in religion, for when church, school and home do not work together, knowledge always remains lacking. Now such a young person comes into a strange city, is amongst strange people, and has a lack of religious knowledge. In the city there will be various Catholic churches, German as well as Irish. First the young man will attend the German church, but he will not understand the preaching, for he is completely anglicized and he has learned religion in the English language. The German church will therefore soon be spoiled for him and in the best case he will now go to an Irish church. There he will understand the preaching, but he’ll soon find out that as a Dutchman he also doesn’t quite belong there either. Finally he comes to the conclusion: in the German church I cannot understand the preaching and amongst the Irish I also don’t belong, therefore I’d be better off not going to any church. Thousands, even hundreds of thousands have gone this way before in these United States of America. The young person will soon then find pleasing company, but this company will not be Catholic – here is an example: exactly 100 year ago, in the year 1790, the first settlers from France, mostly Catholics, came to the city of Gallipolis in Ohio. They spoke French, naturally, and for a while had a priest who spoke their language. Later, however, they had no priest at all for some time, and then they had an English-speaking priest. And what was the result? The good majority of the descendants of the first settlers lost their mother tongue, the French, and thereby they lost their Catholic faith at the same time. People who wrote these lines visited this city Gallipolis 20 years ago as missionary priests and found that the city, with its French descendants, had become completely estranged from the Catholic church in less than 80 years, as not one of these French souls confessed to the Catholic church. Along with the language of their forefathers, they also lost their faith. The few Catholics who could be found in this city back then were Germans and Irish, who would only establish themselves there at a later time. – When one justifies the learning of religion in English by children of German parents by claiming it will help
them to better defend the faith against attacks from non-Catholics, it is actually a ridiculous reason. First of all, common people are neither called nor capable of defending the religion in any language. For the majority of people, it is sufficient to learn how to themselves live according to the instruction of the faith, and to avoid confrontation with non-Catholics when possible. Secondly, it is much more important for young people of German heritage to be able to defend the faith in the German language, if it came to this, for it is much more likely that they will come into contact with non-believers who speak German as with those who speak English. The number of non-Catholic Germans in this country is very large. Therefore, there is no strong reason for children of German parents to learn the catechism in the English language only, but there are many reasons against it. Should the best knowledge of the faith and true piety be planted in the children, it must be done in the language of the parents in the church and in the parish school, for the children of English parents it should be done in English and for the children of German parents it should be done in German, because otherwise religion instruction remains patchwork and fails to have its effect.
Gedanken und Erinnerungen an goldenen Jubiläumsfeste des päpstlichen Collegium Josephinum, die uns an Alma Mater binden

Columbus, Ohio 1888 - 1889 Worthington, Ohio
von Rev. Franz Fuertges

Wir beide hatten Frieden gemacht und galten als Kampfhelden; der dritte im Bunde, der große Ajar, mußte seine Sporen noch verdienen; er sollte auch bald Gelegenheit bekommen, denn die großen Arbeitsbuben konnten uns Studenten nicht ausstehen, weil sie sich zurückgesetzt glaubten. Es war also Eifersucht oder Mißgunst und diese Burschen rückten uns immer mehr auf den Pelz; eines Tages mußte der Strauß ausgefochten werden und da mußte der große Ajar (Mattes) unsere Ehre retten. Doch davon mal später.


Also morgen nach dem Mittagessen müßten wir uns aufstellen und Vater Jessing fixierte die Reihen; dieser setzte die Füße nicht recht, der machte einen Buckel, der hielt den Kopf schief oder ging zu krumm, hielt die Arme nicht recht, schwenkte zuviel; endlich hatte er auch die Arbeitsbuben zurecht gesetzt und nun kommandierte er: Vorwärts, marsch; linker Fuß vor! So, noch einmal. Es wurde dann noch etwas geübt, das war genügend. Dann erhielten wir unsere großen Hüte aus schwarzen Filz mit grauer

Zu Hause angekommen, sagte Vater Jessing: “Jetzt ruht euch aus bis nach dem Abendgebet, dann studiert bis halb neun Uhr und geht früher zu Bett. Wir waren alle froh und dankten ihm; wir konnten alle beten: Mude bin ich, geh zur Ruh, schließe beide Auglein zu; Vater, laß die Augen Dein über meinem Bett sein, etc. Am nächsten Tag dachten wir oft darüber nach was wir gesehen und wünschten, daß wir bald in der neuen Streetcar fahren könnten. Doch war alles halb vergessen, denn die Lektionen in der Grammatik
The Starry Sky

You deem that I have a rational soul, because you perceive an order in my words and actions; you can also conclude when perceiving the order in this universe that there is an eternal rationality – The heathen Plato

The heavens tell of the magnificence of God and announce the works of his hand – The Jew David

The invisible quality of God has since the creation of the world been visible and discernible in the creations, namely His eternal power and deity – (Romans 1:20) The apostle Paul

The observance of the starry sky has spurred humans to conclude that only an all-governing, all-powerful being, a god, could have created and preserved the wonderful order of the universe. So it was when mankind was still in its infancy and didn’t know what the lights in the sky actually were, and so it is still today, after astronomy has unfurled the universe through the use of the telescope and calculation, and has made us acquainted with astronomical distances and countless heavenly bodies. When we look into the immeasurable universe and see the numerous multitudes of heavenly bodies, which follow their orbits with the greatest regularity, the unaffected human spirit is instinctively spurred to admire the creator and director of this order. Heathens, Jews, and Christians have at all times drawn the same conclusion from this inspection, and every person, whether he is acquainted with the discoveries of astronomy or not, if he is only still unaffected by materialist prejudices, can conduct this experiment by himself on a clear, starry night. Study the newest discoveries of astronomy, which make acquainted to us truly overwhelming dimensions, arm your eye with the best instruments, observe the sky and let the impressions that come from astronomical distances fall into your soul, and the heavens, despite all of these advances of science, will tell you of the majesty and power of God, even much more effectively as it did three millennia ago, as the royal singer of the Jewish people recognized this truth and sang it in inspired psalms. Look up with a spiritual and bodily eye to the starry sky, and observe the wonderful order there
above, below, and on all sides, the perfect order, and from this observance you will yet today also have to explain the world as a work of endless rationality, just as the heathen sage Plato did 2300 years ago. Observe the sky with Christian courage of faith and be aware in your consciousness that you can call the creator and director of this formidable world Father with the most inner conviction, and you will acknowledge the same truth that the apostle Paul, filled with the spirit of God, wrote to the Romans 1800 years ago, and said that those consider themselves wise (or men of progress) on this matter would become fools.

It is the same today with our materialists. They are blind with open eyes and do not want to see the magnificence of God, where it is displayed with the movement of the stars. The words of Christ seem appropriate here. He said: I praise you Father, Lord of the heavens and the earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and the learned, but have revealed them to little children. (Matthew 11:25)

Before we take into consideration the materialist view in relation to the starry sky, we want to briefly present to our readers the astronomical view of the world as it is portrayed in today’s state of scientific research, so that they may have a better orientation.

We understand the “world” or “universe” to be all present and perceivable material things, or the sum of all worldly things. When we consider the things in this world individually there is displayed to us such an astonishing diversity that it is absolutely impossible to find two things in the entire universe that are perfectly the same in every way. Despite this enormous diversity on the individual level, a certain unity and harmony nonetheless rules amongst all of these various things of the world. The world and all the things in it is therefore called a cosmos, in other words, it is a well ordered whole, in which everything is ordered according to mass, number and weight, and which displays its beauty in exactly this unity of diversity. A border of the universe has not yet been discovered. Therefore, the size of the world is unknown to us. The space that has until now been revealed to us with the telescope is nonetheless astronomically large and reaches up to billions of miles from the earth. In this entire enormous space of the universe there rules an immutable order. This order is based on the so-called law of gravity, according to which all bodies are attracted to each other in direct proportion to the product of their masses and in inversed proportion to the distance between them squared. This law of gravity governs as far as the telescope reaches, in the entire universe, without exception, which enables scientists to determine the existence of heavenly bodies based on these calculations of gravity, even before an eye armed with the telescope has laid eyes on them. By this same law, the world is divided into systems, of which each has its center or central body, around which the individual bodies move.
These central bodies are the fixed stars or suns. Now as to how the individual heavenly bodies move around their central body, all heavenly bodies together once again probably have a common center, which is the center of the gravity for the entire universe and around which all things move. Science, however, has not yet ascertained this theory with certainty and the question of whether such a center, or central body, of the entire universe exists remains an open one. The earth on which we live makes up only a small heavenly body in the large solar system, and in comparison with the entire universe, including the entirety of all things in the world, the earth, with everything on and in it, is a vanishing small dot. Because we find ourselves inside this solar system, this system is known to us much more than the countless others. The center of the solar system is our sun, which gives us day, night, light and life on earth. Our solar system has nine planetary regions. Nearest to the sun there are four smaller inner planets; the third of these is our earth, which completes its motion around the sun in one year. After these four inner planets, a large number of half-planets follows, of which over one hundred are known up until now, and which all move in one region around the sun. After these, farther out, there are four larger planets. Our earth and these four larger planets are accompanied by side bodies, or moons, which orbit around them. The half-planets and the inner planets outside of our earth do not have moons. In addition to this solar system of ours there are countless other similar systems with suns and planets that orbit around them. Some of these suns have a strong light, others a weak light; some are binary stars, others even ternary, quaternary, or multiple. In addition, there are nebulae, which are partly regarded as extremely broad masses of stars and partly as illuminated masses of gas. Then there are also comets or shooting stars, which are currently considered identical because of the similarity of their orbits. ---- That is the world, or starry sky, as today’s astronomy generally presents it to us. From what has been said, we can see the kinds of great discoveries of astronomy that have been made up to now, but at the same time it is also obvious that a great many things remain a mystery for us.

Religion teaches us that God is the creator and director of this magnificent and great world, and if the pondering of this universe is overwhelming for the human spirit, if we cannot grasp why God has created so many heavenly bodies, if we are completely uncertain about whether or not intelligent creatures live on the countless heavenly bodies, of which most are much larger than our earth, we know this, that God has created no part of the universe without purpose. The ways of God are not our ways, and it goes against nothing to assume that living creatures, which acknowledge their creator and take joy in their existence, inhabit the other heavenly bodies. Divine revelation tells us neither yes or no, and science has until now not been able to show us either. As long as we are in the flesh we are confined to the small dot in the universe we call earth. God’s plan for the world is ultimately a complete secret to us. We are accustomed to giving our attention
only to the things of this earth, to focusing our thoughts on them, and considering this small earth as the entire world. With this expression of the world, the large majority of mankind associates the always-incomplete idea of God, and imagines that God is only occupied with our earth. Now if a person with such a mindset suddenly becomes aware of the overwhelming size of the universe, whereby it becomes clear to him that the entire earth is but a puny little part of the whole, this fact throws his entire extraordinarily concept of God on its head and he will be on the way to falling into the arms of faithless materialism. The mistake here, however, lies neither with God nor the world, but instead with the limited conception that many people have of the all-powerful unlimited God. Even in the books and writings of otherwise highly learned and well-known materialists one can find a truly childish and ridiculous portrayal of the eternal being that we call God. The omnipotence and infinitude of God enables Him to easily create, direct, and govern millions and millions of heavenly bodies in perfect detail, as easily as if He had only our small earth to rule. He who forgets this, who thinks of the infinite, boundless and all powerful God in limited conceptions, he could have doubt as to the possibility of how a God could govern such an enormously large world with all its particulars. A person who thinks this way has already distanced himself from the Catholic instruction at the early stages of his thought, however, and therefore from the truth, and it is consequently not surprising that the final conclusion of his thought is wrong and inclined to disbelief.

We now want to see how materialism views the world. First we must distinguish in the materialist worldview the real facts from the hypotheses, and afterward we shall examine which conclusions of reasons can be taken from the facts of astronomy and what materialism does with these.

The materialist says: “From a formless mass of vapor, individual heavenly bodies and solar systems, through the formation of individual, self-rotating points, must have formed themselves and gradually become compressed into round compact masses.” We don’t know what “self-rotating” points are; the origin of their existence is not given; we also do not know who put them into motion; but we do know that this assertion, which is like a mass of vapor, is not a fact, but rather one of the various hypotheses of natural philosophy that has been proposed in order to find a natural explanation for the undeniable formation of the world. Such suppositions, however, cannot have much value, just like every other fantasy. The materialist then continues; “Matter (Massen) is in constant movement in the universe, a movement which adds to and complicates the diversity, but indeed in all of its expressions and modifications is the consequence of a single comprehensively valid law of nature, the law of attraction (gravity). This law, to which all matter is obedient, and whose effect on all particles we can observe with our
eyes, is followed by all of the large and small bodies without arbitrariness and without even the slightest deviation (that would constitute an exception). All of these movements let themselves be recognized, determined, and predicted with mathematical precision and certainty. As far as the telescope of humans reaches, and as long as it has the ability to recognize the laws of the sky, and man has accomplished this up to millions and millions of miles, man always confronts only this one law, the same mechanical order, the same mathematical formula, the calculation of submissive procedures.” According to these materialist opinions which we accept as fact, the question we must ask is whether or not, from this so comprehensive and perfectly governing lawfulness in the whole universe, from this regular movement of heavenly bodies, the slightest arbitrary order must be accredited to an all-wise director of nature? The emphasis of this materialist evidence against the existence of God clearly lies in the fact that in the order and in the movement of the heavenly bodies, there is no trace of arbitrariness that can be found. Every thinking person can easily see how wrong this conclusion is. Only the person who has a childishly idiotic concept of the all-wise and unlimited God of heaven and earth, who imagines the immutable God to possess human weakness, only such a person can overlook the error of this materialist conclusion. If the opposite of what the materialist claims existed, an arbitrary order could actually be proven in the movement of the heavenly bodies, this arbitrariness would offer a much better mechanism (Handhabe) to deny the existence of the all-wise God, as the actual present comprehensive and thorough order in the world. Arbitrariness is namely evidence of the imperfection and lack of the thought of which conditions are in no way reconcilable with the concept of an all-wise God. The admitted facts in the worldview of the materialists therefore deliver to us the material to admire the wisdom of the world’s director. “Nowhere”, says the materialist, “can there be found a trace of one with arbitrariness, but rather one with wise fingers, which created the sky and set the earth and the comets into their orbits.” --“The attraction of the smallest parts formed the heavenly bodies together, and the law of attraction together with their first movements effected the type of their reciprocal rotation, which we recognize in them today.” It is regrettable that the laws of nature declared to be absolutely immutable by the materialists make these hypotheses impossible again, for if the smallest parts of vapor masses came together without having received the impetus from a power outside of matter, this happened completely in contradiction with the immutable laws of vapor masses or gases, according to which they always seek to spread out or expand, but never come together. How solid heavenly bodies, whose rotation occurs with mathematical precision and exactness, could form out of a mass of vapor without the intervention of a higher power, is completely inexplicable and unthinkable for us. To excuse this nonsense, materialism states the completely arbitrary sentence: “Eternal matter must also take part in an eternal movement.” Now once again, in order to further justify this purely invented
This marvelous confession looks like this: “Why matter adopted a particular type of movement at a particular time remains for the time being indeed secretive to any further insight on our part.” (Büchner) After this shameful explanation for this enlightened and grandiloquent materialist, which makes his earlier hypotheses seem like empty wind, he comforts himself with the idea that later there could be success in giving a solid foundation to the rickety framework of the materialist system of disbelief. We leave him this hope, should he find some comfort in it for his hopeless system.

After materialism has come to the point, in the discussion of mathematical precision, order and harmony of the universe, which reveals everywhere only the highest wisdom and nowhere the trace of wise fingers with arbitrariness, where he can no longer naturally philosophize without a God and therefore wisely stops and comforts himself with hopes for the future; after the fact that two moons of the planet Uranus have a regressive movement and thereby make the whole theory of self-initiated rotation completely impossible, he wisely remains elusive and silent, and the page is left unturned and irregularities, coincidences and adversities (Zweckwidrigkeiten) are used as a battering ram against the argument of God’s existence. There is supposedly no trace of arbitrariness to be discovered in the universe, rather only order and regularity, as far as the telescope of humans reaches, and therefore there is supposedly no God. After this card has been played, the materialist claims that “irregularities, coincidences and adversities in the order of the world and individual heavenly bodies amongst themselves directly rule out the thought of a personal activity in this order.” Truly, the flippancy and the speculation on top of the thoughtlessness of the people on the side of the materialists cannot be taken to any further extreme!

Now in order to reject the idea of God, the materialists use order as well as disorder, usefulness as well as inexpediency, necessity as well as coincidence, everything is good enough, as long as it can display superficial reasoning against the existence of the all-governing God. Even if we assume the undoubted truth of the existence of God as a hypothesis, God could have in no way pleased the materialists. The lack of arbitrariness supposedly argues against His existence, but the opposite also rules out his existence. In America, they call such a flippant and ridiculous argumentation “humbug”. Whoever wants to go against the conscience of all peoples, against the testimony of his conscience, against human rational, by denying the existence of God, because he sees his advantage in it, he may do so, for he is not willing to learn better instruction; when, however, such a godless person tries to pressure the masses and justify his faithlessness with theoretical
nonsense and ridiculous supposed scientific fantasy, as our materialists do today, he deserves that we remove the mask from his face.

The men of natural philosophy, in their godlessness, do not shy away from asking questions such as the following: “Why did the creator give rings to Saturn, which is circled by eight moons and has the least need for it, while poor Mars was left in complete darkness?” (Hudson Tuttle) “Why didn’t the creating force write her name with movements of stars in the sky? Why didn’t she give the heavenly body systems an order from which her purpose could undoubtedly be recognized?” (Büchner) These absurd questions neither solve the puzzle nor do they tear it apart. They are simply empty modes of expression, which confirm the proverb, that a jester can ask more questions than a wise man can answer. According to the customs of the Americans, we could answer these questions with countless other questions, for example: Why can’t materialism read the star movements in the sky? Why does he speak of atoms, which he cannot see; from an eternity that he can neither prove nor grasp? Why does materialism contradict reason? Why does it contradict itself? In fact, it is a luster for the faith to have such people as adversaries.

Joseph Jessing
John Joseph Jessing, 1896.
A letter from Jessing in Gabelsberger shorthand from 1865.
Jessing’s offer to the American government of the use of his college as a war hospital during the upcoming Spanish-American War.
Sacred Heart Church and grounds. Pomeroy, Ohio, 1875. This 8 by 6-inch photograph shows Sacred Heart Church and grounds in Pomeroy, where Reverend John Joseph Jessing served from 1870-1876. The parish was founded in 1848 by German immigrants. When Jessing arrived, Sacred Heart parish numbered approximately 1,500 persons, most of whom worked in the coal and salt industries. (Source: www.ohiomemory.org)
This photograph, taken October 10, 1888, shows the students and orphans of the Josephinum at a parade commemorating the settlement of Ohio. Reverend John Joseph Jessing is standing at the rear of the group. This is the first photograph of Josephinum students and orphans. (Source: www.ohiomemory.org)
Jessing, center, with his boys in 1888. The gentlemen in the top row were probably workers in the print shop.
The students of the three higher classes, Quarta, Tertia, and Secunda, were photographed with Msgr. Jessing in April 1893.