

Finding and Explaining the Nuances of Black Catholicism

Introduction

Catholicism, being the largest denomination of the largest religion in the world, naturally has acquired a large body of research by religious scholars. Its history, controversies, political nature, and most importantly for this paper, social and cultural dimensions have been studied exhaustively. Being a worldwide, and according to its own theology, intrinsically “universal” church, it has seen many permutations, subcultures, and liturgical differences throughout its 2,000-year history. However, a relatively small amount of comprehensive research exists for one of its smallest minorities: Black Catholics.

With approximately 3 million in the United States, Black Catholics represent a considerable minority in the predominately White religion (in the U.S., at least). Considering this, it is understandable that little attention (at least, little useful research beyond conjectures, as the authors of one of the following articles contend) has been devoted to them, and has instead been devoted to the much more popular, distinctive, and culturally rich world of Black Evangelical Protestantism. However, the minority nature of Black Catholics and their comparative cultural assimilation within the large, ordered, unifying Catholic Church makes their case all the more interesting and requiring of serious study. What is the life and spirituality of Black Catholics like? How does it differ from the rest of Catholicism, or Black Protestantism? Is it different at all, or is the nature of Catholic religious practice inherently monochrome?

The two studies analyzed here - one quantitative, one textual - seek to answer the broad question “how does Black Catholic spirituality in the United States differ from that of Whites,

the majority in Catholicism?”, though from two slightly different angles. “Social Network Theory and Predictors of Religiosity for Black and White Catholics: Evidence of a Black Sacred Cosmos?” is a quantitative study based on the hypothesis that there are tangible, measurable differences in the ways Black and White Catholics practice their faith, and these differences can be explained through social factors according to the Social Network Theory. The textual study, “Black Power, Vatican II, and the Emergence of Black Liturgies”, is based on the hypothesis that the intersection of the ideas of the Black Power Movement and the Second Vatican Council helped produce a distinctly Black style of Catholic liturgy in the decades following Vatican II. The Cavendish/Welsh/Leege article seeks to answer the larger question by empirically analyzing the differences in styles of religious practice among modern day Catholics, while the Cressler article attempts to answer by using historical sources to trace the history of the development of a subgenre of Black Catholicism.

Comparing Study Methods - Quantitative

The quantitative research done in the Cavendish article, “Social Network Theory” is based on personal responses from the extensive Notre Dame Survey of Catholic Parish Life. The researchers decided to analyze this survey based on the fact that a body of research existed for Black Catholic liturgical worship, but relatively nothing had been researched regarding the comparative inner spiritual lives of the two races of Catholics. As specified in their own words, the researchers chose to use this specific data because “the basic empirical goal of this research is to delineate clearly the ways in which Black and White Catholics differ in the patterns - and predictors - of religious devotionality and spirituality.” (Cavendish et al., 1998, p. 398)

In addition to basic measures of religious practice, the researchers decided to include principles of Social Network Theory in their research in order to “explain how religious behavior is motivated and sustained by one’s location in social networks”; they sought to not only report the differences found in Black Catholic religiosity, but to discover the factors that were motivating them (Cavendish et al., 1998, p. 399). Social Network Theory refers to a concept found in the social sciences by which the power of links between individuals are analyzed instead of that of the individuals themselves; it is the study of the structural forms—or patterning—of the ties that link units [people, organizations, etc.]” (Schmidt 2007).

While Social Network Theory encompasses models and many other tools for scientific/mathematical research, the researchers of this article primarily use the broad principles of it to guide their research. Social Network Theory essentially states that the behavior of individuals can best be explained in terms of their relationships to others, which is why the researchers chose to apply it in order to discover what social factors could be influencing different levels of religiosity among Catholics (Schmidt 2007). Operating under the Theory-guided assumption that the whole of a Catholic parish is greater than its parts enables them to analyze how factors beyond the respondents’ lives determined their levels of religiosity.

The paragraph in which the researchers describe their application of Social Network Theory cites many other past studies (conducted on church friendships, levels of integration within the church, church drop-outs, etc.) that have examined and provided evidence for the validity of Theory in this particular case by proving the importance of social integration in people's religious practice (Cavendish et al., 1998).

The Notre Dame survey, conducted in 1984 was designed to “[attempt to] describe Catholic parishes in the United States roughly twenty years after the reforms of the Second

Vatican Council.”. In attempting to paint an accurate picture, the survey used a large sample and a massive number of variables - 2,667 parishioners of 36 randomly selected Catholic churches from across the United States were surveyed, and 499 coded variables were included as potential responses (Notre Dame 1984).

249 responses from Black Catholics and 2,418 from White Catholics were used in total; this may seem like an under-representation, but considering the tiny minority that Black Catholics comprise in the whole of American Catholicism, it is actually a representative sample (Cavendish et al., 1998). Given the unique cultural nature of their Catholic practice, Hispanic churches were also systematically excluded, making this survey particularly relevant for the White/Black-specific focus of this article (Notre Dame 1984).

The data was collected through a “multiwave process” in which detailed questionnaires were mailed out to individuals who were registered parishioners of their churches. Though the limiting factor of registered parishioners made the study slightly less representative of the entirety of the U.S. Catholic population, the demographic differences were found minimal enough to not be of consequence to the study’s accuracy. In fact, the survey’s intentional oversampling of Black parishioners made it even more apt for this study’s purpose (Cavendish et al., 1998).

Two distinct phases of data collection and analysis were performed in the study. The first, which tested the first part of the researchers’ hypothesis concerning the differences in spiritual practice between Black and White Catholics, utilized four categories of survey question responses that were pulled out and designated as metrics: the level of the responder’s participation in Obligatory Devotionalism (obligatory practices like Mass and receiving Communion), Evangelical Devotionalism (more traditionally protestant-linked activities like

bible studies, giving testimonies, etc.), Traditional Devotionalism (distinctly Catholic forms of prayer such as the Rosary, Benediction, novenas), and Spiritual Experiences (Cavendish et al., 1998). These factors of religiosity were measured by respondents' ranking of their own participation in the categories of devotions on a numerical scale. The number of dimensions of religiosity as well as the detail of the questions asked were both intended to help portray an accurate picture of private religious life, a quality not easily measured by external, impersonal factors and important to answering the research question at its deepest level.

To test the second part of the study's hypothesis involving the predicted influences of Social Network Theory on differing levels of racial religiosity, responses to questions about social factors such as Organizational Membership and Sense of Community were also included. These were listed as independent variables alongside demographic factors such as race, against which the devotional variables were plotted. These variables were measured more simply: by objective responses to the demographic questions of race, age, gender, education, number of children, and region (South vs. Non-South), a yes-or-no response to the question of Organizational Membership in the church, and subjective numerical answers to questions regarding Sense of Community and Social Integration. One further question was included to examine possible nuances: whether the respondent was a convert to Catholicism, and if so whether they converted from mainline or evangelical Protestantism (Cavendish et al., 1998).

To analyze the quantitative data they gathered, the researchers first focused on just the responses to the dependent variable questions. They organized a table of the mean values of responses to each of the four devotional metrics, distinguishing only between Black and White responses. The mean values for each category were calculated to have a p-value of .001, making

them highly statistically significant. According to this first table of literally “black-and-white” results, clear differences in spirituality between the two races were found. Black Catholics had a higher mean score than their White counterparts in all but one of the devotional categories - Obligatory Devotionalism, of which White Catholics’ mean value was only .23 higher.

The second stage of analysis involved the researchers factoring in all of the many independent variables and performing regression analyses on them. Several of these analyses were performed - one each for the Black and White responses to each devotional category, for a total of eight. Finally, “large-sample Z-tests” were performed in order to isolate the relationships between the independent or “predictor” variables and the dependent ones to determine how the relationships between these and the dependent variables differed between White and Black respondents. Overall, the data from this second detailed stage showed a strong relationship between the social network factors and dependent variables, but only for either White Catholics or both Black *and* White Catholics together.

The results of this analysis are presented in the article in two separate tables, each with corresponding paragraphs detailing the patterns found and the initial conclusions the researchers pulled from them. Given the simplicity of Table 1, only a short paragraph accompanies it, explaining that Black Catholics evidently have overall higher levels of devotional participation. The researchers make this confident conclusion based on the fact that Black Catholics responded with higher levels in all but one of the metrics, and that the only outlier, Obligatory Devotionalism, “represents a minimal type of religious expression for Catholics.”

Table 2, however, with its myriad of numbers and variables comparing each independent variable to each dependent, comes with a more substantial written interpretation of the data. The authors systematically present the results of the Table variable-by-variable in distinct paragraphs.

They start with the overall success of the regressions. Considering p-values, only one of the regressions, the one ran for the Spiritual Experiences metric, was not as comprehensive as the others in determining the effect of predictor variables (Given the subjective nature of spiritual experiences compared to the other, more tangible measures of devotionism, this was likely to be expected). They then present the finding that of the predictor variables, the social network factors (in particular, the rating of Social Integration) were the most significant in predicting levels of spirituality by citing p- and Beta-values. However, they proceed to explain that, when looking at these predictors for Black and White Catholics together, that these social variables are only effective in predicting religiosity for White Catholics or Catholics from both races. Therefore, these regressions disconfirmed one of the researchers' hypotheses - that social factors are more prevalent to the religiosity of Black Catholics than Whites.

The demographic variables are explained to be much less prevalent in determining religiosity or helping to answer the research question. "Age, gender, and educational attainment" do apparently have an impact on levels of religiosity, but these are largely regardless of race and not helpful. The most interesting result of the regressions for the demographic responses, though, was that the location of a respondent in the South and their conversion from Protestantism had virtually no effect on Black respondents' levels of religiosity, but did significantly impact Whites' levels of Traditional and Evangelical Devotionalism.

The results of the final Z-test attempting to finely differentiate the effects of variables between Blacks and Whites confirmed that social factors had largely the same impact on Black religiosity as they did on that of Whites.

In the preceding section labelled "Discussion", the authors move into more detailed, broader conclusions about their results. They posit that social factors indeed were important in

determining the levels of religiosity in Catholics, which confirms past research. It also adds to the understanding of the ultimate research question by confirming that this is an area in which Black and White Catholics are *not* different.

The overall higher levels of Black religiosity as measured by the four categories of responses, though, is presented as a significant difference that answers the question by suggesting that Black Catholics are “more comprehensively religious than their White counterparts”. This conclusion’s importance is explained through presenting previous studies that haven’t been able to explain as significant a difference among specific measures of religious life between Black and White Catholics.

However, the authors conclude that beyond this, the inability of the regressions to explain with social factors and demographics exactly *why* Black Catholics have higher levels of devotionism means that this segment of the study is inconclusive. They posit that though these statistics cannot accurately explain the differences, the presence of a specific “cultural form” in which Blacks feel linked to Christianity (the “Black Sacred Cosmos”) very well might.

The authors conclude with a further explanation of the possibility of a “Black Sacred Cosmos”, and suggest that the ultimate take-away from the study for church leaders is that Black Catholics do indeed have different needs than their White counterparts, but that the high levels of their participation in standard devotions mean that a radical change is not necessary.

Comparing Study Methods – Textual

The textual approach taken by Cressler in his article, “Emergence of Black Liturgies”, involves the historical analysis of newspaper articles, official Church documents, and various journal articles in order to paint an accurate picture of Black Catholic liturgies and their interconnectedness with Black identity. Research for this article was conducted in a manner similar to most historical textual research papers: data was gathered through the finding, reading, and analyzing of textual sources, both primary and secondary, and the data was then synthesized by the author to form coherent support for hypothesis. Sources were selected according to their capability to provide a comprehensive historical account of the Black Catholic Movement and to capture the social impact of Black Power and Vatican II, in order that they could be used by the author to assert that these influenced Black Catholicism.

Among the primary sources (direct accounts rather than analyses, etc.) Cressler used were articles from the Chicago Tribune and the Los Angeles Times, as well as the Chicago Defender and the archdiocese of Chicago newspaper, The New World. These were used chiefly for their accounts and criticism of the 1968 “African Mass”, the 1969 “Black Unity Mass”, and a 1969 “pray-in” protest, all of which were landmark events in the development of Black liturgies that Cressler structures his paper around. Miscellaneous other primary texts are included to supplement the larger works. Among these: “A Statement of the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, 1968”, and the text of an intercessory prayer said during the aforementioned Chicago “pray-in”. “Sacrosanctum Concilium” (the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) - an important document of the Second Vatican Council (Cressler 2014).

Many secondary sources in the forms of journal articles and books and conferences appear. These are the author’s main method of analyzing the Vatican Council and either directly used and quoted for a specific argument, or referred to among a swath of others as a suggestion

for further reading whenever the author describes general facts. Other journal articles and books on Black identity, Black Power, the nature of Black worship are used as a basis for study and are cited towards the end of the article, as the author moves into his analysis of the Black Catholic Movement and comes to a conclusion.

In this textual study, the analysis of the results and their presentation in writing are much more intertwined than in the quantitative study, given the absence of Tables, methods, and even distinct data and analysis sections. Rather, this author attempts to use his results to supplement a narrative-like explanation of the history of Black Catholicism. This approach aims to illuminate the differences between Black and White Catholicism through depicting the experience of one of these races in vivid and accurate detail, since this is the experience of the minority and is therefore less familiar to most readers.

Cressler mostly depends on his primary sources to provide the structure of his data presentation and analysis. Primary sources are most often found in the form of newspaper articles concerning pivotal events that occurred in post-Vatican II Chicago that led to the Black Catholic Movement. With his extensive quotation (“The Los Angeles Times described the event as “an old-fashioned hymn-singing religious rally””) throughout the article, Cressler lets these sources do the talking when discussing these events, ensuring objectivity and providing the most explicit view into his methods (Cressler 2014, p. 107).

By opening the article with depictions of a mass through quotes from the *Tribune* and *Defender* and returning to them later in the article to describe other masses and protests, Cressler effectively sets up a historical framework for the article. It is within this framework, established

in sections like “Black Catholic Protest in Chicago, 1968–1969”, that he elaborates and supports his hypothesis about the influences of Black Power and Vatican II through his secondary sources, concentrated in sections like “What Does Vatican II Have to Do with Black Power?” (which will be discussed later).

Other primary sources are used less extensively, but in a similar fashion for the same purpose. The text from the intercessory prayer at the “pray-in” found on page 106 serves to illustrate the nature of these protests, in the same way that statements from the Black Clergy Caucus, and the National Black Sisters’ Conference are quoted. Letters to the Editor from newspapers are also quoted extensively in the section “Black Critics of the Black Unity Mass” to illustrate the scale and breadth of the racial and religious controversy over the emergence of uniquely Black Catholic liturgies: “It is impossible to understand just how inseparable Vatican II and Black Power had become for most black Catholics without accounting for the forceful critics of both.” (Cressler 2014, p. 122)

Later in the article, when discussing the Black Catholic liturgical spirit that arose from the events discussed earlier, primary sources are used to show the definitive actions that comprised the Black Catholic Movement; records of the National Order of Black Catholics’ (NOBC) “Department of Culture and Worship” and magazine, *Freeing the Spirit* are used for this purpose (Cressler 2014, p.115-116). Additionally, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Ad Gentes*, church documents that are the only primary sources used to discuss Vatican II, are presented as hard evidence for their “contribution to the growth of Black liturgies” (though Cressler’s discussion of this is also linked to an idea from a secondary source) (Cressler 2014, p. 115).

Concerning secondary sources, rather than focusing on direct quotations or other explicit presentation of evidence, Cressler uses them as evidence to support his own broad ideas on the

subject at hand. He largely relies on these sources when discussing Vatican II and the Black Power Movement, as these are – rather than just reportable events – complex ideologies each with their own influential social spirits, for which journal articles and other forms of discussion and analysis from outside observers serve as the best method of obtaining evidence.

The presentation of this evidence is less explicit and more embedded in his own writing than that of his primary sources. For instance, in the section “What Does Vatican II have to do with Black Power?”, he describes the permeating and ambiguous Vatican II concept of “aggiornamento” in largely his own words, citing a bevy of sources that informed him listed as “for further reading” (Cressler 2014, p.101). Quotations and direct references from journals and books are present (such as from Timothy Kelly’s “The Transformation of American Catholicism”), but for the most part, references to secondary sources are contained in footnotes that describe how the ideas the author is presenting were influenced by a conference, lecture, or series of journal articles.

This method of presenting and analyzing secondary source data is also found later on in the article when Cressler turns to Black Power, racism, and Black tensions within the church. Two lengthy paragraphs at the end of “Black Critics of the Black Unity Mass” discuss the impact of Black Power on the question of how Black Catholics should present their Black or Catholic identities, for which Cressler cites and elaborates on two journal articles by racial and religious scholars (Cressler 2014, p.112).

As previously mentioned, the analysis of data and presentation of conclusions are much more intertwined and embedded throughout this article than in the quantitative study (and the author’s method of gathering the data did not need to be presented as explicitly, since, as a textual study, it simply involved the reading of source texts). However, there is a unique element

of Cressler's presentation of his data in writing, in that he chooses to present his analysis as one long, narrative-like article and explicitly mention his sources in lengthy and elaborative footnotes. These footnotes (some as long as a paragraph, such as #31 on page 112) illuminate exactly what ideas he is pulling from what sources and why, and could be considered a formal presentation of his methods.

Analysis of Inferential Processes and Explanatory Methods - Quantitative

The processes the researchers of the "Black Sacred Cosmos" article use to make inferences are easier to trace than those in Cressler's article; abduction and hypothetico-deduction are clearly visible.

As the references to past studies at the beginning of "Black Sacred Cosmos" demonstrate, the authors use a process of abduction to arrive at their initial hypothesis. Considering the prior evidence about the minority of Black Catholics and the unique spirit of Black Protestantism provided to them, the authors form the initial hypotheses that guide their study: that Black Catholics differ substantially in some way from the majority of Catholics, and that social factors have an influence in these differences.

At this level, rules on which the hypothesis operates are applied to the results of the Notre Dame survey. The researchers assume not only that the survey was conducted in a trustworthy/unbiased manner, but that the respondents were telling the truth, which is based on another assumption about the nature of the survey; since Notre Dame is one of the most respected Catholic universities in the country, it is assumed that devout Catholics would feel confident answering a survey from them (as opposed to one from, say, DU). By framing their

hypothesis within the context of Social Network Theory, they also assume that said Theory is valid enough to be used in predicting behavior on such a large scale. Probably the foremost among these rules are the assumptions that enough people responded to paint an accurate picture of the behaviors of Black and White Catholics, and that these behaviors - as measured by the four devotional factors - are suitable proof of a tangible difference in spirituality (a very intangible area).

After obtaining more evidence from the results of the survey, the researchers perform another level of abduction in making the inference that the responses to the survey questions indicate that Black Catholics have a stronger overall level of personal religiosity (Table 1). However, after performing a hypothetico-deductive process to test the validity of their other hypothesis (on the influence of social factors) in the form of the regressions that led to Table 2, the researchers have to revise this hypothesis after finding that the data contradict the notion that social factors have a specific impact on Black Catholics (the counterfactual implied here is: if the social factors influence Black Catholics, then they won't have an equal or greater impact on White Catholics). A final instance of hypothetico-deduction is conducted with the "z-tests" that the researchers use "to examine more closely specific predictor variables." With these tests, they refine their potential conclusions and connect the elements of their two hypotheses by attempting to empirically ensure that the relationships between social predictors and the dependent variables differ significantly for Black and White Catholics. These tests proved to be an important use of hypothetico-deduction since they further confirmed the conclusion that social factors don't have a unique influence on Black Catholics over Whites.

These post-survey inferences are guided by another set of abductive rules. In addition to assuming that their regressions were run correctly and that all relevant data was considered when

they got such low p-values, the researchers make assumptions about the extensiveness of their research when making their conclusions in the “Discussion” section. They assume that enough social factors have been measured by the survey to claim that “social network variables...are salient predictors of religiosity for both Black and White Catholics,” but also assume the opposite - not enough specific research has been conducted - when it comes to determining the differences between the two races (Cavendish et al. 1998, p.405). By asserting that “the models presented in this analysis are somewhat more inconclusive” and that “other factors are likely to be operating”, they are making a conclusion on the assumption more data would suggest a different explanation, one at which they can only speculate currently (Cavendish et al. 1998, p.405).

After explaining their methods, presenting their data in the form of tables, and showing their processes of inference through their elaboration, the researchers explain the facts they have discovered in the “Discussion” section, largely through a statistical relevance style of explanation with some causal elements. The researchers directly refer to the survey and regression results to imply that a strong connection is found between social network variables and levels of religiosity, as well as previous statistical studies that have found similar facts. They also refer to the results of the z-tests to elaborate further and confirm that their data about social factors was not effective in predicting the differences in religious practice between Black and White Catholics.

When the limits of statistical relevance are reached where the data is found to be inconclusive, the researchers present their more speculative explanations in a causal manner from which they can draw at least partial if not comprehensive conclusions (perhaps explaining the question mark in the title of the article). They assert that the high levels of Black

devotionalism found in the survey are caused by the fact that “[Black Catholics] find in more traditional Catholic devotional patterns a deep sense of mystery, otherness, and sacredness” (Cavendish et al. 1998, p.406). Additionally, they posit that the different levels of devotion among the two races of Catholics, if not able to be explained by hard data at this time, could be explained by a deeper, less tangible cause: the different “cultural form” which Christianity takes on for Blacks, dubbed the “Black Sacred Cosmos” (Cavendish et al. 1998, p.406). Their concluding section, “Implications for Church Leaders” also suggests that the unique levels of Black religious devotion found in the survey should serve as a cause for church leaders to adopt new programs (Cavendish et al. 1998, p.407).

Analysis of Inferential Processes and Explanatory Methods - Textual

The research done in “Emergence of Black Liturgies” involves a slightly less complicated and formal inferential process than that found in “Black Sacred Cosmos” when it comes to data, though analysis of the data to form conclusions involves considerable abduction.

Since Cressler is writing an historical paper, he doesn’t have to engage in quite as much formal testing of facts as the quantitative researchers do, as he is writing about events that have already happened and took place a certain way, rather than about multi-variable data that could suggest multiple conclusions. Of course, Cressler is assuming that his sources are complete and accurate, just as the authors of the quantitative study are assuming their survey results are, but overall he doesn’t have to engage in the process of manipulating and testing the validity of his data in the way that the researchers do with their empirical data (such as their carefully

calculated process of 8 regressions and their z-tests) in order to pull out information that will confirm or disconfirm their hypothesis.

This being said, since Cressler is still seeking to answer the question “How does Black Catholicism differ from White Catholicism?”, he necessarily has a hypothesis – the intersection of the Black Power movement and Vatican II created a distinctly Black form of Catholicism – that he claims his evidence supports, and the process of drawing this conclusion from his sources necessarily involves abductive rules and assumptions. By extensively quoting newspaper accounts of events, he assumes that the articles were written honestly and contained quality reporting (given the reputation of the *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*, this is a fairly safe assumption to make). Additionally, his use of secondary sources to bolster his argument, especially in the cases of the multitude of sources he cites simultaneously under “for further reading” and the conference “On the Lived History of Vatican II”, on which he states that he bases an entire paragraph, of which his use as evidence rests on the assumption that there is not contradictory information found in other secondary sources.

For example, though his reporting on the Black Unity Mass doesn’t involve much inference since its occurrence is a provable fact, his insinuations that Vatican II and Black Power were “inseparable” and that “Black Catholic liturgies were among the most enduring contributions black Catholics made to U.S. Catholicism in the decades following the Second Vatican Council” required an inferential process to be made (Cressler 2014, p. 112, 118). In order to arrive at these conclusions, Cressler had to consider the facts found in Vatican II documents and newspaper reports, scour through information and ideas found in secondary sources, and once he had gathered a reasonable amount of evidence, synthesize them into a coherent conclusion that the events of history helped prove and not contradict.

When their validity has been set up as a rule, though, Cressler's primary sources become more or less infallible and are effective as evidence for proving his claims about Black Power. Where primary sources are used, it is difficult to argue alternative meanings for them, as in the instance of the explicitly Black identity-based prayer text from the "pray-in". Likewise, though the strength of the claim on page 115 that Vatican II documents encouraged the Black Catholic Movement could potentially be debated, other explicit primary sources like the statement from the Black Clergy Caucus are less interpretable and therefore function well as hard evidence on which to base an answer to the research question.

With evidence of this nature doing most of the legwork in the abductive process of supporting Cressler's hypothesis, there is not much necessity for counterfactuals or further testing of facts – either these things happened, or they didn't, and either the secondary sources are valid, or they aren't. However, the Letters to the Editor cited in the "Black Critics of the Black Unity Mass" section are part of a hypothetico-deductive approach. By showing that the proud Black liturgical spirit found in these landmark masses wasn't unifying for all Black Catholics, Cressler is testing a potential broad hypothesis and turning into a narrower one. If it was true that Vatican II produced a distinct form or subgenre of Black Catholicism, then Black Catholics would be unified behind it; however, since this is not the case, then it can at least be proved that these masses and protests led to a Black Catholic Movement that, if not unifying, was at least notable.

Concerning his explanatory methods, Cressler also relies on causality, but presents it in a narrative-like structure. By writing the article essentially as a written history of Black Catholicism with the analysis of its development running throughout, he explains his findings through a time-based method – though its reportorial nature and lack of an emotional cadence

disqualify it as a narrative according to Velleman's definition, its extensive use of stories presented as evidence lend it elements of a "chronicle" of Black Catholic history (Velleman 2003, p.2)

However, upon closer inspection, causality is found to be the main way in which Cressler's conclusions are explained. He sets up the stories of masses and protests found in his primary sources as proximal causes which led to the inevitable occurrence of the Black Catholic Movement, and implies that the spirits of Vatican II and Black Power were coinciding ultimate causes that allowed for the development of Black liturgies.

Conclusion

These two studies, though they answer the same question, are essentially apples and oranges when their methods of research and analysis are considered. Aside from the expected differences between textual and quantitative studies, it is clear that "Sacred Cosmos" takes more factors into account and is only partially conclusive with its goals, while "Black Liturgies" makes a more convincing case for a narrower subset of the research question. Their methods of inference and presentation also greatly differ, given the extensive inferences made by Cavendish et al. and the relative ease of presentation by Cressler, bolstered by ability to use footnotes to explain his bevy of cited sources and embed his ideas and analysis fluidly into the narrative-like text.

However, it can certainly be said that each study has its strengths and weaknesses, and they can each be used for different purposes and audiences. Though it can't sufficiently explain them without further research, "Sacred Cosmos" definitely proves that tangible differences do

exist in the lives of Black and White Catholics, and would therefore be useful in a pragmatic sense for church leaders or researchers into the effects of organized religion. “Black Liturgies”, on the other hand, provides a more comprehensive look into the nuances and influences of these differences. While it’s certainly not illustrative of the experience of the modern-day Black Catholic and shouldn’t be assumed to be so by anyone in a position of influence in their lives, it is helpful in understanding the overall Black religious experience and would be useful to scholars seeking to understand the cultural effects of Vatican II and the future of the ethnic Church, as well as researchers who would potentially conduct other studies on the nature of Black religion in America.

Where the quantitative study proves that differences exist, the textual study takes a step toward illuminating their nuances in a specific context, though both rely extensively on common assumptions about the validity of their sources. If these can be proven, both would be quite useful to social scientists and/or clergy attempting to decode the mystery of the experience of an ethnic minority in such a major religion.

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