

# Eighteenth-Century Women and English Catholicism

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It always comes as a surprise when the nocturnal erupts into broad daylight.

—Michel de Certeau<sup>1</sup>

When the pauper Mary Arrowsmith was found dead at Derwent Bridge in Walton, Lancashire in 1747, authorities discovered a Catholic catechism in her pocket. She had inscribed it “Mary Arrowsmith her book.”<sup>2</sup> Death has a way of bringing what has been hidden to light, and this episode suggests much about the hidden persistence, and persistent hiddenness, of Catholicism in eighteenth-century England.<sup>3</sup> The discovery of Arrowsmith’s body occurred a mere two years after a failed Jacobite invasion of Great Britain. Anti-Catholic sentiment had risen to an all-time high between 1744 and 1746, stoked by Dissenting and Anglican propaganda campaigns. Printed pamphlets, sermons, and books recycled long-standing fears associated with the consequences of an imagined Catholic resurgence: tyranny, religious persecution, suppression of free thought, plots to aid England’s enemies, and atrocities against innocents.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, anti-Catholic texts so saturated the book market that the bookseller Ralph Griffiths observed that printers lost money by having “glut[ted] the publick with pieces of that Sort.”<sup>5</sup> In Lancashire and elsewhere, mobs attacked Mass-houses, yet Arrowsmith’s possession of the Catholic catechism seems to signal a willingness to pursue Catholic doctrine beyond the stereotypes of the popular press. The catechism, a key genre of religious instruction and doctrinal inculcation, points to an assertive, if furtive, Catholic presence supported by the printing and distribution of Anglophone texts in what sometimes has been regarded without qualification as the Protestant territory of mid-eighteenth-century England.<sup>6</sup> Arrowsmith’s signature animates this haunting presence, rendering it visible through female agency and an attenuated form of discursive ownership: “her book.” It hints at Arrowsmith’s desire to register membership in a legally suppressed faith community whose activities were often confined to private forms of expression and instruction, typically fostered by reading. Indeed, the episode reminds us that in the wake of anti-Catholic repression, English Catholicism had become a religion of forbidden books and covert reading habits.<sup>7</sup>

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Figure 1, *Converte Angliam*, engraving and etching, circa 1685. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

The essays in this special issue of *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* examine imaginative work by both Catholic and Protestant English women during the long eighteenth century as they wrestled with Catholicism's ineradicable presence. Missing here are accounts of women's anti-Catholic activity, exemplified by writers like Mary Wollstonecraft. Instead, the writers discussed respond to the Catholic presence with varying degrees of sympathy. Some of these women followed the path of Mary Astell, whose undeniably Protestant credentials did not prohibit her from recognizing the value of convent life for certain women, even as she held Catholicism itself at a distance. Others, like Ann Radcliffe, probed England's officially banished Catholic legacy, exploring and even questioning the accepted truths propagated by popular culture. Still others went about the business of educating themselves and their children in the Catholic faith or even joined English convents. They vary broadly in their religious affiliations and affinities, but for each, England's Catholic past might be said to haunt her writing or artistic endeavors, requiring careful attention and interpretation if its presence is to be properly understood. In this sense, these women's varied interactions with Catholicism constitute the kind of cultural self-analysis examined later by Michel de Certeau. Insofar as the appearance of a dead body holding a Catholic catechism signals a cultural return of the repressed, so too does the frequent appearance of Catholic activity in eighteenth-century English women's imaginative work signal an eruption of the "nocturnal" into "broad daylight."<sup>8</sup> Though nothing more is known about Mary Arrowsmith, her appearance in the historical record asks us to consider what other and more ample inscriptions eighteenth-century English women made regarding their respective relation to Catholicism.

In the popular imagination, fear of the return of the repressed English Catholic past often fixated on unruly women actively advancing Catholicism's cause, participating in its sexual corruption, or succumbing to the temptations of Machiavellian papist operators. In popular prints, such as the anonymous *Converte Angliam* (1685), a wolf in priest's clothing hears the confession of a woman, reflecting fear that the intimacy of confession could lead women into theological or sexual error—or both (see fig. 1). Anti-Catholic pulpit oratory and printed polemical work drew on the figure of the Church as woman, the bride of Christ, to demonize the Catholic Church as the fallen woman, the Whore of Babylon, or Jezebel. The street theater of Pope-burnings and Pretender-burnings that attended the Church of England's liturgical calendar feminized Catholic clergy while depicting nuns and lay-women secreted within the male hierarchy.<sup>9</sup> John Rhodes's complaint early in the seventeenth century that "certaine women Brokers and Pedlers" used "baskets on their armes" to sell Catholic books and religious objects suggests that women may have been active in disseminating contraband material.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, William Hogarth depicted

a woman as a rowdy Catholic polemicist in *The March of the Guards to Finchley* (1750), an identification intensified in the version of the painting engraved by Hogarth's assistant, Luke Sullivan (see fig. 2). At the center of that engraving, a grenadier sent to hold off the approach of Jacobite invaders from the North confronts forces within his community battling for his attention. On his right, a pregnant woman holds his arm while carrying a basket full of "God save the King" sheets; on his left, a Catholic woman (identified by the cross hanging from her neck) seems to grab at the grenadier while brandishing Jacobite literature.<sup>11</sup> That women might advance Catholicism in their roles as mothers, wives, caretakers, and educators placed them as actors within a national nightmare haunting the popular imagination.

For Frances E. Dolan, such caricatures and anxieties reflect more than a desire to parody Catholicism by feminizing it; they also record "the perceived importance of women in Catholic theology, iconography, and post-Reformation English practice."<sup>12</sup> Women's spiritual leadership was emphasized in Marian devotions as well as in narratives, portraits, and relics of female Catholic saints.<sup>13</sup> On a practical level, the scarcity of priests and the absence of an institutional church meant that recusant households became the center of spiritual life with women presiding over those households playing significant roles in sustaining and nourishing their family's Catholic identity and faith.<sup>14</sup> Since women were sheltered from penal fines in ways their husbands were not, they could use their extralegal status to hide behind their husbands' apparent orthodoxy, all the while actively sustaining the faith by educating children and servants, overseeing charity work, and sending sons and daughters abroad for Catholic education in the monasteries and convents of the English Catholic diaspora.<sup>15</sup> Speaking of the early modern era, Marie Rowland observes:

It was . . . the wife rather than the husband who made the arrangements, controlled the curiosity of children and servants, and ensured secrecy. The women were more usually at home when the pursuivants arrived. They exploited their supposed frailty and innocence; they provided searchers with meals which distracted their attention; they pleaded bodily infirmity.<sup>16</sup>

Historically, through the period of active state prosecution, the recusant woman was "a figure of opposition to state authority, a sign of the persistence of the 'old religion' in the new Protestant nation."<sup>17</sup>

After the Restoration, Charles II's affinity for Catholics, particularly Catholic women, reaffirmed the perceived danger of the recusant Catholic woman within the Protestant imagination.<sup>18</sup> The sumptuous and well-staffed chapels of Queen Catherine, together with her support of a Catholic printing press, not only telegraphed women's roles in keeping Catholicism alive but also amplified the expectations of the English

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Figure 2, Luke Sullivan, *A Representation of the March of the Guards towards Scotland in the Year 1745*, engraving of William Hogarth's *The March of the Guards to Finchley*, 1750. Reproduced by permission of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Catholic community, evident in the frequency with which recusant books were dedicated to Catherine.<sup>19</sup> With the Revolution of 1688, women continued to play key roles in transmitting, probing, and resisting Catholicism. Throughout the eighteenth century, as Catholicism was tolerated informally and women took leadership roles on religious and moral issues, spearheaded charitable causes, and engaged in public debate, the specter of Catholicism and its institutions continued to haunt and inspire the English people, sometimes simultaneously. With the influx of refugee nuns expelled from France by the French Revolution, sympathy for the plight of Catholic women grew, as convents reestablished themselves in England.<sup>20</sup> The lively and extended debate over the Catholic Relief Act often engaged women.<sup>21</sup> The essays in this special issue extend recent scholarship's claims that, far from receding from national discussion by contracting into an enfeebled opposition culture, Catholicism remained an unavoidable and complex component shaping eighteenth-century English national identity.

*Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* was founded in part as a journal to facilitate the recovery of women's writing. In keeping with the journal's mission, we attend to Catholicism as an overlooked and obscured element of England's eighteenth century, not only because some prominent Catholic authors of this century were women but also because of the powerful overlaps and links during this era between women, writing, and Catholicism. Some of the essays in this collection focus on women's practical experiences of Catholicism, while others turn to their representations of Catholicism in texts; in almost all cases, however, lived experience and written representation intertwine. The essays represent a competing number of perspectives on this topic, including contradictory perspectives. We like to think that if the collection raises more questions than it answers, it nevertheless helps review the state of scholarship on eighteenth-century English Catholicism and helps encourage further studies of Catholicism, which has until very recently been disregarded as an important component of women's imaginative work and habits of mind.

We decided to limit the collection's geographical range primarily to England rather than to Britain and the territories it controlled in this era, including North America. Except for one essay on the Irish writer Regina Maria Roche, whose work was widely read in England, the essays focus on writers who identified themselves as English or who worked within convents that defined themselves as English. To do so, of course, risks suggesting that one really can treat England as an isolated polity and space, operating without regard to developments in the regions with which it was unified politically over the course of the eighteenth century. Catholic peo-

ples—their needs, demands, and desires, as well as the fears they inspired in Protestants—played central roles in the Acts of Union, which combined several facets of government between England and Scotland in 1707 and 1708 and then between Great Britain and Ireland in 1800. The ouster of England's King James II in 1688 was secured on the battlefields of Ireland, then re-secured decades later on Scotland's Culloden Moor. Anti-Catholic rhetoric rationalized and motivated English colonization projects and Christian missions in North America, even as the complex mix of cultures and faiths in colonized territories forced compromises in the anti-Catholic penal code. The religious toleration of colonies such as Pennsylvania and Maryland created *de facto* havens for Catholic emigrants, while in 1774 the controversial Quebec Act guaranteed the free practice of Catholicism in Canada, recently acquired by Britain from France in the Seven Years War. This was the first parliamentary act protecting Catholic rights in any British territory. Finally, many of the nuns who migrated to the Continent, joining English convents there during this period, were Irish.

Clearly England's treatment of Catholics in this era, as well as the lives of English Catholics, did not take place in isolation from the larger settings of the British Isles, the nascent British Empire, and the various webs of colonial dominance that were anchored in the rival nation-states of Europe. English treatments of Catholicism were always responding to the ever-felt pressure of forces beyond England proper; Catholics in England were self-consciously positioned within supporting international networks; and several of the writings examined in this special topics issue were authored outside of England for an audience in exile. While the texts discussed in this collection operate at least tacitly within a broader geographical and political framework, however, they share a focus on English Catholicism as a prohibited minority religion that evoked, in the minds of the majority, the minutely articulated terrors of powerful, merciless forces evidenced in England's own history as well as in the looming presence of neighboring polities with vividly felt histories of persecution, such as France. This particular combination of features marks the English Catholic experience as distinct from that of Catholicism in Scotland, Ireland, North America, or most of Continental Europe. It also defines the English Catholic experience as one articulated through gender in ways meriting closer study, not least because of the alliance between reading imaginative work and imagining national identity.

Determining chronological boundaries was an easier choice. Until recently, the long eighteenth century has been regarded as a low-water mark of English Catholic activity, a period during which English Catholics, exhausted from the active persecution of the Reformation and not yet activated by the intellectual vibrancy and sway of the Oxford movement, seem to have receded from the public sphere. Recent scholarship by

Gabriel Glickman, Alison Shell, and others has forced a reevaluation of this assumed Catholic quiescence.<sup>22</sup> The dynamics and shape of both legal and informal discrimination as they intersect with cultural politics in these years are distinct from the developments that precede and follow them, and these intersections produce a contemplation of Catholicism by Restoration and eighteenth-century women that merits study. Much of what Dolan has shown of English Catholic women's actions in the seventeenth century remains true of the eighteenth. We have sought to build on this scholarship by collecting essays that shed light on eighteenth-century English Catholicism as a cultural given in need of understanding and analysis.

In this volume's first essay, "Neither Single nor Alone: Elizabeth Cellier, Catholic Community, and Transformations of Catholic Women's Piety," Lisa McClain examines Elizabeth Cellier's ministry to Catholics imprisoned during the period of the alleged Popish Plot, the last large-scale state persecution of Catholics in England. A convert to Catholicism, Cellier documented the injustices she observed in Newgate prison as Catholics implicated by Titus Oates's fictions were imprisoned and tortured. When one of the prisoners accused her of complicity in the Meal-Tub Plot, she defended herself successfully from charges of treason, but her perceived audacity in defending herself legally, her unapologetic acknowledgment of her Catholicism, and her willingness to issue a printed defense of her activity prompted much invective writing in which she featured as "a stout *Virago*."<sup>23</sup> Caricatures of Cellier as an isolated eccentric have made it difficult to view the actual woman. As McClain demonstrates, Cellier's work and texts reflect her understanding of piety and of women's work within Catholicism. They also reveal her participation within a network of Catholics working both inside and outside of prison, a network that—due to Cellier's role as a midwife—included Catholics of many different stations.<sup>24</sup> In Cellier's work, McClain concludes, she was neither single nor alone.

Catholic women also actively supported the English Catholic diaspora on the Continent, which was sustained by monasteries and convents. In the wake of the Revolution of 1688, English Catholics left for the Continent, causing "a significant demographical dispersal," so that by 1690, 220 families, including "half of the complete Catholic peerage," lived at St. Germain, and more than 4,000 English subjects lived abroad (Glickman, p. 23). A key witness to and participant in this displacement was Jane Barker, whose life and writings record the penury and alienation of exile. Barker's Catholic poems, until now available in their entirety only in manuscript, are presented here for the first time in print, edited



and annotated by Bridget Keegan, assisted by Libby Hallgren Hoxmeier. Barker's poems lament the plight of English Catholics forced to "wander, vagabonds alone" through "this world's labyrinth."<sup>25</sup> For her, as for many English converts to Catholicism, conversion stranded her in the no-man's land between irreconcilable political and religious authorities:

For converts often suffer to excess,  
Beset with griefs, on no hand find redress,  
They run as 'twere the gantlet twixt the blows,  
Of jealous tepid friends, and peevish foes  
Affronted by the party, which they leave,  
The other does with coldness them receive,  
Betwixt these two their generous souls are ground,  
And neither thinks a converts conscience sound.<sup>26</sup>

By conveying both the anguish of exile and the searing experience of conversion, Barker's poems provide insight into the complexity of Catholic and Jacobite mentalities.

That women could also inhabit liminal spaces in which Catholic and Protestant doctrine blended is suggested by the writing of Catherine Trotter, who converted to Catholicism, then reconverted back to the national Church. In "Catherine Trotter and the Claims of Conscience," Joanne E. Myers attributes Trotter's exploration of the inadequacy of private moral judgment in her tragedies to Catholic moral teaching. For Myers, Trotter's later philosophical rejection of "interest" as a standard for moral reasoning distances Trotter's philosophical views from the moral psychology of John Locke, whose work she is generally seen as championing. The interplay of Catholic and Protestant approaches to moral reasoning within Trotter's work suggests the need to consider how confessional boundaries blurred, despite the efforts of political propaganda to sharpen them. More work on the Restoration stage as a threshold for exploring the eruption of the Catholic past into the Protestant present is warranted, not least to appreciate accidental ironies through which Catholicism made incongruent appearances, such as Elizabeth Barry's performance of Queen Elizabeth in a production of John Banks's *The Unhappy Favourite* (1682), for which she wore Mary of Modena's coronation robes.<sup>27</sup>

If English Protestants were often made aware of the presence of the Catholic past, English Catholics labored to preserve the old faith while fusing it to patriotic notions of the modern English state. By the eighteenth century, large-scale persecution had ended, but the existence of a shadow court at St. Germain lent credibility to fears of an English Catholic resurgence, and penal laws remained in force. As Glickman puts it, eighteenth-century English Catholics "worked to negotiate between the conflicting demands towards integration and separatism in an unpromising environment" (p. 12). Women featured prominently in the recusant

cult of the family, now central to English Catholic identity. They entered into marriages designed to build alliances, manage family estates, and strengthen the Catholic community. They provided financial support to convents or to the Jacobite cause. In the seventeenth-century, this work had often been conducted privately, as in the case of the laywoman Helena Wintour, who turned to familiar women's work, embroidering lavish vestments designed "to practice a personal form of Jesuit-led meditation on the Virgin Mary."<sup>28</sup> By the eighteenth century, however, Catholics began to showcase their Catholic identity more publicly. In the building boom following the English Revolution, English Catholic gentry built or redesigned English country estates, not just to conceal priests or provide space for Mass but often to inscribe their Catholicism through a rich architectural iconography.<sup>29</sup> At times, tensions between segregation and integration, militancy and conciliation, divided marriages. Mary Howard (née Shireburn), 8th Duchess of Norfolk, announced her Jacobite loyalties by decorating her Worksop estate with oak sprigs on James Edward's birthday in 1717 (Glickman, p. 84). Though her husband preferred Franciscans, she employed a Jesuit chaplain, the former almoner to Mary of Modena. Eventually, her Jacobite activity landed her husband in prison for six months on charges that he was active in the Jacobite plot of 1722.<sup>30</sup>

A more placid fusion of Catholic and patriotic English identities can be found in the activities of Mary Blount, 9th Duchess of Norfolk, who, as Clare Haynes explains in her essay in this volume, used her place at court to flaunt her twin roles as an English Catholic and a loyal English subject. Her social leadership included overseeing renovations to her homes that published her Catholicism unapologetically through splendid chapels with crucifixes and paintings of crucifixes. At court, as Haynes notes, the duchess was perceived as behaving, according to one contemporary, much to her credit; she "assured the Queen, though she and the Duke were of a different religion, they had as much duty and regard for the King as any of his subjects, and should be glad of every occasion that gave 'em an opportunity to show it."<sup>31</sup> Not everyone was pleased with the Duchess's activism, however; Horace Walpole—alternately spellbound and repelled by Catholicism—referred to her bitinglly as "my Lord Duchess."<sup>32</sup> The differing Catholic sensibilities of successive dukes and duchesses of Norfolk suggest the difficulty of defining what it meant to be Catholic in eighteenth-century England.

That definition is all the more complicated because English Catholicism was forced to be cosmopolitan and outward-looking. To understand its full complexity, we need to take into account the English Catholic diaspora. On the Continent, women like Lucy Knatchbull (1584-1629) founded religious orders and erected convents, work that Sir Tobie Matthew compared to "Writing, or Printing, or Building, the sensible effect and fruit whereof remains afterward."<sup>33</sup> By 1700, there were twenty-two English convents in

France and the Low Countries that drew English women “often from the leading recusant gentry households, whose dowries and family patronage were central to . . . [the convent’s] economic security.”<sup>34</sup> These convents operated under *clausura*, a series of decrees issued by the Council of Trent insisting on strict monastic enclosure; nuns were prohibited from leaving the cloister and anyone other than a professed nun was barred from entering it. In part, enclosure enforced prayerful interiority for which reading and writing were essential. Exploring manuscripts from the Canonesses of Holy Sepulchre at Liège and the Poor Clares at Rouen, Caroline Bowden identifies the texts that helped structure an English nun’s prayerful daily life. In addition to using manuscript and printed volumes for prayer, nuns composed and preserved texts—annals, life writing, obituaries—that helped establish their convent’s institutional memory and corporate identity.<sup>35</sup> Their labors as producers of manuscript books—translations, anthologies, and copies of other manuscripts—force us to “reconsider the secondary or mechanical nature of copying,” as we place that copying within community readerships.<sup>36</sup> The care with which the Sepulchrines oversaw the preservation of most of their texts during the exodus imposed on them by the French Revolution reminds us of the significant role of texts in conventual life—and of the role of conventual life in preserving texts. Bowden’s essay supports Alexandra Walsham’s argument that post-Tridentine Catholicism was as much invested in print culture as Protestantism, a claim fortified both by Mary Arrowsmith’s possession of a catechism and by conversion narratives that emphasize the role of reading in effecting conversion.<sup>37</sup>

*Clausura* complicated but did not sever English nuns’ connections to the outside world. Strict enclosure encouraged nuns to become artists, engravers, bookmakers, watchmakers, or to acquire skills in other crafts that raised revenue. Throughout the Continent, the strictures of *clausura* even encouraged nuns to become capable of repairing their buildings and monuments and creating conventual artwork to avoid as much as possible “direct contact with male workers coming from outside.”<sup>38</sup> However much contemplative Catholic women religious treasured the asylum offered by the convent, some nuns had to engage with the world beyond the walls to keep convents financially viable. As Barbara Diefendorf has observed, “Scholars have come to realize that even the highest convent walls were not sealed but remained porous; even tightly cloistered nuns remained members of families and a presence in the city.”<sup>39</sup> Indeed, the work of sustaining a convent—correspondence, manuscript composition and transmission, financial management, political wrestling, and the maintenance of the convent’s buildings—exposes convent walls as something of a necessary fiction, more an important symbolic than an absolute enclosure.<sup>40</sup> Claire Walker has documented the work of convents, whose nuns

ran small schools and guesthouses, wrote devotional works, and sometimes engaged in overt political activities in the quest for their long held desire to return eventually to English soil. In the process, the convents became centres of English Catholic piety and activity in the towns and cities where they were located, and provided vital links between the nuns' families in England and Continental Catholicism.<sup>41</sup>

Elsewhere, Walker notes that nuns raised funds to support their convents through "a combination of prayer, needlework, hospitality, education, and housework," details often translated into fictional representations of convents.<sup>42</sup> Running a convent required astute business acumen capable of working under straightened circumstances and negotiating diplomatically with patrons, politicians, family members, parents, merchants, bankers, and laborers. For English nuns, exiled from their home country, dependent on family and friends for patronage and recruitment, and immersed in daily prayers for their country's return to the faith, cultivating family ties may have been an inextricable component of conventual life. Winifred Thimelby (1618-1690), the prioress of St. Monica in Louvain, Flanders, warned her family back home: "Doe not suppose me a well mortified nun dead to the world; for alas tis not so, I am alive, and as nearly concern'd for thos I love, as if I had never left them."<sup>43</sup>

Nuns' engagement with communities beyond a given convent's walls through both manuscript and printed texts usefully augments arguments by Anne Mellor and others refuting the existence of separate, gendered spheres of public discourse.<sup>44</sup> English nuns were remarkably attentive to shifting political events in England and were often forced to be politically active by the challenge of financing and running convents. The Benedictine abbess at Ghent, Mary Knatchbull (1610-1696), sent and received mail on behalf of Charles II and his advisers, distributed news, facilitated credit, and provided advice and fundraising for the exiled court.<sup>45</sup> Later, between 1721 and 1736, Lady Mary Rosa Howard (professed 1695-1747), a Dominican nun working in Brussels, served as a conduit for Jacobite letters.<sup>46</sup> When James II died in 1701, parts of his body were embalmed and distributed to convents to encourage reliquary devotion, thereby fortifying convents' ties to Jacobitism. In addition to attending to political events, nuns also engaged in devotional instruction beyond the convent. The popularity of the printed devotional work of Lady Lucy Herbert (1669-1744) suggests a public appetite for a woman's deft citation of scripture, Church fathers, and the Council of Trent.<sup>47</sup> The existence of manuscripts of religious instruction, such as that of Sir Robert Howard's daughter, Mary Howard (1653-1735), who entered the convent of Poor Clares at Rouen in 1674 at twenty-two and became its abbess in 1701, qualifies claims that Catholic devotional work was exclusively the province of priests, such as John Gother and Richard Challoner.<sup>48</sup> Finally, it may be

time to review the often unstated assumption that the English mission was conducted solely by men. Continental convents were sites of diasporic missionary activity, evident in the frequency with which they were visited by both Catholics and Protestants during the Grand Tour.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, two convents existed in England during the eighteenth century: Bar Convent in York and its sister-house at Hammersmith. Both were resurrections of the suppressed efforts of Mary Ward (1585-1645) at establishing an unenclosed order for women based on the Ignatian rule and inspired by Ward's mystical illuminations.<sup>50</sup> The nuns at Bar Convent worked illegally and covertly, disguising their work by keeping their own names, wearing widow's clothes rather than habits, and restricting holy pictures, crucifixes, and other material trappings of Catholicism to chapels and workrooms. As Susan O'Brien notes, these convents' extensive contacts with the outside world reflect an outward-looking perspective "in keeping with Mary Ward's original conception for the English mission."<sup>51</sup> Ward died in 1645, without seeing that her plan for an English convent would be renewed in 1686 by her friend Frances Bedingfield (1616-1704). She died feeling that her spiritual quest, like Mary Arrowsmith's, was incomplete, but her quest was picked up and given new life by others.

Despite or perhaps because of their activity, nuns were caricatured in popular culture, particularly after the first of the Catholic Relief Acts was passed in 1778. However, Michael Tomko reminds us in his essay in this volume that Elizabeth Inchbald's phenomenally successful farce *A Mogul Tale* (1784) scrutinizes and even mocks anti-Catholic humor. Significantly, Inchbald's farce was written in the wake of the Gordon Riots, the violent, week-long anti-Catholic response to the passage of the first Catholic Relief Act. Before the violence ended, 300 had died and many more were injured. Inchbald's farce opens improbably with the distressed landing of a hot-air balloon in a Mogul's seraglio, having lost its way from Wapping. Hearing that a balloon has deposited three figures—a quack, a cobbler, and the cobbler's wife, Fanny—in his garden, the Mogul prepares to perform the cultural stereotypes that he knows he evokes, ordering his servant:

Aggravate their fears, as much as possible, tell them, I am the abstract of cruelty, the essence of tyranny; tell them the Divan shall open with all its terrors. For though I mean to save their lives, I want to see the effect of their fears, for in the hour of reflection I love to contemplate that greatest work of heaven, the mind of man.<sup>52</sup>

In the carnivalesque scenes that follow, the cobbler is lured into impersonating the Pope, and Fanny is introduced as a nun "guilty of some crime, not to be forgiven, but by severe penance, enjoined to accompany us" (p. 13). These roles expose the characters' unreflective anti-Catholic prejudice. Tomko contrasts the Mogul's archly self-aware humor as he pretends to

be the cruel tyrant of popular imagination with the crude, unselfconscious anti-Catholic humor betrayed by the cobbler and his wife. Like Miss Milner's laughter in Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791), the shared laughter born of national prejudice is here defamiliarized, forcing recognition of its crude provincialism.<sup>53</sup> The laughter elicited as the cobbler and his wife expose their prejudice is intended, Tomko concludes, "both to distance the audience from the anti-Catholicism being performed on stage and to dissolve the power of the worst imaginings of misrepresented groups."<sup>54</sup>

The frequency with which convents were both imagined and visited throughout the eighteenth century suggests something like a cultural obsession. Recent work by Rebecca D'Monté and Nicole Pohl has called attention to post-Reformation English women's creative labor both imagining and enacting female communities, engagements that overlook Catholicism's patriarchal structure to focus on the benefits for women of convent life and of Catholicism's communal spirit.<sup>55</sup> As noted above, for those on the Grand Tour, convents were valued as "little self-enclosed Englands that shut out the foreign cultures around them."<sup>56</sup> Even hostile visitors, such as the Williamite spy John Macky could acknowledge, as Liesbeth Corens notes, that a prioress like Lucy Herbert was "a Lady of great affability and civility to the English."<sup>57</sup> Manuscript descriptions of convents, such as the anonymous and unsympathetic description of a 1751 profession of a nun in Duderstadt, Germany, often record pity for the novice as a "victim," even as they register something like religious veneration at the ceremony's moving beauty: "the moment she had received the Wafer the whole band of Musick struck up, and in my life I never saw a Ceremony all together more pompous, Solemn and affecting even to an unconcerned Spectator."<sup>58</sup>

This ambidextrous perspective—both resisting and appreciating aspects of Catholicism and its institutions—can be seen in the "spectacularly diachronic" sacrilege narratives documented by Shell, which anticipate the gothic novel by a century.<sup>59</sup> Like ghost stories, sacrilege narratives dramatize the eruption of the past into the present, often documenting moral anxiety regarding dispossession. As Shell explains, "ruins have always demanded exposition, both for the educated and the uneducated observer" (p. 37). The exegetical contests over the meanings of ruins quickly morph into contests over the nature of English national identity. For Maria Purves, the Gothic novels of the 1790s reflect anxiety toward the French Revolution's expulsion of nuns, monks, and priests.<sup>60</sup> Shocked by France's overturning of the social order, English women and men surveyed the influx of refugee nuns returning to England with a mixture of compassion and suspicion. For Purves, Gothic novels written in the 1790s should be read within a "Burkean counter-revolutionary discourse . . . [that] essentially made pos-

sible a favourable opinion of Catholicism” (p. 204).<sup>61</sup> Noting the sublimity of Catholic ritual and music, which inspires appreciative awe in both fictional and actual Protestant observers, Purves asks pointedly, “where does psychological appreciation end and spiritual response begin?” (p. 79).<sup>62</sup>

For other critics of the gothic novel, such as Diane Long Hoeveler, whose essay on Regina Maria Roche’s *Children of the Abbey* (1796) appears in this volume, gothic dualism signals not sympathy for Catholicism but rather the gothic novel’s generic hybridity. Hoeveler insists that Roche’s positive representation of convents and nuns is the result of ideological fractures born of the historical juncture in which she wrote. Roche’s *Children of the Abbey* is, for her, a bifurcated product, split between nostalgia and reform, the product of a mind not “fully aware of or in control of the conflicted ideological agenda of her novel.”<sup>63</sup> Hoeveler views the novel’s oppositions as manifestations of Roche’s ambivalence toward being wedged between a feudal and superstitious past and an emerging secular present. These ongoing scholarly debates over whether such dualities result from an artist’s unconscious psychomachia or from conscious design suggest the unfinished nature of the English Reformation.

By 1800, there were “twenty-four religious communities . . . in England,” a number that would increase to 596 by 1900, in part due to the influx of Irish nuns.<sup>64</sup> The increased visibility of Catholic religious in the 1790s and the debate over the Catholic Relief Act contributed to a growing awareness of the irrepressibility of England’s Catholic past. A sense of that past reverberates in the works of Jane Austen. Beth Kowaleski Wallace summarizes the situation by positing that “Catholicism and the issue of Catholic Relief function . . . as ‘not-saids’ permeating Austen’s work,” constituting the “ambient noise” that reminds us of “the ghostly traces of a past with an unfathomed future.”<sup>65</sup> Austen’s heroines are frequently haunted by the “specter of the nun” (p. 159). Catherine Moreland longs to see a nun, and both Emma Woodhouse’s entitlement and Jane Fairfax’s dependence lead them to envision celibate futures for themselves. For Wallace, however, this “ambient noise dissipates” in the harmony of the double weddings that conclude *Emma* (1815) (p. 175). Part of George Knightley’s attraction for Emma is his efficient and charitable administration of Donwell Abbey, which, for Wallace, “affords . . . a progressive, ‘modern’ future, one remarkable for the way in which it updates monastic tradition by carrying forward the best virtues of a community-centered tradition into a modern, secular landscape” (p. 175). In this reading, we see another contest over how to read a narrative of displacement with Wallace arguing that the rightful order is restored, not through a nostalgic return to the past, but through Knightley’s modern Protestant renewal. Other novels of this period, such as Frances Burney’s *The Wanderer* (1815), also signal the “ambient noise”

of Catholicism, in this case with a Protestant heroine forced to flee her French convent during the anti-clerical wrath of the French Revolution, only to find post-Reformation England a surprisingly inhospitable place for a single woman laboring under the novel's usefully vague subtitle, "female difficulties."

Taken together, these essays suggest the historiographical challenges facing literary scholars as they labor to allow the dead to speak. We thought it would be appropriate for this special topics issue to include as an Innovations piece—typically a commentary on new developments in scholarship—an essay exploring digital tools useful to scholars researching eighteenth-century women and Catholicism. We are grateful that Victoria Van Hyning agreed to provide such a piece. She reviews the rapidly changing state of digital tools today. Indeed, the digital world's radical transformation of the scholarly world raises both hopes and pressing questions about how evidence pertaining to England's eighteenth-century Catholic past might be preserved, questions that take on urgency as some English convents in the twenty-first century, having survived great difficulties, find themselves finally forced to close. The digital world alone cannot preserve printed and manuscript archives. Curators, archivists, and designers of digital tools will need to act diligently and cooperatively if they are to take over the preservation of books, manuscripts, and data from convents. The efficiency of that transfer of curatorship will determine how well the future will be able to document English women's experience of Catholicism.

Finally, we are particularly grateful to Frances Dolan for providing a characteristically engaging and challenging afterward. Her contribution seems especially appropriate since her work inspired this volume. In *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* and in a series of articles, Dolan examines the seventeenth-century sites where English Catholicism was contested—churches, court, the scaffold, the bed, the household, and prisons—revealing the role played by women and gender in the ideological struggle for control over seventeenth-century Catholicism's "lost" spaces.<sup>66</sup> Her historiographical insights regarding how the past gets constructed and how gender is used to demonize the Other have expanded our understanding of Reformation displacement and merit further consideration within eighteenth-century studies.

We hope the essays in this volume suggest how eighteenth-century women participated in these contests within the new context of informal toleration for Catholics. Even ten years after the highly contested Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, an English tourist visiting the convent of the Beguine nuns in Belgium could not prevent the texts in his head from



shaping his experience of the convent; in his meticulously illustrated manuscript travel journal, he reported that as he and his companion walked about the convent, “Lady Abbesses, Confessors, Sister Marthas, Monk Lewis’s abductions, elopements and all sorts of ments thickened upon our imaginations.”<sup>67</sup> His acknowledgment that literary representations shape actual experience helps us see more clearly the challenge of disentangling lived and literary experience. He betrays an awareness of literature’s power to capture the eruption of the nocturnal into daylight. Mary Arrowsmith’s full story may be forever lost to us, but her inscription reminds us of the importance of the historical record and asks us to do our best to allow the dead to speak.

## NOTES

In addition to expressing gratitude to our contributors, we would like to acknowledge the indispensable staff at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and the Yale Center for British Art. The project was conceived by Anna Battigelli while working at the Beinecke as a James Marshall Osborn Fellow; it developed and matured through dialogue with Laura Stevens. Georgianna Ziegler, the Louis B. Thalheimer Head of Reference at the Folger Shakespeare Library, has been an unfailing aid. Tonya Moutray read the introduction at an early stage and provided useful comments. Paula R. Backscheider and James A. Winn have been invaluable resources. Finally, we are grateful to Fran Dolan, whose work inspired the volume and who suggested *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* as the appropriate venue. No volume of *Tulsa Studies* should be published without acknowledging the journal’s expert staff, particularly its managing editor, Karen Dutoi.

<sup>1</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Marie B. Rowlands, ed., *English Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558-1778: A Joint Research Project of the Catholic Record Society and Wolverhampton University* (Totten: Catholic Record Society, 1999), 270. Rowlands observes, “large numbers of catechisms were bought both by Jesuits and secular clergy ‘for the poor’ and catechising was a normal part of pastoral care, with individual teaching of converts” (p. 281). Michael Mullett views this anecdote as “evidence to suggest that a reading (and writing) public had been created amongst the Catholic poor” and reviews the history of using inexpensive catechisms to educate the poor; see Mullett, ed., *English Catholicism, 1680-1830*, 6 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006), 1:xvi. John Hilton notes that the poor made up “a significant proportion of the Catholic population of Lancashire” based on the 1705 Returns and that paupers were “overwhelmingly female”; see Hilton, “The Catholic Poor: Paupers and Vagabonds, 1580-1780,” in *English Catholics of Parish and Town*, 122, 124. Similarly, using data collected from northeast England, Leo Gooch claims that “the majority (90%) [of Catholics] were ordinary folk without any capital resources to speak of, and most of them earned a living on the land in one way or another”; see Gooch, “‘Chiefly of Low Rank’: The Catholics of North-East England, 1705-1814,” *English Catholics of Parish and Town*, 253.

<sup>3</sup> The terms “English Catholicism” and “Catholicism” are used rather than “Roman Catholicism” to suggest the distinct character of post-Reformation Catholicism in England.

<sup>4</sup> Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 130.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England*, 138.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale, 1992), a highly influential and important book that identifies Protestantism as the key force in the development of British national identity and nationalist feeling.

<sup>7</sup> For the role of reading within Catholic devotional practice, see n. 37.

<sup>8</sup> Certeau provides a historiographical hermeneutics: “the reading of texts has much to do with an interpretation of dreams; texts form discourses about the other, about which we can wonder what is actually told *there*, in those literary regions that are always drawn from what is really occurring”; see Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1988), 211.

<sup>9</sup> A print for the Pope-burning in London, “The Solemn Mock Procession of the POPE Cardinalls Jesuits Fryers &c: through the City of London, November the 17th, 1680 (London: Nathaniel Ponder, Jonathan Wilkins, and Samuel Lee, 1680), depicts a lady who claims

For ten yeares I was holy Fathers Miss.  
Hee was ye Churches head, & I was his,  
I was a cursed straping female Prince’s  
By mee ye Catholick world was ruld. & since  
Accesse to Courts has bin as to the Pox:  
For ye most part by Petticoats & Smocks.

The manuscript transcription of a 1680 Pope-burning pamphlet describes the women of the procession: “Here comes the Empress Donna Olympia, who was the Popes Mistress by her Lust, and consequently the Worlds in his time; she is surrounded by four Nuns, to whom ‘tis less honourable to be Whores, than to Marry”; see “The Solemn Mock-Procession or the tryal and execution of the Pope,” Osborn fd7, James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, f. 34. In *The Print in Early Modern England: An Historical Oversight* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), Malcolm Jones discusses the subgenre of prints depicting fraternization between monks and nuns. He notes, for example, that during the Pope-burning procession at Sussex on 5 November 1679, “several Pictures were carried upon long Poles,” one of which depicted a friar and a Jesuit “dallying with a Nun,” while the devil spied on them from behind a curtain, saying: “I will spoil no sport my dear children” (p. 150). A subgenre of pornographic literature also focused on the sexual corruption of monks and nuns. See also Sheila Williams, “The Pope-Burning Processions of 1679, 1680, and 1681,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1958), 104-18.

<sup>10</sup> John Rhodes, *An Answer to a Romish Rime Lately Printed*, 2nd ed. (London: Simon Stafford, 1602), A2r. See also Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 11.

<sup>11</sup> The British Museum Images website describes her as a “Jacobite harridan,” <http://www.bmimages.com/preview.asp?image=00134950001>. Our thanks to Sabine Volk-Birke for suggesting this connection.

<sup>12</sup> Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1999), 8. For a catalog of how anti-Catholicism was kept alive through sermons, polemical printed work, liturgical fast days, prints, songs, oral tales, and mob violence, see Haydon’s *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England*. See also Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and *Oral Culture and Catholicism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of Marian imagery in eighteenth-century poetry, see John Sitter, “Marian Musings: Reflections on Blessed Virgins in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 71 (2008), 671-86.

<sup>14</sup> This view of the family’s significance is expressed by the abbess Mary Caryll to her brother in her hope that their family might “propagate religion, and be servisable to their King, as their ancestors have been, witness yourself that has spent these eighteen years in banishment for their service”; quoted in Gabriel Glickman, *The English Catholic Community, 1688-1745: Politics, Culture and Ideology* (Woodbridge: Boydell 2009), 85. See also Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993). Subsequent references to Glickman will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>15</sup> By law, a wife was a “femme covert.” Her property belonged to her husband, which rendered it useless to prosecute her under penal laws. According to John Bossy, this meant that “a husband could not coerce his wife’s conscience nor be held responsible for her decisions in conscientious matters”; see Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975), 154. See also Rebecca Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century: A Reassessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Rowlands adds that “society was very strongly convinced that the duty of ensuring the proper religious behaviour of the family lay with the paterfamilias” and that “in practice the only punishment available for married women was imprisonment, and many women were sent to gaol”; see Rowlands, “Recusant Women, 1560-1640,” in *Women in English Society, 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London: Methuen, 1985), 150, 152. Rowlands concludes that “the state thus never solved the problem of dealing with married women recusants; instead it withdrew from an inconclusive engagement” (p. 156). For an excellent discussion of the division of labor forced by persecution in the early modern period, see Walsham, *Church Papists*, 11, 78-81.

<sup>16</sup> Rowlands, “Recusant Women,” 157. Remarking on early modern recusant women’s activity, Bossy labeled the period between 1580 and 1620 the “matriarchal era” (p. 158). Walsham qualifies Bossy’s phrase by noting that women’s increased roles in transmitting the faith was “a natural division of labour in the management of dissent,” but she agrees that “ironically, a woman’s inferior public and legal identity afforded her superior devotional status, fuller membership of the Roman Catholic Church—at least in the eyes of the hierarchy” (pp. 81, 80-81). More work on the effects of legal suppression on women’s role in the eighteenth century is needed.

<sup>17</sup> Arthur F. Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and*

*Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 36.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the long ideological shadow cast by Charles II's mistresses in eighteenth-century literature, see Alison Conway, *The Protestant Whore: Courtesan Narratives and Religious Controversy in England, 1680-1750* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> For the printing press in Queen Catherine's retinue, see Glickman, *The English Catholic Community*, 31.

<sup>20</sup> See Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life, 1450-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Carmen M. Mangion, *Contested Identities: Catholic Women Religious in Nineteenth-Century England and Wales* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008). Tonya Moutray's valuable book forthcoming from Ashgate Press surveys refugee nuns and the French Revolution.

<sup>21</sup> As Michael Tomko notes, "consistent with Anne Mellor's depiction of women's involvement within public sphere politics in *Mothers of the Nation* (2000), women writers ranging from Charlotte Smith in *The Emigrants* (1793) to Felicia Hemans in *The Forest Sanctuary* (1825) intervened in the nationwide controversy over the Catholic Question"; see Tomko, *British Romanticism and the Catholic Question: Religion, History and National Identity, 1778-1829* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 4. For non-Catholic women's participation in this debate, see Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1713-1783*, 333-34.

<sup>22</sup> See Glickman, *The English Catholic Community*; and Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660*, and *Oral Culture and Catholicism in Early Modern England*.

<sup>23</sup> *The Midwife Unmask'd: or, The Popish Design of Mrs. Cellier's meal-tub plainly made known* (London: T. Davies, 1680), 1.

<sup>24</sup> McClain's essay nicely supplements Dolan's essay on Cellier, "The Wretched Subject the Whole Town Talks of: Elizabeth Cellier, Popish Plots, and Print," in *Whores of Babylon*, 157-210. See also Helen King, "Elizabeth Cellier," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed 28 May 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4990>.

<sup>25</sup> Jane Barker, "Dialogue between Fidelia and her Little Nephew Martius," quoted in Glickman, *English Catholic Community*, 49. Later, when Catherine Holland converted to Catholicism through reading, she too compared the consequences of conversion to being lost in a labyrinth: "which Way soever I turned the Eye of my Mind, I saw nothing but a Labyrinth, Impossibilities, and Difficulties"; quoted in Isobel Grundy, "Women's History? Writing by English Nuns," in *Women, Writing, History, 1640-1740*, ed. Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London: Batsford, 1992), 131.

<sup>26</sup> Barker, "Englands good Genius and Philanthrophel his companion," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 31 (2012), 217, lines 31-38. For Barker's Catholicism, see Tonya Moutray McArthur's "Jane Barker and the Politics of Catholic Celibacy," *Studies in English Literature*, 47 (2007), 595-618.

<sup>27</sup> We are grateful to Dolan for directing us to this anecdote. See J. Douglas Canfield and Maja-Lisa von Sneidern eds., *The Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century English Drama* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2001), 104.

<sup>28</sup> Sophie Holroyd, “Rich Embroidered Churchstuff: The Vestments of Helena Wintour,” in *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Richard Corthell, Dolan, Christopher Highley, and Marotti (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 74.

<sup>29</sup> For the English Catholic building boom, see Glickman, *The English Catholic Community*, especially 59-70; and Peter Davidson, “Recusant Catholic Spaces in Early Modern England,” in *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England*, 19-51. Glickman reverses the older view of the Catholic gentry in decline, with English Catholics defining themselves exclusively in opposition to mainstream English culture. More work is required to augment analysis of the English Catholic gentry with accounts of poorer Catholics.

<sup>30</sup> John Callow, “Mary Howard [née Shireburn],” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed 28 May 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/73837>.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Clare Haynes, “Of Her Making: The Cultural Practice of Mary, 9th Duchess of Norfolk,” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, 31 (2012), 79.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Haynes, “Of Her Making,” 80.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Dolan, “Reading, Work, and Catholic Women’s Biographies,” *English Literary Renaissance*, 33 (2003), 334.

<sup>34</sup> Claire Walker, “Prayer, Patronage, and Political Conspiracy: English Nuns and the Restoration,” *Historical Journal*, 43 (2000), 5. Convents admitted both choir nuns, requiring a substantial dowry, and lay sisters, who compensated for a lower dowry by undertaking manual labor. Looking at the correspondence of James Corker, confessor to the English Benedictine nuns in Paris, Dame Benedict Rowell finds that he made no distinction between choir and lay nuns: “they got the same spiritual training”; see Rowell, “Abbot Corker and the Nuns,” in *Lamspringe: An English Abbey in Germany, 1643-1803* (Ampleford: Ampleford Abbey Trustees, 2004), 98.

<sup>35</sup> See Caroline Bowden, “Collecting the Lives of Early Modern Women Religious: Obituary Writing and the Development of Collective Memory and Corporate Identity,” *Women’s History Review*, 19 (2010), 7-20. See also Heather Wolfe, “Dame Barbara Constable, Catholic Antiquarian, Advisor, and Closet Missionary,” in *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England*, 158-88; and Marie-Louise Coolahan, “Identity Politics and Nuns’ Writing,” *Women’s Writing*, 14 (2007), 306-20.

<sup>36</sup> Helen Smith, *“Grossly Material Things”: Women and Book Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 30.

<sup>37</sup> Indeed, reading was often the vehicle through which conversion happened. Anne, Duchess of York, attributed her conversion to reading Peter Heylin’s *Ecclesia Restaurata; or, the History of the Reformation of the Church of England* (1661). Catherine Holland converted to Catholicism as her “Knowledge of the Catholick Religion did increase by means of Catholick Books, which I grew so fond of, as I gave a gold Ring for one”; quoted in Dolan, “Reading, Work, and Catholic Women’s Biographies,” 332. That religious reading was not limited to the gentry is suggested by John Gother’s recommendation that laborers might read pious material as a substitute for Mass: “always taking some Time both Morning and Afternoon for Reading some Good Books, which may revive in them the Memory of their Duty,

and quicken in them the Desire of complying with it; and if this can be done in Common, it will be more Exemplary and Beneficial"; see Gother, *Instructions for Particular States* (1718), in *English Catholicism, 1680-1830*, 2:276. The market for cheap printed catechisms such as the one Arrowsmith carried in her pocket was subsidized by charity and expands our understanding of Catholicism and the printed word. See also Walsham's "Preaching without Speaking: Script, Print, and Religious Dissent," in *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300-1700*, ed. Julia Crick and Walsham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 211-34; and Molly Murray, "'Now I am a Catholique': William Alabaster and the Early Modern Catholic Conversion Narrative," in *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England*, 189-215.

<sup>38</sup> Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life*, 162.

<sup>39</sup> Barbara Diefendorf, "Rethinking the Catholic Reformation: The Role of Women," in *Women, Religion, and the Atlantic World, 1600-1800*, ed. Daniella Kostroun and Lisa Vollendorf (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 31. Evangelisti similarly argues that "the history of nuns seems to have been characterized by a kind of continuous tension between enclosure and the push towards a more open model of religious life" (p. 6). See also Dolan, "Why are Nuns Funny?," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 70 (2007), 509-35; and Walker, "Combining Martha and Mary: Gender and Work in Seventeenth-Century English Cloisters," *Sixteenth-Century Journal*, 30 (1999), 397-418.

<sup>40</sup> As Walker notes, patrons could interfere with strict enclosure. For example, Queen Mary of Modena "sought favours which compromised cloisters' rules and statutes," such as requesting that the Dunkirk Benedictine abbess Mary Caryll tutor one of the Queen's pages; see Walker, "Loyal and Dutiful Subjects: English Nuns and Stuart Politics," in *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700*, ed. James Daybell (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 236.

<sup>41</sup> Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe: English Convents in France and the Low Countries* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 2.

<sup>42</sup> Walker, "Combining Mary and Martha," 397. Walker argues that nuns used the Martha/Mary dichotomy to distinguish between apostolic ministry and contemplative life. She cites as evidence the 1685 obituary of the Paris Benedictine lay sister Margaret Greene, which noted that "in her many Employment[s] of Martha, she did not omitted [sic] the chiefe affair of Mary, for she was . . . very serious at her prayer & devotions" (p. 399). Walker concludes that "the nuns reworked the Martha/Mary metaphor in such a way that the boundaries between religious and secular work were conveniently blurred" (p. 399).

<sup>43</sup> Mrs. Thimelby to Herbert Aston, n. d., in *Tixall Letters; or the Correspondence of the Aston Family, and their Friends*, ed. Arthur Clifford, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne, 1815), 2:44-45. See also Grundy, "Women's History? Writings by English Nuns," 134.

<sup>44</sup> Anne Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England, 1780-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 1-12, 70, 91, 104, 143. In "Loyal and Dutiful Subjects," Walker similarly insists that "English nuns' actions testify to the fact that not only were early modern women politically conscious, but also they often possessed the requisite contacts and skills to influence affairs of state" (p. 240). Nuns, she adds, "were much closer to both the English crown and political subversion than scholars have hitherto acknowledged" (p. 229). In addition to engaging in politics, nuns also addressed an audience beyond the con-

vent's walls. Wolfe has demonstrated how Dame Barbara Constable's original and transcribed manuscripts nourished a readership of recusants both in East Riding in Yorkshire and among the English Benedictine monks and nuns abroad that "transcended the physical and social limitations of enclosure and of female subordination"; see Crothell, Dolan, Highley, and Marotti, introduction to *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England*, 9, regarding Wolfe's chapter "Dame Barbara Constable: Catholic Antiquarian, Advisor, and Closet Missionary," 158-88. Finally, nuns could expand the boundaries of rigidly imposed orthodoxy. Jenna Lay views Constable's efforts to preserve and transmit Augustine Baker's work on contemplative prayer as working against the "dominant strain of post-Reformation monastic instruction . . . based on the Ignatian model of discursive prayer," thereby working against, though not outside of, the grain of orthodoxy; see Lay, "An English Nun's Authority: Early Modern Spiritual Controversy and the Manuscripts of Barbara Constable," in *Gender, Catholicism and Spirituality: Women and the Roman Catholic Church in Britain and Europe, 1200-1900*, ed. Laurence Lux-Territt and Mangion (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 101. See also Barbara Harris, "Women and Politics in Early Tudor England," *Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), 259-81.

<sup>45</sup> Walker, "Prayer, Patronage, and Political Conspiracy: English Nuns and the Restoration." See also Walker, "Loyal and Dutiful Subjects"; and Bowden, "The Abbess and Mrs Brown: Lady Mary Knatchbull and Royalist Politics in Flanders in the late 1650s," *Recusant History*, 24 (1999), 288-308.

<sup>46</sup> Glickman, *English Catholic Community*, 199; and Who were the Nuns?, s. v. "Mary Rosa" (name in religion), accessed 28 May 2013, <http://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk/search/search.html>.

<sup>47</sup> See Lady Lucy Herbert, *Several Excellent Methods of Hearing Mass* (1722), *Motives to Excite us to the Frequent Meditation of our Saviour's Passion* (1742), and *Several Methods and Practices of Devotion* (1743). These works went through a combined fifteen impressions between 1722 and 1792. See Frans Blom, ed., *English Catholic Books, 1701-1800: A Bibliography* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1996), 151-52. Herbert's public face as a producer of straightforward devotional printed texts was only part of the story; she also requested and circulated manuscript accounts of her sister's success in freeing her Jacobite husband from the Tower the day before his intended execution, which supplements Walker's claim that nuns engaged in "political subversion" ("Loyal and Dutiful Subjects," p. 229). See also Grundy, "Women's History? Writings by English Nuns," 138; and Leigh Eicke, "Winifred Maxwell [née Herbert]," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed 28 May 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18417>.

<sup>48</sup> Excerpts of Mary Howard's work are included in John Seward, John Morrill, and Tomko, eds., *Firmly I Believe and Truly: The Spiritual Tradition of Catholic England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 293. The English Catholic devotional book trade has traditionally been considered the province of men. Though Martha Meighan took over her husband's bookshop upon his death in 1753 before passing it on to her son, the tight-knit group of Catholic booksellers was comprised of men: Thomas Metcalfe, Thomas Meighan, Sr., Thomas Meighan, Jr., James Marmaduke, James Peter Loughlan, Richard Brown, and Patrick and George Keating. Admittedly, these men held "a virtual monopoly" over the production and sale of Catholic books, which by the eighteenth century were domestically produced rather than imported (Blom, p. xi). However, work on manuscript and epistolary catechetical

work by nuns working abroad qualifies this male-dominated portrait of religious education. Nuns like Winifred Thimelby produced manuscript devotional instructions that were sent back to England. More scholarship on women's roles in the afterlife of printed devotional books is needed: what roles did women play in distributing books, overseeing catechetical and charitable work, educating children and servants, and reading within the household? How, one wonders, did Mary Arrowsmith acquire her catechism? For a useful overview of devotional texts, see Isabel Rivers, "Religious Publishing," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 5, 1659-1830, ed. Michael Suarez and Michael Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 579-600.

<sup>49</sup> Hester Thrale Piozzi's reversal of her view of conventual life, from contempt to genuine appreciation, is representative of the transformation of attitudes effected by convents on their visitors. For Piozzi and for many English women, convents solved the problem of what to do with single, poor, or unmarried women. As Piozzi put it, "A Well endowed Convent is of all others the most perfect Refuge from Poverty"; quoted in McArthur, "Peregrinations to the Convent: Hester Thrale Piozzi and Ann Radcliffe," in *British-French Exchanges in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Kathleen Hardesty Doig and Dorothy Medlin (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 127.

<sup>50</sup> See Lux-Sterritt, "Mary Ward's English Institute and Prescribed Female Roles in the Early Modern Church," in *Gender, Catholicism and Spirituality*, 83-87; Ellen Macek, "'Ghostly Fathers' and Their 'Virtuous Daughters': The Role of Spiritual Direction in the Lives of Three Early Modern English Women," *The Catholic Historical Review*, 90 (2004), 213-35; Bowden, "Mary Ward," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed 28 May 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28699>; and M. Gregory Kirkus, "Great Aunt and Great Niece: Two 17th-18th Century Members of the Bedingfield Family," *Recusant History*, 25 (2000), 29-42.

<sup>51</sup> Susan O'Brien, "Women of the 'English Catholic Community': Nuns and Pupils at the Bar Convent, York, 1680-1790," in *Monastic Studies: The Continuity of Tradition*, ed. Judith Loades (Bangor: Headstart History, 1990), 275.

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Inchbald, *The Mogul Tale; or, The Descent of the Balloon* (London: F. Powell, 1796), 9, quoted in Tomko, "'All the World have heard of the Devil and the Pope': Elizabeth Inchbald's *The Mogul Tale* and English Catholic Satire," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 31 (2012), 118-19. Subsequent references to *The Mogul Tale* will be cited from Inchbald parenthetically in the text.

<sup>53</sup> Miss Milner's mocking suggestion in *A Simple Story* that she dress as a nun for a masquerade ball of which her guardian/fiancé disapproves is another instance of Inchbald's interest in parodying anti-Catholic behavior. In *British Romanticism and the Catholic Question*, Tomko reads the crumbling marriage between the Protestant Miss Milner and the Catholic Lord Elmwood allegorically as an acknowledgment of "the trauma, instability and difficulty involved in reconciliation across fraught historical and religious borders" (p. 56).

<sup>54</sup> Tomko, "'All the World have heard of the Devil and the Pope,'" 132.

<sup>55</sup> Rebecca D'Monté and Nicole Pohl, *Female Communities, 1600-1800: Literary Visions and Cultural Realities* (London: Macmillan, 2000). For summaries of representations of convents in women's literature, see D'Monté and Pohl's introduction; Katharine Rogers, "Fantasy and Reality in Fictional Convents of the Eighteenth



Century,” *Comparative Literature Studies*, 22 (1985), 297-316; and McArthur, “Peregrinations to the Convent,” 116-30.

<sup>56</sup> Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 183.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Liesbeth Corens, “Catholic Nuns and English Identities: English Protestant Travellers on the English Convents in the Low Countries, 1660-1730,” *Recusant History*, 30 (2011), 442. For larger discussions of the Grand Tour and convents, see McArthur, “Peregrinations to the Convent” and her book on nuns and representations of nuns in literature, forthcoming from Ashgate Press.

<sup>58</sup> Commonplace book, late eighteenth century, Osborn c53, Osborn Collection, 67, 73.

<sup>59</sup> Shell, *Oral Culture and Catholicism in Early Modern England*, 24. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>60</sup> Maria Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism: Religion, Cultural Exchange and the Popular Novel, 1785-1829* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009). As Mangion explains in *Contested Identities*, “supporters of the French Revolution, ardent in their republicanism and anti-clericalism, found religious life antithetical to the state they were building” (pp. 32-33). In quick succession between 1790 and 1792, French religious were released from their vows, monasteries were seized, and religious fled. The return of nuns to England was partly subsidized by the British government, which Mangion muses “may have reflected more an antipathy for the French government and the revolutions in France than an acceptance for Catholicism or religious life” (p. 34). Subsequent references to Purves will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>61</sup> Mark Canuel provides an alternate but not unrelated view by reading Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian* (1797) within the context of toleration. According to his reading, Radcliffe’s characters’ different faiths do not preclude social cooperation and the novel thus participates in an emerging rhetoric of toleration: “the Gothic novel seeks to image itself within a discourse that emphasizes comprehensiveness not by achieving a consensus among beliefs, but by valuing the literary—and the regime in which literature makes its appearance—precisely in its separation from doctrinal compulsion”; see Canuel, “‘Holy hypocrisy’ and the Role of Belief: Radcliffe’s Gothics,” in *Religion, Toleration, and British Writing, 1790-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 65.

<sup>62</sup> As Brenda Tooley notes, Radcliffe’s *The Italian* “presents an alternative to the novel’s world of institutionalized violence in the convent of the *Santa della Pietà*,” where Ellena discovers her true identity with the help of a sympathetic and intelligent abbess; see Tooley, “Gothic Utopia: Heretical Sanctuary in Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian*,” *Utopian Studies*, 11, No. 2 (2000), 43. If we turn to semi-gothic novels such as the staunchly Anglican Charlotte Lennox’s *Henrietta* (1758), we see that she hints at two aspects of the convent; throughout *Henrietta*—a novel that exists on the margins of gothic terror—the title character lives in fear of being placed in a convent, only to find the convent as a refuge and guarantor of her sexual virtue at the novel’s conclusion.

<sup>63</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler, “Regina Maria Roche’s *The Children of the Abbey*: Contesting the Catholic Presence in Female Gothic Fiction,” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, 31 (2012), 150. Hoeveler’s account of the gothic novel is congruent with the account expressed by Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall’s “Gothic

Criticism,” in *A Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 209-28.

<sup>64</sup> Mangion, *Contested Identities*, 34, and also 37.

<sup>65</sup> Beth Kowaleski Wallace, “‘Penance and mortification for ever’: Jane Austen and the Ambient Noise of Catholicism,” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, 31 (2012), 160, 175. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>66</sup> See Dolan, “Ashes in ‘the Archive’: The London Fire of 1666, Partisanship, and Proof,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 31 (2001), 379-408; “Gender and the ‘Lost’ Spaces of Catholicism,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 32 (2002), 641-65; “Reading, Work, and Catholic Women’s Biographies”; and “Why are Nuns Funny?”

<sup>67</sup> [John Dyott?], journal of a tour in Belgium, Osborn d378, Osborn Collection.