

REPRESENTATIONS OF CATHOLICISM IN AMERICAN LITERATURE,  
1820-1920

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REPRESENTATIONS OF CATHOLICISM IN AMERICAN LITERATURE,  
1820-1920

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT  
REPRESENTATIONS OF CATHOLICISM IN AMERICAN LITERATURE,  
1820-1920

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This dissertation examines the representation of Catholics and Catholicism in literature by non-Catholic authors in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American prose fiction and travel narratives. Moving roughly chronologically, it identifies notable images of Catholicism, describes their presentation, and, finally, offers evidence of and accounts for a meaningful change in the presentation. The introduction reviews the contributions to this field made by Susan Griffin, David Reynolds, and Jenny Franchot. It adapts and builds on historical analysis by Jay Dolan of the relationship of Catholics to America.

It concludes by proposing grounds for concluding that the trend in the presentation of Catholicism in American literature from 1820 to 1920 by non-Catholic writers is toward more positive depiction: notably in the change in literary emphasis from romance to realism and in the change in the key elements of “narrative theology” to “narrative aesthetics.” It contextualizes these changes within the enhanced cultural position of the American author and within a concern with modernism. It considers what American writers’ portrayals of Catholics say about American belief in separation of church and state, compromise, and optimism.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION:RELIGION AS AN “INVISIBLE DOMAIN” IN AMERICAN STUDIES .....	1
CHAPTER II CATHOLICISM AND MORALITY IN TWO ANTEBELLUM ROMANCES .....	34
James Fenimore Cooper .....	37
Catharine Maria Sedgwick .....	56
Conclusion .....	72
CHAPTER III DOCTRINAL DISPUTES: ANTEBELLUM NOVELS, ONCE MORE .....	77
Orestes Brownson .....	81
Augusta Jane Evans Wilson .....	88
Conclusion .....	101
CHAPTER IV ‘RELICS OF PAPISTRY LEFT BEHIND US’: HAWTHORNE, JAMES, HOWELLS AND CATHOLIC AESTHETICS .....	105
Nathaniel Hawthorne .....	108
<u>The Scarlet Letter</u> .....	108
<u>The Marble Faun</u> .....	121
Henry James.....	131
<u>Roderick Hudson</u> .....	131



<u>The Portrait of a Lady</u> .....	146	
<u>The Golden Bowl</u> .....	151	
William Dean Howells.....	156	
<u>Indian Summer</u> .....	156	
Conclusion .....	161	
CHAPTER V “A COMPLETE VARIETY OF PROTESTANT CONGREGATIONS”		
IN KING ARTHUR’S COURT: MARK TWAIN ON CATHOLICISM AND		
DEMOCRACY .....		165
<u>The Innocents Abroad</u> .....	170	
<u>A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court</u> .....	180	
<u>Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc</u> .....	190	
CHAPTER VI FRIEND OF CREOLES, FRIEND OF HISPANICS; NATIONAL		
CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN HARPER AND NORRIS .....		213
Frances E. W. Harper .....	215	
Frank Norris .....	228	
Conclusion .....	237	
CHAPTER VII “SO MANY CELLS WITH SO MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF		
HONEY”: CATHOLIC DEVOTIONAL LIFE IN HAROLD FREDERIC,		
PAULINE HOPKINS, AND HENRY ADAMS .....		239
Harold Frederic .....	240	
Pauline Hopkins .....	251	
Henry Adams .....	260	
CHAPTER VIII “MOTHER-WOMEN, OTHER WOMEN, CREOLE MEN,		

CELIBATE PRIESTS; CATHOLIC GENDER MODELS IN CHOPIN AND FITZGERALD .....	272
Kate Chopin .....	273
F. Scott Fitzgerald .....	294
Conclusion .....	310
CHAPTER IX THE CHANGING PRESENTATIONS OF CATHOLICISM AFTER THE CIVIL WAR; FROM FEAR AND FASCINATION TO ACCOMMODATION AND COMMON CAUSE .....	313
ENDNOTES .....	342
WORKS CITED .....	372

## Chapter I Introduction: Religion as an “Invisible Domain” in American Studies

This study examines the representation of Catholics and Catholicism by non-Catholic authors in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American prose, primarily fiction but also two travel books and one travel essay. My concerns are, for the one-hundred year period from the 1820s to the 1920s, to identify images of Catholicism and describe their presentation, and to investigate whether any meaningful changes took place in such presentation. In discussing representations of Catholics in fiction, I will be discussing both clergy and lay characters. Catholicism here includes Catholic doctrine on the nature and number of Sacraments and on the Virgin Mary, Catholic emphasis on the Papacy and on intercession of Saints, and Catholic church ritual, as well as many contrasts between Catholic and Protestant practice that are consequences of differences in doctrine, including differences in personal and public devotional practices, church architecture and decoration, and church music. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, Catholicism was a minority religion in the United States and despite dramatic increases has remained a minority Christian religion relative to the total Protestant Christian population. Historian Mark Noll notes that Catholics, constituting 1% of the American population in 1776, numbered a mere 25,000, with 23 priests (Old Religion 121). Waves of Irish immigration from the 1820s onward and from the southern and eastern Mediterranean in the 1890s, as well as conversions by

Americans during the nineteenth century, changed the percentage dramatically. By 1906, Catholics totaled twelve million, making them 14% of the American population, with 15,000 priests and 12,000 churches (Noll, Old Religion 121). “The number of American Catholics quadrupled between 1860 and 1900, and, despite a slowdown in Catholic immigration by World War I, kept growing to almost 20 million in the 1920s. Inexorably, the Catholic share of the population was also rising rapidly, approaching 20 percent by 1930” (Morris 113).

Despite minority status, but because of their growing numbers, Catholics and Catholicism are a significant presence in nineteenth-century American literature, especially fiction by non-Catholics. Often the attention they received was negative, hence the use of the term “anti-Catholicism” not only in my key scholarly sources, but as a Library of Congress official library classification. Drawing on work by Ray Allen Billington, Jenny Franchot indicates the scope of anti-Catholicism in antebellum America. She says, “From 1800 to 1860, a partial count of anti-Catholic publications shows some 25 newspapers, 13 magazines, 210 books, 40 fictional pieces, 41 histories, and scores of giftbooks, almanacs, and pamphlets dedicated to the anti-Catholic cause” (106). The fact that “the Inquisition and its ingenious tortures had become a form of popular entertainment” (Franchot, Roads to Rome 166) by the time of the appearance of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Pit and the Pendulum” is just one small indicator of the interest of segments of the American public in material about Catholics. Again drawing on work by Billington, Franchot notes the case of “the New York showman who in 1842 exhibited a building of the Inquisition replete with common instruments of torture” (Roads to

Rome 166). One might almost think of such an exhibit as an ancestor of the Halloween Haunted House which forms a part of popular culture now.

Franchot's impressive statistics and the sweeping scope of her own ambitious groundbreaking work suggest the need for limiting any study of this material. Franchot along with David Reynolds and Susan Griffin have already made careful, persuasive study of Catholicism (essentially anti-Catholicism) in antebellum American fiction. Although I will comment on three writers neglected or ignored by Franchot and on a work by Orestes Brownson before his conversion to Roman Catholicism, most of my study deals with postbellum literature.

I discuss the representations of Catholicism in twenty-two works by sixteen authors: Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Orestes Brownson, Augusta Jane Evans Wilson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, Frances E. W. Harper, Frank Norris, Harold Frederic, Pauline Hopkins, Henry Adams, Kate Chopin, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Of these authors, thirteen were never Catholic. One, Orestes Brownson, converted to Catholicism four years after publishing the work I discuss. Two others, Kate Chopin and F. Scott Fitzgerald, were raised Catholic but did not remain practicing Catholics in adult life.

In undertaking this study I have had to draw boundaries for what would be included and what would not be. In restricting this study to non-Catholic authors, I am excluding the Catholic authors described by Paul R. Messbarger in his study of American Catholic fiction from 1884 to 1900, as well as any work by Orestes Brownson after his conversion. Restricting my study primarily to fiction fits the growth of religious fiction

in nineteenth-century American literature, the prominence of Catholicism as target of satire or as aesthetic background in non-religious fiction, and the ability of fiction to convey polemical and ideological messages in an affective form (Wood, Broken Estate xi) and to contribute to a sense of nationhood. As Benedict Anderson argues, “two forms of imagining” which contribute powerfully to the concept of nationhood because of their way of understanding time are “the novel and the newspaper” (24-25). The only nonfiction works I will comment on are one of Washington Irving’s travel essays in The Sketch Book, Mark Twain’s The Innocents Abroad, and “The Virgin of Chartres,” the early twentieth-century essay by Henry Adams. These works complement the fiction in this study. One occurs at the beginning of the one-hundred year period treated here, one at the midpoint, and one in the last two decades of the period. All three record the reflections occasioned by actual travel to and observation of Catholic sites in Europe and vary in tone from nostalgic to critical to appreciative. These three travel narratives offer a steady focus on Catholic sites rather than the incidental portrayals of Catholicism for aesthetic purposes that became more common after the Civil War.

For each fiction writer I discuss, I will employ a set approach, consisting of a description of what evidence exists within each writer’s work for asserting that an author has a particular view of Catholicism and how the writer manifests that view. Relevant critical commentary is provided for each author. Within individual chapters, I analyze pairs or clusters of works within relatively close historical proximity of each other, such as Cooper’s The Last of the Mohicans (1826) and Sedgwick’s Hope Leslie (1827), and with topically similar content, such as Cooper’s and Sedgwick’s depiction of missionaries

and Indians, or Chopin's and Fitzgerald's presentation of gender. Susan Griffin describes the method in her study as follows: "I want to recover the analytic tools of formalist consideration and close reading too often missing from our contemporary criticism by showing their compatibility with—indeed, I would argue their necessity for—historical study" (3). I concur. Besides close reading, I relate works to their cultural context and historical events, such as Frank Norris's knowledge of the Mussel Slough Massacre as background for the dramatic struggle between California ranchers and the railroad in The Octopus, and biographical context, such as Henry James's international perspective, Mark Twain's loss of his favorite daughter before writing Joan of Arc, or Augusta Jane Evans Wilson's young age at the writing of Inez and Frances E. W. Harper's age of 67 at the writing of Iola Leroy. It is also of some importance to indicate whether an author represents popular sentiment or the approach of an elite culture to the questions about American identity that are raised by a Catholic presence in the country. Brief plot summaries are included for works which are no longer in print and which need to be read in the reading rooms of special collections or read on the Internet because limited print copies exist worldwide.

How Catholics and Catholicism were presented in nineteenth-century American literature has generally been overlooked by scholars, with the three notable exceptions discussed below. The reason, I believe, is that it is often considered a violation of implicitly agreed-upon norms in academic/scholarly circles to discuss religion or politics. But I agree with Toni Morrison's view on racial discourse expressed in Playing in the Dark. Morrison analyzes the "silence and evasion . . . [ruling] literary discourse" (9) on

race as an issue of a kind of literary manners on the part of critics who ignore the Africanist presence in American literature. She describes the logic of “ignoring race . . . [as something] understood [by the practitioners] to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture” (10) whose logic credits itself for having the “well-bred instinct” (10) not to notice race. While her discussion focuses on race, not religion, her point is germane to my study: the breach of proper social—or literary critical—conventions actually comes from not discussing a significant topic. The point about the neglect of religion as a topic can be made not only from analogy to race, but even more directly. In describing Americanists, Jenny Franchot has asserted that religion is an “invisible domain” to these critics. She observes that “Foucault’s deterministic account of power’s production of knowledge has been used to favor what have been deemed powerful forms of knowledge—medicine, sexuality, or even literature. . . . Those forms of knowledge that have been judged powerless from a contemporary Western intellectual point of view—knowledge that describes itself as spiritual for example—no longer attract the kind of intellectual curiosity that makes for sharply perceptive critique” (“Invisible Domain” 835). Franchot is talking about a change in the forty-year period preceding her article’s appearance in 1995. She delineates certain areas of the “interior life” that have been neglected by scholars. These include “concerns for the sacred, the soul, creedal affiliation and disaffiliation, theological tradition, ritual behavior, and ceremonialized expression” (“Invisible Domain” 836). Religious belief as an object of study comes to seem “scandalous” (“Invisible Domain” 837), replaced by things formerly deemed



scandalous, such as sexual orientation, unless the religion being studied is non-Western (“Invisible Domain” 838).

As explained above, I am interested in how creedal affiliation, i.e. Protestantism or lack of religious affiliation, affects the presentation of Catholicism. Theological belief, ritual, and ceremony necessarily occupy a central place in my study.

The authors I include are mainly elite/canonical authors. Scholars from the 1940s and 1950s who were influential in canon formation emphasized aesthetic features and a plot focused on the lone male hero embattled on the frontier. These scholars did not concentrate on the treatment of religious minorities. Although the authors I study have been heavily analyzed, relatively little attention has been paid to the way in which they represent Catholics and Catholicism.

My dissertation began with an observation. A re-reading of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s The Marble Faun after a schoolgirl reading many years earlier made me see clearly how Hawthorne was struggling with his view of Catholicism as a religion and with Catholic art, including Madonnas as its aesthetic embodiment. A reading of Henry Adams’s “The Virgin of Chartres,” by contrast, seemed full of affection and admiration for Chartres Cathedral and, in particular, for the statue of the Virgin. Two prominent figures in American literature, separated by a little less than fifty years, had very different reactions to a figure so prominent in Catholic theology and piety. I wondered what changes had occurred in the intervening cultural and literary landscape.

Beyond satisfying personal curiosity, my topic has general relevance and intellectual importance. The topic has to do, quite simply, with power relations,

including shifting power relations, among religiously-affiliated groups. In Cathy Davidson's judgment, one important contribution of postcolonial history is to show that relationships of money, power, official voices, and cultural forces are not just "teleological," meaning they are not fulfilled or realized when a nation emerges, with all conflicts cleared up or laid aside for the greater good of the newly emerging nation. She emphasizes the ability of postcolonial theory to study both the dominant group and the less powerful groups, which she terms "'subalterns,'" following Gayatri Spivak (17). She contrasts this approach with "[u]niversalist or heroic history [which] has to erase or minimize contradictions such as the second president of the United States passing the Alien and Sedition Acts" (17). Here she refers to John Adams and his efforts in lobbying Congress to pass legislation restraining and possibly deporting resident aliens, as well as making it a crime to produce "false, scandalous, and malicious [anti-government] writing." While such history presents dissenters as un-American, work that disavows this approach looks for ways to bring together those on the outside with those on the inside (18). The novels that Davidson surveys, she says, show a vast "social terrain" that includes "even Catholics" (28)—which is the final enumeration in a list of thirty-nine groups of character types! This dissertation focuses on that last term. I want to examine how "even Catholics" appear in novels, how a group that has made major contributions to American life has been presented historically in American fiction.

Part of my study is to attempt to determine whether there have been changes over time in the presentation of Catholicism in American literature, to identify cultural markers that would verify that a change in presentation—and thus, presumably, in

attitude—has taken place. Cultural markers could include, for example, such things as the adaptation by Protestants of selected features of Catholic worship, the making of common cause between evangelical Protestants and Catholics against the perceived dangers of modernism, or the more frequent occurrence of positive literary depictions of such specifically Catholic ministerial requirements as the celibate priesthood and such features of worship and outlook as saints and the position of the Virgin Mary. Readers who are interested in American intellectual, cultural, or religious history will, I hope, find not a few matters of interest in the chapters here.

My work is a logical extension of the work offered by Susan Griffin, David Reynolds, and Jenny Franchot. These three researchers have developed the existing scholarly narrative of the presentation of Catholicism in nineteenth-century American literature. (Thomas Haddox has taken this narrative in an interesting direction in his concentration on the presentation of Catholicism in Southern American literature.) In varying degrees, each of these scholars stresses what Franchot calls Protestant feelings of “fear and fascination” towards Catholicism. This broad scholarly narrative, though groundbreaking and stimulating, is incomplete in that it does not take into sufficient account the presentation of Catholicism that occurs after the Civil War. Franchot had intended to extend her study into the post-Civil War period, but her untimely death prevented her from realizing this aim. Griffin’s cross-cultural study does not have the exclusive concentration on American literature that I am attempting. Reynolds’s study concentrates on American literature, but it is too broad for my purposes. His work

involves a range of genres, a time span beginning with the early Republic and ending with the close of the nineteenth century, and Protestant and Catholic authors.

Of these three authors, the most recent work has been done by Susan Griffin, who analyzes both “British and American anti-Catholic fiction from 1830 through the turn of the century” (11) in her 2004 Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction. Griffin believes that the “novel of religious polemic” (11) was a very important but now much neglected type of fiction in the nineteenth-century. She focuses on comparisons that can be made between England and America. Griffin is not as interested in Hawthorne as she is in minor antebellum writers. Also, her work shows how the rhetoric of anti-Catholicism offered “opportunities” in ready-made forms for plot and character development to nineteenth-century fiction writers. Her aim lies “in tracing the ideologies of those forms” (12).

Griffin describes a set of standard anti-Catholic plots: “the escaped nun’s tale, the priest-wife-husband triangle, the brotherhood of young men challenging an incestuous holy father’s control of his daughter” (3). Her concern is to show how the writing and rewriting of these plots in nineteenth-century Anglo-American fiction interacted with “cultural, political, and legal issues of the day” (3). While some of the authors she discusses are “obscure” (12), such as Charles Frothingham, or were writing under such pseudonyms as “Harry Hazel,” others—Ned Buntline, for example—were popular in their time, or known as influential critics, such as Sarah Josepha Hale and Charles Kingsley; yet others were popular in their time and have achieved canonical status, including Charlotte Bronte and Henry James. Griffin is interested in what cross-cultural

British/American comparisons reveal about a shared anti-Catholic body of writing. She is also interested in identifying stock characters and preoccupations in each culture for what they say about anxieties felt by Protestants in Britain and America.

Several of the stock characters and preoccupations Griffin identifies are relevant for my study. One is a concern in antebellum fiction with a priest “hovering over the deathbed of the rich” (21). Unlike British anti-Catholic fiction, which did show a fear of Vatican appropriation of British wealth, in American fiction this figure suggests a concern with “the origins and the legacy of American citizenship and rights” (21). Griffin identifies two clergy types, the “Irish immigrant priest, personified for American Protestants as Archbishop John Hughes of New York, and the sophisticated Jesuit from Southern Europe—the original Confidence Man” (21) common in Know-Nothing fiction of the 1850s. The latter stereotype is encountered in Augusta Jane Evans Wilson’s Inez in the person of Fr. Mazzolin.

Another contrast Griffin draws between British and American concerns about the conversion or presence of new Catholics is also illuminating. While British writers accepted ““Old Catholics”” (15) as sincere if misguided, they did not accept the Puseyites from the 1830s and 1840s or the Ritualists from the 1860s. By contrast, postbellum American writers were concerned with “Irish and German immigrants” (16), particularly from fear of how Catholic priests would dictate parishioner votes, fear of competition from Catholic schools and their effect on public schools, and fear of the concentration of wealth in Catholics through Catholic land-ownership in the American West (16). Charles Chesnutt, for example, uses Irish Catholic stereotypes in his short story “Uncle

Wellington's Wives," included in The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories of the Color Line (1899) written in the 1890s, the same decade in which Frances E. W. Harper was writing.

Finally, Griffin's discussion of Henry James's use of the sensational fertility informs my view of antebellum anti-Catholicism. Griffin comments that "[w]hile the sensation novel's ties to its gothic predecessors have long been recognized, anti-Catholicism's part in that heritage has gone largely unremarked" (24). Further, she states about Disraeli, James, and Howells that "[i]n turning to anti-Catholic literary precedents, all three writers revert to an anachronistic mode, a gothic inheritance" (25). She argues that for James and Howells, both realists, this puts them into contact with "romance, a troubling genre" (25), a potential conflict they resolve by "consistently ironiz[ing] their relationship to the scenes and plots and characters of anti-Catholicism" (25). In my study of the writers preceding Hawthorne, I link frontier romance and Gothicism to negative portrayals of Catholics in Cooper, Sedgwick, and Wilson. Unlike James and Howells, these writers embrace and endorse the truth claims made by available scenes, plots, and characters of anti-Catholicism.

Griffin, in fact, makes a number of points that I find accurate and foundational. She notes a decline in anti-Catholic fiction later in the nineteenth-century. She also makes the important point that not all Protestant readers and reviewers agreed with the attacks on Catholics contained in anti-Catholic fiction (12-13). Further, she finds Anglo-American anti-Catholicism a neglected area of critical attention, a "skeleton hidden in the closets of Anglo-American history" that was important in shaping "both British and

American national identities” (11). She also thinks that what anti-Catholic fiction actually “tells us about are the Protestantisms of the period” (4). By pluralizing Protestantisms, she emphasizes that there are differences in outlook between such groups as Anglicans and Evangelicals, and even within Anglicans and Evangelicals. She cautions that a simplistic binary opposition is reductive of the complexities of the presentation of Catholics by non-Catholic writers.

My work will differ from Griffin’s work in several ways. Her work is explicitly transnational. Her concern is to relate literary anti-Catholicism in both England and America to specific events in each country’s nineteenth-century history. My study is focused on American literature in order to concentrate on the “histories” (Richard Brodhead’s term, “Literary Field” 12-13) of one nation rather than two. Griffin’s antebellum analysis concentrates on “the work of numerous less well-known writers” (12); I am interested primarily in canonical writers. Griffin, Reynolds, and Franchot all move back and forth between canonical and popular writers. In doing so, they have overlooked elements of anti-Catholicism in canonical writers. Because canonical romance writers have been viewed by such earlier canon constructors as Richard Chase as being freed from “addressing particularized matters of history and culture,” showing instead “moral and psychological absolutes,” it is worth determining the extent of anti-Catholicism in this portrayal (Levine 2, 11-12). Also, Griffin is interested in recurring forms such as the escaped nun’s tale and its relationship to ideology. I concentrate on identifying the content of pairs or groups of novels and travel narratives according to seven categories by which Catholic life in America can be judged historically: morality,

doctrine, aesthetics, democracy, national churches, devotional life, and gender. Texts are analyzed in the category which appears most prominently.

David Reynolds's 1981 study Faith in Fiction, which concentrates on American fiction between 1785 and 1850, is the earliest of the three book-length works laying the groundwork for my study. He analyzes the content of religious fiction in "this transition period of central importance in American history" (2). For Reynolds, this period is important because it extends over a time when the new nation was finding its way. It marks the diminishment of the influence of the thinking of Jonathan Edwards and other Puritan preachers, inversely with the "rise of religious tolerance and diversity in nineteenth-century America . . . accompanied by an increasingly widespread tendency to embellish religion with diverting narrative" (1). Reynolds's concerns are much broader than simply the representation of Catholicism in fiction, but he does treat anti-Catholic satire. His purpose is to tell the story of the rise in popularity of the religious yet nonsectarian novel for which the post-Civil War era is known. He analyzes the oriental tale, the visionary mode, Calvinist fiction, liberal fiction, Biblical fiction, Roman Catholic fiction, and satirical fiction, all forming a stream of fiction flowing into a highly successful flood of "religious best sellers after the Civil War, the most popular of which, like The Gates Ajar and Ben-Hur, were nonsectarian and quite secular" (2).

Although Reynolds's interests go beyond Roman Catholicism as such, he strikingly shows that between 1834 and 1850 a number of extreme fictional attacks were made on Catholics. Reynolds comments, "The story of early anti-Catholic fiction is one of increasing xenophobic outrage on the part of nativists who felt that the growth of



Roman Catholicism in America must be stopped at any cost” (180). Here, Reynolds attributes a motive and gives a name to Protestant fiction writers as a group. The motive is fear. The name is nativism. Reynolds sees the year 1830 as a turning point for these writers. In his view, prior to 1830 anti-Catholic fiction was restrained; after 1830 anti-Catholic fiction was stoked by a series of events, including the 1829 English Catholic Emancipation Bill and an 1829 United States Catholic Provincial Council meeting (180) which conveyed the clear view that “Roman Catholicism was to be an organized and permanent feature of the American religious scene” (180). Reynolds also notes that waves of immigration shook the confidence of “expansionist American Protestantism . . . [in their previously maintained belief] that it was the Catholics who would remain on the outside” (180).

Among the anti-Catholic writers discussed by Reynolds are many whose names will not be familiar to non-specialists in nineteenth-century American fiction. These include Anne T. Bullard, George Bourne, “Mr. DePotter” (a pseudonymous author), Rebecca Reed, and Maria Monk. With the exception of Bullard, who attempted a reasoned critique that only “occasionally lapses into the kind of fervid opprobrium that would dominate later anti-Catholic fiction” (181), the remaining writers in this list specialized in lurid convent fiction. In this form, nuns and priests were accused of every vice and crime imaginable. Treated fictionally by other anti-Catholic writers were Protestant martyrs, attempts by Catholic clergy to reclaim converts to Protestantism, and, especially popular, Jesuits attempting to take over the United States for the Pope. A stereotyped character in much of this fiction was “the despotic priest or abbess who

inhibits the protagonist's freedom" (187). Reynolds concludes his discussion of anti-Catholic satire by highlighting its contradictions: that while it accuses Catholics of materialism, its purpose is mercenary; that while it claims to be factual, it has invented its slanders on convent life; that while it claims to have wholesome motives, it presents sin, especially sexual sin, with a lurid fascination. Reynolds is careful to distinguish popular authors of their time from canonical authors of the American Renaissance. He comments on how the popular writer of religious fiction might actually fear the ambiguities regarding religious faith and doubt encountered in the work of Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville: "Skeptical philosophers and elite American novelists were sometimes admired but more often feared, since they were apt to investigate those dark, uncertain regions that the popular writers were trying to avoid" (212). Of the popular, non-canonical authors discussed by Reynolds, I discuss Catharine Maria Sedgwick and Augusta Jane Evans Wilson in greater detail and with a different emphasis than his. Reynolds argues that prior to 1830, "fictional attacks on Roman Catholicism were not infrequent but were relatively restrained" (180). Sedgwick's 1827 novel Hope Leslie analyzed in Chapter Two contains some sustained anti-Catholic elements. Reynolds emphasizes the popularity and sales of Augusta Jane Evans Wilson in a chapter titled "Into the Mainstream." He includes her in a list of names following this statement: "After 1850 pious novels were no longer being produced primarily by New England liberals but rather by authors of the evangelical mainstream" (200). He also includes her with "domestic sentimentalists of the 1850s and 1860s [who] customarily rewarded perseveringly pious orphans with money and marriage" (204). He groups her with three other writers whose

protagonists “combined a distaste for gloomy theology with hopes for social advancement” (204). If Wilson’s protagonists disdained gloomy theology, they did not disdain vigorous theological polemic. Reynolds glosses over their presentations of Catholicism, but of course I do not. Of the elite authors, whom he only touches on lightly, I discuss Hawthorne’s The Scarlet Letter and The Marble Faun in detail because of my view that both are significant texts for their representation of Catholicism.

Franchot’s 1994 study Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism is a study of a mix of genres in the period 1830 to 1860. It is the major scholarly book in the area of American antebellum literary depictions of anti-Catholicism. Analyzing “histories, domestic novels, pulp fiction, poetry, correspondence, and canonical literary narrative” (Roads to Rome xviii), Franchot suggests that Catholicism challenged the formation of Protestant gender identity around women as “domestic” and men as “entrepreneurial,” and that it posed multiple threats to Protestantism: threats to Protestant workers through its being an alternative source of cheap labor; threats to Protestant spirituality through its offering enticing, almost bewitching, aesthetic works; and threats to the Protestant sense of a religiously unified and homogeneous nation (Roads to Rome xxi).

In Franchot’s account, the feeling of being threatened manifested itself in different ways and in differing degrees, depending on the author. Presentations of Catholicism were found in both high culture works by such authors as Poe, Melville, and Hawthorne, and low/popular culture works of pulp fiction by such writers as Rebecca Reed and Maria Monk. While works by the canonical authors could be marked by

thoughtful ambivalence and “skilled manipulations of the popular Catholic captivity tale” (Roads to Rome xxvi), works of pulp fiction use anticlericalism and lurid presentations of occurrences in convents to raise issues related to gender, and point to “deeper struggles over racial and religious homogeneity and how, if at all, to enclose slavery within a democratic nation” (Roads to Rome xxv).

Franchot’s readings of Poe’s “The Pit and the Pendulum” and Melville’s “Benito Cereno” are particularly notable not only for their imaginative flair but, more importantly for my purposes, for the way in which she argues that anti-Catholicism is a sort of cover or trope for deeper national anxieties. She cites Poe’s story as an example of the way in which elite literature uses “the language of Protestant captivity” (Roads to Rome 163) to explore the tortured consciousness of the narrator, and to suggest finally that both the narrator and his readers share a common weakness, an unexpected and startling captivity, their addiction to “no-popery literature” (Roads to Rome 169). In the case of Melville’s “Benito Cereno,” she suggests that Melville uses this language to criticize New England’s racial views (Roads to Rome 163), finally forcing the reader’s identification with Babo and Babo’s decapitated gaze,<sup>1</sup> pondering that the secrets being studied in antebellum America are not the secrets of Catholicism but the secrets of race (Roads to Rome 180).

Franchot devotes the last part of her book to telling the stories of four significant conversions to Catholicism in the nineteenth century, of which Orestes Brownson’s is one. Her particular focus is the content of Brownson’s writings (nonfiction and fiction) anticipating and following his conversion. In her discussion of Brownson’s The Spirit-

Rapper, for example, she points out Brownson's criticism of the nineteenth-century fascination with spiritualism and mesmerism, and notes that this work "is one of the few historical texts to internationalize antebellum America, for in it he labored to demonstrate that theological liberalism and the European revolutions of 1848 were insidiously, indeed satanically, connected" (Roads to Rome 343). She also notes that "[l]ike other antebellum Catholic apologists, Brownson drew parallels between the integrity of the individual psyche, the unity of the Catholic church, and the fate of the nation" (Roads to Rome 347). Although Brownson's antebellum interest in religion and its role in nationhood is of great interest to me, my focus in this study is on his fiction preceding his conversion.

Writers on the topic of anti-Catholicism in American fiction owe a debt of gratitude to Franchot. Nonetheless, her work necessarily involved selection and emphasis. Whereas she includes works from many genres, including the historiographers William H. Prescott and Francis Parkman, and comments on popular as well as on elite writers, I concentrate on fiction and primarily on canonical authors in order to place the canonical authors in conversation with each other with regard to the presence and degree of anti-Catholicism in their texts. Also, my reading of Hawthorne's ambivalence is somewhat different in emphasis than hers. While Hawthorne plays a major role in Franchot's study, she fits him within her analysis of how the Puritan captivity narrative subtly continued to influence nineteenth-century fiction in its fascination with enslavement to Catholicism, its alluring doctrines "artfully linked together into a great chain, forged for the purpose of binding the soul at the feet of the priest" (Roads to

Rome 109). For Franchot, the captivity narrative from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came to be expressed in convent (which she labels anticonvent narrative) and confessional genres. Hence, Franchot makes much of the confessional scenes in The Marble Faun, whereas I am interested in its representation of Catholicism in the entirety of the novel, including especially the narrator's comments on Italian International Gothic and Renaissance art.

My dissertation builds on the work of Griffin, Reynolds, and Franchot, and carries it into the post-Civil War Reconstruction era. Historians' characterization of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (or, as some historians date it, 1863-1877), has changed dramatically in recent years. According to Eric Foner and Olivia Mahoney, for much of the twentieth century it was viewed as "an era of unrelieved sordidness in political and social life" (12). Lincoln's efforts at reconciliation between North and South, extended by Andrew Johnson, were "thwarted by vindictive Radical Republicans in Congress, who fastened black supremacy upon the defeated Confederacy" (12). What ensued was "[a]n orgy of corruption and misgovernment" (12), led by a motley collection of carbetbaggers, scalawags, and "ignorant and childlike freedpeople who were incapable of responsibly exercising the political power that had been thrust upon them" (12). The response of the suffering South was to "band together in patriotic organizations like the Ku Klux Klan to overthrow these 'black' governments and restore 'home rule'" (12). Foner and Mahoney challenge these conclusions as insufficiently nuanced. Revisionist scholarship casts Andrew Johnson as "a racist politician too stubborn to compromise with his critics" (13), Congressional Radical Republicans as "[c]ommit[ted] to racial equality," and Radical

Reconstruction as “a time of progress for African-Americans and the region [i.e. the South] as a whole” (13). Additionally, the Ku Klux Klan, “whose campaign of violence had been minimized or excused by earlier historians, was revealed as a terrorist organization that beat and killed its opponents in order to deprive blacks of their newly won rights” (13); African-Americans were now shown as making positive, active contributions to history in this era. The significance for my project is the emergence of black women writers, two of whom I study here, following Reconstruction.

The period following Reconstruction, 1880-1920, is viewed by many historians as a landmark period in American history. These years are significant for many reasons, including shifts in religious beliefs, race relations, the “concentration of vast resources in the hands of a few” (Heath 6), the emergence of America as power on the world stage, and changes in American population wrought by immigration. The old synthesis of Protestant beliefs in place on the eve of the Civil War had been severely challenged by the war and its aftermath (see Noll Civil War). “Bloody shirt” rhetoric, blaming Democrats for the assassination of Lincoln and also blaming Southern white Democrats for attacks on blacks in the South, characterized Northern and Southern politics after the Civil War until the 1880s (Beatty xi-xiii). American greed in the form of gold rushes, railroad speculation, and corruption led Mark Twain to characterize the period after the Civil War as the gilded age (Beatty xiv); it was a time of corporate dominance of raw resources, railroads, workers and wealth by consolidation of independent competitors into monopolies (Beatty 385). The change is seen visually by the difference between Lyman Beecher, “gaunt defender of Calvinism and republican virtue” (Lears 7) and Henry Ward

Beecher, “genial [and] portly” representing “an afterdinner creed, meant to be consumed with Courvoisier and La Coronas” (Lears 7). Although the term “the gilded age” comes from the title of a work by Twain and co-author Charles Dudley Warner (The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today, 1873), it has been used to label the period from after the Civil War until the Panic of 1893. With the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States emerged as a world power. Heavy waves of immigration from southern and eastern Europe occurred in the 1890s, 1900s, and 1910s. The “growing diversity of the American population” (Heath 9) is reflected by the fact that “approximately 1,200 foreign language periodicals . . . were in existence by 1896” (Heath 9), as well as, perhaps, by the fact that McGuffey school books, “dime novels[,] and the [Horatio] Alger stories functioned as an important part of the acculturation process for millions of immigrants, introducing them to the values of white Protestant culture” (Heath 9).

From the point of view of America’s Catholic population, this era is also consequential. Jay Dolan speaks of the period 1880 to 1920 as a time “when Catholicism’s relationship with American culture intensified” (9). He identifies five areas whose exploration helps to characterize the relationship of America’s Catholics to America. The five are doctrine, democracy, national identity in terms of ethnically-affiliated churches (Polish American, German American, Italian American, etc.), devotional life, and gender. Two of the works in my study explicitly concern doctrinal opposition between Catholics and Protestants or between all religions and atheism. All three of Twain’s works express his strong belief in democracy and religious diversity as opposed to centralized authority that combines secular and religious governance. Two



works contain background portrayals of ethnic Catholic churches; in one of the two, the church and priest are very important for one of the interlocking plot strands. Three works contain intense scenes involving Catholic liturgy or sacraments. For two, issues related to available gender roles are prominent or even pre-eminent. Thus, the works in my study can be related profitably to these themes, especially with the addition of two categories, morality and aesthetics. I have added these two categories because they supplement Dolan's categories in useful ways. Three of the antebellum works analyzed here stress moral behavior rather than doctrinal disputes. Although doctrine, especially beliefs on truth-telling, is the underlying premise of the anti-Catholicism in two of the three works, behavior by fictional characters in the moral realm rather than doctrinal dispute is the way the works offer their critique of Catholicism. For the six works discussed in this study by Hawthorne, James, and Howells, when Catholicism appears, the emphasis is on the aesthetic. Although Dolan identifies his five categories as having special importance for the forty-year period from 1880 to 1920, I find that the addition of morality and aesthetics provide more complete means of characterizing the ways non-Catholic authors present Catholicism from the 1820s onward, especially as aesthetics assumes prominence.

Chapter Two of my study looks at two works that place an emphasis on the moral behavior of Catholics, use early American settings, Indian characters, and a more restrained presentation than does Augusta Jane Evans Wilson's fiction. One is James Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans. The other is Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Hope Leslie. The chapter also briefly examines travel writing by Washington Irving in

The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon. Although the negative stance towards Catholicism of many American antebellum authors has been well-established by Franchot, Reynolds, and Griffin, I investigate literary works in Chapter Two and also in Chapter Three that have been for the most part neglected by them. Also, it is worth noting that the emphasis on morality and doctrine in the presentation of Catholics recedes but does not disappear in the decades after the Civil War. Even the yellow journalists whom Nordstrom analyzes in Danger on the Doorstep deemphasized doctrinal differences, preferring to stress the anti-democratic nature of Catholicism in their attacks.

Chapter Three focuses on antebellum doctrinal discussion. Unsurprisingly, presentation of doctrinal issues can evoke strident responses. Ray Allen Billington argues that Catholicism was not even seen as a Christian religion in nineteenth-century America, a view seconded by Mark Noll (Civil War 18-19). A case in point is Augusta Jane Evans Wilson's Inez. This work portrays a struggle over the Texas-Mexican border in the 1830s. It is concerned with churches with a national identity, in this case a Spanish church, a mixed Hispanic-American congregation, and a wily Italian priest seeking converts and money. The heart of the work is polemical, an argument between two friends over doctrinal and church historical matters. After the Civil War, Wilson softened substantially her criticisms of Catholicism, reflected in at least one of her later novels, Infelice. This novel treats doctrine in a subdued, secondary way, acknowledging the positive benefit accruing to the main character from the Catholic education in her childhood. A much more balanced doctrinal treatment is found in Orestes Brownson's Charles Elwood, or The Infidel Converted. Brownson's balance is not surprising in light

of his history of doctrinal searching, his openness to various systems of thought, his eventual conversion to Catholicism, and his later history of apologetical writing.

In Chapter Four I emphasize the aesthetic dimension of Catholicism, one of the two categories I add to Jay Dolan's list. Of the three authors treated in that chapter, James is especially noted for his aestheticism. I am treating aesthetics as a separate category from devotional life because the writers I group together in this chapter emphasize Catholic art and architecture rather than Catholic ritual. Writers who emphasize aestheticism in the Protestant encounter with Catholicism can be quite positive, but are not invariably so. For Hawthorne, his mind freighted with the legacy of Puritan ancestry, Catholic art was alluring but presented a problematic challenge to him and to his characters, such as Rev. Dimmesdale in The Scarlet Letter and Hilda in The Marble Faun. However, Hawthorne was willing to explore his views of Catholicism by placing his characters in mental dialogue with the early church fathers or immersing them in the Catholic culture of Italy. Henry James is positive in his presentations of Catholic art and churches in Roderick Hudson, The Portrait of a Lady, and The Golden Bowl. As a point of difference from Edwin Fussell, who sees James as one-quarter Catholic in sensibility, I stress that the aesthetic elements in James's presentation are restricted to pure aestheticism. Continuing the themes of the Puritan's encounter with Italian Catholic culture, William Dean Howells tries in Indian Summer to contain and minimize the threat of Catholicism to his main character's mental equilibrium. Yet, in the character of a former Unitarian minister, Mr. Waters, Howells raises significant questions about

Savonarola, Florentine history, history more broadly conceived, church festival celebrations, and the role of the carnivalesque in Catholic culture generally.

Chapter Five concentrates on three works by Mark Twain dealing with democracy and Catholicism. Twain is negative but fair in his presentation of Catholicism. In the travel book The Innocents Abroad and the novel A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, he emphasizes an American Protestant's encounter with Catholic culture. In both books, Twain expresses the view that democracy is more forward-looking than the government of any country with close church-state ties. (Walt Whitman expresses the same critique in Democratic Vistas.) Twain's critique is not as thorough-going in his Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc. His emphasis in this relatively late work has shifted from democracy to the personal sanctity of an individual who eventually became a Catholic saint. Although this shift in emphasis accounts for a dramatic difference in tone and thus in reader response to Twain's work, a study of the work is included in the chapter on Catholics and democracy because there is a sufficiently heavy residue of concern with democracy to justify its treatment here.

The two works by Frances E. W. Harper and Frank Norris discussed in Chapter Six represent a corollary to the concern with democracy in the chapter on Twain. If the fictional emphasis is on churches with a national, i.e., foreign ethnic identity, as it is in Frank Norris's The Octopus or in Frances E. W. Harper's Iola Leroy, the presentation is positive, if only because the ethnic church can be held at a distance and be perceived as less threatening to one's own religious perspective. Norris presents the Spanish mission and its priest, Fr. Sarria, as helpful to Vanamee, his most alluring and mysterious

character. Harper presents Caribbean and New Orleans Creole culture as tolerant and accepting of racial mixing.

Chapter Seven is concerned with writers who emphasize devotional practices of Catholics in their fictional works. They are typically more positive in their presentation, but it would be facile to suggest that is invariably so. A significant example of a positive presentation occurs in Pauline Hopkins's novel Contending Forces. Here, the depiction of the New Orleans Catholic church services at Easter presents the hymns as stirring and inspirational. Harold Frederic's novel The Damnation of Theron Ware stands in sharp contrast, not only for its presentation of the harmful seductiveness of organ music but also for the attitude of its priest towards the sacrament of Extreme Unction, and, even more significantly, his Renan-inspired rejection of the validity of Scripture. The most positive literary presentation by a non-Catholic is by Henry Adams, specifically in his description of the Virgin of Chartres and his imaginative recreation of medieval French devotional life. Adams's autobiography had shown that he was moved by his experience of Catholic art during his European tour in the 1860s before his marriage. He has not changed his response by 1904, but his essay on the Virgin of Chartres suggests that his capacity for aesthetic and even spiritual pleasure has deepened.

Gender, as presented in Kate Chopin's The Awakening and F. Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise, is the focus for Chapter Eight. I build on Dolan's discussion of gender: "With the emergence of the new woman in American society an awakening clearly began to take place among Catholics, which sought to modify the traditional understanding of the role of women in society. The American ideal of gender equality

emerging at this time clearly influenced the shape of Catholic culture” (10). Kate Chopin’s presentation of women in Louisiana Creole culture in the 1890s, particularly in The Awakening, but also in her short fiction, represents a significant fictional contribution not only to the depiction of women’s roles but also to the depiction of Catholic women’s roles. I will focus on the relation of Chopin’s female characters to family roles and sexuality. My discussion of Fitzgerald will concentrate on his presentation of masculinity, celibacy, virginity, and sexuality in This Side of Paradise. Both Chopin and Fitzgerald use aesthetic aspects of Catholicism to develop their stories, but each writer rejects Catholic sexual roles available to men and women.

Explanation of the postbellum literary presentation of Catholicism in America is complex because the story of this presentation involves the intersection of religion, culture, and literature. Part of the complexity emerges from the Catholic response to the cultural landscape; part is due to the Protestant response to the cultural landscape. On the Catholic side, one aspect is the growth of Catholicism in terms of numbers of members and numbers of institutions in the nineteenth century. Another aspect is the greater reach of Vatican oversight in America from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Related to Vatican oversight is the negative stance towards modernism by such influential Popes as the nineteenth-century Pius IX and the early twentieth-century Pius X. The ultimate result at the end of the nineteenth century was a retrenchment towards Vatican oversight on the part of American Catholics in what has been described by scholars of Catholic history as the Americanist controversy. (Pope Leo XIII wrote an apostolic letter *Testem Benevolentiae*, condemning Americanism, in 1899. The tenets of Americanism specified

by Pope Leo for castigation were the view that civic virtues were more important than traditional theological or cardinal virtues, that active virtues were more important than passive virtues such as humility, that the rules of religious orders were too strict to follow, that the Holy Spirit was busier in the nineteenth century giving individual revelations to those seeking inner light than in previous eras, and that private individuals were qualified to engage in discussions with non-Catholics on religious doctrines.) In the early twentieth century, priests were required to take an oath against modernism, by which was meant agnosticism, a denial of revelation through prophecy and miracles, dogmatic relativism, and vital immanence (Pivarunas).

The intellectual and sociological aspects of Protestantism in the late nineteenth century are at least as complex. T. J. Jackson Lears describes what the late century Victorians in America called ““modern doubt”” (42). In 1887, the Reverend Theodore T. Munger described the corrosive effects of this sense of doubt as “ ‘destroy[ing] the sense of reality’” and ““envelop[ing] all things in its puzzle,—God, immortality, the value of life, the rewards of virtue, and the operation of conscience. It puts quicksand under every step”” (42). The overarching context for change was technological progress accompanied by an “implicit,” pervasive, and “incalculable” belief in the progress of individuals and nations articulated by powerful men like Andrew Carnegie (Lears 8). America was becoming urban. In 1870, only 9.9 million Americans lived in towns and cities with populations greater than 2,500 (Noll, Old Religion 129). By 1930, the number was 69 million. Those millions included many Catholics, Jews, atheists and agnostics for Protestants to interact with. Noll describes the effects of the increasing pluralism on

Protestants: “The shift in population to the cities did not mean that revivalistic, evangelical, voluntaristic Protestantism passed away, but it did mean that considerable adjustment was required for the new environment” (Noll, Old Religion 129). Some Protestant responses included the evangelical outreach of Dwight Moody, the founding of the Salvation Army, the spread of the Social Gospel by Walter Rauschenbauch, and the Women’s Christian Temperance Movement’s emphasis on temperance (Noll, Old Religion 130-134). Noll refers to the prohibition movement as “the last gasp of Protestant hegemony” (Old Religion 135) and enumerates post-Civil War factors that “undermined Protestant cultural dominance” (Old Religion 135). He refers to “splintered Protestantism” at the turn of the twentieth century, but discusses new life for Protestantism in areas beyond “white, English-stock Protestant churches” (Old Religion 135).

Differences between Catholics and Protestants were significant, but abundant common ground existed at the end of the nineteenth century. One commonality was the need for outreach programs to aid the urban poor, such as the work done by the Salvation Army (see Noll Old Religion 132), or the work of individual Catholic charities operating under the 1901 to 1919 umbrella organization, The American Federation of Catholic Societies (Nordstrom 119). Hurstwood’s vertiginous fall in Sister Carrie provides but one fictional example of someone in desperate need of a meal, a place to stay, a jobs training program, and moral regeneration from a faith-based social services intervention program. A second area for common ground was the formation of an intellectual response to the dangers of modernism. John Messbarger describes the joining of forces



of Evangelicals and Catholics against perceived destructive anti-religious forces of modernism. Several significant broad cultural trends regarding religion, general philosophy, and world view became evident at the end of the nineteenth century. In characterizing the nineteenth-century context for his study, David Reynolds says that “pious fiction emerged during a century when, in Henry Steele Commager’s phrase, religion prospered in America while theology went slowly bankrupt” (2). In nineteenth-century America, articulating the value, importance and truth of Christian religion against negative aspects of modernism and arresting the bankruptcy of theology was important to both Protestants and Catholics.

Certainly there were signs that major shifts were occurring within devotional American Catholicism and Protestantism in the nineteenth century. The growth of Catholicism in the United States prompted many responses by the broader non-Catholic culture. For one thing, it led to a Protestant acceptance and adaptation of selected church architectural and decorating features. This adaptation indicates that a line was drawn about what was acceptable to Protestants in Catholic worship and what was not translatable into the Protestant idiom. The building of Catholic churches in the nineteenth century had an influence on the decoration and liturgical practices of Protestant churches. Ryan K. Smith documents the influence. Protestants began building churches with Gothic architectural features. They included crosses on their churches and on gravesites. They added flowers and candles to the decoration of their churches. Also, they began to recognize such events and seasons in their liturgical calendar as Christmas, Easter, and Lent. Smith speaks of the cross-pollination” (157) that has taken place

“among America’s denominations.” He devotes only a page to the Protestant influences on Catholicism in the nineteenth century, but they were also significant, including Catholic church missions similar to Methodist revivals, the presence of lay trustees attempting to control parishes, summer schools and summer Chautauqua institutes, and the use of gospel music (157). Overall, the complex cultural situation within Roman Catholicism can be summarized as a shift from a broader humanistic outlook to a narrower, more pietistic one. This outlook was heavily influenced by the Irish clergy in America (Giles 42).

I write about non-Catholic authors’ response to Catholics with the underlying assumption of a point made by Paul Giles in his analysis of Catholic presence in American fiction, film, and art, that statistics do not tell the story about Catholicism in literature, whether one is speaking of Catholic or Protestant authors. Giles cautions, “Anyone can recite immigration statistics, but to apprehend those silent areas where religion flies free of rigid conceptual pigeonholes and begins exerting pressure in a more intangible fashion seems a more interesting and valuable task” (26). The issues and the implied or manifested point of view in individual literary depictions tell the story. Is it going to be clear, as might be hoped and/or expected, that the literature of this hundred-year period evidences an ameliorative transformation of American anti-Catholicism? Chesterton’s *bon mot* about the inauguration of the nineteenth century could be apropos here, by way of analogy. He said, ““The chief turn of nineteenth-century England was taken about the time when a footman at Holland House [the exclusive and powerful Whig center] opened a door and announced “Mr. Macaulay”””

(Harrold and Templeman xxiii). Or again, Messbarger makes an observation about a similarly important yet fictional arrival inaugurating another era, when he says of post-Civil War society that its emphasis on “change, flux, realignment, a bottom to top restructuring of American ideology and myth” is invoked by the moment “when Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* disembarks from her train in the Chicago depot to begin a career in the city, a cultural event that can be dated 1900” (78). We can pinpoint another, earlier momentous fictional occurrence for American Catholic-Protestant relations in The Marble Faun when in 1860 Hilda enters a confessional in St. Peter’s. Even more momentous are two nonfictional occurrences—Mark Twain’s writing Joan of Arc and Henry Adams sitting in appreciative admiration in Chartres Cathedral. On the level of elite culture, these three events may seem to signal a new era in American Catholic-Protestant relations. Do they indeed?

## Chapter II Catholicism and Morality in Two Antebellum Romances

The moral menace presented by Catholicism is a major theme of novels by two of America's better known early nineteenth-century writers. This chapter focuses on the ways in which Catholic moral behavior in times of war is presented in James Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans and in daily colonial life in Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Hope Leslie.

My definition of morality comes from Charles Curran. Working within a Catholic theological and philosophical framework, Curran outlines morality as particular actions, orientation and motives, attitudes and tendencies associated with Christian life, values desirable for society, guiding principles, and norms for making choices (Curran 891). Curran's definition is relevant because it helps to show the misreading of Catholicism by Cooper and Sedgwick. Also, Curran's definition takes into account the history of moral theology but is less legalistic than Catholic definitions from American Catholic catechisms first published in 1821. Both Cooper and Sedgwick stress political and territorial security based on a moral foundation. Cooper's historical romance uses a geographic argument to delineate the moral and mortal threat from Catholics in war. For Cooper, French Catholic misconduct in war threatens British Protestant control of lands and borders; the attitudes, principles, and norms of Catholic missionaries threaten racial purity; the actions and values of Indians under the control of a Catholic general and his army threaten female safety. Sedgwick's novel combines frontier romance and gothic romance to delineate the threat Catholics pose to domestic happiness through corrupt morality. Again, the danger is to land and wealth, racial purity, and the safety of women.

Cooper and Sedgwick particularly target lying, whether it is in the form of chivalry, seen as a false display of manners covering murderous intentions, or physical disguise, as the way the Catholic menace is expressed. Cooper and Sedgwick thus view truth-telling as a guiding principle of life.

Through their fiction Cooper and Sedgwick participated in the political rhetoric of the American majority stressing the implicitly moral value of the religious homogeneity of the population and, as a guiding principle, the rightness of the Anglo-American ownership of what were originally Indian lands.<sup>2</sup> For both Cooper and Sedgwick, the moral superiority of their Anglo-American characters derives from religious beliefs that provide a proper moral orientation and lead to wholesome actions. Their plots concern actions with a significant moral dimension, whether in war or peace, both of which present challenges to the moral person. Neither is a permanent condition of life. Cooper treats a war in colonial American history and an historical event in that war as metaphors for the struggle between good and evil. For Sedgwick, domestic happiness is key. Both writers suggest that certain moral behaviors are normative and desirable. Correct moral conduct of warfare, for example, includes guaranteeing and then insuring the right of innocent civilians to safe passage after surrender to an enemy that possesses overwhelming force. Proper moral conduct encompasses the right of females to protection from unwanted attentions from captors, either in the form of rape or forced marriage. In times of peace, moral behavior includes the obligation to tell the truth, both in social situations and at legal trials, and the obligation to observe religious and social norms of morality with regard to marriage and sexual unions.

The two novels under consideration here are aptly paired. Appearing within one year of each other, Cooper's novel in 1826 and Sedgwick's in 1827, each novel constructs a colonial setting prior to the Revolutionary War. The thematic emphasis in each is on the securing of the safety of British Protestant colonists in a dangerous and sparsely settled new world surrounded by wilderness. The threat to safety for Cooper's characters and for Sedgwick's is dramatized in plots structured on colonists confronting the menace of a French/Indian alliance combined with the lesser but ever-present menace of dangerous animals in the natural environment. As Catholic rivals to the British, the French and their alliance with Indian tribes posed military, political, territorial, racial, and religious challenges to the establishment of well-defended British colonies, as they would later pose to the U.S. Republic. Each novelist asserts the inherent justness of the Anglo-American claim to disputed colonial territory; each does so on the basis of the demonstrable moral superiority of the British Protestant claimants they favor. To accentuate the moral challenge posed by Catholicism, Cooper emphasizes the moral deficiencies of General Montcalm, his French soldiers, his "French Indians," and the Jesuit missionaries who preached to the Indians.<sup>3</sup> Sedgwick introduces the rogue British Catholic character Sir Philip Gardiner whose traitorous behavior is presented as foreign to British ways of conduct. Sedgwick also includes a subplot involving a conversion to Catholicism that results in an Indian-white marriage.

## James Fenimore Cooper

Cooper's first strategy in The Last of the Mohicans to show the French danger to the British, including military danger and the importation of alien French values, is his choice of a key historical event in the American colonial past. The novel is set during the French and Indian War (1757-1763), approximately three-quarters of a century before its publication date of 1826. The central historical action of Cooper's novel occurs in August 1757 with the surrender of the English Fort William Henry to the French under the leadership of General Montcalm and the subsequent Huron Indian attack on the procession of survivors leaving the fort. Women, children, and sick and enfeebled men were killed during the Indian attack, an event known as the massacre of Fort William Henry. Cooper sides with the struggling, strategically vulnerable British, particularly those located in this one isolated fort.<sup>4</sup> Cooper concentrates on the travails of Cora and Alice Munro, the two daughters of Colonel Munro, journeying through the wilderness to see their father at Fort William Henry. Under the protection of Major Heyward, and at times guided by the dangerous Huron Magua, and also under the guidance of the Mohican Chingachgook, his son and heir Uncas, and Hawk-eye, the white man versed in Indian lore and the forest, the young women reach Fort William Henry just before its surrender. During the confused scene of the Indian assault after the fort's surrender, the women are captured by Magua. The attempts to recover them, and Cora's, Uncas's, and Magua's deaths, followed by an elegiac burial scene conclude the novel.

Cooper's other overall rhetorical strategy is to reverse the historical French presentation of the two key Native American tribes crucial to his story. The literary

codes followed by Columbus and by French Jesuit missionaries in depicting the noble savage are described by A. James Arnold. In the French tradition, the Hurons are morally good primitive peoples and the Iroquois or Mohicans are bad. Arnold says, “The Hurons, allied with France, are *sauvages* but Catholic Christians, whereas the Iroquois or Mohicans, allied with the English, are *barbares* who in 1646 tortured, then murdered Father Jogues and his Jesuit companions” (6). A further example of the French allocation of praise and blame to the Indian tribes is the fact that Voltaire used the word “Huron” as “a synecdoche for noble savage in eighteenth-century France” (Arnold 6). Arnold contrasts the French approach with Cooper’s approach: “We find a reversal of the same values in James Fenimore Cooper’s saga of the French and Indian Wars, where it is the Huron Magua who is the consummate villain—deceitful, brutal, and vicious (*Mohicans*). In Cooper’s vision the Mohican and Delaware allies of the English and American colonists present the positive traits of the noble savage” (6). Cooper reinvigorates stereotypes “that he had inherited from the late colonial period when France and England were engaged in mortal combat for control over North America from the Atlantic to the Mississippi” (6). Arnold concludes that the presentation of the two groups of Indians depends on the rhetorical needs and goals of the presenter: “These examples of the semiotic reversal of the signification of *Huron* and *Mohican* demonstrate nicely that notions of the noble or the barbarous savage could be assigned as needed to Native American peoples according to the requirements of a given European colonial system of authority and control” (6).



It is important for Cooper's concept of an American nation of British extraction to disparage the French as unwelcome rivals politically, militarily, and morally, interlopers in British colonies that will before long gain their independence from England.

Thematically, Cooper sees the overall movement of history as progressive: superior groups survive and drive out inferior groups.<sup>5</sup> The Anglo-Americans are portrayed as superior not only technologically but also morally. Technologically, they are advanced over the Indians; morally, they are superior to the Indians and the French. They have a religiously and politically righteous claim to the land. The forecast union of Duncan Heyward and Alice Munro will realize the claim as they establish a line of rightful owners of the land, Americans of Anglo ancestry.<sup>6</sup> Cooper's answer to the question of "Who owns America?" was that it should be an emerging American race of primarily Anglo-American ancestry, not one of French or mixed French and Indian ancestry. The marriage of Anglo-Americans to each other represents a desirable value for Cooper; the marriage of whites and Indians represents adherence to an improper norm of conduct. Cooper reflects American Protestant suspicion of French Catholics in Canada.

Historically, the young American nation gave an anti-French answer to the question of ownership of America in the closing years of the eighteenth century. The French presence menacing the young United States of 1783 had to be eliminated, and along with it, French ideas and French religion, for their challenge to morality and harmony. Historian of the American Revolution Gordon S. Wood refers to France in 1763 as "this most fearsome of Britain's enemies" (4-5).<sup>7</sup>

The conjunction of the French, the French Catholic missionaries, and the Indians who followed the French is expressed concisely by James Axtell in a comment known as a “counterfactual.” Historians use this term to label a hypothesis they propose contrary to what actually happened. According to Axtell, “a controlled use of the counterfactual can invigorate the search for historical causation” (983). In his counterfactual, Axtell teases out the religious, rhetorical, and moral implications for the British colonial settlers by trying to imagine a North America without an Indian presence. He says that “the French ‘Catholic menace’ to the north would have been no threat to English Protestant sensibilities without hundreds of Indian converts, led by ‘deviously’ effective Jesuit missionaries, ringing New England’s borders” (991). Axtell comments that without the combined French/Indian threat to the English, their settlers “would not have developed—in conjunction with their conceit as God’s ‘Chosen People’—such a pronounced garrison mentality, picturing themselves as innocent and holy victims threatened by heavily armed satanic forces” (991). This is precisely the picture Cooper constructs in his novel. The English have a lone, indefensible fort, whose vulnerability is underscored by the presence of innocent, defenseless, harmless young women, menaced by woods glowing with the eyes of hostile natives who support the French. The fort’s vulnerability is complicated by the unreliability of General Montcalm’s word. The British leaders treat their word as their bond. This is a guiding principle for them. Montcalm does not treat his word as bond. This represents a moral lack in him.

Cooper’s portrait of the French general Montcalm is scathingly negative.<sup>8</sup> From the first, Montcalm’s character is presented as deficient in terms of moral attitudes,

values, and actions. The narrator insists on citing Montcalm's title, the Marquis of Montcalm, rather than referring simply to Montcalm or General Montcalm (153).

Montcalm refers to himself as Louis de St. Veran (165). The narrator describes his facial appearance as "smiling and polished" (153). These character descriptors and especially a reference to his foolish chivalry in throwing away his life combine to present an ironic portrait of a misplaced, Catholic-based but irrelevant and dated French chivalry, a form of lying in a military situation when an ethical posture is called for.

Colonel Munro suggests that Montcalm's famed manners are a farcical sham in the context of war. Manners represent an orientation towards superficial, drawing-room or parlor-room behavior, when lives are at stake. The implicit guiding principle should be the preservation of life, not the saving of face, the protection of women, children and invalids, not the utterance of a bon mot in a salon. He refers scoffingly to Montcalm's manners after Montcalm intercepts a vital message but releases the messenger: "For the customary attentions of your Marquis of Montcalm—I warrant me, Duncan, that he of Lothian would buy a dozen such marquessates—but, if the news of the letter were bad, the gentility of this French monsieur would certainly compel him to let us know it!" (151). After this reference to Montcalm's manners, the link with Catholicism is made more explicit. Munro speaks to Heyward defiantly about the prospects of Montcalm capturing the fort, referring to Montcalm and "all the knights of St Louis . . . with the French saint at their head, craving to speak a word" (157). Munro's comment links Catholicism with titles and theatre rather than with plain knightly valor. Munro rounds out his disparagement of Montcalm by contrasting the Knights of St. Louis, a French

Catholic group, with the Scottish order of the Thistle: “A pretty degree of knighthood, sir, is that which can be bought with sugar-hogsheads! And then your two-penny marquessates! The Thistle is the order for dignity and antiquity; the veritable ‘*nemo me impune lacessit*’ of chivalry!” (157)

The narrator has already prepared the reader for this judgment of Montcalm by suggesting a reprehensible link between polished manners, political subtlety, and a lack of morality. Well before the attack on Fort William Henry, Major Heyward imagines that he and the women are being given safe passage for delivery to Montcalm as bargaining chips between Montcalm and Munro. The narrator comments on Heyward’s “busy and ingenious speculation” about Montcalm: “For though the French commander bore a high character for courage and enterprise, he was also thought to be expert in those political practices, which do not always respect the nicer obligations of morality, and which so generally disgraced the European diplomacy of that period” (94). The narrator suggests by the reference to the “nicer obligations of morality” that these are precisely the considerations which should be observed but are not, creating a blot on the reputations of the practitioners of such Machiavellian diplomacy.<sup>9</sup> Manners and political practices can be artful lures dangled before the inexperienced, naïve, and trusting in order to draw them to destruction. The narrator also shows an awareness of eighteenth-century European politics, especially with regard to Protestant-Catholic conflicts. The Counter-Reformation and the Inquisition were still in effect, the latter during the entirety of the eighteenth century in Spain. There were numerous “Jacobite invasion scares” in Scotland. France posed a challenge to Great Britain throughout the long eighteenth

century (Colley 23-24). Refugees came to England from France, Orange, the Palatines, and other European places; “all these horrors, argued a dissenting minister in 1735, were a poignant reminder of Britain’s own blessings, and a warning of how easily they could be snuffed out” (Colley 24).

Under Cooper’s scrutiny, Montcalm’s sense of moral conduct in war fails to live up to a match between between words and actions. Cooper shows Montcalm’s orientation as shallow. Montcalm’s words and reassurances to the English are accompanied by gestures that are undercut by what actually happens. Shortly before the assault, Montcalm reassures Heyward in words laden with courtesy: “‘Monsieur, you have the plighted faith of ‘un gentil-homme Francais,’ for your safety. . . it should suffice’” (162). In his gestural language, Montcalm “lay[s] his hand impressively on his heart” (162). Munro’s suspicion of the reliability of Montcalm’s pledge, voiced immediately after the pledge is given, is bluntly expressed to Heyward: “‘I have no overweening reliance on the faith of these marquesses, or marquis, as they call themselves. Their patents of nobility are too common, to be certain that they bear the seal of true honour’” (163). Munro’s scoffing dismissal of Montcalm’s title and pedigree of nobility is based on his doubt of their connection with an underlying honor consisting of such important military virtues as trustworthiness and fidelity to one’s given word. Manners and oaths become mere performance that operates as a smooth cover for deliberate deception.

Not only does Cooper emphasize Montcalm’s exaggerated and false display of manners as an example of personal foolishness on the part of General Montcalm, he also

places heavy stress on Montcalm's reckless disregard for consequences to civilians in the unleashing of violent, uncontrollable forces embodied by the Indians. Cooper holds Montcalm responsible for not recognizing the Huron proclivity to savagery. The narrator pictures Montcalm in a brooding mood, reflecting on the proportionality of means and ends, just after the surrender of Fort William Henry and just before the bloody Indian attack on the civilian survivors exiting the fort. The narrator indicts Montcalm through his reference to the "deep responsibility they assume, who disregard the means to attain their end" (170-71). Means/ends morality allows one to choose from among ethically unequal and unacceptable means in order to bring about a desired outcome. Moreover, the narrator suggests that Montcalm's reputation has already been stained by a previous unspecified episode that contained "one horrid scene, and in circumstances fearfully resembling those, under which he now found himself" (170). By experience, then, Montcalm has every reason to know what will happen with the Indians after the fort's surrender. The narrator's summary judgment of Montcalm is unflinching. He describes him as being full of "generous sentiments, high courtesy, and chivalrous courage . . . great in all the minor attributes of character, but who was found wanting, when it became necessary to prove how much principle is superior to policy" (180).

Like their leader Montcalm, the French officers and soldiers are also portrayed as morally guilty. Not only are they allies with the Indians, and not only don't they help the English during the Indian attack, but their idleness allows for the possibility of an Indian-white marriage. Because of their alliance with the uncontrollable Indians, the French stand by during an assault on the civilians and the wounded soldiers exiting the

fort. French culpability in the attack, for “setting in motion an engine, which it exceeds human power to control” (171),<sup>10</sup> is stressed by the use of the word “engine,” suggesting unfeeling machinery wound up and running without direction. The bloody force of the attack, put on special rhetorical display by Cooper, stands in shocking contrast to the false mannerly theatrics of the French soldiers as the English sick, wounded, and weary exit the fort. The French officers are depicted as those “who had learned their rank, bow[ing] often and low, forbearing, however, to intrude those attentions, which they saw, with peculiar tact, might not be agreeable” (174). The French soldiers, under Montcalm’s direction, are “attentive, but silent observers of the proceedings of the vanquished, failing in none of the stipulated military honours, and offering no taunt or insult, in their success, to their less fortunate foes” (174). The moral orientation of French officers and soldiers alike is to chivalrous manners modeled by their Catholic leader Montcalm, rather than to civilian security.

Cooper presents the moral orientation of the Hurons as being on a low, childlike, instinctual level. Even earlier in the novel, when no fighting is occurring, the Hurons exhibit a “childish passion for finery” that must be gratified, and they display “blood-thirsty vengeance in their looks” (90). Immediately after the exit from the fort, then, the Huron propensities are unleashed. Cooper pictures the forest bristling with a massed, menacing presence: “[there] hung a dark cloud of savages, eyeing the passages of their enemies, and hovering, at a distance, like vultures” (174). In Cooper’s portrayal, these uncontrollable Indian allies of the French slaughter women, children, babies, and sick, defenseless men. The French soldiers, led by the Catholic Montcalm, are morally at fault

through inaction rather than through actual war-time criminal conduct. The slaughter Cooper depicts is epitomized in a particularly graphic bloody scene between one woman with a “gaudy . . . shawl” wrapping her baby but “coveted” by a “wild and untutored Huron” (175). He snatches the shawl and baby, almost willing for a moment to return the baby to the mother, but when the shawl is taken by another Indian, “he dash[es] the head of the infant against a rock, and ca[sts] its quivering remains to [the mother’s] very feet” (175). Then he “dr[ives] his tomahawk into [the mother’s] own brain” (175). Shortly thereafter, “two thousand raging savages br[eak] from the forest at [a] signal” (176), and death and mayhem ensue. The Indians are depicted as “heated and maddened by the sight” of blood, kneeling and drinking “freely, exultingly, hellishly, of the crimson tide” (176). Indians capture white females, whom they intend to use as slaves or to subjugate in white-Indian marriages. Magua captures Cora and Alice.

The aftermath of the attack draws forth further, summary moral judgments, directed against Montcalm, the French soldiers, and the Huron Indians, in descending hierarchical order. As Magua and his captives leave the field, the narrator remarks that “the armed columns of the Christian King stood fast, in an apathy which has never been explained, and which has left an immoveable blot on the, otherwise, fair escutcheon of their leader” (179). Clearly the reference to the Christian King is caustic. The reference to the “escutcheon” of Montcalm again reminds the reader of the gap between chivalry and morality. The word “apathy” applied to the French soldiers’ demeanor suggests a baffling passivity on their part amounting to a culpable moral omission. According to Augustine’s long-standing principle of conduct of a just war, indiscriminate slaughter of



women and children is not part of a moral conduct of war. The narrator concludes that the day's victors are the "triumphant savages" (179). Manners have not triumphed; savagery has. For savages and savagery to be victorious, this episode of the war could not have been waged in a principled way.

After the bloody Indian attack, Hawk-eye raises a tactical question with an underlying ethical premise that targets Montcalm's failure to control his Indians scouts. Hawk-eye asks: "Why did not the grand Frencher, he who is captain general of the Canadas, bury the tomahawks of the Hurons, if a word from a white can work so strongly on the nature of an Indian?" (202). Hawk-eye is asking why Montcalm stood by and did nothing during the Huron attack on the refugees from the fort. He is also suggesting the limitations of language in imposing control. The language of command and restraint, the language of the European diplomatic court, may not be an effective deterrent against the promptings of an inherently savage and lawless nature. Court language represents French politesse and finesse; the battlefield requires a more elementary guiding principle. Hawk-eye implies that language must be joined with force to be effective with what he would label a savage population. Heyward's response is less practical and more theological. His reply brings forth the judgment not only of history but of eternity: "The Marquis of Montcalm can only settle that error with his God" (202). Heyward's clear implication is that Montcalm's Catholic God is not the same as Heyward's Protestant God. Montcalm's God tolerates idolatry and lying; Heyward's God does not. Hawk-eye adds, "[t]here is a vast difference between throwing a regiment of white coats atwixt the tribes and the prisoners, and coaxing an angry savage to forget he carries a knife and a

rifle, with words that must begin with calling him ‘your son’” (202). In saying this, Hawk-eye points to the sheer futility of the French attempt to inculcate their Huron allies with French Catholic values based on manners and courtesy—and diplomatic intrigue.

In league with the French, Magua and the Hurons are depicted as an especially savage, satanically-led force threatening life, innocent women, and property. They are referred to repeatedly as the “French Indians” (185, 215), disparaged by Uncas as “‘dogs that whine when the Frenchman casts . . . the offals of his deer!’” (308), and described by Hawk-eye as “‘furnished by the Frenchers with a good grooved barrel a man’” (327). The servility to the French is clear; Hawk-eye’s statement adds the moral dimension of the inequality and unfairness of a fight between the Huron French-supplied rifle and David Gamut’s innocent make-shift stone and sling, the latter an imitation of the Biblical contest between David and Goliath.

The savagery of the French Indians in their attack on the survivors of Fort William Henry is underscored by imagery that repeatedly compares the Indians to animals, by a scene in which they eat raw deer meat, by descriptions of Indian ceremonies as “bloody and lawless rites,” and by the description of the Indians as “malicious demons” acting in “some unhallowed and supernatural arena” (237). Martin Bruckner emphasizes that sixteenth-century, seventeenth-century, and eighteenth-century maps of North America depicting Native Americans have associated them with animals, particularly monkeys and parrots (69). Such maps show natives crouching, chattering, sometimes with “disproportionate ears and apelike facial features” (69). Europeans are shown standing straight, reading account books, emerging from ships, talking, and ruling

(60-73). In Bruckner's analysis, natives are silenced as Europeans become the rightful owners of North America. Cooper's association of Hurons with animalistic savagery strongly suggests that they need to be eradicated, not preached to or married. Magua, the leader of the Hurons, is set apart as more intelligent, more rhetorically gifted, and more wily than the other members of the tribe. However, the gifts that set him apart seem to arise from an actively evil nature. After the triumphant speech to his tribe in which he reviews their position relative to "their great pale father" (282), their rightful claims, and their need to have a "complete and final triumph over their enemies," he is depicted sitting alone, staring at a fire. The narrator comments that "it would not have been difficult to have fancied the dusky savage the Prince of Darkness, brooding on his own fancied wrongs, and plotting evil" (284). Cooper cannot countenance the possibility of accommodation to such a person in the form of a marriage between Cora and Magua. Her death is preferable to the physical defilement of Indian rape, especially the lifelong defilement necessarily implied by a marriage to an Indian.

Cooper directly criticizes French Catholic missionaries, especially Jesuits. The suspicion he shares with his audience was undoubtedly aroused further by the Jesuit outlook on New World native populations.<sup>11</sup> Jesuit missionaries working in Canada encouraged marriage between French settlers and the Hurons. They believed that this would aid their efforts at conversion, "leading ultimately to a united French-Indian, Catholic-Christian community in North America. Racial matters, such as physical characteristics and skin color, were of no concern to the Jesuits" (Heidenreich & Brandao x).

Cooper anticipates by some forty years a thematic preoccupation of American historian Francis Parkman. Though the latter admired the physical courage and dedication of the Jesuits, he could never understand or approve their motivations in their missions to the Hurons and later to the Iroquois. Parkman consistently depicted the Catholic Church and its energetic agents negatively because he perceived their behavior as morally dishonest. By his account, Jesuits were present everywhere “under countless disguises, by a thousand arts, luring, persuading, or compelling souls into the fold of Rome” (Heidenreich and Brandao viii), representing forces medieval, feudal, and authoritarian. Parkman viewed the Jesuits as completely opposed to the forces of freedom and liberty, “represented by a vigorously forward-looking English Protestantism that would inevitably triumph in the birth of a free and democratic United States” (Heidenreich and Brandao viii). Parkman’s depiction of the Jesuits as deceitful parallels Cooper’s depiction of Montcalm’s deceptive chivalry.

Cooper and his audience were envisioning a Protestant America which traced its native roots back to Jonathan Edwards and other uncompromisingly vigorous preachers of Calvinist doctrine.<sup>12</sup> Thus, besides the necessity of attacking the French as an alien political and military threat in English territory, Cooper also makes a number of obligatory disparaging comments on Jesuits<sup>13</sup> and missionaries. He scoffs at Jesuit success in the New World through characters who impugn Jesuits for alleged duplicity and religious idolatry. For example, British Army Colonel Munro, commander of Fort William Henry, says to his subordinate and his future son-in-law Duncan Heyward, ““A jesuitical way, that, Major Duncan Heyward, of telling a man of his misfortunes”” (151).

Munro refers to a statement made by Montcalm in a tone of ironical courtesy which Munro chooses to interpret as “jesuitical,” by which he means “equivocal.” This way of viewing truth, as being laden with ambiguity in speech, in written text, and in mind, runs directly counter to the Protestant emphasis on the ability of a reader to glean one clear, unconfused truth from scripture reading. As such, ambiguity would be morally reprehensible to Cooper and to his readers because it might lead to justifications for slippery and unreliable uses of language, i.e., lying.

Comments by other characters also criticize the moral outlooks of Catholic missionaries who promote idolatry and Indian-white marriages. When David Gamut is discovered in captivity to the Hurons and is asked why he did not try to double back and communicate with Heyward and the others, he refers to his resolution to stay with Cora and Alice “even into the idolatrous province of the Jesuits” (224), meaning northern New York and Canada. Historian Ray Allen Billington points out that one of the chief objectives of the literature of anti-Catholicism was “to show that Catholicism was not Christianity, but an idolatrous religion, the ascendancy of which would plunge the world into infidelity” (351). Idolatry, whether because of the use of statues and crucifixes in Catholic churches, or a non-Catholic viewing of the Eucharist as somehow idolatrous, is an action with a moral dimension forbidden by the second commandment. Later still, when Hawk-eye and the others plan strategies of escape and avoidance, Hawk-eye reassures Heyward, disguised as a medicine man: ““A conjuror must have his time, like a stragglng priest in the settlements. We are as safe from interruption as a missionary would be at the beginning of a two hours’ discourse”” (257). The comparison between

priest and conjuror parallels the recurring Protestant critique of Catholic liturgical services as idolatrous shows or “mummeries” (Smith 39 *inter alia*). The word “conjuror,” like the theatrical term “mummery,” associates the Catholic liturgy with fraud and deception, with the priest as perpetrator/magician. The descriptor “straggling” suggests that the priest is wasting his time in a misguided but intense and single-mindedly funny effort trying to raise spiritually, morally, and intellectually what cannot be raised.

A further fault of the missionaries is their promotion of Indian-white marriages. When Magua is guiding the young women in the early part of the novel, Heyward says, “There are evils worse than death” (80). Although Heyward does not explain his statement, the context makes it clear that the reference is to the women’s ravishment by Indians. Thus, the Jesuit missionary effort is based on an underlying wrong emphasis on Indian-white equality, which leads to Indian-white marriages, a racial and cultural mixing that in Cooper’s eyes only results in moral degradation.

Cooper uses the figure of the clergyman David Gamut as an anchor against the menacing Jesuits in the woods of Canada and New York. During the course of the novel, Gamut expresses his theological point of view in various conversations with other characters. Gamut trusts in Providence, believes that he has received punishment for his sins, and that the “departed spirits of the damned” make frightening noises upon their departure, filling the very air of the woods “with shrieks and cries” (82). The narrator himself compares the exultant cries, yells, and laughter of Hurons escaping from a white attack to sounds when “fifty demons were uttering their blasphemies at the fall of some Christian soul” (76).

Events in the novel occur in a theatre of Christian trial, struggle, and combat, a sort of medieval morality play setting of good vs. evil, not simply against a neutral forest background whose location can be specified by the purely numerical coordinates of latitude and longitude. The white Protestant Christian will triumph eventually; the wicked pagan Indian will ultimately fall.<sup>14</sup> The novel's ending fits this description in its emphasis on racial characteristics of Alice, Heyward, and Magua, in the contrast between Indian pagan burial rites and the white characters' Christian orientation, and in the ultimate triumph of Alice and Heyward, if not of Cora and Uncas. In the closing pages of the novel, Alice's whiteness is emphasized. The Mohican Indians "compared her to flakes of snow; as pure, as white, as brilliant, and as liable to melt in the fierce heats of summer, or congeal in the frosts of winter" (343). The Indians see her as a fit companion to Heyward: "They doubted not that she was lovely in the eyes of the young chief, whose skin and whose sorrow seemed so like her own" (343). David Gamut is disturbed by the "heathenish" rites, and calls for "Christian burial" (345). Munro bows his head "in compelled submission to the stroke of Providence" (340), an appropriate physical posture suggesting a proper moral orientation to the will of God. The dark-skinned and dark-hearted Huron Indian Magua, by contrast, suffers a violent death and is filled with satanic hatred at his demise: "Turning a relentless look on his enemy, he shook his hand in grim defiance. But his hold loosened, and his dark person was seen cutting the air with its head downwards, for a fleeting instant, until it glided past the fringe of shrubbery which clung to the mountain, in its rapid flight to destruction" (338).

Cooper makes a clear argument for a close relationship between Protestant religion and moral behavior. According to Alan Wolfe, important figures associated with America's founding, such as George Washington and John Jay, thought that "[a] common morality . . . was dependent on a common religion" (B5). In the argument Cooper lays out, the supports for religion are historical, literary, and ultimately scriptural. He claims that the duty of the dominant religion is to control land borders, historical memory, and the interpretation of sacred texts. It is right to exclude groups with intrinsically immoral natures from citizenship. The Hurons are the prime example of this necessity. Early in the novel, Hawk-eye says to his companions, "[the Hurons] are a thievish race, nor do I care by whom they are adopted; you can never make any thing of them but skulks and vagabonds" (37). Hawk-eye associates the Catholic French and their missionized Hurons with stealing and deception, and rejects any chance of their improving under proselytizing or tutelage.

The control of borders is vital. Once a non-Indian group presumes a right to land ownership, the incursion of other groups is seen as a thievish threat to territorial integrity. In the opening of the novel, a rhetorical position that suggests the importance of this cartographic claim, the narrator makes clear the significance of the proper, non-Jesuit naming of the territory that furnishes the setting for the novel. Naming is a normative moral action that establishes and perpetuates the claim to ownership. Geographical naming establishes a territorial claim based not simply on military success. For Cooper, the British military ultimately achieves success because of its foundation on a sound morality. Cooper makes it clear from the opening page of The Last of the Mohicans that



the New York territory had multiple names for lakes and rivers. Although Cooper's own footnote from 1831 translates "Horican" as meaning "The tail of the lake," and although he mentions the prosaic British name of Lake George as its current legal name, it is clear from a map of colonial America before the Revolution that a French-named and controlled lake in New York, Le Lac du Saint Sacrement, is a dagger pointed at the aspirations of the British and American colonists for territorial control. Thus, from the opening of the novel a Jesuit-named body of water<sup>15</sup> dominates the landscape. This is a name which will need to be changed as part of a preference for Anglophone over Francophone names and because of its association with Catholic sacramentalism.

Immediately after the description of the setting, through a reference to George Washington, Cooper establishes the link between correct historical memory and morality. He describes Washington as

a chief who had been selected from a crowd of trained warriors for his rare military endowments, [leading an army previously] disgracefully routed by a handful of French and Indians, and only saved from annihilation by the coolness and spirit of a Virginian boy [i.e., Washington], whose riper fame has since diffused itself, with the steady influence of moral truth, to the uttermost confines of Christendom. (13)

Much later, Cooper reiterates the importance of a correct, reliable writing of history. He says that "history, like love, is so apt to surround her heroes with an atmosphere of imaginary brightness, [that] it is probable that Louis de Saint Veran [i.e., Montcalm] will be viewed by posterity only as the gallant defender of his country, while his cruel apathy

on the shores of the Oswego and of the Horican, will be forgotten” (180). Because such a blurring of the historical record would be a moral blot, Cooper declares his own intention to set things right: “Deeply regretting this weakness on the part of a sister muse, we shall at once retire from her sacred precincts, within the proper limits of our own humbler vocation” (180). David Gamut stresses the importance of the right version of sacred texts by his praise for a work used in New England’s colonies. He describes it as ““the six-and-twentieth edition, promulgated at Boston, Anno Domini, 1744; and is entitled, ‘The Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs of the Old and New Testaments; faithfully translated into English Metre, for the Use, Edification, and Comfort of the Saints in Public and Private, especially in New-England’” (26). He always carries this work with him; David’s gifts in psalmody help to bring about protection and rescue at key moments, such as in the rescue of Alice from the Huron camp.

#### Catharine Maria Sedgwick

In his historical romance, Cooper uses the geographic argument about borders described above to delineate the moral and mortal threat that Catholics posed. They lied, misconducted themselves in war, and promoted inappropriate sexual liaisons. They threatened military, political, and territorial security on a massive scale; they threatened property ownership, racial purity, and female safety. Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s 1827 novel combines frontier romance and gothic romance to suggest how, also, Catholics pose an insidious moral threat to domestic happiness through lying and sexual immorality.

The generic terms frontier romance and gothic romance need definition. In her “Introduction” to Sedgwick’s novel, Carolyn Karcher provides an extensive discussion of “frontier romance.” The definition of the genre is based on a book review of an earlier Sedgwick novel by her contemporary William Cullen Bryant. He saw the chief elements of this form as a forest/frontier setting in the “infancy of our country” and a plot focused on European settlers and surrounding indigenous Indian tribes whose presence was both helpful and problematic to the settlers (Karcher xvii-xviii). Catholic missionary activity among Indians could make the Indian presence more problematic than helpful to settlers. The popularity of frontier romance in the 1820s is evidenced by the publication of five novels besides Hope Leslie and one autobiographical account involving white-Indian relations in the period 1823-26.<sup>16</sup> Sedgwick depicts a Catholic-Indian marriage in Hope Leslie and another in her 1826 short story<sup>17</sup> “The Catholic Iroquois,” as well as a female Catholic Indian’s martyrdom at the hands of her own people because of her conversion and stubborn adherence to her new faith.<sup>18</sup> Karcher situates the form’s popularity in the immediate historical context of the 1791 U.S. treaty with the Cherokee Indians and just before the Indian Removal Act of 1830, during the debates over how to resolve the problem of the presence of the Indians in the southern United States. In novels re-staging events from colonial American history and addressing questions of historiography and national racial and religious identity, writers of frontier romance raised significant questions about the future of Indians in the United States.

The generic label “gothic romance” builds on and adds a freighted emotional dimension to frontier romance in terms of reader response. M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey

Galt Harpham distinguish several forms. The first centers on a castle setting with “dungeons, subterranean passages, and sliding panels.” Castles provide the backdrop for sensational or supernatural occurrences. The aim is to “invoke chilling terror” in the reader. A related type of gothicism relies on a “brooding atmosphere” and “events that are uncanny or macabre or melodramatically violent”; major characters may be psychologically aberrant. A third type involves fiction by women in which the “suppression of female sexuality” or simply a “challenge to gender hierarchy” and male values is the central concern. American Southern gothic and popular modern and contemporary horror fiction offer many examples of the extended notions of gothicism. A succinct summary of the connection between gothic and romance is that a gothic romance presents a fearful invader who will do harm. For Sedgwick, the use of the gothic includes a heavy religious component. The invader that will do harm is an invader who is a member of a minority religion whose beliefs and practices oppose the majority religion in a threatening way.

Karcher lists five key questions Sedgwick and other “frontier romancers” raise about Indians (xix); she lists another four questions Sedgwick raises about women’s roles (xx). Combining frontier romance and gothic romance adds a thematic complication. Beyond Indians and women, Sedgwick’s novel raises questions about another minority group in the 1820s—Roman Catholics. Sedgwick raises the questions by contrasting Puritan/Protestant views and practices with Catholic views and practices. Roman Catholics are even more threatening than Indians—an enemy within, especially if linked with the Indians in culturally dangerous ways. The novel offers several methods of

determining who a Roman Catholic is, and even more importantly, establishes why Catholic presence, through lying and sexual immorality, constitutes a moral threat to the Puritans. Missionary work, promotion of interracial marriage, concealed alien ideology, espousal of falsehoods, a challenge to gender distinctions, are all dangers viewed by Sedgwick as threatening. Sedgwick builds her novel on a series of point/counterpoint presentations in order to draw out the moral implications of the dangers involved. The pairings are based on contrasting names and contrasting moral behaviors. Sedgwick's rhetorical strategy in presenting the dangers of Catholicism draws directly upon the gothic tradition in literature.

Puritan life in the decades of the 1630s and 1640s was difficult and austere. A glance at a Karel Allard map of New England from around 1700 shows bears and wolves, among other wildlife, and palisaded forts which commonly shielded settlers from Indians. Wolves howl (31) in Hope Leslie, and the narrator points out that the years 1642 and 1643 were known for Indian depredations, uprisings, and massacres. In addition to threats from wild animals and assaults by Indians, early settlers faced crop failures, famine, disease. In such a climate, doctrinal nonconformity, whether by an individual or by an established group, was perceived as a threat to the order and safety of the commonwealth. Hope Leslie contains several references to Anne Hutchinson, a Puritan nonconformist whose open espousal of an Arminian doctrine earned her a trial and exile in early colonial history. Martha Fletcher, a godly Puritan character in Hope Leslie, refers to her as “poor deluded Mrs. Hutchinson” (18). Anne Hutchinson's fate is well-explained by a dichotomy invoked by Sacvan Bercovitch in a footnote to Michael

Zuckerman in The American Jeremiad: in early colonial history “both the self-assertion that informs the modern psyche and the coercive mutuality that marks the modern community achieved something of their subsequent scope” (26). If the immediate goal of a society is concord, and if the lack of concord is seen as a threat to its very survival, then individuals whose thoughts, words, and actions represent discord are inherently dangerous. Given the threat posed by one nonconforming individual, the threat is the greater when posed by an organized religion with many members, dedicated missionaries, and articulated doctrines and church structures that stand in direct opposition to Puritanism.

In Sedgwick’s novel, William Fletcher trustingly leaves his family in a wooded area called Bethel in order to go to Boston to pick up two girls who have been orphaned by their parents’ unexpected deaths. While he is gone, part of his family is killed. When Fletcher returns with the girls, he changes their names from Mary and Alice to Faith and Hope, treasures them, and raises them with his son Everell and two Indian companions, Magawisca and her brother Oneco. By the time the children grow up, Hope has become good friends with Magawisca and has fallen in love with Everell. After many plot twists and turns suggesting that Everell will marry an even better Puritan than Hope, a young woman named Esther, Hope and Everell finally marry. Three other complications threaten Hope’s eventual marriage to Everell. One is her attempt to find her sister, who has converted to Catholicism and has run off to marry Oneco in a ceremony performed by a Catholic missionary priest. A second is the wicked designs on Hope and her family fortune by the disguised English Catholic Sir Philip Gardiner, who has been accompanied

to Boston by a young woman named Rosa whom Sir Philip took from a convent and has disguised as his male page in order to have an illicit affair with her. The third complication is Hope's rescue of Magawisca, who has been jailed as a threat to Puritan society in the face of Indian unrest and a Puritan crackdown on Indians.

Clearly, Catholics constitute a moral danger to Puritan society through their threat to the integrity of Puritan marriage and family. One of the gravest dangers represented by the Catholics in Hope Leslie comes from the consequences of proselytization of the Indians. Sedgwick agrees with Cooper on the inappropriateness of Indian-white marriages. Catholic missionaries were in competition with Protestant missionaries who worked with Indians, catechized them, and established them in separate Indian villages at the edge of town. Magawisca is even offered a clearing of her name at her trial if she will agree to live with the catechised Indians (293). John Eliot, the "Apostle to the Indians," is held up as a model of Protestant missionary work. The narrator's physical description of Eliot emphasizes his asceticism and matches his kindly manner towards Magawisca in her trial. This legitimate missionary work is contrasted with the threat of the French missionaries. When Magawisca at her trial takes out the crucifix which had been dropped by Sir Philip in her jail cell, it is first assumed by observers that it is her crucifix. The governor orders her to "[p]ut down that idolatrous sign," and a deputy says, "She hath, doubtless, fallen under popish enchantments . . . the French priests have spread their nets throughout the western forests" (304-05). A second danger posed by Catholicism is that Catholic missionaries encouraged Indian-white marriages. Such marriages come from wrong conversions to Catholicism by Indians and whites alike and result in broken

family bonds, rejection of one's proper cultural heritage, and immersion in sinful cultural practices. When Hope Leslie first hears in shocked dismay that her sister is married to an Indian, Magawisca says, "She hath been signed with the cross by a holy father from France; she bows to the crucifix'" (197). Hope's unvocalized response is her authentic one: "she thought that any Christian faith was better than none" (197). Much later in the novel, Hope tries to win her sister away from her Indian husband Oneco with talk about their childhood and their sainted mother, and with jewels. Finally Hope must accept her sister's Indian garb, her crucifix, and her Indian husband, though in fact she never again sees her sister.

Recognizing French missionary work and interracial marriage as two dangers posed by a Catholic presence in the colonies, Sedgwick seeks ways to identify Catholics. Even the mechanisms involved in identification have a moral dimension. One way her novel shows of identifying Catholics is their eating fish on Fridays. The practice, Sedgwick implies, is an empty gesture and conveys the assumption that Christ's atonement was limited. Another is their belief that oath-taking on a crucifix is more binding than oath-taking on a Bible (304). Sedgwick suggests that this is wrong because it is based on display and a distorted reading of scripture. For some Protestant groups, the use of a cross with Christ's body on it is regarded as idolatrous. Ryan K. Smith has extensively explored the association of particular religious symbols with Catholics in nineteenth-century America, including crucifixes. Smith's account of a British traveler who entered a Catholic chapel in Philadelphia in the early part of the decade in which Cooper's and Sedgwick's novels appeared indicates that it was repulsive to the Protestant



observer. The traveler remarked in particular on the crucifix, “hanging ‘as large as life’ before the altar: ‘the first view’ of this ‘sight of horror,’ he wrote, ‘must make a sickening impression; but its constant presence deadens the feelings, and renders devotion grounded upon it a mere ceremony’” (Smith 40). This attitude, originating in the Reformation’s rejection of Roman symbols and upheld by all new church groups except Lutherans and Moravians, extended to “early denominations in America that grew out of the English experience—Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists” (58), ultimately resulting in a compromise which recognized the “prominence and potency” (61) of Catholic symbols and resulted in the adoption of such acceptable Protestant modifications as the “‘empty cross’ as consciously signifying the resurrection’s triumph” (Smith 62). Although this method of identification could be seen as a Catholic aesthetic or devotional preference, for Sedgwick it suggests immorality. An oath falsely taken goes beyond hypocrisy; it is lying. An oath on a crucifix represents idolatry. Moreover, lying in court after taking an insincere oath on a Bible compounds one’s culpability.

The consumption of fish on Fridays and the oath on the cross are two indicators of Catholics mentioned in the novel. Other ways, less easy of detection, occur in the moral darkness of deceit. The treacherous Catholic Sir Philip Gardiner’s letter to one Wilton, a friend in England, reveals these ways. They include Gardiner’s talismanic wearing of a crucifix, membership in a secret society as a “knight of the holy sepulcher,” praying to the saints (210), and quoting a noted priest and confessor, Father Baretto,<sup>19</sup> as a valid interpreter of a point of Scripture (207). But these ways are stereotyped and superficial,

and do not get at the verbal and physical deception represented by Sir Philip and his Catholic page Roslin/Rosa. The deep danger represented by Sir Philip is his shifting approach to truth. The deep danger represented by Roslin/Rosa is the challenge to gender boundaries represented by her donning the costume of a male page to cover her female identity. Propensity to deceit is intrinsically a more difficult means of identification. Yet the novel's plotting and comments by the Governor show that providence detects deceit.

The novel is centrally concerned with the nature of truth and the means of discovering truth, whether in a friendship, in a love relationship, or in a courtroom. Plain, unvarnished truth is the preferred norm. When Everell arrives in Boston fresh from England and it becomes apparent from Esther's blushes and embarrassment that she has previously known him, Hope directly accuses her proper Puritan friend Esther of "paltering with a double sense" (138). Later, the narrator refers to Esther "for the first time in her life condescend[ing] to an equivocation" (264). When Roslin/Rosa causes a fatal explosion on a ship, an act of desperation Rosa undertakes to prevent Sir Philip's marriage to Hope Leslie, Sir Philip's perfidy is finally unmasked. Karcher interprets the explosion as a deliberate association of Rosa with a notorious incident in British history. It was the plot by "the Catholic conspirator, Guy Fawkes, accused of masterminding the 1605 Gunpowder Plot to blow up the king, his ministers, and both houses of Parliament" (xxxix). All three of these references to double meanings in place of plain truth invoke Macbeth and this play's focus on equivocation.

The chief equivocator in Hope Leslie is the undercover Catholic Sir Philip. His rhetoric is recognized as deceitful. Once, for example, a jailer overhears him cursing and says, “I marvel, your worship, that ye spoke those evil words so glibly: it seemed like one casting away stilts, and going on his own natural feet again” (273); and once by the narrator who refers to Sir Philip’s “plausible tale” devising as having been accomplished by “one accustomed to all the sinuosities of the human mind and human affairs” (313).

Sir Philip’s equivocation is so deep that he does not hesitate to practice deception on his fellow Catholic and victim of his sexual appetites, Rosa. In his final conversation with the cross-dressing page, he once more tries to lure Rosa into his evil schemes of capturing Hope for a forced marriage. He offers Rosa a twisted interpretation of Scripture. He suggests soothingly and falsely that if Rosa will be a gentlewoman to Hope Leslie, he will view her as Abraham viewed Hagar: “for a little while do the tasks of the bondwoman, and you shall yet have her wages—nay, start not—you remember the good Patriarch’s affections manifestly leaned to the side of Hagar” (339). Rosa’s “starting” suggests her recognition of Sir Philip’s continuing plot to entwine her in a lascivious relationship benefitting only himself. It also indicates her acknowledgment of her previous sexual enslavement to him, a surprising fall from virtue in a girl cared for as a child and educated by “some charitable [Catholic nuns who were] sisters of the order of St. Joseph” (275). The subplot involving Rosa provides a hint of the prurient direction popular fiction would subsequently take in writers like Maria Monk. In Sedgwick’s less lurid version, the nuns kept Rosa in a “safe asylum” (275) until her designing and worldly aunt, a woman named Lady Lunford, took her from the convent and exposed her at her

house, which was “the resort of men of fashion,” to the wicked Sir Philip. In the depiction of the relationship between Sir Philip and Rosa, Sedgwick follows popular audience stereotypes of Catholic males as predators and females as unsuspecting victims.

In Sedgwick’s text, opposed pairings of names imply differences in attitudes and beliefs that lead to differences in moral stances and behavioral choices in daily life. Again, as with Cooper, naming is normative. Names can support a trust in grace and faith, or they can suggest a leading away to a fundamentally false stance built upon saints, ceremony, and actions rather than faith. The names can apply to people, places, or such things as book titles. When the young English girls Alice and Mary lose their mother and are given to the guardianship of the New Englander Mr. Fletcher, he changes their names “in commemoration of the christian graces of their mother . . . to the puritanical appellations of Hope and Faith” (30). These new names fit with the Reformation and Puritan emphasis on the faith of the believer as the key to salvation. The Reformation believer emphasizes faith and grace, not deeds. Mr. Fletcher must travel to Boston, leaving behind his family, “his little community at Bethel” (30). The name Bethel, associated with Abraham’s journey by faith from Mesopotamia and ultimately to Canaan, is one example of the Puritan interest in Hebrew Scriptural place names. Its association with Abraham connotes an emphasis on faith rather than works. A final name pairing involves books. Sir Philip, the Catholic who poses as a Puritan, suggests to the Fletchers’ housekeeper, Mrs. Jennet, that she buy a book called Food for saints, and Fire for sinners (315). The title of the book suggests the fieriness of Puritan sermons, invoking hellfire and damnation for the errant. Yet when Sir Philip’s

unfortunate paramour Rosa is talking to him, she mentions a book called Legends of the Saints (338), a book she had heard of from the Abbess at her convent, in which she read of a ring of invisible bright presences surrounding and connecting the faithful and the faithful departed. Rosa believes that the invisible spirits will protect her. Rosa's memory of the saints' book suggests her orientation to Catholic belief.

Rosa's expressions of the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints is scoffed at by her seducer, Sir Philip, as "fantastic legends, inventions of hypocritical priests and tiresome old women" (338). By his dismissal of belief in saints, Sir Philip is revealed as hypocritical and duplicitous even in his profession of Catholicism. In one other discussion of saints in the novel, Governor Winthrop expresses opposition to idolatry in his dislike of Hope's story about her rescue from a group of rowdy sailors intent on ravaging her. The Italian Catholic sailor Antonio believes that Hope is the Virgin Mary or at least Saint Petronilla, the daughter of Saint Peter (252-53). Governor Winthrop stresses Hope's delivery from a "strong enemy" but scolds her for "err[ing], lamentably, in permitting, for a moment, the idol worship of that darkened papistical youth" (285). The episode and Winthrop's response to it reveal the sailor Antonio as kind but gullible and superstitious, a common charge against Catholics in nineteenth-century America. Mr. Fletcher tries to defend Hope by suggesting that her error was little, in that "the best catholic doctors put this interpretation on the invocations to saints" (285). Nevertheless, Governor Winthrop is steadfast in maintaining that Hope strengthened Antonio's superstition. When asked for her view, the godly Esther suggests

that Hope should have relied on Providence (286). For Esther, the proper orientation is to Providence as a resolver of life's tangles.

Governor Winthrop's steadfast espousal of the Puritan/Protestant belief in the efficacy of grace rather than works appears at several places in the novel. Although grace can help to effect good deeds, the emphasis on grace suggests a narrower definition of morality than Charles Curran's definition, which originates in "Catholic insistence that the human person [has] the power of self-determination [and which emphasizes] the importance of works as well as faith" (891). At the dinner at the Governor's house, Mr. Fletcher remarks to the Governor that he sometimes believes that "the covenant of works was to [Hope] a hindrance to the covenant of grace" (160). Governor Winthrop agrees that Hope relies too much on "*performances*" rather than the "passiveness, that, next to godliness, is a woman's best virtue" (160). Later, Hope is chastised but excused for wandering off on a Saturday night, the "holy time" in Puritan society to be used "exclusively [for] acts of mercy and devotion" (184). Nevertheless, Governor Winthrop warns Hope's defender, Mrs. Grafton, to "take heed, my worthy friend, not to lay too much stress on doing or not doing—not to rest unduly on duties and performances, for they be unsound ground" (185). Through Governor Winthrop, Sedgwick asserts the Reformation doctrine of faith, and critiques as inadequate the Catholic emphasis on works as evidence of a moral life. Although Hope is the protagonist of the novel, she is not an experienced theologian or politician. Governor Winthrop's word represents the official, authoritative position on faith in a colony in which church and state were not separate.

While these pairings suggest preferred moral attitudes and dispositions, other contrasting pairings in the book involve moral behavior more directly. It becomes clear that Rosa, although convent-educated, has been engaged in a sexual liaison with Sir Philip. Her victimization at the hands of Sir Philip is based on her misguided love for him and her continuing belief that at some point he will marry her. Rosa's conduct, though presented as an instance of a naïve female being taken advantage of by an older, calculating male, nevertheless stands in contrast to the views of marriage represented by two young women Rosa's age, Hope and Esther. The novel ends by looking forward to a wedding between Hope and Everell and to a single life of charitable service to others for Esther. Neither Hope nor Esther would ever contemplate a relationship with a male outside of marriage.

Even the brief pairing of two minor characters, prisoner and jailer, suggests the moral difference between Catholicism and Puritanism. Thomas Morton, another victim of Sir Philip Gardiner, is a jailed Catholic maniac. A former gallant, he is reduced to wearing rags, his hair has fallen out, his beard is matted, and his eyes are gleaming (270). In his insanity, he springs on his false friend Sir Philip. Barnaby, the jailer, though only a cameo character, helps to anchor the text on a firm Biblical foundation. He notices Sir Philip's evil way of talking when his physical safety is threatened by Morton and does not hesitate to point out the discrepancy (273). Barnaby is acutely aware of the false mask of goodness Sir Philip wears to the unsuspecting public and the haste with which Sir Philip discards the mask when pressed by challenging circumstances. Barnaby sets psalms to verse and sings them, however long, as part of his devotionals (322). He is a

respector of the authority of the magistrates, a kindly character who loves his daughter Ruth and her baby Barnaby.

Beyond clearly ideologically marked pairings, Sedgwick's emphasis on morality is seen in her presentation of the domestic details of food and clothing. Mark McWilliams argues that Hope Leslie's detailed presentation of food shows a Puritan society whose quality of life "depends not on the sophisticated combinations of European cuisine but rather on the rustic abundance celebrated in the myth of republican simplicity," and remarks how Sedgwick's food descriptions are unusual for novels of her time. They point to "relative elegance" among the Puritans and help delineate characters. Quentin Miller argues that Sedgwick's use of clothing in Hope Leslie shows, among other things, her admiration for "Puritan ethics, Native American customs" (122), and her stern judgment of "dishonesty and hypocrisy" (130) in such dissembling characters as Sir Philip and in the false and gaudy outfit worn by Rosa. Sir Philip himself recognizes the outfit's incongruity in Puritan society. In a letter, he describes her as "'persist[ing] in wearing a velvet Spanish hat, with a buckle and feathers, most audaciously cocked on one side; and indeed her whole apparel would better suit a Queen's page, than the humble serving-boy of a self-denying puritan'" (209). For Sedgwick and for Sir Philip, modest clothing is a marker of a morally good person; Rosa's costume is part of her flamboyant deception.

Sedgwick's views were more complicated than her novel's expression of them. One assessment of Hope Leslie stresses who Sedgwick incorporates into America in her vision of the young nation:



As might be expected from [Sedgwick's] conflicted assessment of her Puritan forebears, the ideal America projected in Hope Leslie reveals traces of their intolerance. Puritan society's outcasts find no place in this brave new world. Indians, Catholics, and fallen women, apparently, do not belong in a regenerated nation. . . . [but] [d]espite these obvious limitations, Sedgwick's America does promise far greater personal freedom, especially for white women. (Karcher xxx-xxx)

This assessment reads Sedgwick as having limited tolerance, but other Sedgwick fiction shows a broader sympathy. Her 1826 story "The Catholic Iroquois" expresses her somewhat greater understanding of Catholics than is apparent in Hope Leslie. The story centers on fidelity to Catholicism, fidelity to a white spouse, and Indian female martyrdom. Female Indian heroism in "The Catholic Iroquois" is still present in Hope Leslie, but the story is not centered on Magawisca or on Hope's white sister who marries an Indian, and both Magawisca and Hope's sister disappear by the end of the novel. And other work by Sedgwick from the 1830s also shows a broader spirit with a larger, less Puritan-oriented understanding of life and morality. For example, Philip Gould discusses Sedgwick's use of the Marquis de Lafayette, a "cultural cosmopolitan," in The Linwoods, a work from 1835, that asks readers "to examine their narrow understanding of the nation and to assume their responsibilities as citizens of the world" (258). That Sedgwick called upon her readers "to think in national and transatlantic terms simultaneously" (Gould 258) requires a kind of international understanding that goes beyond local culture without abandoning what is solid and just in the culture's morality.

## Conclusion

In his discussion of the history of moral theology, Charles Curran notes that the writers of the patristic age, that is, the Fathers of the Church living in the first six hundred years of Christianity, discussed particular issues not as theological systematizers but as pastors. The three examples he singles out are “lying, participation in the military, [and] sexuality” (892). These are the exact moral areas in which Cooper and Sedgwick find their Catholic characters lacking. However, both authors allow latitude to Protestant or Puritan characters. For example, in The Last of the Mohicans, Heyward has no scruples as to whether or not to lie to the Indians to facilitate his escape with the disguised Alice. For Heyward and for the narrator, seeing and rescuing Alice by whatever means available was the important mission. Heyward exonerates himself from any possible guilt over a young Indian woman’s death with the thought that she was too sick for him to effect a cure. In Hope Leslie, Esther is permitted an equivocation (264) about Magawisca’s safety when Hope’s health is precarious. Later, Sedgwick describes with approval Hope’s donning of a disguise in order to free Magawisca from the prison she was placed in by the Governor.

The decade in which Cooper and Sedgwick wrote began with Washington Irving’s expression of nostalgic affection towards a past Catholicism in The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gentleman (1819-20). Irving praises English rural life, including English funeral customs, especially those in the far north of the country which retain the marks of the old faith. Its expression of morality in funerals is acceptable perhaps because it is associated with the past, not with the vital present. In his sketch “Rural

Funerals,” he singles out the “strewing [of] flowers before the funerals and planting them at the graves of departed friends” as “beautiful and simple-hearted customs of rural life” which are the “remains of some of the rites of the primitive church” (105). He makes note of the white flowers and gloves signaling the funeral of a virgin; he talks about the peasantry of North Wales who “kneel and pray over the graves of their deceased friends for several Sundays after the interment” (111). In his journey across the Atlantic to England, Irving believed he saw a Catholicism that was quaint, contained, and past. British Catholicism, though the object of agitation for greater rights, did not constitute a threat to settled political and social arrangements of the members of the Anglican Church, the dominant religion, and the Catholic minority. But the decade of the 1820s saw many changes in the positioning of Catholicism in America. Sedgwick and Cooper were confronted with a more complex challenge from a rapidly growing Catholicism. They and other American fiction writers no longer employed a tone of fond nostalgia for the portrayal of Catholicism in the stories they told.

For Cooper and Sedgwick, Catholics and Indian characters guided by Catholics committed wrongs. Each novelist asserts the connection between morality and rightful land ownership. Cooper’s dismissive treatment of the French validates the rightness of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 from Napoleon.<sup>20</sup> For Sedgwick, land ownership issues are complicated by her family history. The greater relative complexity of Sedgwick’s views of Indians and their historical linkage with Catholic missionaries is made evident in Karen Woods Weierman’s reading of Hope Leslie. Weierman argues that Sedgwick tries to “challeng[e] the collective, enforced amnesia concerning the Indian presence in

Stockbridge [Massachusetts] and elsewhere,” reminding readers that although the values held by the Indians differed from those of white Americans, nevertheless their lives “held meaning and value” (429). Weierman concludes, though, that Sedgwick could not fully express an empathy for Indians and a “truly egalitarian position” (434) because of ways in which her own family was implicated in appropriating Indian lands during and after the Revolutionary War.

Cooper’s perspective in The Last of the Mohicans is that the French, led by a Catholic general, were a rival nation to the British, threatening contested territorial supremacy in the new world. The French-Indian alliance, forged in part through the help of Catholic missionaries, was a combined power that constituted a foreign military danger united with an unpredictable native insurgency. The alliance Cooper feared endangered lives immediately through the prospect of bloody slaughter; it suggested that the map might be redrawn in such a way as to constitute a loss of territory, resources, and a valuable foothold to acquisition of other territory; and it connoted the possibility of racial mixing. Sedgwick’s perspective, more domestic than Cooper’s, still stresses the danger of an Indian-missionary alliance. Property ownership is threatened by potential Indian uprisings. Indians slip noiselessly into homes of white citizens, or concoct pagan charms and herbal remedies purporting to be cures. Families are broken as family members disappear into the forest with an Indian spouse, never to be seen again.

Cooper and Sedgwick were aware of the need of their readers for reassurance about a coherent American identity. Much earlier, according to Martin Bruckner,

[f]ollowing the English Revolution in the mid-seventeenth century, British subjects living on both sides of the Atlantic consumed geographic texts that envisioned America as an unclaimed part of the world upon which a centralized state apparatus or an individual entrepreneur could impress the mechanisms of colonization and enact personal narratives of an emerging British imperial identity. (8)

By 1826, however, the year of the publication of Cooper's novel, American national identity as a Protestant nation with Anglo-American roots racially, culturally, juridically, and philosophically had been in place for fifty years.

In the decade of the 1820s, this identity began to be threatened by changes in the composition and nature of American Catholicism. In the immediate post American-Revolutionary Era, the very small Catholic population in America had adapted to an "age of do-it-yourself religion" (Dolan 26), by stressing Enlightenment values and internal piety, and showing itself willing to accommodate to the Protestant majority through worship, inter-marriage, and common cemeteries (26-29). This accommodation altered in the nineteenth century. After Napoleon's defeat in 1814, French Catholic clergy in the United States who had arrived after the French Revolution stressed a rigorist, baroque, pietistic, other-worldly form of Catholicism. This shift, and a progressively greater orientation on the part of American Catholics to Rome and the Papacy, combined with heavy immigration to the United States in the 1820s from Ireland and Germany (Dolan 35-45), created a new Catholicism more threatening to British Protestant America.

Antebellum writers concerned with pointing out the faults of Catholicism had three central criticisms in mind. The first one, referred to earlier in this chapter, was the Protestant critique of Catholicism as an “idolatrous religion” (Billington 351). The second, important to a later discussion of Twain, is that Catholicism is “irreconcilable with the democratic institutions of the United States” (351). Their third criticism, one central to the theme of this chapter, is that “acceptance of the moral standards of the Catholic church would be suicidal to the best interests both of Protestantism and the nation” (Billington 351). The Protestant errand in the wilderness would be an encounter not in the paradise of a New Zion, not in a New World garden, but in a wilderness with the surprising and unexpected taint of Catholicism, where mixed-race offspring and challenges to theological uniformity could unravel the whole New World project sought by Pilgrims and Puritans as a refuge from the contentious problems and religious divisions of the Old World. For Cooper and for Sedgwick, the linking of morally unattractive Catholic characters with vanishing Indians reinforces the claim to American land<sup>21</sup> and an American future that their texts assert.

### Chapter III Doctrinal Disputes: Antebellum Novels, Once More

Richard P. McBrien defines Catholic doctrine as “an official teaching of the Church . . . promulgated by official teachers and teaching bodies, that is, by the magisterium: ecumenical councils, popes, and regional or national bodies of bishops, including local, regional, and international synods” (424). Clearly, the emphasis in the definition is on the official, the institutional, the collective; and according to McBrien, doctrine is a basic and contentious issue between either nonbelievers and Catholics or between Protestants and Catholics.<sup>22</sup> Going beyond the sole authority of Scripture, Catholics rely on both postbiblical tradition and the authority of the hierarchy, sources of authority rejected by most Protestants.<sup>23</sup> John A. Hardon notes that

[t]hree premises of Protestantism have remained fairly constant, namely, the Bible as the only rule of faith, excluding tradition and Church authority; justification by faith alone, excluding supernatural merit and good works; and the universal priesthood of believers, excluding a distinct episcopacy or priesthood divinely empowered through ordination to teach, govern, and sanctify the people of God. (351)

David Reynolds has stressed the particular importance of examining religious fiction in the United States in the period between 1785 and 1850 (2). According to Reynolds, because “[r]eligious changes during this period left an indelible mark on the quality of both popular and elite culture in America,” a kind of fiction emerged that “occupied a crucial position between Puritan religious literature, which had generally

been confined to exposition or illustration of orthodox dogma, and post-Civil War religious best sellers” (2). Looking at two works in Reynolds’s transitional category, this chapter examines the presentation of doctrinal conflict between Catholicism and nonbelief in Orestes Brownson’s Charles Elwood (1840) and between Catholicism and Protestantism in Augusta Jane Evans Wilson’s Inez: A Tale of the Alamo (1855). Each work is notable for its lengthy and serious treatment of the doctrinal issues separating Catholics and others in a fifteen-year period that ends just five years before the Civil War. These particular two works have been neglected by Reynolds and Franchot. In Roads to Rome, Franchot devotes a separate chapter to Orestes Brownson as an example of an influential nineteenth-century convert to Catholicism, but concentrates on Brownson’s The Spirit-Rapper and the details of Brownson’s conversion and influence. David Reynolds discusses both writers, but he does not discuss Wilson’s Inez, and his treatment of Brownson’s Charles Elwood is briefer than his discussion of Brownson’s conversion, his other fiction, and his role as a critic of nineteenth-century religious fiction.

Both of these works address the three Protestant “constants” enumerated above. Brownson’s novel, written when he was a Unitarian preacher (Lapati 27), is a loosely autobiographical document describing the author’s passage from unbelief to belief in the period from 1829 to 1831 (Lapati 27). Writing from the point of view of an atheist who has converted to a highly personal Christianity, Brownson concentrates on the key Protestant premises—the position of the believer with respect to Scripture and the authority of Scripture rather than of tradition, the relative importance of faith over works,



and the nature of the priesthood—and adds a discussion of miracles and the meaning of the word “church.” Wilson’s novel addresses the same three doctrinal issues from a less personal point of view. She also discusses differences between Catholics and Protestants on other significant doctrinal points. Wilson’s interests encompass the number of sacraments, the status of the Virgin, the authority of the Pope, the status of Purgatory and the nature of sins and the means by which they are forgiven, and the belief in the intercessory role of the saints. Both of these novels feature a central character intensely interested in religion. That interest creates the plot. Brownson’s title character challenges all institutional religion, especially but not exclusively Roman Catholicism. Wilson’s central character expends much of her energy arguing solely against Roman Catholicism. The polemic of each central character draws upon early church history, the Medieval church period, and Reformation history to support doctrinal arguments, a significant epistemological departure from a solely scriptural based argument. This rhetorical departure from a focus on Scripture alone is an implicit concession to a Catholic view of the significance of history and its connection to theology.<sup>24</sup>

The reputations and careers of Brownson and Wilson are similar in several ways. Both were well-regarded writers and commanded popular attention during their lifetimes. Both suffered a decline in critical stature either before or since their deaths. Both underwent a modified polemical stance in their relationship to Catholicism. Wilson’s literary odyssey involved a shift from severe critic to mild commentator on Roman Catholicism; Orestes Brownson experienced an even more dramatic personal and professional shift. Charles Elwood is a pertinent anomaly for several reasons. First, it

represents the author's views as a Protestant thinking as a Unitarian after having been a Presbyterian, Transcendentalist, and socialist (Reynolds 158). Second, it is a way-station on Brownson's road to conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1844. Finally, it is difficult to see it as a novel in the usual sense of the word, since it is so little concerned with plot and character development, and so much concerned with polemic and persuasion.

Brownson's 1844 conversion and subsequent career as Catholic apologist laid him open to criticism and marginalizing in his day and afterward. Among those who judged Brownson harshly were his contemporary Transcendentalists. Critic Paul Giles defends the continuity in Brownson's thinking against the Transcendentalist charge that Brownson's conversion led to his hostility to Transcendentalism. Giles says that it could equally be claimed that Brownson's hostility to Transcendentalists led to his faith (57-58). The significance of Brownson's Transcendentalism for my study is that it is the source of much of his recognizably Transcendental rhetoric in Charles Elwood, leading him to valorize an idiosyncratic, personal religion rather than to privilege institutional Roman Catholicism. The irony of his altered fame in our time is that a man once highly regarded for his intellectual stature has fallen into relative obscurity. Brownson is mainly of interest only to scholars of nineteenth-century American literature, American political philosophy, and those particularly interested in the history and literature of Catholicism in nineteenth-century America.

Wilson's work enjoyed extraordinary popularity in the nineteenth century. In one eight-year period she earned \$100,000 "from the sale of her religious novels" (Reynolds 206); her St. Elmo was so popular that it not only inspired a parody (Reynolds 206) but

also the naming of babies St. Elmo and “at least thirteen American towns after 1870” (Reynolds 208). St. Elmo rivaled Uncle Tom’s Cabin in total sales in the nineteenth century (Drew Gilpin Faust x).<sup>25</sup> Mary Chesnut, the Civil War diarist, made two diary entries referring to Augusta Jane Evans [Wilson], one as an authoress from Georgia attending a dinner at which Chesnut was present, the other a reference to a woman calling on her at her house and talking at great length about the celebrated author. Accounting for Wilson’s popularity, David Reynolds says that “the best philosophical minds of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were rhetorically defeated in novels that posed practical piety as the highest good” (215). Wilson’s work was in the category of religious fiction in which “[r]arely . . . was the battle against philosophy waged in intellectual fashion. . . . [instead, writers such as Wilson] pitted against philosophy all the fictional forces of sentiment, exemplary heroism, and morality to insure the victory of hopeful religion” (214-15). Showing insight into the limits of tolerance in her audience, Wilson decided to focus on plots revolving around conversion rather than plots revolving around rejection of a religion. Wilson’s work is of special interest now to feminists, historians, and scholars of nineteenth-century American domestic novels and Southern literature.

#### Orestes Brownson

A primarily philosophical work, Charles Elwood considers religious issues and religious doctrine. The format is reminiscent of Renaissance and seventeenth-century dialogues, minimizing plot and character development and emphasizing polemics.

Reynolds notes that Brownson himself observed that “religious fiction attempts a difficult

combination of divine contemplation, which demands stasis and reason, and plot, which is based on action and emotional change” (33). Eventually Brownson’s pro-Catholic apologetics would challenge socially prevalent anti-Catholic views, but his pro-Catholic polemical stance is not reflected in Charles Elwood.<sup>26</sup> Its 1840 publication date, six years after its actual composition in 1834 (Lapati 27), makes it part of Brownson’s phase of searching, and precedes his 1844 conversion by four years.

Charles Elwood is a doubter who speaks of himself as a nonbeliever, ostracized in his community because of being an “open, avowed infidel” (7). The novel consists almost entirely of Elwood’s conversations with Mr. Howard, an exemplary Protestant, and Mr. Morton, an exemplary minister. Together Mr. Howard and Mr. Morton convert Elwood into a state of belief. Reynolds succinctly characterizes this religious journey: “[Brownson] carefully records the celebrations that lead Elwood from atheism to Protestantism. Basically, the argument is a fully developed version of the theme of most American Protestant novels of the period: that the religious sentiment beneath changeable creeds can be apprehended through free individual inquiry. . . .” (158). The message is that through the universal priesthood of the believer, the individual has the power of doctrinal and faith discernment unaided by clergy. The novel critiques the lack of freedom in both the Calvinist clergyman and the Catholic priest (144), upholding instead the ““authority of pure reason in matters of religion as well as natural science”” (145).

The OED definitions of “priest” distinguish uses before and after the Reformation, Hebrew scriptural uses including references to Christ, uses referring to any Christian minister or to all Christian believers, and uses that apply to ministers of non-

Christian religions. Although Brownson uses the term variously, sometimes referring to Christian ministers or to Christian believers, most often he uses it to apply to Catholic priests. For example, Charles Elwood remarks that priesthood destroys criticisms of itself (17), but goes on to say that priests explained books to people who couldn't read and who didn't have the books (17-18). These are standard nineteenth-century interpretations of medieval Christianity that are also found in Wilson. Her main character argues that the cause of the Dark Ages was “the gradual withdrawal of light and knowledge—the crushing, withering influence exerted on the minds of men . . . by the priests of Rome—corrupted, fallen Rome” (159). Wilson's main character links “[i]gnorance and superstition reign[ing] throughout the world . . . [where] in the ninth century scarce a person was to be found in Rome itself who knew even the alphabet” (160) with a knowledgeable, powerful priesthood. She asserts that “what remained of light and learning was hid in the cell of the anchorite—not disseminated, but effectually concealed” (160) until Luther's arrival.

Mr. Morton dismisses the validity of the ordination of ministers, stressing the primacy of personal authority conferred by Christ. In an analysis of Paul's ministry in Acts, he sees Paul as breaking away from Gamaliel, the Rabbi noted for tolerance, in a way other early Christians did not (148-50). The inward change in Paul he describes as follows: “[I]n his lone inquiries, in his silent meditations, in his secret interviews with the Egeria of his soul, the spirit of truth, he [became] convinced that Christianity, rightly interpreted, is true, is from God” (152). It was at this moment, according to Mr. Morton, that the scales fell from Paul's eyes. Morton argues that Paul, authorized by Christ,

preached on his own. For Mr. Morton, this authority cannot be learned of men, especially not from an official doctrinal teaching body headquartered in Rome. Rather, it is a living revelation which the person comes into contact with internally. Showing an awareness of the watchmaker argument for the existence of God advanced by Paley, Morton extols instead a living God who made and continues to make, filling all space and always seen by the pure in heart (161-62). He abhors both Arians, adherents of the “fourth-century heresy that denied the divinity of Jesus Christ” (Hardon 29), and Socinians, anti-Trinitarians who emphasized reason and who eventually came to be known as Unitarians. He exhorts Elwood to learn the Gospel from the living Christ, the Paraclete (164), not from the one in the tomb of Joseph of Arimethea (163). He asks Elwood to listen to the Great Teacher within every individual mind, and commune with the Divinity within. He stresses the greater reality of the spiritual and the invisible. In short, Brownson writes in Charles Elwood about the inner personal light and the inward and invisible church, not a visible church with a big bureaucracy that issues official teachings. In this novel, the teachers are not “official,” not certified or licensed to teach by an overseeing office located in Rome.

In the central chapter of the novel, “The Christian,” Mr. Howard makes trenchant observations on both Catholicism and Protestantism. He says that Catholicism ““borrowed indeed many terms from the Nazarene Reformer; but in most cases it interpreted them by the ideas and associations of the old religions”” (109-10). Thus, he is critical of its essence as being merely a substitution of terms, i.e., doctrine and doctrine-parsing, for a living, breathing reality. He says the Catholic Church’s mission was to

civilize the barbarians that replaced the Roman Empire, but that its job was finished at the Reformation, and that it has ““since then been a mere cumberer of the ground”” (110). In discussing Protestantism, he says that protesting alone cannot be a religion, and that he himself would be a Catholic “[i]f protestantism did not mark a transition to something better”” (110). He sees Protestantism as having made incomplete efforts to improve Catholicism. He describes “[t]he three hundred years which have passed away since Luther, [as having] been merely ages of doubt, criticism, inquiry, destruction; efforts to get rid of a superannuated institution and to elaborate a new one”” (110-111).

During the course of the highly abstract and philosophical questioning and presentation by Elwood, Mr. Howard, and Mr. Morton, references are made to Spinoza as an advocate of a type of pantheism, to David, Isaiah, and Paul as prophets of one sort, and to Fenelon, Penn, Swedenborg, and Oberlin as prophets of another sort. There are references to Homer, Socrates, Plato, Milton, and Rousseau as poets, philosophers, and thinkers contributing something to the discussion of the nature of religious belief, and the Gentile sages, Homer and Euclid (229). These references indicate the abstract nature of the discussion in the novel as well as its wide-ranging philosophical, historical, and literary references.

These many references also indicate Brownson’s departure from the all-sufficiency of the Bible in matters of faith. They further represent a marked departure from centering on justification by faith. Brownson indicates by his range of learning that the passage from unbelief to belief cannot be brought about solely by reading Scripture. It comes about through a rational consideration of many philosophical views. Thus,

Brownson shows himself sympathetic to the Roman Catholic tradition of stressing the lack of a disjunction between faith and reason.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, Mr. Howard says late in the novel that ““little good comes from mere doctrinal discussions”” (243). Instead, individuals must come to an awareness of certain core truths by communing with a Divinity within (164-65). This leads to the recognition of God as the Invisible Universe, Unseen, Unchangeable, and Permanent in Reality (178-84). One must realize that the universe is inside the mind of God and is a revelation of Him. The justification for using a range of sources is that humans as searchers should not all go to one torch for enlightenment (219). God works ““flashes of lightning”” (232) that illuminate the mind.

Miracles are another topic explored by Charles Elwood in his conversations. Mr. Howard says that God rules natural events, but also that the miracles are symbols, that a seeker should be able to detect God in a moral doctrine as well as in a miracle (237), and that the church is inward and invisible. He finds that Calvinism has a central truth, ““ the sovereignty of God,”” but falls short of recognizing the ““free agency of man”” (246-47), and that the Arminian falls short in the opposite way.<sup>28</sup> He emphasizes that one should embrace the fullness of inner revelation, not be seduced by church-controlled and dictated beliefs, such as the ones encompassed in McBrien’s definition of doctrine. What little plot there is centers on three intertwined realities: Charles Elwood’s fiancée Elizabeth’s breaking off their engagement because of his lack of faith, his devastation over her death, and, by the end of the novel, his consolation in his newly awakened faith. The novel criticizes the priesthood and authoritarianism, Calvinism and,



by extension, Roman Catholicism and all denominations with ordained ministers who do not act on the inner light.

A foreshadowing of Brownson's conversion to Roman Catholicism is evident in the dialogue concerning doctrine and the masses of people. Mr. Morton urges Charles Elwood to "view with suspicion all doctrines that disinherit the masses" (220). Mr. Howard had commented on the "ignorant, half-brutish mixture of wealth and poverty" he found in his travels in the Old World, and lamented that so few who lived in palaces ever realized the "great doctrine of the common brotherhood of the race" (102). Although this emphasis on impoverishment and ignorance in Europe reveals the same criticism of the Old World as would be made by Wilson in Inez and by Twain in The Innocents Abroad, Paul Giles comments that Brownson himself liked the universalist sympathies of Catholicism (60). Charles Elwood says that many Christian groups think "distinctions . . . are of Divine appointment. . . and that it is therefore impious as well as foolish to war against them" (105). As will be explored below in greater detail, the application of doctrine to an exclusionary outlook, although alien to Brownson's temperament, is compatible with Wilson's emphasis on maintaining borders between religions and regions.

Brownson's novel does not target Roman Catholicism exclusively. His focus, rather, is on the passage from unbelief to belief. When he does discuss Roman Catholicism, he faults it for being a hierarchical church. He also faults it on doctrinal grounds. Mr. Howard criticizes those interested in "what is orthodox [more] than what is true; what will the church approve, than what she ought to approve" (108). The

definition of doctrine with which this chapter began stresses the collective approval and promulgation by the Catholic Church's teaching body; Mr. Howard's comment criticizes this arrangement. Further criticism of Catholic emphasis on creeds is heard when Mr. Howard reassures Charles Elwood that he is closer to Christianity than he thinks because of his emphasis on philanthropy and the poor rather than on the avoidance of hell (see 110-18). After a lengthy discussion of the shortcomings of Catholicism, Mr. Howard says, "Christianity is not a creed, but a life" (127); "Christ is not a dogma to be believed, but a spirit to be cultivated and obeyed" (127).

#### Augusta Jane Evans Wilson

Criticism of Catholicism in Inez is more far-reaching than in Charles Elwood, extending to every area of doctrinal difference between Protestants and Catholics listed earlier in this chapter. Unlike Brownson, though, Wilson has a layered set of purposes in her novel that involve the defining of religion, region, race, and nation. In Inez, Wilson uses the gothic romance form combined with a sustained focus on doctrinal issues separating Catholics and Protestants for her multiple ends.<sup>29</sup> Gothic romance, a fictive format that steadily gained in popularity among the reading public during the antebellum period, allowed the presentation of some very contentious issues related to doctrine.

In Inez, Wilson explores four borders: the border between Mexico and Texas, the border between North and South, the border between Catholics and Protestants, and the border between non-Americans and Americans. For Wilson, the latter half of each of these pairings is the location of authenticity. The first half of each of the pairings represents a menacing incursion into a way of life seeking permanence. Wilson's focus

on anti-Catholic doctrine is a trope for a pro-slavery, anti-immigrant ideology. For Wilson, the South's way of life was being threatened by forces constituted of immigrants and alien religious beliefs. Thomas Haddox quotes James J. Thompson's observation about the overwhelming presence of Catholic immigrants in Northern cities and the perception of Catholics it led to: "Its strength in the North lent to Catholicism an identity with a region and culture to which Southerners displayed mounting aversion. The North, they lamented, vomited up every variety of weirdness: Transcendentalists, Unitarians, utopian socialists, abolitionists, health reformers, free-love advocates, feminists—and Roman Catholics'" (7). For Wilson and her Southern audience, Roman Catholics and Roman Catholic doctrine were associated with weirdness, deviance, and doctrinal error.

Inez; A Tale of the Alamo, Wilson's popular first novel, was published in 1855 but set in Texas in 1836 before and during the Siege of the Alamo, in which American settlers in Texas fought against General Santa Anna's Mexican forces, and the Goliad Massacre. According to Susan Griffin, the novel "had at least three nineteenth-century British publications, in addition to dozens of U.S. ones" (147). Citing a review in the 1855 issue of Godey's Lady's Book, Griffin says that the reviewer and readers saw the novel as "participating legitimately in the contemporary debate over what constitutes America and American" (148). Although Inez did not earn as much critical acclaim or wide success as its author's subsequent work (Fox-Genovese ix), all of Wilson's writing generally was highly regarded in the nineteenth century. Wilson was seeking a broad audience that could relate to her particular combination of the themes regarding women's roles, Southern life, and Protestant values. David Reynolds sees anti-Catholic fiction

after 1835 as “especially salable when it was sentimental and scabrous” (196). Inez combines these tones of sentimentality and salaciousness. It presents a marriage, maudlin deaths, and a portrait of a villainous priest. It depicts Catholic doctrine and its agents as the source of everything evil historically and all that will be potentially evil in the future in America.<sup>30</sup>

As Sedgwick did in Hope Leslie, Wilson concentrates on three female characters: Mary, Florence, and Inez. Mary Irving and Florence Hamilton are friends and cousins. They have been moved to San Antonio from their life on a plantation in the South. Florence Hamilton converts to Catholicism at her father’s deathbed request; Mary is dismayed when she hears of this, and she leads Florence back to Protestantism through her skill at persuasive argumentation. When Florence becomes engaged, her fiancé is, like Mary, shocked that Florence was ever a Catholic, even for a brief period, but they agree never again to speak of this error in her judgment. Mary is in love with Dr. Bryant, but she dies young toward the end of the novel and is never able to tell him that she loves him. He treasures his love for her and his memories of her and is thus unable to fall in love with the lapsed-Catholic Inez, a Mexican. Inez is threatened by a Jesuit priest’s interest in her and in her money. The sinister hypocrisy of the priest, Padre Mazzolin, causes Inez to lose her connection to the church. Like Mary, Inez also loves Dr. Bryant. She tries unsuccessfully to save him during a fight with the Mexicans at Goliad. She buries him, but dies from an infection she contracts from the dead on the battlefield.

In a one-sided conversation (see 118-33, 143-65, and 172-78), Mary disputes Florence’s belief in the intercession of the saints, confession, purgatory, and

contemporary miracles. Mary makes assertions that draw upon the three constants of Protestant doctrine. She says that Florence's beliefs have no Biblical foundation, the first of the three premises, and that Jesus is the only mediator. Mary will emphasize this key Protestant point later in the novel as she nurses sick soldiers at the battle for the Alamo. Inez sees Mary at the beds of the sick: "She bade them leave off saint-worship and cling to Jesus as their only Mediator" (Inez 286). This reflects the Protestant reliance on faith alone as well as the emphasis on a universal priesthood of the believer and the exclusion of a distinct episcopacy. She argues that nuns and priests cannot be mediators. This denies a role for Catholic religious orders, substituting for these Catholic orders the Biblically-based faith and universal priesthood of individual believers. Florence is rendered silent in the face of Mary's arguments. She comments very little throughout Mary's disputation; when she does speak, it is to concede that Mary is right (see, for example, pages 125, 129, 130, 133, 150, and 162, *inter alia*). As dangerous and threatening as the Catholic-Protestant border is, Mary's effective persuasion can rescue Florence from her errant crossing.

Not content to limit her discourse to Catholic doctrine, Mary attacks Catholic practices that follow from doctrine, such as abstaining from meat on Fridays or, as she describes it, praying to images of the Virgin, petitioning little bits of painted canvas representing saints purported to have miraculous interventional powers against storms or bad health (173-74), or venerating relics. Mary ties her arguments to doctrine whenever possible. For example, she denies the good works done by nuns in the nineteenth century by refusing to acknowledge their charitable hospital service for non-Catholics, and she

finds Catholic schools to be dangerous to the republic as “branches of the propaganda . . . but [i.e., only] come to proselyte [sic]” (161). Through its blanket criticism of the underlying teaching agenda of Catholic schools, this remark implicitly attacks the idea of an official teaching body of the Catholic Church charged with promulgating doctrine. Mary’s anti-doctrinal arguments are founded on excerpts of writings from the Church fathers, Scriptural references, and such Church history as the iconoclastic controversy (153) or the practice of selling indulgences (154). Mary’s use of writings by the Church fathers as part of her arsenal represents a rhetorical slippage from the Protestant emphasis on Scripturally based discussion of doctrine, yet it also shows Wilson’s learnedness.<sup>31</sup>

If doctrine is thought of as a set of propositional statements requiring assent or demurrals, it can be subject to debate over sources, supporting texts, interpretations, translations, and the Biblical canon itself. Mary ventures into the history of Catholic behavior toward dissenters from Catholic doctrine. While this part of Mary’s polemic goes beyond propositional doctrine, it indicates that Wilson found it necessary to base her arguments on history as well as Scripture in order to be convincing. In the historical portion of her argument, Mary discusses Catholic-Protestant doctrinal conflict in various European settings, her interpretation of the state of learning in the Middle Ages, and Catholic claims about the source of Catholic prayers such as the Hail Mary (176). She concentrates on four historical attacks by Catholics on Protestants or dissenters, including the Duke of Alva, the Albigensian crusade, the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre, and the Smithfield massacre (155). Each of these bloody attacks by Catholics involved the targeting of people labeled as heretics from a Catholic doctrinal perspective. Several

were connected with the Inquisition. By invoking Protestant-Catholic medieval and Renaissance conflicts, Mary suggests the attack by evil, unrighteous forces against the righteous. She denies that monks preserved learning in the Middle Ages, saying that priests and Rome caused the Dark Ages (159-162). This last claim resembles Twain's "historically inaccurate" (Haddox 72) critique of Catholicism in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. Further, Mary argues that the French King Henry IV found Protestantism to be more tolerant than Catholicism was (177-78). The suggestion here is that prescribed doctrine leads to intolerance, whereas independently-arrived-at doctrine does not.

Mary challenges an explanation of the derivation of the Hail Mary found in an Ursuline Manual (176), which says it came from the Angel Gabriel inspired by the Holy Ghost. Underlying Mary's dismissal of the origin of the prayer is a three-fold repudiation of Catholic doctrine and its implementation in Catholic practice: one, of Catholic religious orders as intermediaries between the laity and Christ; two, of the common Roman Catholic practice of imploring Christ's succor through such mediators as Mary and the Saints; and three, a disagreement with the 1854 Papal declaration of Mary's immaculate conception.

At each turn of Mary's polemic, her cousin Florence either agrees with her or raises a point which allows Mary an opportunity for further polemic. Mary returns to broader doctrinal considerations at the end of her discourse. She concludes her arguments by saying that Catholicism allows no "liberty of conscience" (177), suggesting that Catholicism is anti-democratic whereas Protestantism is democratic, and

that the only aim of Protestants is “to preserve the balance of power in ecclesiastical affairs” (177). For Mary, doctrines about the authority of hierarchy in particular are incompatible with democracy. A summing up of Mary’s position reveals that she considers three broad areas: her individual qualifications to read Scripture and derive authentic doctrine from it for doctrinal positions and for a refutation of Catholic doctrinal positions; her selective analysis of history for the way in which Catholic behavior in the treatment of dissenters is a reflection of erroneous doctrines; and her critique of Catholic devotional practices.

Mary is an example of a Ramist thinker, of what Walter Ong refers to as “corpuscular epistemology” (168)—a “one-to-one gross correspondence between concept, word and referent which never really got to the spoken word at all but took the printed text, not oral utterance, as the point of departure and the model for thought” (168). For Mary, the primary printed text is the Bible. She is not interested in how the canonical books of the Bible were decided upon over the course of the first four centuries of church history, so she ignores conciliar deliberations over formation of the canon and the role of Origen, Jerome, Athanasius, and Augustine in determining which books were part of the canon. Although Mary and Florence are affectionate cousins who have been raised together, Mary’s conversation with Florence reads like a university lecture<sup>32</sup> rather than an authentic give-and-take dialogue of two intimates. In Mary’s rhetoric, Italy is “benighted” (155); Italy, Spain, and Portugal are less progressive than Protestant countries and are under the “black cloud of superstition and crime” (160). Mary’s rhetoric fits well with “anti-Catholic rhetoric that had circulated during the Mexican



War,” a “rhetoric that identified Catholic countries with despotism, technological backwardness, and evil-mind-controlling Jesuits” (Haddox 7). The inadequacy of the Catholic mindset for Wilson is reflected even in matters of taste. For example, Mary complains that Papists admire different constellations than do Protestants—Cygnus rather than Orion (219).

Florence’s conversion to Catholicism is short-lived but personally wounding. Wilson’s novel shows that the consequences of conversion to Roman Catholic doctrine include the potential of destroying one’s personal relationships and one’s very life. When Florence has been safely restored to the Protestant fold, the fact that she does not at first tell her fiancé about her embrace of Catholic doctrine threatens to destroy their engagement. Mr. Stewart has the univocal view that truth requires complete disclosure about one’s past. Though Florence defends herself, she acquiesces and asserts that they will never again discuss this matter (230). Once more, Florence has been reduced to silent acquiescence. Her concession that they will never discuss this matter again suggests not only its unpleasantness but also a deep-seated anxiety about what would be attractive enough to draw someone to convert. Both Florence and her fiancé apply a strict standard of truth-telling and full disclosure to Florence’s past doctrinal allegiance, one which does not apply to her future husband’s recent past actions. When Stewart reveals that he has been able to purchase the plantation and slaves her father owned but lost after financial setbacks, his withholding of this information is glossed over as his prerogative, in this instance, to give a pleasant surprise (315).

Wilson, then, accepts a double standard in truth-telling for her characters, one that fits with her beliefs about marriage. The view is developed in subsequent novels.

According to McCandless, the main female character in Wilson's Beulah is given the choice by her fiancé of accepting him as "that tyrant, Guy Hartwell" or accepting "the tyrant Ambition" (7); McCandless observes that Wilson is "reluctant to criticize the social and sexual hierarchy of the nineteenth-century South" (7). Conversion to the doctrines of Roman Catholicism would have upset this hierarchy and made Florence's marriage to Mr. Stewart impossible.

The most energetic character in the novel is Inez De Garcia, a dark, beautiful Mexican woman whose love Dr. Bryant does not reciprocate because he has committed his heart to blond-haired, blue-eyed Mary, even in Mary's death. Inez is a challenge to all the borders Wilson intends to defend through her writing. Inez's independence includes her denial of God's existence because of Padre Mazzolin's falseness, her escape through fire dressed as a man, her burial of Dr. Bryant, and her refusal to yield to Padre Mazzolin on her deathbed. Inez's donning of male garb to facilitate her escape can be seen as a trope operating on many levels. McCandless notes the reaction of one Southern woman writer, Caroline Howard Gilman, when she first succeeded in being published: "Gilman was horrified the first time she saw herself in print. She felt herself 'as alarmed as if I had been detected in man's apparel'" (12). Inez represents in her male attire and in her entire presence in the novel a subversive challenge to national, regional, religious, and citizenry borders, and extends to social and gender lines of demarcation as well. According to Nancy Alder, Wilson "rotely reminded her readers that God appointed

women to rule in the home by divine right” (79). This represents a belief in women’s subordination outside, but not within, the domestic sphere as a kind of logically consequent religious doctrine derived from Scripture and reflected in Southern institutions and society. Inez’s inability racially or behaviorally to fit the role of Southern womanhood can only end in her death. Susan Griffin sees the figure of Inez De Garcia as a “troubling presence” (149) that suggests “American vulnerability to foreign influence” (149). According to Griffin, for Wilson, writing a nativist text “concerned with preserving national integrity, the character of Inez offers a space for narrative free play and emblemizes the attractions and dangers of the liminal” (150).

Wilson’s purposes in writing the novel may go beyond simple anti-Catholic polemic. Because of Wilson’s concern with defense of the borders—Mexico/Texas, Catholic/Protestant, North/South, and outsider/citizen—enumerated above, it is possible to read her novel on multiple levels. Inez has been characterized as “improbably likening the aggression of the Mexicans against the Texans to that of the North against the South” (Fox-Genovese, “Introduction” xvi). Fox-Genovese observes further that Wilson’s “gothic portrayal of a villainous Jesuit priest’s sinister campaign to gain control of the souls and fortunes of unsuspecting Protestants was intended obliquely to represent the intentions of fanatical abolitionists upon southern values” (xvi). These comments suggest that Wilson’s purpose was primarily political rather than religious, with doctrine acting as a metaphor for an assault on the Southern way of life. In Fox-Genovese’s reading, Wilson found that anti-Catholic rhetoric was serviceable to this larger purpose, both for its familiarity to her readers and its emotionally evocative potential. An

alternate reading is that Wilson's concern with doctrine was primary, not secondary. In her early teenage years, Wilson experienced a crisis of faith from which she emerged with a determination to combat skepticism. Fox-Genovese offers a more balanced analysis of Inez in her statement that "amidst its melodramatic excesses lay the themes that would preoccupy Evans [Wilson] throughout her career: women's identities and roles, southern values, and religion" (xvi). This assessment suggests that the three themes are parallel, the religious theme not subordinate.

Nina Baym offers qualified praise for Wilson's novel. The heroine is scholarly; the local color portrait of Texas is early and unusual; and it "involved extensive treatment of Protestant-Catholic religious controversy, arguing the Protestant side equally with melodrama and Scripture" (302). While Baym's insights are sound, she overlooks the fact that for Wilson the doctrinal disputes between Catholics and Protestants involve challenges not simply on a Scriptural basis but on the grounds of history and devotional practice as well. Baym also suggests that Wilson is a confident, vigorous combatant. Wilson is marked by the fear of Catholicism described by Jenny Franchot. Thomas Haddox, who concentrates on Southern writers and their portrayal of Catholicism, characterizes Southern Protestant anxiety as arising from Catholicism's potential to mar religious unity, its aesthetic and liturgical excess, and its potential to "undermine the southern racial order by encouraging miscegenation and advocating racial equality"(9). Wilson's Inez exhibits all three anxieties.

Wilson views Catholicism as a dangerous presence on the Texas-Mexico border, a place rife with challenges, epitomized by Inez and by Padre Mazzolin, to religious unity.

Inez does not keep her faith or turn to any other faith. Her unreciprocated love for Dr. Bryant shows an unrealized potential for undermining Southern racial order by suggesting that marriage would be possible between a Southern gentleman and a dark woman who was once a Catholic. Padre Mazzolin schemes for converts and their money. Florence's temporary conversion gravely threatens family religious cohesiveness. Wilson's depictions of Catholic sacraments are her critique of Catholic excess deriving from Catholic doctrines. During confession, Inez reluctantly agrees to marry the man Padre Mazzolin has selected for her. This prompts a "smile of triumph [to] glitter . . . in the Padre's eyes." During the same confession, Padre Mazzolin questions Inez about associating with Mary, an "infernally heretic" who will turn her from the faith (61-65). The death of Florence's father is described as "death-bed for a theatre," where Padre Mazzolin, dressed in a surplice with Jesuit insignia on it, has set up twelve candles, uses incense and holy water, gets Mr. Hamilton to embrace a crucifix he can hardly hold, offers a chalice with the Eucharist in it, and whispers "low in the sufferer's ear" (84-86). The "spectacle" makes Mary "quiver in every limb," and she looks "mournfully on as this mummery [is] enacted" (85-86).

A striking change occurs in Wilson's fictional presentation of Catholicism in such later books as *Infelice* (1875). While *Inez*, her gothic border romance, clearly illustrates her youthful nativist tendencies, by the time she writes her romance *Infelice* (1875), she has reconceptualized Catholicism so that it appears not in the guise of a virulent enemy but in a much more benign, tamed form. Wilson's tone towards Catholicism undergoes a marked shift, and she goes from picturing Catholicism as a dangerous doctrinal threat to a

more charitable depiction of Catholic practice, Catholic education and character formation, Catholic nuns, and Catholic art and music. Convents are portrayed as places which preserve purity and provide refuge and security from a dangerous world. The central character, Regina Orme, spends an early, formative part of her life in a convent.<sup>33</sup> Regina's convent upbringing is clearly the source or at least the preserver of her purity of character and outlook, and later she asks her guardian to send her back to the convent. Her name Regina, suggestive of the Queen of Heaven, is changed by her guardian to Lily, a name representing her purity, and also a Marian title. Wilson pointedly emphasizes the word's Catholic associations in having her friend Olga refer to her as a "sober, solemn, demure blue-eyed Annunciation lily" (290). Throughout, the novel makes positive allusions to cultural figures from literature, music, and art associated with Catholicism.<sup>34</sup>

The tone in Infelice raises the question of why Wilson underwent so marked a change. Possible explanations include her age, her mother's influence, and the influence of her surrounding culture at the time of her writing Inez, coupled with a change in Wilson after the Civil War or, at the very least, a recognition on Wilson's part of a shift in her audience's attitude towards anti-Catholic rhetoric. The most obvious explanation is that, according to Wilson's family, Wilson wrote Inez when she was fifteen, which would have been in 1850, five years before the printing of the novel with a subvention from a prosperous uncle (Faust, "Note" ix-x). One's views often move towards greater tolerance with the perspective of maturity. Wilson had been home-schooled, so perhaps the anti-Catholic views in the novel were those of her mother. Ray Allen Billington describes in detail the anti-Catholicism prevalent in antebellum America. In some

respects, the literary and political height of this phenomenon was reached in the early 1850s, with the “meteoric career” and sudden flaming out of the Know-Nothing party, “its unity sacrificed on the altar of sectionalism, and its popular appeal dissipated in the clashing interests from which grew a civil war” (380). Anti-Catholicism was at one time an unmistakable thread in the American social fabric, as evidenced by the Know-Nothings’ theft in 1854 of a block of marble sent by Pius IX for use on the Washington monument. This symbolic gesture, and the use of Masonic signs on the monument, indicate an acceptance of anti-Catholicism in American popular culture. Inez did not sell nearly as well as Wilson’s later work did (Fox-Genovese, “Note” ix), suggesting that her awareness of a successful writing formula deepened with experience, whether or not her own views ever softened.

### Conclusion

Brownson’s Charles Elwood and Wilson’s Inez have similarities but many significant differences. Both take religion seriously; both display unusual learnedness on the part of their fictive characters; both rely on history<sup>35</sup> to support their arguments; both tackle big subjects and use dialogue between characters to discuss doctrinal differences; both focus on an unrealized love balanced by the consolatory satisfactions that derive from correct doctrine; and both subordinate plot and character development to doctrinal discussions.

But substantive differences exist between the concerns of these writers. Whereas Brownson is focused only on abstract borders in his novel, Wilson is concerned with the borders she identifies between Protestants and Catholics, North and South, the

United States and Mexico, and Americans and racial others. Brownson emphasizes largeness of soul in his work. This can be seen in Charles Elwood's observation that there are "times when this world is too small for me, when I seem to have that within me which is greater than the universe" (79). Brownson focuses on the difference between the outer and the inner, the difference between the tomb and the life given by Christ and the inspiration which floods into the spirit.<sup>36</sup> He emphasizes liberation through belief whereas Wilson emphasizes argumentation as a corrective of wayward belief. Wilson shows a sense of disputation, an emphasis on head rather than heart in her parsing of doctrinal differences, especially with regard to the nature of Christ.

As a Catholic apologist from 1845 until his death in 1876, Brownson renounced his once-held socialist ideas. He advocated Catholicism for America as a way of checking the lack of discipline he perceived. He was pro-Union and critical of Catholic clergy who were secessionist. Wilson continued to emphasize argument throughout her lifetime, though not necessarily Protestant-Catholic doctrinal disputes. Her novels after Inez stress not only religion but also Southern values, and they support the subordination of women almost as a religious doctrine (see Alder 79). Wilson's work gained great popularity in the nineteenth century for its ability to argue her point of view and connect with her audience.<sup>37</sup> McCandless comments that "[h]er novel Macaria presented so positive a view of Southern values that it was banned by federal generals who feared its effects on their troops" (14).

Wilson preferred the three Protestant "constants" to Catholic doctrine; Brownson, however, challenges all three—an emphasis on Scripture alone, the faith of the believer,



and the universal priesthood of the believer. Through his character Charles Elwood, he rejects the idea put forth by a Protestant clergyman early in the novel that “[m]y credentials [meaning, my rationale, my support for my reasoning] are the Bible” (13). Elwood won’t accept the Bible as the authenticator of miracles because he says circular reasoning is involved in using the Bible as a proof of miracles, and using miracles as a proof of the truths of the Bible (20-27). Elwood is extremely critical of the faith of the living “saints” for which he cites the behavior of his fiancée’s brother. He mentions having seen the brother when “he was on the anxious seats” in church (80), but that once he became a saint, he was “decidedly worse” for it. He describes the effects of faith conversion and a believer’s emphasis on the faith as follows: “By persuading them that they are saints, it permits them to fancy that they can do no wrong” (80). He mentions that his fiancée’s brother merely combines religion with a “harsh, haughty and vindictive temper” (81). Elwood’s mentor, Mr. Howard, is critical of all clergy, seeing in ecclesiastical tyranny the worst form of tyranny. He says that the Protestant clergy “indeed protest against the authority of Rome, but they set up a written word for which they claim equal authority” (143). He adds, “They war against the hierarchy, but they claim infallibility for the congregation” (143).

Inez, published in 1855 at the height of the Know-Nothing movement’s political success, upholds all three Protestant constants. Wilson explicitly criticizes Catholic doctrine, the faith of individual Catholic believers that results in their subjection to manipulative sacramental devotional practice, and the machinations of an untrustworthy priesthood. Catholic doctrinal faith and the practices it results in are captured early in

the novel: “Even as the Moslem kneels at sunset toward the ‘Holy City,’ so punctiliously does the devout Papist bend for vesper prayers” (27). Catholic clergy are embodied in the “swarthy” (29) complexioned Italian Jesuit Padre Mazzolin, “low” (29) in physical stature, but full of “Jesuit determination” (29) and “policy” (30), aiming at a “cardinal’s cap” for his labors against “cursed heretics” (32).

In a review of Garry Wills’s Head and Heart: American Christianities, Andrew Delbanco notes that America’s founding fathers had no use for Catholics. John Adams, for example, asserted “Liberty and Popery cannot live together” (21). In spite of Adams’s sweeping dismissal of Catholicism, Delbanco’s overall assessment is that “American history is notable for the absence of pogroms and religious wars. Perhaps this is because Americans deflect their worst impulses into racial hatred or xenophobia—but, all things considered, the experiment in religious liberty started by the founders has worked remarkably well” (23). Perhaps in some small part that violence was avoided because Americans deflected their doctrinal disputes into religious fiction, a very popular genre in the nineteenth century.

#### Chapter IV “Relics of Papistry Left Behind Us”: Hawthorne, James, Howells and Catholic Aesthetics

Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, and William Dean Howells explore the contrast between European art informed by Catholicism, and American art informed by Puritanism and Protestantism. The range of aesthetic themes presented in the fiction of these major writers includes the place of art in American life; the nature of that art—whether decorated or plain; the nature of the artist; and the place of judgment and taste in American artistic preferences. More particularly, for my purposes, to explore these themes, they depict church architecture and religious objects, interior decoration of such settings as a church, a Puritan meeting house, a minister’s apartment or a convent, and clothing when it is seen in decorative and religiously symbolic ways. They also depict religious objects originally designed to support devotional life in churches, convents, and monasteries, including crucifixes, statues, and paintings. Whether the objects remain in their original settings or have become part of European museum collections or private collections, Hawthorne, James, and Howells view them from an aesthetic perspective. More broadly, these writers’ treatment of individual characters is often a matter of aesthetics.

In his analysis of the Catholic aspects of Henry James, Edwin Sill Fussell uses the term “literary Catholicizing” to refer to “the representation in narrative, dramatic, or poetic form, of identifiably Roman Catholic rites, sacraments, beliefs, practices, and

fictive personages, for aesthetic reasons additional to or instead of religious reasons” (ix). The application of a Catholic aesthetic to character is allowed for in W. J. T. Mitchell’s discussion of Representation: “representation, even purely ‘aesthetic’ representation of fictional persons” (15). Henry James’s own view of how literary aesthetics informs his writing also supports the inclusion of characters in this discussion of aesthetics. Adeline R. Tintner reminds the reader of this characteristic Jamesian stance: “By 1881 James’s moral as well as aesthetic dependence on museum art had changed. His conclusion, put into the mind of Ralph Touchett, was that a first-rate person is ‘finer than the finest work of art’” (2).

Analyzing the creation of American historical memory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (163-75), Michael Kammen sees an emphasis on Puritans, especially in the 1880s and 1890s, but more broadly from 1870-1930, as part of a conscious American effort to construct memory along the lines of a perceived patriotic ancestry. Hawthorne, James, and Howells use Puritan characters or characters with Puritan ancestry in four of the novels discussed below. Only one of the novels is primarily set in the New World; the others are set in the Old World of Europe, specifically Italy, allowing the Puritan characters to encounter Catholicism at its administrative and emotional center. The emphasis on Puritanism in each of these authors is significant, for Hawthorne, James, and Howells did not participate in this nationalistic effort in a simple, unquestioning way. For each author, the clash expands America’s nineteenth-century sense of the aesthetic beyond the myth-making centering on America’s New England-based Puritan heritage coming from such figures as Henry

Cabot Lodge, on the one hand, and Henry Ford, on the other (Kammen 30), and newly founded American historical societies and American heritage associations.

Certain components are key to the Puritanism these writers present. The most important for my study is that Puritanism is implicitly, and often explicitly, contrasted with Catholicism. R. W. B. Lewis speaks of the historian as not only looking for the “major terms of discourse” (2), but, quite significantly, “for major pairs of opposed terms which, by their very opposition, carry discourse forward. The historian looks, too, for the coloration or discoloration of ideas received from the sometimes bruising contact of opposites” (2). Patterns of thought, behavior, and speech associated with the Puritan, as expressed in art and in appearance, are contrasted to Catholicism. These novelists explore the influence of Catholicism and Puritanism on American history, government, and culture, and each challenges any simple-minded preference for one -ism over the other. They plainly do not engage in an early nineteenth-century American authorial practice described by Edwin Fussell. Criticizing Catherine Maria Sedgwick and Lydia Childs specifically, Fussell characterizes fiction of the 1820s as enabling

the liberal writer and reader . . . to indulge in lofty views of history all the way from the present back to the seventeenth century. The novels are set in the seventeenth century, to which their authors condescend. But the seventeenth century is also useful in mounting attacks on nineteenth-century Catholics; for these attacks the nineteenth-century author is not responsible. (8)

In contrast, most of the novels discussed in this chapter are set in the author's own contemporary time, featuring a nineteenth-century Puritan or person of Puritan ancestry. All three authors represent a significant softening of the heavy anti-Catholicism prevalent in ante-bellum America described in Chapters Two and Three. All three writers pose aesthetic Catholicism as an alternative perspective to Puritanism and use it as a way of critiquing the legacy of Puritanism in America. What is at stake is the motivation and character of the colonists coming to America. Was America exceptionalist at its inception, or has its exceptionalism been something much more gradual—the eventual realization of its ideals of liberty, justice, and equality for all, through the incorporation of its minorities, especially minority religions, into its tapestry of diversity? Its imagination, aesthetic productions and judgments, effects on character and temperament, and potential impact on government are interrogated and sometimes found wanting.

### Nathaniel Hawthorne

#### The Scarlet Letter

In The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne depicts a hypothetical Papist among the Puritans; moreover, the central characters Hester, Pearl, and Rev. Dimmesdale can each be read as complex but incomplete representations of Catholicism contrasting in appearance and domestic setting with their Puritan surroundings. The “The Market-Place” tableau, for example, presents a concentrated, highly visual aesthetic contrast between Puritanism and Catholicism. Most members of the crowd observing Hester on the scaffold are Puritans. Hester is associated with Catholicism. She embodies an ironic version of the Virgin Mary depicted in medieval and Renaissance art. On a second

allegorical level, Hester can be read as an icon of the Catholic church depicted in antebellum anti-Catholic rhetoric: a florid and seductive artist luring the unsuspecting to their spiritual destruction. The Puritan men in the crowd are dressed in “sad-colored garments and gray, steeple-crowned hats” and are “intermixed with women, some wearing hoods” (42). The Puritan women are not delicate, but have “broad shoulders and well-developed busts . . . and round and ruddy cheeks” with a “boldness and rotundity of speech” (45) to match. The sumptuary laws governing dress in the colony are stressed (47); most Puritans throughout the novel are dressed in black. The town-beadle’s severity reflects “the Puritanic code of law” (47), a law described by a townsman as “our righteous law” (56) in this “godly New England” (56). In a display of a lack of compassion for Hester, the women speak of wanting to see her branded on the forehead (46). One “iron-visaged” woman would like to see Hester stripped of her “rich gown” and red letter and have it replaced with “a rag of . . . mine own rheumatic flannel” (48). The appearance of the village women is unsavory, and their conversation shows them frankly desirous of seeing punishment inflicted on Hester. The mention of branding and stripping has a sexual undertone that fits Hester’s original crime. In a striking example of what Franchot labels Hawthorne’s unpredictable distribution of terms of criticism and praise, Hawthorne refers to the magistrates as keeping “an inquisitorial watch over” (73) Hester.

The author’s hypothetical Papist in the crowd responds to Hester in a more moderate and more aesthetically oriented way than the punitive Puritan women and magistrates do:

Had there been a Papist among the crowd of Puritans, he might have seen in this beautiful woman, so picturesque in her attire and mien, and with the infant at her bosom, an object to remind him of the image of Divine Maternity, which so many illustrious painters have vied with one another to represent; something which should remind him, indeed, but only by contrast, of that sacred image of sinless motherhood, whose infant was to redeem the world. (50)

The putative Papist is not eager to brand and strip Hester, nor is he ready for the inquisitorial task embraced elsewhere by the Puritan magistrates. Although Hawthorne qualifies the thinking of the Papist by saying that this reminder is “only by contrast,” he still suggests that the Papist is compassionate and sympathetic to Hester. He goes on to comment starkly that “[h]ere, there was the taint of deepest sin in the most sacred quality of human life, working such effect, that the world was only the darker for this woman’s beauty, and the more lost for the infant that she had borne” (50). Although this judgment is severe, it suggests the stance of a theologian, not the stance of a criminologist. Also, it stands not only in contrast to the views of the assembled Puritans but to the eventual favorable views of the townspeople toward Hester.

Hester’s embodiment of female beauty functions in a complex way: it aligns her with other Hawthorne “dark” heroines; it aligns her with religious portraits of the Virgin Mary in youth and in age—portraits that form a strong part of traditional Catholic religious art; it allows her to be interpreted variously as a living symbol of God’s covenanted people but also as a symbol of the Catholic church. John Gatta sees Hester



not simply as a dark-haired Hawthorne heroine, but as an example of Hawthorne's development of the Dark Madonna. Noting that earlier critics addressed "Hawthorne's attraction toward Catholicism" (11), Gatta concentrates on "his fictive portrayal of Mary, the Mother of Jesus and figurative Christian relative of the primeval Mother Goddess" (11). For Gatta, the "fair heroine" is "a virginal innocent . . . typically represented by dovelike New England maidens . . . [including Hilda in The Marble Faun]. In theological terms, the fair lady has been associated with grace, spirituality, and the prospect of salvation; the dark lady, with sin, bodily temptation, and the threat of damnation" (11-12). Gatta sees Hawthorne's attraction to this figure as part of Hawthorne's critique of nineteenth-century rational Christianity, drained of spirituality in order to concentrate on aggressive money-making. The characteristics of this figure are most fully realized in Hester, who is shown as lover, iconoclast, sinner, but also tender nurturer, mediator, and, of course, enfleshed, womanly being. Gatta relates Hester to the young mother Mary but also to "the mature Stabat Mater" (17-18), standing on the scaffold, both when she stands alone and "in a pieta pose" with the dying Dimmesdale slumped in her arms. Both the "Stabat Mater" and the "pieta pose" refer to many Catholic artistic depictions of the mature Virgin Mother of God, suffering with her Son. In Gatta's complex view of Hester, she does not just function as a female prophet but "[t]ypologically . . . not as the scarlet whore from Revelation 17 . . . but as the afflicted female embodiment of God's covenanted people from Revelation 12.2" (19).

Hester's own sense of artistic beauty expresses an aesthetic that stands in contrast to the Puritan aesthetic of plainness and simplicity. Hester lives by the "art" (73) of her

needlework, and she possesses a sense of beauty that far exceeds the “sable simplicity that generally characterized the Puritanic modes of dress” (73). She is able to make ruffs, bands, and gloves for ordinations, gubernatorial installations, military men, and funerals, and linen for babies. Her work becomes “the fashion” (74); the only adornment for which no one seeks her service is bridal adornment. Hester is associated with the stain of red rather than with bridal white.

The narrator comments extensively on the properties of the scarlet letter Hester wears. It is made of “fine red cloth” with “traces about it of gold embroidery” (28); although it “had been wrought . . . with wonderful skill of needlework” (28), it was faded and shabby-looking by the time of the narrator’s examination in the Custom-House. Religious language suggests a connection between Hester’s “A” and an artistic aspect of Catholic theology: the ladies who did this needlework were “conversant with . . . mysteries” (28); the fading of the cloth was rendered by “a sacrilegious moth” (28). Its possession so assails and deludes the senses of the narrator that he “experienced a sensation not altogether physical . . . as of burning heat . . . as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron” (29). At the time of Hester’s wearing of the letter, the narrator pointedly remarks on the discrepancy between its style and the style allowed by Puritan law and convention:

It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore; and which was of a splendor in accordance

with the taste of the age, but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony. (47)

The narrator observes the artistry of the letter, its beguiling surface allure—“in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread”(47)—and its contrast with Puritan regulations.

Hester’s artistic taste, expressed through her needlework and through the way she dresses Pearl, aligns her with a lush, baroque Catholic artistic taste likened to elaborate, exotic Orientalism. The narrator observes that “[s]he had in her nature a rich, voluptuous, Oriental characteristic,—a taste for the gorgeously beautiful, which, save in the exquisite productions of her needle, found nothing else, in all the possibilities of her life, to exercise itself upon” (75). Catholic artistic taste is expressed in the novel in color, especially vibrant, eye-catching color: the “crimson velvet” of Pearl’s dress, “abundantly embroidered with fantasies and flourishes of gold thread” (91); the related descriptions of Pearl as a “jet of flame” (92), “the scarlet fever,” a ““little bird of scarlet plumage”” (98), a figure resembling a time ““when the sun has been shining through a richly painted window, and tracing out the golden and crimson images across the floor”” (98); the color-related nicknames given to Pearl by Mr. Wilson—““Pearl?—Ruby, rather!—or Coral!—or Red Rose, at the very least, judging from thy hue!”” (99); and, even, the “colors still unfaded” (113) of the Gobelin tapestries decorating Dimmesdale’s front apartment, which contrast with the black of Dimmesdale’s Geneva cloak.

Hester and Pearl are explicitly related to some type of vestigial Catholicism and, particularly, its representation in Puritan rhetoric as the Whore of Babylon. Gossips in

town believe and spread the rumor that “poor little Pearl was a demon offspring; such as, ever since old Catholic times, had occasionally been seen on earth, through the agency of their mothers’ sin, and to promote some foul and wicked purpose” (89). During the visit to Governor Bellingham’s mansion, both Mr. Wilson and Governor Bellingham make comments that relate Pearl to a Catholicism defeated and replaced by the Reformation. After his comparison of Pearl to stained glass windows, Mr. Wilson observes ““But that was in the old land”” (98) and asks Pearl, ““Art thou a Christian child,—ha? Dost know thy catechism? Or art thou one of those naughty elfs or fairies, whom we thought to have left behind us, with other relics of Papistry, in merry old England?”” (99). Governor Bellingham sees Pearl and says, ““Nay, we might have judged that such a child’s mother must needs be a scarlet woman, and a worthy type of her of Babylon”” (99).

Puritan society’s disavowal of Hester as a proper, i.e., pure, maker of bridal adornment suggests Hawthorne’s use of Hester as a symbol of the Whore of Babylon, identified in anti-Catholic rhetoric as the Catholic Church. Calling The Scarlet Letter “[p]erhaps the finest antebellum romance of Catholicism” (Roads 260), Jenny Franchot describes the novel as combining conversion narrative and conventions of detective fiction in order to explore the concealment, displaced revelation, and eventual full revelation of a sin gnawing on the individual. Franchot interprets Hawthorne’s intention as using a recognizably anti-Catholic rhetoric to establish a complex allegorical view of Hester, whom she describes in the following terms:

Acutely sensitive to the deficiencies of Calvinist and liberal Protestantism,

Hawthorne constructed a Puritan Boston suffused by the meditations on Catholicism of a nineteenth-century spectator who, like Dimmesdale, is implicated in various strategies of evasion and partial appropriation of the ‘old, corrupted faith of Rome . . . .’ Thus labeled in anti-Catholic terms familiar to the novel’s antebellum audience, Hester is a Babylonish confusion, inciting a therapeutic Puritanic discourse against the sins of a concupiscent woman who refuses to divulge herself except through her sewing, an activity that partially vocalizes an otherwise iconic silence. (Roads 260)

Franchot goes on to comment that although some readers have read the novel as opposing a “banished Anglo-Catholic past of iconographic richness to a Puritan past (and, by implication, a nineteenth-century Protestant present) of cold intellection and self-inhibition” (Roads 260), she nonetheless reads the novel as not reducible to just an expression of nostalgia “for a Catholic world repressed by an incipiently bourgeois and pallid Protestantism” (Roads 261). Franchot’s reservation is that Hawthorne “unpredictably distributes” the terms of his fictional analysis in ways that do not univocally uphold one view (Roads 261).

Hester’s scarlet “A” is treated in complex ways. Hester’s letter, referred to by Chillingworth as blazing with “‘bale-fire’” (67), is a thing that behaves unexpectedly but unerringly in its pointing. Hester’s letter travels to those implicated in her past adulterous action. Besides being a sign affixed to her bosom, it also seems to be represented by the walking Pearl, who is not only a walking stained glass window (98) but a walking “A.”

This floating signifier also affixes itself to the fleshly bosom of her partner in adultery, the Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale, only to be revealed in the final scaffold scene.

The scarlet and golden physical appearances of Hester and Pearl make a link between Catholic artistic taste and color. The narrator of The Scarlet Letter also associates visual imagination, a vital part of the literary artist's mind, and its results with color, and, by extension, with Catholicism. Franchot uses Hawthorne's famous statements by the narrator in the Custom-House—relating the action of moonlight with the romance writer (in describing the coal-fire, the narrator speaks of it throwing “its unobtrusive tinge throughout the room, with a faint ruddiness upon the walls and ceiling, and a reflected gleam from the polish of the furniture. This warmer light mingles itself with the cold spirituality of the moonbeams, and communicates, as it were, a heart and sensibilities of human tenderness to the forms which fancy summons up. It converts them from snow-images into men and women” [33])—to make an explicit connection. According to Franchot, Hawthorne suggests that sin and materiality, a stain or coloration, associates Catholicism, stained glass, and the imagination, whereas the white light of moonlight, aligned with Protestantism, “renders the spirit visible while conspicuously avoiding the indolence and sensuous captivities of matter” (Roads 265). Franchot summarizes the novel as posing “[t]he larger psychological and theological question . . . [of] the extent to which the polluted can save the pure or even issue into the pure, a question that leads Hawthorne to identify the corruptions and material of Catholicism with those of the imagination” (Roads 264). The narrator comments on the role of the imagination of the observer in the interpretation of any natural phenomenon, such as the

meteoric reddish light in the sky tracing out a letter “A” on the evening of Governor Bellingham’s death. When a lone person—perhaps a figure for the literary artist—rather than a crowd sees an event, “its credibility rest[s] on the faith of some lonely eyewitness, who be[holds] the wonder through the colored, magnifying, and distorting medium of his imagination” (140).

Moreover, the narrative itself is deeply colored with the effects of a tinged imagination. Pearl herself is perceived by Reverend Wilson as walking stained glass, a church architectural feature identified historically with Catholic cathedrals and churches, not with Protestant churches. Nevertheless, the novelist contains the adult Pearl within the confines of “middle-class domesticity” (266), presumably by her inheritance of Roger Chillingworth’s money, her marriage, and elevation to middle-class status in England.

Male clothing is also used to suggest contrasts in the novel. Dimmesdale’s Geneva cloak, not only his Puritan clergyman’s garb but his physical protection for maintaining orthodoxy, is mentioned at several key junctures in the text. The first character mentioned as wearing the Geneva cloak in The Scarlet Letter is Rev. Wilson, who passes Dimmesdale in the dream-like sequence of the second midnight scaffold scene. When Rev. Wilson passes, “muffling” the Geneva cloak “closely” about him, he never looks at the platform. The words of invitation Dimmesdale issues to Rev. Wilson to “[c]ome up hither . . . and pass a pleasant hour with me!” (136) are not actually said, but exist only in his perversely cheerful imagination of that hour. This scene closes the next day with the sexton returning Dimmesdale’s black glove to him, saying that ““Satan

dropped it there, I take it . . .” (143). Rev. Wilson’s Geneva cloak confers some form of protection on him, making Dimmesdale’s self-display invisible to his sight.

Dimmesdale himself is wearing a Geneva cloak after his encounter with Hester in the forest. He experiences not only a sudden surge of energy, but also multiple temptations to wickedness of speech, either in using curse words or in actually disavowing accepted scriptural interpretations and practices. He guards against the temptation to speak lasciviously to a maiden by gathering his Geneva cloak about him, holding it “before his face” (201). This cartoonish behavior is reminiscent of Rev. Hooper’s assumption of the wearing of a black veil in front of his congregation in “The Minister’s Black Veil,” with no words of explanation offered for the peculiarity of his behavior. Because the Geneva cloak is so named for being worn by Calvinist clergy, whose center was Geneva, Switzerland, Hawthorne’s text raises a question about the efficacy of the cloak and perhaps of the Calvinist theology, including the celebrated Calvinist tome, the Institutes, as a defense against the world. Analogous to Governor Bellingham’s suit of armor in his hall, the cloak indicates the outward or apparent spiritual status of the wearer, but not his inner disposition. The protection it offers against other symbols which point to the spiritual state of the wearer, such as the scarlet letter, is uncertain and incomplete.

Hawthorne uses color patterning to underscore the severity of Calvinism’s judgments. Hester says that if Governor Bellingham and the ministers had taken Pearl from her, she would have been ready to sign her name in the Black Man’s book in “‘mine own blood’” (105). The Black Man is a Puritan designation for Satan, presumably dark



in feature and dark in clothing. Hester's writing her own name in the book would result in her everlasting, irrevocable damnation. Hester's cooperation with her own damnation fits well with the Calvinist idea of predestination as something that is written about the person from eternity; a person's actions simply confirm God's immutable judgments. Yet in another way the writing of a name in the book challenges the notion of God's superintending judgment by suggesting that there is a voluntary component on the part of the person—a work, not simply faith alone, determining the outcome. To be willing to write in her own blood further seals the horror of her willing yielding to Satan.

The Black Man's book and its forest context is structurally opposed by Dimmesdale's apartment, with the Gobelin tapestries. These tapestries, made by a family of weavers and dyers in the middle of the fifteenth century, were used as wall hangings and are now on display in museums. Unlike the book with the names of the judged and damned, Dimmesdale's Gobelin tapestries depict Bible scenes. The scene of David and Bathsheba involves adulterous sin, but David experiences forgiveness. Moreover, near the tapestries Dimmesdale situates his library, "rich with parchment-bound folios of the Fathers, and the lore of Rabbis, and monkish erudition, of which the Protestant divines, even while they vilified and decried that class of writers, were yet constrained often to avail themselves" (113). Hawthorne could not make more plain his view of the dependence of Puritan religion on early and medieval church sources associated with Catholicism—Patristic theologians, rabbis whose works were read by such medieval theologians as Thomas Aquinas, and monks. Protestant theologians often resorted to these sources. When Dimmesdale, exhausted by study and by self-punishment, falls

asleep at noon, occasioning Chillingworth's sick joy at discovering evidence on Dimmesdale's bosom that confirms his long-harbored suspicion about Dimmesdale's complicity with Hester, his sleep has been brought about by his poring over "a large black-letter volume" (124). Hawthorne slyly comments that "[i]t must have been a work of vast ability in the somniferous school of literature" (124) and goes on to note the depth of Dimmesdale's slumber. Whatever the text which wrought this enchantment-like state in Dimmesdale, like Dante falling asleep before his trip with Virgil through the Inferno, Dimmesdale has fallen asleep and had some sort of vision. After his sleep, Dimmesdale experiences a range of temptation vaster than his own adultery. Also, Hawthorne may be suggesting indirectly that the Protestant divines slumber in their seeming lack of awareness of their dependency on and appropriation of medieval Catholic theology. Finally, Dimmesdale's reliance on patristic commentary may suggest a less masculine construction of his character than was considered appropriate for a nineteenth-century Protestant minister. Dimmesdale's spiritual investment in patristic writers, combined with his beloved status in his Puritan congregation, makes him part of Hawthorne's ironic examination of Puritan thought and practice. To sum up, in The Scarlet Letter Hawthorne identifies imaginatively with the anonymous Papist in the crowd who looks kindly upon Hester and her infant on the platform. Hawthorne's narrator examines Hester's and Pearl's shared plight with sympathetic insight by relating them to medieval and Renaissance Catholic religious art and to the sheer force of color. Opposed to them is the dazzling white of Puritan purity and spirit and the black darkness of its judgments, rendered visible by its clothing.

## The Marble Faun

Hawthorne's concerns in The Marble Faun are more explicitly and thoroughly Catholic. Character, plot, setting, theme, and narrative commentary center on Catholicism. Of the four main characters, Donatello, Miriam, Kenyon, and Hilda, Donatello is Catholic and is the title character. Hilda is referred to as a Puritan or daughter of Puritans, yet the novel raises the question as to whether she has Catholic leanings and to what extent. The plot focuses on Miriam being followed by a sinister, mysterious character called the Model, who turns out to be a monk and who is murdered by Donatello. The Italian setting of the 1850s is Catholic, which is made clear by the presence of wayside shrines, statues of Popes, St. Peter's, Catholic popular cultural events, and museums containing medieval and Renaissance Catholic art, as well as by references to contemporary Papal/Italian political events and conflicts. Hawthorne's habitual preoccupation with sin, guilt, and repentance are present, but in this novel he broods on a number of theological issues central to Catholic thinking, including the efficacy of Confession as a sacrament of forgiveness, and the deep issue of whether sin is necessary to knowledge and redemption. The latter doctrine is referred to in Catholic theology as *Felix culpa*, or the blessed fault or fortunate fall, explained by Thomas Aquinas as an example of the fact that a greater good can issue forth from an evil, and as reflected in the Latin *Exsultet* of the Easter Vigil. It is discussed in these general terms by Kenyon and Hilda in the novel. Finally, the narrator makes numerous comments on medieval and Renaissance religious art. Creating an extended meditation on the burden of history, the narrator specifically broods on Rome's pervasive reminders of the Catholic

religious past, including depictions of shrines, statues, churches, religious art, festivals, and devotional practices. He asks whether and how the elements of the past have relevance to the present.

Catholic religious practices are intended to enact ritually the idea that sin involves a struggle against temptation and evil and that help is at hand. Among the aesthetic dimensions of Catholic religious practice is music. An example from The Marble Faun is the recitation or singing of the *De Profundis*, based on Psalm 130, habitually read in Catholic burial services before Vatican II. The Psalm expresses in a plaintive cry the abject lowliness of the sinner and the sinner's complete dependence on God's mercy. When Miriam, Donatello, and Kenyon go to the Church of the Capuchins, they hear from a deep part of the church the "lugubrious strain of a 'De Profundis,'" a sound which is said to "rumble" and "ooze up among the flat grave-stones and sad epitaphs, filling the church as with a gloomy mist" (142). As an expression of the Model's guilty complicity in his own murder, it is an aptly mournful sound. However, Hawthorne's ambivalence towards the effectiveness of the sung or chanted *De Profundis* is evident from the way he describes the gloomy penetration of the lugubrious music into the church atmosphere.

If rituals such as funeral practices, sacramental Confession, and exorcisms allow for the expression of the sinner's battle against evil, religious art also can give inspirational comfort to the viewer and may drive the penitent viewer to change. But this changed orientation is not a necessity, as Hawthorne's characters make clear from their own critiques of various religious art works, and as Hawthorne's narrator also makes clear. Hawthorne's characters and his narrator offer a variety of critiques of medieval

and Renaissance religious art work, including depictions of the Madonna and Child. The narrator's ambivalence is crucial to understanding Hawthorne's own critique.

Guido Reni's *St. Michael Trampling the Devil* was a tourist attraction for nineteenth-century tourists and one that "has emblematic importance in Hawthorne's plot" (Manning 368). Miriam, Donatello, and Kenyon view Reni's painting towards the end of their tour of the Church of the Capuchins. Kenyon comments on the absent Hilda's admiration for the Archangel's "'heavenly severity'" (143) of expression at the possible contamination that comes from having to touch sin, even to triumph over it. Miriam is severely critical of the picture, finding the Angel too neat and physically undefiled for having undergone a "'death-struggle with Evil'" (143). She goes on to describe what the combat-weary Angel should look like, in her mental revision of the painting, including torn feathers, bloodied, broken sword, gashes on St. Michael's own face, and St. Michael pressing hard on Satan, with a fierce yet holy look around the Angel's eyes. Miriam's criticism is based on her belief that the struggle with evil does not occur without a partial vanquishing of even the victor.

The narrator's views of Italian religious art draw upon Hawthorne's own sojourn in Italy and the material from his Italian notebooks. Some of the narrator's musings are significant for what they say about the relevance of religion in the present of the novel and about the burden of history. The narrator's sweeping survey of Roman history goes back to the pre-history regarding the fallen angels in Genesis; he settles on Guido Reni's 1630s depiction of this apocalyptic battle between St. Michael and the Devil to reinforce his theme about sin. When the narrator considers the "faded frescoes" (237) of Giotto,

Cimabue, Ghirlandaio, or Pinturicchio, he considers them in their original context and in their nineteenth-century context. He speculates that originally they were “[g]lowing on the church-walls, [when] they might be looked upon as symbols of the living spirit that made Catholicism a true religion, and that glorified it as long as it retained a genuine life; they filled the transepts with a radiant throng of Saints and Angels, and threw around the high altar a faint reflection . . . of a Diviner Presence” (237). In their current state of deterioration, the narrator believes that the best any artist could do is to white-wash the walls, ridding the viewer of these “pathetic relics” (237).

Hawthorne varies between direct narrator comment on art and character comment on art. In a scene in Perugia, Kenyon invites Donatello to view some pictures by Fra Angelico. Through this scene, Hawthorne uses art to continue his thematic contrast between Miriam’s and Donatello’s discovery of personal intellectual and spiritual depths through sin and repentance vs. Hilda’s rigid purity. Donatello comments in a vein similar to Miriam’s on the Guido Reni portrait of St. Michael when he suggests that Fra Angelico’s angels and saints have never experienced temptation. Kenyon realizes at once that the very unruffled innocence of Fra Angelico’s work is the basis for Hilda’s admiration of it. Hilda’s own fragility as a thinker and as a copyist is suggested by an old artist she has encountered in one of the Roman galleries. He predicts that one day he will see her “[a] heap of white ashes . . . in front of the divine Raphael’s picture of the Madonna di Foligno. Nothing more, upon my word! The fire, which the poor child feels so fervently, will have gone into her innermost, and burnt her quite up!” (261). Hilda

thinks of this immolation as a “happy martyrdom” (261), yet it suggests Hawthorne’s criticism of Hilda as lacking depth.

Hilda’s weariness at the sight of the Italian picture galleries reflects Hawthorne’s reservations about Italian Catholic religious art. Her weariness also demonstrates Hawthorne’s self-admitted limitation in knowledge and taste for visual art. Millicent Bell refers to “Hawthorne’s naïve aesthetic observations concerning such subjects as the propriety of nudity in sculpture” (355). Susan Manning goes a step further in referring to what she calls “a not-altogether-disowned and robust philistinism which refused to be impressed” (xxxiv). Manning suggests that Hawthorne’s habitual outlook was shaken by his encounter with “European ‘Culture’” (xxxiv-xxxvi). Hawthorne’s narrator comments that when the “icy Demon of Weariness, who haunts great picture-galleries” (262) strikes the viewer, the result is an eradication of the preference for much Italian religious art. The work of Dutch artists depicting domestic still life—of Teniers, Douw, and Van Mieris—comes to be seen as superior to the Italians. He complains that there is too much repetition in their art, including “Virgins and Infant Christs, repeated over and over again, in pretty much an identical spirit” (262). He adds a complaint that “[h]alf of the other pictures are Magdalens, Flights into Egypt, Crucifixions, Depositions from the Cross, Pietas, Noli-me-tangeres, or the Sacrifice of Abraham, or Martyrdoms of Saints” (263). He objects that the models who sat for the depictions of the Virgin were the mistresses of the artists, and he expresses his mistrustful disgust as a self-evident doubt: “And who can trust the religious sentiment of Raphael, or receive any of his Virgins as Heaven-descended likenesses, after seeing, for example, the Fornarina of the Barberini

palace, and feeling how sensual the artist must have been, to paint such a brazen trollop of his own accord, and lovingly!" (263). The narrator rushes to withdraw this comment, upon reflection on other Cherubs, Angels, and Madonnas by Raphael (263). However, based on the rhetorical figure of apophasis (defined by Lanham as "pretending to deny what is really affirmed" 183), the comment made so emphatically and fully cannot be withdrawn by a simple, less vigorous denial. The narrator shows that he shares Hilda's heritage of Puritanism, a legacy that affects their viewing of Italian art and tempers their capacity to appreciate it fully.

Hilda's weariness in the picture galleries and the narrator's preference for Dutch still life art of the seventeenth century over Italian Renaissance art may reflect the Protestant shaping of Hawthorne's aesthetic sensibility. Art historian Norman Bryson stresses the link between seventeenth-century Dutch still life painting, the Dutch nation's material wealth, and Calvinist theology, in a chapter entitled "Abundance" (96-135). Bryson calls attention in particular to the Calvinist imagination in the *Vanitas* paintings and the emphasis on wealth, as well as the painterly virtuosity evident in Kalf's *Still Life with Nautilus Cup*. Bryson contrasts the Dutch celebration of abundance with the work of Cotan and Zurbaran, both informed by a Spanish sensibility. Cotan's work in particular represents its roots in Spanish Carthusian monasticism (70); the artist approaches each work in the same disciplined way of self-abnegation, whereas the Dutch artists emphasize lushness in colors and in the economic success implied by having many flowers from different seasons blooming on one canvas. Hawthorne's admiration for the brass pots of Teniers, Douw, and Van Mieris over Italian Renaissance art represents the



possibility that Hawthorne was affected by aggressive nineteenth-century American capitalism.

In spite of Hawthorne's ambivalent views on Italian religious art, his narrator does concede that some Italian artists deserve a high reputation, in part because they have united their own religious spirit with that of their art. The narrator says of Perugino that he "was evidently a devout man; and the Virgin, therefore, revealed herself to him in loftier and sweeter faces of celestial womanhood . . . than even the genius of Raphael could imagine" (264). He comments that Sodoma's fresco "at Siena, of Christ bound to a pillar" (265) is the work of an artist who "beyond a question, both prayed and wept, while painting his fresco" (264). When Hilda needs to see this painting again, the narrator comments on its combined characteristics of exhaustion, loneliness, and yet divinity. His ultimate praise is that "Sodoma, in this matchless picture, has done more towards reconciling the incongruity of Divine Omnipotence and outraged, suffering Humanity, combined in one person, than the theologians ever did" (265). By this assessment of Sodoma, Hawthorne reveals his sense that the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement are, perhaps, beyond adequate theologizing and verbalizing, but can be rendered sublimely in visual art.

Hilda's desire to see this picture is all the more odd since she is unable to understand the doctrine of *Felix culpa* celebrated in the Easter Vigil, the belief that the happy fault of Adam brought mankind the birth and work of Redemption of Christ. Hawthorne opposes the confraternity of the guilty with Hilda's lack of moral blemish. Miriam even says to Hilda, "'You have no sin, nor any conception of what it is'" (163),

yet adds by way of terrible qualification, ““and therefore you are so terribly severe! As an angel, you are not amiss; but, as a human creature, and a woman among earthly men and women, you need a sin to soften you!”” (163). Like the wine at Mount Beni, which loses its taste and color, all its sensuous appeal, if it is carried away from its Tuscan origins, Hilda seems insipid when transported from America to a country with an ancient history. Thus, she needs to return to America, where she and Kenyon can confidently go forward as parents of a new generation of Americans.

Hawthorne takes an intertwined aesthetic and theological approach to the question of remedies for sin. He acknowledges the existence of Catholic remedies for the suffering soul in the chapter “Altars and Incense.” He says, “There is no one want or weakness of human nature, for which Catholicism will own itself without a remedy; cordials, certainly, it possesses in abundance, and sedatives, in inexhaustible variety, and what may once have been genuine medicaments, though a little the worse for long keeping” (268). The title of the chapter suggests the sensual appeal of incense to sight and smell. The word “cordials” suggests something sweet to taste. The comment hints at a longing for a Catholic remedy, which was once “genuine” and is only bruised by its association with a tarnished Catholic history. An historically earlier example of one remedy is the beneficent statue of Pope Julius III, which Miriam associates with blessing, and whose “kindly, yet authoritative” demeanor is described in positive terms in the chapter “Market-Day in Perugia.” Julius’s pointing “right hand was raised and spread abroad, as if in the act of shedding forth a benediction, which every man (so broad, so wise, and so serenely affectionate, was the bronze Pope’s regard) might hope to feel

quietly descending upon the need, or the distress, that he had closest at his heart” (245). Even Kenyon thinks that the dead Pope’s blessing has fallen upon Donatello and done him good. The narrator discusses at some length the Pope’s beneficent surveillance of the marketplace. In the chapter that immediately follows, “The Bronze Pontiff’s Benediction,” all three friends imagine that the Pope’s blessing descends upon them, and the narration suggests that a reconciliation between the alienated lovers Miriam and Donatello is achieved at least in part through the good offices of the bronze Pope’s extended hand.

The symbolic link between Hilda and the Virgin is clear and has been commented on by many critics. Among the remedies which assuage the suffering Hilda are her maintaining the lamp at the Virgin’s shrine (259). The link, though, is partial—it always emphasizes Hilda’s purity but not maternity. In St. Peter’s Hilda wanders towards a shrine showing a copy of Guido Reni’s picture of St. Michael defeating the devil. After praying there, she finds another shrine, one showing *The Burial and Reception in Heaven of St. Petronilla* (274). Catholic legend identifies St. Petronilla as the daughter of St. Peter (Butler 274), believed by Catholics to be buried below St. Peter’s Cathedral in Rome (Butler 199). Hilda pauses at this shrine and wonders if she can “look down upon what she was, just as Petronilla in the picture looked at her own corpse” (274). Hilda’s act of mental projection is granted to her in the next chapter, when she seeks another Catholic remedy, that of Confession. This episode has been commented on by Olivia Gatti Taylor, who notes that Hawthorne “seems to favor the traditionally Catholic approach, one which centers on the vocalization or ‘exhalation’ of sins in secret” (145),

maintaining the sinner's individuality. In an afterthought expressed to Kenyon, the priest who has heard Hilda's confession predicts that she may yet end a Catholic, "clad in the shining white robe of the true faith!" (323).

As a kind of postscript to the whole novel, Hilda and Kenyon go to the Pantheon, and even Kenyon reflects on the reason Catholics pray to the saints as intercessors. Yet Hilda remains what she is, in all her spotless purity and limited compassion for others not as good as she is. In the concluding chapter, she even refuses to agree with Kenyon that sin is "merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained" (357). When Kenyon goes on to pose the question, "Did Adam fall, that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier Paradise than his?" (357), Hilda expresses a temptation to weep at the thought that Kenyon actually considered such a thing. For Hilda, then, the matter of Adam—Americans as a new people in a New World—described by R. W. B. Lewis is simply a matter of a freshness, not of a second chance after a nearly fatal flaw.

Hawthorne has been careful to point out weaknesses in both Protestant and Catholic perspectives on history and personal life. For those Protestants who think the way the Puritan Hilda does, the limitation is a lack of understanding or of theological depth represented by her cruel behavior towards Miriam, the inconsistency of her keeping the shrine of the Virgin and going to confession, and the limits of her reasoning in her discussion of weighty theological matters with Miriam and Kenyon; for Catholics the limitation is a tainted church history heavily tinged with scandal and represented in the novel by gothic images of corruption and decay that appear in catacomb scenes and the

open coffin display of the Model's body after his murder. It should be noted that Kenyon's thought is much broader than Hilda's, but his embrace of their common future means that he will be forced to compromise his broad-mindedness. The signs of his forced narrowing occur in the closing pages of the novel.

Hawthorne joins his fellow romancers James Fenimore Cooper and Catharine Maria Sedgwick in depicting the Puritan fear of Catholicism as a displacement of nineteenth-century American worries about Catholicism. Like Hope Leslie, The Scarlet Letter uses a seventeenth-century setting, colonialism and indigenous people as foreground and background. The Scarlet Letter is heavily invested in the presentation of the Sabbath, Anne Hutchinson, John Eliot, Election Day, atheism and other moral crimes such as adultery or witchcraft punishable by the state, threats of Indian revolt, Indian powwows, native medicines, Indian captives. Hawthorne continues to meditate on the meaning of Puritanism in The Marble Faun, though he gives the events in that novel a contemporary and international setting. In creating a nineteenth-century memory of seventeenth and eighteenth-century America, he raises questions about whether violations of religious uniformity are serious and threatening and posits European Roman Catholicism as an entity against which identity can be constructed.

#### Henry James

##### Roderick Hudson

Henry James's first novel, Roderick Hudson, and William Dean Howells's Indian Summer both make reference, either direct or indirect, to Hawthorne's The Marble Faun. In Howells's novel, two characters look at a copy of Hawthorne's novel (218). In

James's novel, the reference is more subtle. Leon Edel says that James "seemed to be taking up where Hawthorne had left off in The Marble Faun" (ix). The connection consists of characters who are artists, characters who are Puritans, a removal from Massachusetts to Rome, and a thematic similarity. Edel describes the common features, beginning with The Marble Faun:

That novel had carried Hawthorne from Salem and Boston to Rome; and in Rome he had sketched an American artist-group. But it was the work of a man who discovered the Eternal City late in life, too late, and who saw it with rural eyes. Hawthorne was both enchanted and ill-at-ease in Papal Rome. James seemed to have asked himself: what if a younger American, as sensitive as Hawthorne, had come to Rome from the same provincial horizons—younger, and aflame with artistic dreams and hopes, looking with the brazen eyes of his youth rather than those of tired middle age upon the Forum and the Capitol in which past and present, Pagan and Christian, melted together; with the heaped up centuries on all sides, the villas and the palaces, the statutes and the gardens, the signatures of old pomps and old cruelties? What if, in this world, one should place a young, inexperienced, passionate American who wants to create and live, be bold and free and pursue the bright hope of fame and glory? (ix-x)

The similarity in characters and settings between Hawthorne and James underscores their shared themes relating to art and Catholicism. My discussion of James will concentrate on the difference between European and American art as informed by religion.

James's use of Catholic material in such works as Roderick Hudson and The Portrait of a Lady reflects his awareness of Americans traveling in Europe to Catholic sites and collecting Catholic art. James recognized that after the Civil War Americans were becoming more generally aware of Catholic liturgy and aesthetics through exposure to these aspects of Catholicism both here and abroad. U.S. citizens were traveling abroad in record numbers after the Civil War. Lears points out that by 1873, 25,000 American tourists were going to Europe each year (186). Americans used books such as The Marble Faun as tourist guidebooks. Cathedrals became "relics of a cult of taste" (Lears 186).

In Roderick Hudson, the central character goes to Rome full of enthusiasm for his sculpture, seemingly full of talent and potential, but becomes dissipated in contact with people and events in Rome, and then is unable to work productively. When his mother and his fiancée come from Northampton, Massachusetts, sent for by his friend Rowland Mallet, to try to rescue him from his metaphorical slough, one measure of his distance from his roots occurs in the extended conversation with the women during their visit to St. Peter's Cathedral.

Roderick believes Rome to be brimming with living and dead presences, contained in its art, even its ruins, and its population, including "beggars, monks" (219). He declares that what they are seeing are "the results of an immemorial, a complex and accumulated, civilisation" (219). His fiancée, Mary, says she is afraid of those words, and declares that she would never change, even if as an artist's wife she has ten years' exposure to the beautiful things of Rome. She declares that the "heart of New England"

is what has made her, and she refuses to be seduced by this “so strangely-mixed Roman [civilization]” (220). In referring to the mixture of Rome, Mary speaks for the American view of Catholicism described by Ray Allen Billington in his study of antebellum America. Billington says that one of the objectives of the anti-Catholic propagandists was to demonstrate that “Catholicism was not Christianity, but an idolatrous religion” (351). For Mary, the mixture in Rome of pagan and Christian culture is a residue of paganism that contaminates Catholicism and renders it un-Christian.

The accusation of paganism leveled against Catholicism is not dropped. Roderick’s mother and Mary disdain the prospect of kissing “that dreadful brass toe” (220) of the statue of St. Peter as a “heathenish” custom (220). Roderick’s mother uses a strategy often used by characters in James’s fiction to lessen the impact of an encounter with Catholic culture. She reduces the statue to its materiality in an attempt to distance and deny its attraction: “If I could only have kept our door-knocker at Northampton as bright as that!” (220). Mrs. Hudson’s resistance only goads Roderick into stronger, more frontal attacks on Puritanism. He rebukes his mother by saying that the kissing of the toe is “sublimier than anything that *your* religion asks you to do!” (220). Mary attempts to blunt Roderick’s comment by speaking of the religious duties she shares with Mrs. Hudson. This provokes Roderick’s most direct attack on Puritanism. He says:

The duty of sitting in a whitewashed meeting-house and listening to a nasal Puritan! I admit that’s difficult. But it’s not sublime. I’m speaking of ceremonies, of magnificent forms. It’s in my line, you know, to make



much of magnificent forms. I think this a very interesting case of a grand form. Couldn't you do it? (220)

Quietly true to her principles, Mary refuses to kiss the toe of the brass statue of St. Peter. Roderick responds by celebrating the Catholic emphasis on ceremony and form. He has previously remarked enthusiastically on the beggars as being part of the life with which Rome is “impregnated” (219). After Mary refuses the act of obeisance to the statue, they see “a squalid, savage-looking peasant, a tattered ruffian of the most orthodox Italian aspect . . . performing his devotions before it” and turning away to make the sign of the cross (221). Mrs. Hudson recoils in horror, rejecting the peasant for thinking “he’s as good as anyone” (221). Immediately after the beggar’s appearance, the beautiful Christina Light, the proximate cause of Roderick’s literal and symbolic downfall, kisses the statue’s toe and touches it with her forehead. Roderick enjoys the joining of peasant and princess in the ceremony as an indicator of the universality of Catholicism. The living, whether peasant or princess, are equal in the ceremonial exaltation of the honored dead.

Roderick, under the enchantment of Christina, has sculpted an image of her. As someone of interest to a sculptor in his professional life, Christina is sharply contrasted with Mary. When Rowland Mallet first sees Mary, she appears to him tall, straight, maidenly, plain, with “features [that] were bravely irregular” (52). The summing up of her appearance is that “[s]he wore a scanty white dress and had a vaguely rustic, provincial air; she looked like a distinguished villager. She was evidently a girl of extreme personal force, but she lacked pliancy” (52). She is “hemming a kitchen towel

with the aid of a large steel thimble” (52). Mary’s image, then, is that of someone domestic and retiring, someone with a personal force that is never really explained, little demonstrated, and tested by Roderick’s death.

Mary’s plain appearance is matched by her plainness in speech and thought. She is depicted in character as simple (287) and never pretends not to be so, in spite of the view of the enamored observer, Rowland Mallet, that “she had really a finer sense of human things and had made more, for observation and for temper, of her scant material of experience, than Christina had ever made of the stuff of *her* wild weaving” (287). Mary’s father, grandfather, and brother are ministers (54), but she denies Rowland’s reference to them as ““a race of theologians”” (66), preferring to say of her family’s theological position, ““We don’t take a very firm stand upon doctrine; we’re practical and active rather; we haven’t time to find reasons and phrases. We write sermons and preach them, but we do a great deal of hard work besides” (67). As a philosophical statement of doctrine, Mary’s position sounds as if she is describing her own understanding of what would later come to be known as Pragmatism, associated with William James. In Mary’s view, wording and firmness of position are not important; what is important is activity and practicality. She emphasizes the balance of sermons with work. This sounds very much like William James’s test of truth (Horn 73) as being whether a thing succeeds (leads one on a path out of the woods), not whether, in Scholastic terms, there is a correspondence between formulation in the mind and reality. Thomas E. Woods says that “William James and John Dewey . . . were skeptical of the efforts of traditional philosophy to attain absolutely true knowledge. Pragmatism, based as it was on human

experience, sought to render philosophy more democratic and individualistic; James even called it ‘philosophic Protestantism’” (7). Although Pragmatism can be a subtle tool of analysis, as Jason Gary Horn has demonstrated in his work on Mark Twain and William James, in Mary’s version of it, its simplicity and practicality are most prominent.

In the closing paragraphs of Roderick Hudson, in an explicitly aesthetic metaphor echoing the ending of Thackeray’s Vanity Fair, Rowland Mallet contemplates the feeling of emptiness and waste. Just after Roderick’s tragic plunge off the Swiss mountain has been discovered, with the mountain itself described as lifting “its blank and stony face above [Roderick’s body]” (332), the narrator says, “Now that all was over Rowland understood how up to the brim, for two years, his personal world had been filled. It looked to him at present as void and blank and sinister as a theatre bankrupt and closed” (333). The waste Rowland describes seems to be matched by that of the patient and stoical Mary, who ends by living out her days “under the New England elms” (334) with her would-be mother-in-law, Mrs. Hudson. The latter was introduced to the reader as a “small, softly-desperate woman,” wearing no cap, but nevertheless smoothing and confining her auburn hair “with Puritanic precision” (51-52). Mary remains “inscrutably civil” to Rowland when he calls on her in New England at the end of the novel.

Although Rowland aided her trip back to America, and although Mary recognizes that she is continuing to use him, she wants only to talk of Roderick, a subject never tiring to the young woman, and a subject Rowland never talks of anywhere else (334). This is part of the waste Rowland describes.

In spite of Rowland Mallet's attraction to Mary as a person of quiet substance, she does not come across to the reader as a compelling or even mildly interesting character. James himself admits as much in his Preface to the 1909 edition. He says of Rowland Mallet, whose consciousness he takes to be the "center of interest throughout" the novel (16), "The ironic effect of his having fallen in love with the girl who is herself in love with Roderick . . . remains happier than my execution of it; which should logically have involved the reader's being put into position to take more closely home the impression made by Mary Garland" (17). He goes on to say that although he tried "later patching-up of the girl's figure" (17), it "has not been skillfully enough taken" (17), that she does not end up appearing "irresistible" (17), and is unconvincing (18).

Unlike the Protestant Mary Garland, the Catholic Christina Light is introduced as a magnetic personality with a striking appearance. She is a fit dramatic subject for Roderick Hudson's unusual sculptural conceptions, since earlier he has spoken of making "a ripping Christ . . . very different from the Christ of tradition; more—more—" (87) and a handsome Cain "lift[ing] up the murderous club with the beautiful movement of the fighters in the Greek friezes who are chopping at their enemies" (88). When Roderick and Rowland first see Christina, they are struck by her beauty and her "great snow-white poodle" (108). Her beauty is "dazzling," and she describes her dog as "handsomer than the people" in Florence (109). The beauty of the dog reflects that of its mistress. It responds to her Italian commands to smile and gives its "hand to the kind gentleman" (109). The narrator describes the dog's white head as looking "like one of those little pads in swan's-down for applying powder to the face" (110). Rowland

perceives the girl as “not a person of a feeble understanding” (110), in spite of her interest in her dog. He thinks of her as interesting, as speaking with a “vague foreign accent” (110). Her beauty makes Rowland wonder about her ancestry, for it “had, in spite of her youth, an air of longer history than consorts, in general, with the rather extemporized look of American loveliness” (110). Christina is described as very fair, having magnificent hair and blue-grey eyes, resembling a divinity (121). She is more exotic, evidently with a longer lineage, than American freshness and spontaneity would allow for. Unlike Mary Garland, plying her sewing needle on kitchen towels and once teaching ““some small children their lessons”” (67), Christina Light seems to have been made, or rather to have been brought up, to be looked at. When Roderick asks to make a bust of her, Christina complains of having spent ““half my life sitting for my photograph, in every conceivable attitude and with every conceivable coiffure. It seems to me I’ve posed enough”” (113). Her mother, who has an eye on Christina’s marriageability, makes becoming a princess the sole purpose of Christina’s education. Christina’s mother advises her that ““it may be one’s duty to pose!”” (113). Rowland Mallet speculates that Christina’s education may mean the ability to speak ““three or four languages and [to have] read several hundred French novels”” (117). When Mary Garland sees Christina Light in St. Peter’s, she exclaims, ““You told me . . . that Rome contained some of the most beautiful things in the world. This surely is one of them!”” (221). Rowland confirms the view that ““[s]he’s the most beautiful girl in Europe . . .”” (221).

Just as Mary Garland is associated with Puritanism through her family ancestry, her plainness of appearance and speech, her devotion to her mother-in-law, and the

simplicity of explanation of her faith, Christina is associated with Catholicism. Her Catholicism is weak and watery when viewed from the perspective of American Catholic writers of the period, as well as from the perspective of the American converts Orestes Brownson and Isaac Hecker. However, Catholicism is manifested in her conversation, in her behavior in St. Peter's, in her half-Italian parentage, in her cosmopolitanism, and in her suitability as a spouse to Prince Casamassima. In commenting on Rowland Mallet's admiration for Christina's "impulse. . . audacity, the restless questioning temperament," Edwin S. Fussell says, "Those who regard Christina Light, as I tend to do (within limits), as James' quintessential Catholic must surely admire the audacity of his impulse, for these are not traits normally attributed to Catholics by non-Catholics—quite the reverse" (75). One recalls here Richard Hofstadter's criticism of American Catholics, under Irish rather than French or German influence, for a non-questioning, non-intellectual attitude toward life (Giles 51-52). One is left, then, with what to make of Fussell's claim that Christina Light is James's "quintessential Catholic." To discuss this point, some background about James's eventual revisions of his text is needed.

In a striking change from the 1875 version of the novel, the 1907-1909 New York Edition alters James's conception of Christina as having become a Catholic convert around the time of the group's encounter in St. Peter's, to presenting her as born and raised Catholic (see Fussell's discussion of this point, 77-79). Fussell sums up his explanation of the change as follows: "Christina Light has always been a Catholic, she is a cradle Catholic, she is the very negation of a convert, she can't possibly be converted because she already *is*. She is not a Catholic convert—not, *not*, NOT" ( 79).

Accordingly, all traces of Christina's Catholic conversion are deleted, and her status as a hot-and-cold Romanist is substituted. It appears that Henry James in 1907 desired that no special attention be drawn to the origins of his novelistic career in the curious business of writing conversion narratives. Watch and Ward had long since been forgotten, he probably believed, and the Italian tales dealing with conversion were also far in the past. All that remained was to "'fix'" Christina Light, which he accordingly did" (79). However, Fussell issues a sort of challenge to James and to readers of James in the following statement: "But if you achieve the status of a Great Writer it is no use trying to cover your tracks; your earliest publications will be brought to the light, read, studied, and pondered, and what was once there will be there still, simple matter of fact" (79).

Fussell's challenge is partially answered by the author himself, in his Preface to the 1909 edition. James speaks of the "law of antithesis" governing his conception:

The difficulty had been from the first that I required my antithesis—my antithesis to Christina Light, one of the main terms of the subject. One is ridden by the law that antithesis, to be efficient, shall be both direct and complete. Directness seemed to fail unless Mary should be, so to speak, "plain," Christina being essentially so "coloured"; and completeness seemed to fail unless she too should have her potency. She could moreover, by which I mean the antithetic young woman could, perfectly have had it; only success would have been then in the narrator's art to attest it. Christina's own presence and action are, on the other hand, I think, all firm ground; the truth probably being that the ideal antithesis

rarely does “come off,” and that it has to content itself for the most part with a strong term and a weak term, and even then to feel itself lucky. (18)

James’s own discussion describes his desired effect of contrasting two young women, one “plain” and one “coloured.” Mary’s plainness consists in her ancestry, appearance, character, philosophy, religion, and destiny. Christina as a coloured figure (here recall Jenny Franchot’s metaphor of plain white glass for Protestant churches and stained glass for Catholic churches and for Hester and Pearl) is likewise related to her appearance, heritage, background, and beliefs. Christina’s appearance can be so various that on one occasion she can be compared to “some immaculate saint of legend being led to martyrdom” (125) when her hair is down, an image emphasizing her Catholicism; on another to ““a sorceress”” (242), Rowland’s comment recalling the criticism of Catholicism for its pagan roots; and on yet another occasion to ““a terribly explosive force”” (253) in her putative ability to resist an order from the Pope (252). Mary’s consistency is upended and upstaged by Christina’s complexity. James himself was so pleased with the conception of her character that in his Preface to the New York Edition he uses an image of beauty, though admittedly a magical, almost mechanistic beauty, to describe his feelings about her: “I remember at all events feeling, toward the end of Roderick, that the Princess Casamassima had been launched, that wound-up with the right silver key, she would go on a certain time by the motion communicated; thanks to which I knew the pity, the real pang of losing sight of her” (18).

If Christina Light had been a Catholic convert, readers would have placed certain expectations on the novelist. Well-known nineteenth-century Catholic converts, such as



Orestes Brownson, Sophia Ripley, and Fr. Isaac Hecker, were noted for their fervor, devotion, and advocacy of Catholicism. Further, some dramatization of why and how Christina's conversion came about would be needed. In Fussell's analysis, James did not wish to write a conversion novel; in James's own analysis of his antithesis between Mary Garland and Christina Light, a conversion did not fit his eventual conception of Christina Light as, if not exactly a lukewarm Catholic, a thinking but passive Catholic with regard to religious observance. Paul Giles draws the contrast in the following terms:

Protestantism foregrounds the importance of free choice, individual conscience, and individual belief, while Catholicism places more emphasis upon a (religious or artistic) tradition which necessarily incorporates and objectifies the individual, with his or her own particular attitude toward that tradition being of secondary importance . . . [;] while Protestantism chooses to emphasize conscious belief, Catholicism stresses altogether vaguer conceptions of "the Faith." (15)

Christina and especially her mother also seem to be part of another phenomenon described by Giles in his discussion of The Golden Bowl. He says, "In James, as in Cooper, Catholicism becomes almost inescapably associated with Old World patterns of Machiavellian corruption and guileful behavior." (45)

The guileful behavior is depicted in James as an aesthetic instinct governing behavior, a kind of theatricalism in real life. Christina's mother has aimed her whole life as a mother at seeing Christina married into wealth and title. She realizes that titles and hereditary wealth are not that easy to come by, and that Christina had better take the offer

given to her by Prince Casamassima. Christina's mother plays a game too deep for Roderick Hudson. She has concealed for all the years of Christina's life the true story of her parentage. When she reveals to Christina that it is the devoted, wizened, Italian hanger-on, a man who has an old Roman fire in his eyes and "the social discipline of a thousand years" (140), the Cavaliere, who is her real father, she also clearly conveys to Christina that she ought to be grateful to the Prince for his devotion to her, and that an impecunious and failing artist like Roderick Hudson will be miserably poor, and his mate will be so, too. The Prince's Cardinal uncle had him locked up to try to prevent his marriage to Christina (164). The moves by other players, especially by Christina's mother, pressure Christina to make the choice for riches that her desire for beautiful things requires.

Not everyone in the novel finds Christina Light as irresistible as Roderick does, or as James himself did. Rowland Mallet never succumbs to Christina Light in Roderick's extravagant, self-destructive way. Leon Edel suggests that Roderick and Rowland stand for different sides of Henry James—Roderick is the impetuous, passionate artist who risks all for his conceptions and his love; Rowland, more thoughtful, more reticent, the outsider and observer, is "all decorous caution and New England conscience" (xiii). Rowland does not succumb because he assumes a posture of detachment from the beginning and never gives it up. He holds at arm's length things associated with Catholicism, studying them as aesthetic objects only. For example, early in the visit to Rome, "amid dropped curtains and the scattered gleam of firelight upon polished carvings and mellow paintings, the two friends [i.e., Rowland and Roderick] sat with

their heads together, criticizing intaglios and etchings, water-colour drawings and illuminated missals” (78). Christina compliments him for his combination of artistic and prosaic tastes: “[Y]ou have what is called a ‘catholic’ taste, and yet you’re full of obstinate little prejudices and preferences which, if I knew you, I should find very tiresome” (119). Although the expression “catholic taste” has multiple meanings, including the secular ones connoting universality, in the context of the novel it is a loaded term ironically apt for Rowland. Only a little after this encounter with Christina, Rowland muses on why he does not convert. His thought about Catholicism is reminiscent of Mark Twain’s criticism of the possessiveness of Catholic churches as suggesting that Christ was crucified in one of them. Rowland thinks, “[If] . . . one tacitly concedes to the Roman Church the monopoly of a guarantee of immortality, . . . if one is indisposed to bargain with her for the precious gift one must do without it altogether” (121). In his chance encounter with Christina in the church of St. Cecilia, where he has come to admire a polished statue, a meeting which occurs before their later meeting in St. Peter’s, Rowland explicitly tells Christina that he has always, even since being in Rome, looked at the “‘Faith simply from the outside. I don’t see an opening as big as your finger-nail where I could creep into it!’” (185). When Christina asks him about his beliefs, he says he believes “‘in the grand old English Bible’” (185).

It was suggested above that in Roderick Hudson James takes up the Puritan-Catholic antithesis where Hawthorne left off. Leon Edel is right to say that James looks at the opposition from a fresher, more cosmopolitan point of view than does Hawthorne. In this early novel, James acknowledges the grandeur of St. Peter’s. He also opposes two

key female Puritan and Catholic characters as aesthetic principles in a way that weighs heavily on behalf of the Catholic character, at least for beauty and for interest if not for stability of character. A main character and commentator, Rowland Mallet, is not susceptible in the least to conversion to Catholicism or to any form of Christianity, being contented with an aesthetic stance towards life.

### The Portrait of a Lady

In The Portrait of a Lady (1881), James's presentation of Catholicism is not foregrounded as significantly as it is in Roderick Hudson. Catholic aesthetic matters include a visit to St. Peter's, the way in which Catholic aestheticism reflects Isabel's thinking, and Osmond's placement of Pansy in a convent as a means of disciplining her. Edwin Fussell characterizes it as "James' masterpiece of inclusive graciousness. There is something in it for everyone—and many of these things are indeterminate and ambiguous" (140). By this, Fussell means that the novel is so delicately balanced that it is difficult to interpret whether Henrietta Stackpole is being literal or suggestive when she tells Casper Goodwood at the end of the novel that Isabel has "started for Rome" (James 490). It is also equally difficult to know something as basic as whether Gilbert Osmond and his sister are Catholic. Fussell characterizes the novel as "exud[ing] a vaguely Anglican or Protestant Episcopal air . . . forever moving in two opposite directions at once" (141). He cites as clear evidence the Anglicanism of Lord Warburton and his family, Mr. Bantling, and possibly the Touchetts, and the vague Unitarianism of Isabel. He speaks of the "fatuities" of Osmond which appeal to both Protestant and Catholic readers of James for different reasons (142). Fussell's summary comment about

Isabel is relevant here. He says, “Isabel Archer’s Catholic sympathies, whatever they may be, tend toward the aesthetic, the impersonal, the touristic, the literary, and in this she is at once with her creator and with most of her creator’s audience” (142). The term “aesthetic” in this list can be seen as encompassing the other terms. Isabel spends time in Rome visiting churches; also, she visits her step-daughter, Pansy, at the convent in Rome before going to see the dying Ralph Touchett at Gardencourt. The narrator’s descriptions of the churches convey Isabel’s detachment, and the description of the convent conveys her sense of oppression and imprisonment.

For Isabel, St. Peter’s is impressive but is mainly a backdrop for an encounter with Gilbert Osmond and for the conversation of her friends on her romantic status. When Isabel goes to St. Peter’s, the narrator says, “She had not been one of the superior tourists who are ‘disappointed’ in Saint Peter’s and find it smaller than its fame” (251). She notices its “leathern curtains” at the entrance, the “far-arching dome” through which light falls “through the air thickened with incense” (251), the “marble and gilt, . . . [the] mosaic and bronze” (251); the church assumes for her a grandeur which it holds ever afterward. The church’s size, with the implicit corollary of any individual’s smallness, is emphasized; its imposing beauty is depicted in broad, not particular, strokes. In Isabel’s sense of the church’s scale and elaborate decoration, she is more appreciative of its beauty than her companions are; Lord Warburton speaks comparatively of Saint Sophia of Constantinople, and Henrietta Stackpole says that Michelangelo’s dome is inferior to the dome of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. (251). The Pope’s singers can be heard in the background, and Isabel notices their “splendid chant” mingling with “clouds of

incense” (251). When Isabel unexpectedly sees Gilbert Osmond in St. Peter’s, they compare their views of the church. Isabel says quite generically that “[i]t’s very large and very bright,” to which Osmond replies with the fullness of his ego, “‘It’s too large; it makes one feel like an atom’” (252). Although Osmond refers to himself as a “‘nobody,’” he quite readily accepts Isabel’s unstudied remark that “[y]ou ought indeed to be a Pope!” (292). Lord Warburton and Ralph Touchett talk in a little *mise-en-scene* about Osmond, recognizing him as a suitor and expressing their hope that he will not succeed with Isabel. Thus, St. Peter’s is mainly the backdrop for showing Isabel’s appreciation of its beauty, for showing what Fussell has referred to as Osmond’s fatuity of character, and for dramatizing the concern of Isabel’s friends for her choice of marriage partner.

James’s use of the Catholic aesthetic as a mirror of Isabel’s psychology and moods continues later in the novel. Just after Isabel has her dramatic confrontation with Madame Merle, in which she begins to realize that Madame Merle was instrumental in bringing about her marriage to Osmond, Isabel goes for a drive in Rome. She contemplates the oneness of her unhappiness with the vast pageant of human history reflected in “old Rome” (430). In addition to touring Roman ruins, however, Isabel has recently often chosen churches, “a mouldy church to which no one came” (430), or “starved churches, where the marble columns, transferred from pagan ruins, seemed to offer her a companionship in endurance and the musty incense to be a compound of long-unanswered prayers” (431). These descriptions suggest an observer infected by weariness, cynicism, and worldliness. Yet, the remarks are immediately countered by a

surprising description of Isabel looking at the side altars of the churches: “the firmest of worshippers, gazing at dark altar-pictures or clustered candles, could not have felt more intimately the suggestiveness of these objects nor have been more liable at such moments to a spiritual visitation” (431). Isabel is compared to a worshipper in a tone that suggests she shares the outlook of the worshipper at such moments. The pictures and candles are not viewed solely for their aesthetic properties but for their psychological suggestiveness to the worshipper, their ability to convey some type of spiritual insight, and their intimacy with the worshipper.

Isabel’s response to Catholic churches is positive. When she visits St. Peter’s, she is impressed by its grandeur. When she needs consolation, she finds it in front of “dark altar-pictures.” Lesser characters do not show negative responses to the churches, unlike Mary Garland and Roderick Hudson’s mother. But James’s comparatively positive or neutral portrayals of the churches are countered by his negative depiction of the effects of convent education and convent life on Pansy.

Pansy emerges from the convent as a pearl (210), a doll (348), a girl of complete simplicity. The suggestion is made that she has been somehow “finished” or “added to” as a person by her stay with the nuns. The air of simplicity is something somehow created rather than natural to Pansy. Isabel notices this quality of Pansy when she first meets her: “Even the little girl from the convent, who, in her prim white dress, with her small submissive face and her hands locked before her, stood there as if she were about to partake of her first communion, even Mr. Osmond’s diminutive daughter had a kind of finish that was not entirely artless” (219). Pansy, as a product of the convent, has been

rendered a decorated, completed thing. The “finish” suggests an application of lacquer to a piece of wood or to a painting. Much later in the novel, when Osmond seeks not only to regain tight control over Pansy’s suddenly independent inclinations but also to rebuke Isabel for what he imagines is her role in preventing a proposal to Pansy from Lord Warburton, he decides to “sequester” (442) Pansy in a convent again for a few weeks. Isabel realizes that he wants to show the difference between Isabel and himself with regard to Pansy, and also to “show that if he regarded his daughter as a precious work of art it was natural he should be more and more careful about the finishing touches” (442).

The convent has clean, cheerful, large rooms, a “well-used garden,” and a “genial and obsequious person” as the “portress of the convent” (456). In spite of the convent’s seemingly positive features, Isabel perceives it as a place of foreboding and restriction. She is taken to a parlour in which she will soon unexpectedly encounter Madame Merle: “The parlour was a vast, cold apartment, with new-looking furniture; a large clean stove of white porcelain, unlighted, a collection of wax flowers under glass, and a series of engravings from religious pictures on the walls” (456). Though at one point Isabel had associated the place, oddly, with Philadelphia, presumably a comfortable link, on this occasion “the apartment only seemed to her very empty and very soundless” (456). The newness of the furniture is countered by the stark white of the porcelain stove, by flowers whose deadness and captivity in a collection suggest Osmond’s goal with respect to Pansy, and by engravings which are only copies, after all, of original pictures. The overall impression is one of coldness. In looking out through a window at the convent garden, Isabel realizes bitterly that Osmond, the collector of Correggios and crucifixes



(228), has treated her as a thing, “an applied handled hung-up tool, as senseless and convenient as mere shaped wood and iron” (459). For Osmond, Isabel is a convenience, and the convent is a convenience. Four women are in agreement about Osmond’s use of the convent as a disciplinary tool for rendering Pansy docile and compliant. Pansy herself says she’s ““had enough”” (462); Mother Catherine uses similar language, which is then echoed by Isabel and consented to by Madame Merle (463).

In The Portrait of a Lady, James presents Catholic churches in a basically positive light. They impress and console Isabel Archer, attract tourists such as Lord Warburton and Henrietta Stackpole, and diminish the egos of such irritable, self-satisfied critics and consumers of civilization as Gilbert Osmond. Some churches are mouldy and deserted, but all have a kind of interest, however touristic and aesthetic that interest may be. The convent, although a space satisfactory for a young girl, is repressive and limiting for a girl who has reached marriageable age. Staying in a convent results in a submissive, reduced, and defeated personality, unequal to any contest of wills with a stern, displeased father.

### The Golden Bowl

The Golden Bowl (1904), the final novel by James considered in this study, offers the aesthetic object of the title and four scheming Catholic characters. The gilded crystal bowl has attracted extensive critical comment, though not necessarily for its Catholic symbolism. The bowl functions aesthetically in many ways and can be viewed from a purely secular aesthetic point of view. Bill Brown points out that a description of things occurs in The Golden Bowl in at least five ways: 1) the bric-a-brac with which people

decorate their houses—Maggie and her father travel with a few of their best objects to decorate the houses and hotels they stay at in Europe; 2) people are described as things—the Prince, for example, is an “old embossed coin, of a purity of gold no longer used” (Golden Bowl 56)—the metonymic figure in which Michael Meeuwis says the Prince becomes trapped; 3) thought itself is physicalized—Maggie’s suspicions about Charlotte become “accumulations . . . a roomful of confused objects” (Golden Bowl 334), and she herself walks “along the corridor of her life” (Golden Bowl 334), looking and thinking; 4) the relationships between people are conceived of as things—the golden bowl of the title; 5) the house of fiction is described as a thing, and the novel itself is “an extraordinary rhetorical machine, producing one analogy after another” (Brown 160)—as in, for example, the pagoda image.

The golden bowl is presented in all these ways. When Maggie buys the bowl, she places it on the mantel first as a decorative object intended as a gift for her father. Next, the bowl is a symbol of individuals, for it is gilded and cracked, just as the Prince and Charlotte are gilded with the Ververs’ money and just as the Prince says that he himself is a flawed crystal (137-38), a statement incredulously denied by Mr. Verver. Then, the bowl represents physicalized thought, as when Fanny tells Maggie ““your whole idea has a crack”” (447). Next, the bowl depicts multiple relationships. After the visit to Portland Place by the antique shop owner, the bowl becomes an accusatory object representing relationships, especially Maggie’s confirmed knowledge of the Prince’s relationship with Charlotte. Finally, Brown’s words on the pagoda image fit the dramatic scene in which Fanny breaks the bowl: “Read retrospectively, The Golden Bowl’s pagoda might

encourage us to imagine that we witness a character circling the house of fiction itself, or a character facing not so much her exteriority to a social ‘arrangement’ as her exteriority to a novelistic arrangement. . .” (168). Maggie has rebelled against the novelist’s stifling confinement of her within drab clothes and a drab role; she is suddenly “promoted to leading lady” (469) and has a “telescope” that allows her to see clearly. Her transformation and her solutions to her problem are both harsh. They place her squarely in the dual roles of dramaturge and collector.

The bowl also links the aesthetic with Catholic theology. Brenda Austin-Smith considers the possibility that the bowl is connected to the “chalice of communion,” and that, if seen as a symbol of the Eucharist, “the cup would suggest the proximity of the transcendental and the means whereby transformation is effected by a mystical and symbolic process” (55). Although Austin-Smith dismisses what she sees as the contradictory functions of the bowl as symbol—the bowl simply cannot function as both symbolic sacred vessel and secular tattle-tale” (59-60)—her initial consideration of its sacred connotations links Catholicism and aestheticism. Even Gregory Erickson, who is interested in pursuing an atheological reading of the novel centered on “the theme of a negative non-metaphysical world that runs through. . . the novel” (265), observes that the “bowl itself echoes the Bible, the Holy Grail, and the rituals of Mass and Communion” (259).

The Catholicity of the bowl echoes the way Maggie tends to perceive her special relationship with her father (their visits “communions snatched” 151) and, later, with her husband (her investigation of his ancestry in a “shrine” of a “temple” with shelves

“consecrated” to records of the Prince’s ancestry 427) in terms of Eucharistic imagery. Since Communion is envisioned by Catholics as a special moment of grace—that is, as a way to access divine goodness and be given the strength to resist sin—it is plausible that Maggie, a Catholic, would express her moral yearnings in terms of communion imagery. Martha Nussbaum comments on two peculiar features of Maggie’s moral ambition: her desire to be good and her extraordinary closeness to her father, which has significantly not been re-ordered by her marriage (25). Maggie’s desire to be good could conceivably be expressed in terms of communion imagery. But for her to so express her relationships with other people, primarily and consistently with her father, but also with others occasionally, is an unusual aesthetic perspective. It suggests that she unconsciously sees her relationship with her father in terms of a highly ritualized, formal church service, complete with many things requisite for its validity in places and times of non-persecution: marble altar, linen altar cloth, lavabo cruets, chalice, vestments, wine for consecration, unleavened wheat host for consecration, and bells to signal the moment of consecration. The indispensable features are the table-like altar, the host, the chalice, and the words spoken by the priest. Optional things include church organ, statues, stained glass windows, and hymn books. In short, for Maggie to express her relationship with her father and later with her husband in this way is odd and remarkable. Clearly, she sees personal relationships in a highly charged framework of things laden with sacred meaning.

Maggie’s husband, the Prince, is presented as a Catholic collectible art object. Amerigo is a prince with property and a title, but without the money to maintain his

property or a lifestyle commensurate with the title of prince. His papal ancestor is referred to as part of his credential of worthiness (55); his great-uncle was a Cardinal “who had taken a hand and played a part in his education” (54). These aspects of his background testify to his pedigree, worldliness, and desirability as the husband sought for Maggie. He has a shining heritage, as long as it is not looked into too closely. His ancestor, Amerigo Vespucci, is the source of the name for America, though he was not a discoverer of America. James’s Amerigo’s claim to fame is gilded, for it is not as sturdy as Columbus’s claim or the claim of many another Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, or Dutch explorer. It is a veneer covering the labor of others. Amerigo wears the veneer very well. He is cultivated, polished, worldly. He bears some slight intrinsic claim to importance in world history by virtue of his ancestry. His wife, after all, spends an afternoon in the British Museum researching his ancestry, emerging reassured that he is a worthy acquisition.

The possibility of fraud perpetuated by Italian claimants to the discovery of America is explored in Justin Nordstrom’s discussion of popular anti-Catholic yellow journalists of the second decade of the twentieth century. Americans were concerned to establish a history of America based on ancestral heroes. James’s portrait of the Prince’s impoverishment and need for money would raise alarm in some readers. Stuart Burrows points out the link between the metaphoric discovery of one particular terrain, one’s own innocence, in The Golden Bowl, and “its lucrative production” (98). A sinister symbiotic relationship exists. Titled but impoverished Europeans need money to maintain wealthy lifestyles; even in the acts of conquest and appropriation, wealthy

Americans need to believe in their own innocence. Similarly, Anat Pick emphasizes the financial basis of the character relations in the novel. The Prince, for example, is valuable to Adam, and does not need to be, in vulgar parlance, “‘cashed in’” (124). The Prince is a nice showpiece. The Prince willingly accedes to the terms of his being collected, first by Adam Verver and later, and more decisively, by Maggie because he needs the money to sustain his self-image and his face to the world.

The portrayal of Catholicism that emerges in The Golden Bowl is negative. The four Catholic characters in the novel are engaged in deep games with each other that prove to be destructive to at least two of them, the Prince and Charlotte. The manipulative game-playing and maneuvering in the novel fit Giles’s observation about the association in James between Catholicism and “Old World patterns of Machiavellian corruption and guileful behavior” (45). The bowl of the title is gilded and cracked, suggesting among other things the Prince’s weak claims to an established name; moreover, it could be seen as reflecting something inherently devious about Catholicism, since the Prince has members of the church hierarchy in his immediate and ancestral past.

### William Dean Howells

#### Indian Summer

Howells’s sense of the aestheticism of Catholic sacraments and church art, and his awareness of literary and historical precedents in the discussion of Italian art and art censorship, as represented by the conflict between Savonarola and Florence, are the focus of my discussion of Indian Summer. Important to the discussion are the central character’s comment on the sacrament of Extreme Unction and on Florentine church art,

on several characters' examination of Hawthorne's novel The Marble Faun, and one character's comments on Savonarola. The novel tells the story of a journalist and newspaper editor, Theodore Colville, who becomes tired of his newspaper position in Indiana and decides to go to Florence, where he had been on the verge of marriage decades earlier. He renews his acquaintance with Evalina Bowen, a widow, and her daughter Effie. He thinks he is in love with a young woman, Imogene Graham, who also thinks she is in love with him, views it as her responsibility to make up for his failed earlier romance, and accepts his proposal. During the course of the novel, he has many conversations with his friend Mr. Waters, a lapsed Unitarian minister who has given up his ministerial calling. After a carriage accident, Imogene realizes that she is not in love with Colville after all, but has merely pitied him. Likewise, he realizes that he is really in love with Evalina Bowen. The two of them marry in the last pages of the novel.

Colville's response to the sight of Extreme Unction, the Catholic sacrament administered to the dying, is aesthetic. Early in his stay in Florence, he sees:

a procession which had just issued from the church going to administer the extreme unction to some dying person across the piazza. The parish priest went first, bearing the consecrated wafer in its vessel, and at his side an acolyte holding a yellow silk umbrella over the Eucharist; after them came a number of *facchini* in white robes and white hoods that hid their faces; their tapers burned sallow and lifeless in the new morning light; the bell jangled dismally. (40)

Colville's response is dismissive and distancing: "'They even die dramatically in this country,' thought Colville, in whom the artist was taken with the effectiveness of the spectacle before his human pity was stirred for the poor soul who was passing" (40). Colville sees a serious Catholic sacrament as theatrical spectacle. He sees Catholicism as the Other, in the terms of diminishment and containment described by Jenny Franchot in her analysis of works by Harriet Beecher Stowe and by George Washington Cable.

Franchot sees the cult of domesticity prevalent in the nineteenth century as depending on

visual fragments of an abandoned "Romanism" function[ing] as vestigial traces for what must remain, ideologically speaking, the invisible processes of an improvisational, Protestant perfectionism. Such broken sacramental signs are critical to these novels' postsacramental semiotics, for, as material markers at once numinous and fallen, these Catholic fragments deploy the ambiguity of the fragment to testify to the superior immateriality and wholeness of fictional character. ("Unseemly" 42-43)

In Franchot's analysis of Stowe's The Minister's Wooing, these claims become more clear. Her argument is that many Anglo-American novelists appropriated Catholic materials into their novels in an attempt to contain and control potential challenge to their own point of view. In doing so, the novelists used the appropriated materials to suggest a greater interiority and depth on the part of their central characters ("Unseemly" 42-42).

Unlike Catholics, they have no need for external, material displays; unlike Catholics, they are not arrested in a fragmented past. Similarly, Colville, considering himself a wise,



sophisticated observer of a scene he would not expect to see in realistic Indiana, dismisses the procession for Extreme Unction.

When Colville discusses Catholic art, he mingles appreciative comments about paintings by Giotto with the statement about works by Cimabue that “‘it’s pretty hard to keep from laughing at some of them, don’t you think?’” (43). He recovers his artistic perspective in praising “[t]he great Cimabue, with all that famous history on its back—the first divine Madonna by the first divine master . . . [and] . . . frescoes of Ghirlandajo’s with real Florentine faces and figures in them” in Santa Maria Novella, a church in Florence. Yet he balances praise of Ghirlandaio’s art with criticism of his artistic subjects: “‘I suppose that if the full day were let in on them [the Ghirlandajo Florentine faces], once, they would vanish like the ghosts at cock-crow!’” (44). He adds a criticism of the cloister and the observation that only twelve monks remain, the others “‘scattered and gone’” (44).

A reference to The Marble Faun that occurs late in the novel can be read for how it reflects on the Protestant-Catholic dichotomy at work in Howells’s text: “Imogene and Mr. Morton were looking over a copy of The Marble Faun, which he has illustrated with photographs at Rome. Imogene asked Colville to look at it too, but he said he would examine it later; he had his opinion of people who illustrated The Marble Faun with photographs; it surprised him that she seemed to find something novel and brilliant in the idea” (218). Paul Giles stresses Howells’s binary aesthetic outlook that contrasts “Italian romance to American realism” (83), an outlook reflected by Colville’s view that “Italy is art and America is business . . . [a] rigid opposition of positivism versus aesthetics” (83).

In pursuing the logic of this oppositional aesthetic with respect to Indian Summer and its reference to the Hawthorne novel, Giles observes that “in Catholic Europe no individual can be wholly original . . . . Imogen Grahame [sic] and Mr. Morton peruse a copy of Hawthorne’s Marble Faun, as though their subjectivity were becoming transformed into an object emanating from within Hawthorne’s text” (97).

Here, again, America’s Puritan past is critiqued. The long-term outcome of Puritanism can be an emphasis on money-making and worldly success, not on aesthetics. Artistic touring is seen as passive consumerism detached from good taste—having the money for transportation, hotels, and guidebooks. Puritan individualism can lead eventually to a feeling of detachment from job and community, isolation, loneliness, and emotional confusion—all emotions Colville experiences both before his trip to Italy, and, acutely, during his trip.

Another judgment of American Puritanism occurs in the conversation between Colville and Mr. Waters. The former Unitarian minister, Mr. Waters, demonstrates a strong interest in Florentine Renaissance history. He describes the basis of his interest as ““find[ing] my ancestral puritanism particularly appealed to by the puritanism of Savonarola”” (63). Savonarola was noted for his 1497 “bonfire of the vanities,” his fiery destruction of Florentine art, Carnival costumes, and books as inimical to a good Christian life (see 282). Mr. Waters does not believe Savonarola was a Protestant. However, his elegiac tone towards Savonarola and Puritans is evident in his comments to Colville:

Just now I'm interested in justifying his failure to myself, for it's one of the things in history that I've found it hardest to accept. But no doubt his puritanic state fell because it was dreary and ugly, as the puritanic state always has been. It makes its own virtues intolerable; puritanism won't let you see how good and beautiful the Puritans often are. It was inevitable that Savonarola's enemies should misunderstand and hate him. (64)

Mr. Waters clearly states that, in his view, Puritanism as a system, however virtuous, lacks beauty. He finds individual Puritans good, virtuous, and even beautiful, just as he attributes these traits to Savonarola, but he thinks that any government set up by Puritans is bound to fail. In light of the intense interest in America's Puritan past in the 1880s, Howells uses Mr. Waters to deliver a strong critique of the negative, bleak aspects of Puritanism. In this critique, he echoes the unfavorable judgment made by Roderick Hudson, and he reinforces the negative side of Hawthorne's ambivalent engagement with Puritans. In all instances, a major part of the reason for the criticism of Puritanism originates in what Roderick Hudson and Mr. Waters, as well as at times the narrator of The Marble Faun, assert is a Puritan lack of appreciation of beauty and lack of encouragement of beautiful things, ceremonies, and forms. The comparison they either state or imply is with Catholicism's sense of the aesthetic.

### Conclusion

Surrounded by Catholic art, central characters in Hawthorne, James, and Howells react quite intensely to the art they see. Rev. Dimmesdale feels accused of his own adultery by the tapestries in his apartment. Hilda feels weary wandering picture galleries

in Rome. Roderick Hudson loses his talent when confronted with Catholic art and a strikingly beautiful person he uses as a model for a bust. Isabel Archer Osmond is consoled by church art once she realizes at least some of the truth about her marriage. Maggie Verver purchases the golden bowl and uses so much imagery of communion, consecration, and altar that she almost elevates herself to the priesthood. Colville admires some medieval Catholic religious art but laughs at and deplors the excesses of the pre-Lenten Carnival costumers. Both Dimmesdale and Hilda have a sense of sin or a sense of participation in sin that accounts for the intensity of their reactions. Roderick Hudson, Isabel Archer, and Maggie Verver have all suffered from romantic delusions arising from their misreading of Catholic art and Catholic characters. Colville finds Catholic Europe threatening to his sense of identity and individuality.

Each of these characters must negotiate the difference he or she perceives between Puritan aesthetics and Catholic aesthetics. For Dimmesdale, at one extreme, the difference is between the mirror-like surface of the suit of armor in Governor Bellingham's mansion, or between the opaque, dark Geneva cloak Dimmesdale wears, and the rich Gobelin tapestry of David and Bathsheba in Dimmesdale's apartment. The latter works as part of Dimmesdale's private torment, leading him to the only release possible, a clear, public confession. For Colville, at the other extreme, the difference is between Mr. Waters's articulation of the Puritans' failed efforts to suppress art and excess in apparel, versus the sumptuousness of Florentine church art and costumers. Colville generally defends himself against Catholicism by subordinating his interest in art

to his own witticisms about the coldness of the churches, the suppression of monasteries and convents (see 282 fn for 44), or the theatricality of the sacraments.

In no instance in these novels does the Puritanism of American history, so sought after by the individuals and societies working on the Reconstruction of American memory both immediately before and in the decades after the Civil War, resemble the almost wholly positive portrayal by Catharine Maria Sedgwick in Hope Leslie.

Puritanism in these novels is not the heroic Puritanism of the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the painter Frank E. Schoonover, or the illustrator Howard Chandler Christy. It is a Puritanism complicated and challenged by Old World Catholic aestheticism. In The Portrait of a Lady, James explores and may be satirizing the sensationalized convent narrative of such antebellum writers as Maria Monk.

The attitude towards Puritanism in these novels by three major American writers fits with the spirit of Brooks Adams's "controversial reassessment of his ancestors' legacy" (Kammen 206), The Emancipation of Massachusetts, published in 1887, a work viewed by Adams's contemporaries "as being anti-clerical, anti-Puritan, and perhaps even an attack upon religion in general" (Kammen 206-07). Adams's view of Puritans becomes too negative to be an accurate description of the stance of Hawthorne, James and Howells. Nevertheless, their novels do reassess America's Puritan legacy and raise questions about how positive that legacy has been. Balanced against their reservations about Puritanism are these authors' sympathetic treatments of individual Catholic or Catholic-leaning characters, Catholic religious art, music, and objects, and Catholic church architecture. Through their emphasis on the colored,

decorated features of an aesthetic informed by Catholicism, they challenge an American Puritan aesthetic based on plainness and simplicity. They also challenge the premise underlying Michael P. Winship's historical assessment that the last Puritan in America lived at the end of the seventeenth century.

Chapter V “A complete variety of Protestant congregations” in *King Arthur’s Court*:

Mark Twain on Catholicism and Democracy

Mark Twain thought extensively about history, Catholicism, and democracy. In his travel book *The Innocents Abroad* and in his historical romance *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, the emphasis is on an American Protestant’s encounter with Catholic culture abroad, whether nineteenth-century Italy as it existed at the time of Vatican I or Twain’s imagination of medieval Arthurian England, and its contrast with American democracy. In *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, Twain reflects on Catholics and democracy in the historical context of Catholic-dominated France of the fifteenth century. The emphasis in this relatively late work has shifted from democracy to personal sanctity, a shift accounting for a dramatic difference in Twain’s tone and in critical response to the work (see, for example, Haddox 76 and Horn 69-70). However, concerns with democracy remain, justifying the novel’s treatment in this study.

In these three books, Twain expresses the view that democracy is more progressive than the government of any country with close church-state ties that imposes a top-down governance on its members. Moreover, he insists on the importance of legal and institutional arrangements which go hand in hand with democracy, such arrangements as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, an independent judiciary, and freedom of inquiry. In voicing these views, Twain places himself on one side of a divide which affected not only Catholics but also Protestants and Jews in late nineteenth-century

America. The divide erupted over the issue of how believers in traditional religion with inherited dogma should relate to “the emerging modern culture of the late nineteenth century” (Dolan 76), a culture dominated by science and technology. This chapter will indicate ways in which Twain’s response to the challenges confronting the postbellum society problematizes the issues associated with modernism in a way ignored by critics eager to read him as fundamentally anti-religious in his orientation. He problematizes the issue by the selectivity and restraint shown in the Catholic targets of his criticism in his travel writing, by his impartial attacks on medieval Catholicism and late nineteenth-century American capitalism and weaponry in A Connecticut Yankee, and by his historically careful, sensitive depiction of Joan of Arc as a courageous medieval Catholic heroine.

In opposition to the literary critics who emphasize Twain’s anti-religious stance, historian T. J. Jackson Lears identifies Twain as one of a culturally elite group of antimodernists, the result of a combination of unfortuitous financial circumstances in Twain’s personal life and his disappointments over American public life in the Gilded Age. According to Lears, the root of antimodernism was a “reaction against secularizing tendencies” (xiii), which resulted in an ambivalent combination of “enthusiasm for material progress” with a “quest for intense experience” and desire to protest late nineteenth-century cultural sterility. Not from business or politics, antimodernists were “journalists, academics, ministers, and literari” who were “[o]ld stock, Protestant . . . moral and intellectual leaders of the American WASP bourgeoisie” (xiv). They exerted strong cultural influence in “shaping [with British “counterparts”] a transatlantic



Victorian culture and . . . helped . . . to maintain dominant norms and values” (xiv). One of the primary directions to which the antimodernists turned for answers, according to Lears, was medieval European history, whether for its craftsmanship, its cathedrals, its saints and mystics, or its unity of faith. Moreover, Harold Bush has pointed out through discussion of Twain’s church attendance and hymn singing, friendship with ministers, and interest in alternate forms of spiritualism how Twain’s losses in both his immediate family and extended families colored his thinking about religion in his later decades.

The emphasis of literary scholars who write about Mark Twain is on the humorous, iconoclastic, deistic, or agnostic Twain. Thomas Haddox singles out Alfred Kazin for the “best recent discussion of Twain’s deism and attitude towards religion” (193 fn. 45). Kazin concedes that Twain was “obsessed with God” (190), not consistent about God, and “steadily pursu[ing] his quarrel with God” (191). In a memorable phrase, Kazin says, “If ever there was a Calvinist whose theology survived his faith, it was Mark Twain” (191).

Twain saw an opposition between Catholicism and democracy. He was disturbed by his perception that the Catholic Church he saw in his European travels and residence abroad used fraud to gain control over its members. The following comment by Mordecai Richler is indicative of one scholarly stance taken towards Twain’s sustained engagement with the issue: “Twain, a writer with an enduring affection for chicanery and those who can get away with it, takes obvious delight in the Church of Rome’s humbug, coming back to it again and again” (xliv). Other critics, such as Joe B. Fulton, take a provocative stance towards Twain’s anomalous work Joan of Arc, insisting Joan is not a

Catholic saint (118) but rather that Twain's contemporaries misunderstood his intentions (106-07) in viewing Joan of Arc as favorable to Catholicism when in fact the courtroom scenes show that Joan's last battle is a "verbal battle fought against the Catholic Church" (126). Yet another view of Twain's presentation of Christianity, if not exactly of Catholicism, at least in The Innocents Abroad, is emphasized by Leland Krauth. He speaks of the frequency of Twain's statements about the Saviour as follows: "While it is seldom acknowledged, the moments of seriousness in the text far outnumber those of comedy. . . . Twain's moral outlook [in The Innocents Abroad] is almost stodgily traditional. . . . [T]he heart of civilization . . . is predictably religion and the morality that derives from it" (qtd. in Bush 65). Krauth presents a Mark Twain whose humor was both transgressive and bounded, and claims that the bounded side of Twain's nature sought to uphold authority and tradition (see Krauth 1-16). Going beyond, and sometimes plainly rejecting, these critics, I want to suggest aspects of Twain's views of Catholicism that have been neglected.

In The Innocents Abroad, every criticism of Catholicism Twain makes is balanced by significant concessions related to the material manifestation he is criticizing, even-handed criticism of Protestants, or simply by silence. For example, while he deplores the ornateness of St. Charles Borromeo's tomb in Milan's Cathedral, he nevertheless acknowledges both the beauty of the cathedral and the personal holiness and goodness of Charles Borromeo. He does not press forward with criticisms of Roman Catholicism in places where he could. He does not criticize the sacraments, the creed, or St. Peter's Cathedral. He makes many and increasing criticisms of his fellow Protestant travelers

for their religious expressions on shipboard and for their penny-wise, pound-foolish conduct in the Holy Land. Twain would continue in his career to make these people his satirical targets. Twenty years later, he makes significant criticisms at the end of Connecticut Yankee of Yankee weapon ingenuity for the slaughter it causes. By the writing of Joan of Arc, he has at least provisionally set aside his criticism of Catholic miracles, Catholic relics, ornate churches, and Catholic love of the dead. Acceptance of these elements of Catholicism—in Joan’s Voices, in his lament over the lack of relics of Joan, in the depiction of Rheims Cathedral, and in Joan’s love of two dead saints, not to mention Twain’s own faithful, longstanding love of Joan (see Rasmussen 254-55)—impressively supersede his early disgust over these aspects of Catholicism. A contemporary reviewer writing for the Charleston Sunday News observed that Twain was not using “the wit of Voltaire, seeking to make [Joan] a laughing stock. . . [I]t is the kindly humorist, giving credit for devotion to creed and to country, that speaks in these pages” (Budd 402). A noted reviewer of the day, Walter Besant, commented that though he would not have expected the author of Huckleberry Finn to have written such a work, nevertheless “to present such a saint, such a miracle, argues a nature or a soul capable of comprehending and realizing such a level” (Budd 406-07). So remarkably, in fact, did Twain lay aside his criticisms in these areas that Ignatius Press, founded by the Jesuit Fr. Fessio in the 1970s to counter negative cultural forces in America and a drift he perceived in American Catholicism, has published an edition of Twain’s Joan of Arc.

The one stance on which Twain remained firm was his strong preference for democracy over authoritarianism. The love of democracy and its expressions and

supporting structures—free speech, freedom of association, an independent judiciary, and education—remained with Twain his whole life. His love of democracy is reflected in reviews of his work written by his contemporaries. A San Francisco reviewer of Connecticut Yankee says, “Mark Twain has come up from the people” (Budd 288). William Dean Howells defends the tone of Connecticut Yankee by referring to the humor as “the American kind, the kind employed in the service of democracy, of humanity” (Budd 295). Twain could not compromise on philosophic fundamentals, in spite of his professed admiration for Joan of Arc. In addition to his unwavering stance on democracy, Twain also shows in all three of his chief “European” books an interest in history prior to American Puritan history. Twain’s anti-modernism was, thus, neither simple nor formulaic, but thoughtful. He wanted to be taken seriously, not simply as a jokester and comedian. He thought Joan of Arc was his best work (Haddox 76, Bush 80-81, Rasmussen 254-55) because it dealt with a serious topic on which he took a serious position.

#### The Innocents Abroad

American Catholic history provides an interesting context for Twain’s work. For American Catholics, the issue of the individual’s and church’s response to the challenges of modernism is embodied in the contrary positions on church-state relations taken in the 1880s and 1890s by Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota, and Bishop Bernard McQuaid of Rochester, New York. Although both men, according to Dolan, were “ardently American and supported such American ideals as the separation of church and state as well as democracy” (74), Ireland thought the church could and should encounter

the modern world without losing its values, whereas McQuaid thought the age was “ungodly,” beset by enemies like “liberalism and socialism” (74).

Unlike Bishop McQuaid, Twain was blunt and uncompromising in his view that retreating from the world into the past or behind a mental drawbridge was not the answer to challenges from modernity. In his introduction to the Oxford Mark Twain edition of The Innocents Abroad, Mordecai Richler summarizes the multiple targets of Twain’s satire in this travel book:

Given today’s touchy political climate, I suspect there is sufficient kindling in *The Innocents Abroad* to light a fire of protest under Portuguese, Italians, Moslems, Catholics, Turks, Greeks, feminists, Arabs, American Indians, and other sensitive types. I have no doubt that *Innocents Abroad*, released today, would be banned in schools, the author condemned as a racist, and possibly, just possibly, finding himself the subject of a *fatwa*. (xxxv-xxxvi)

In fact, though, Twain’s criticisms of Catholicism in The Innocents Abroad are confined to certain limited, specific targets. His first target is impoverished and backward Azores Islands’ Catholic natives, who are content to live as their grandfathers did, never seeking means of improvement (55-57). His main Catholic targets arise from his travels in Italy. An early one is the excessively elaborate burial site for St. Charles Borromeo (177-78). Another is the preoccupation of Catholicism with the past (270-71) and, more specifically, with death and decay, represented by having Mass in the catacombs or by the practice of the Capuchin monks of decorating basement chapels with the bones of

their dead brethren (298-302). Yet another is the presentation of relics of Christ and of the saints in churches (131-32, 265 *inter alia*). Twain doubts the competing claims of a number of European Catholic churches to have relics of the true cross, observing that from his point of view so many relics of the true cross could make many crosses.

Similarly, he expresses his disdain for performances he regards as false miracles, such as the biennial “miraculous liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius” (311), or fraudulent aids to belief, such as the imprint of Christ’s sweating, blood-stained face on St.

Veronica’s cloth, which Twain says is located simultaneously in Paris, Spain, Milan, and at St. Peter’s, concluding wryly, “No tradition is so amply verified as this of St. Veronica and her handkerchief” (575). In Rome, he raises the issue of the order of importance of holy people in the prevailing Catholic mindset as deduced from churches in Rome; here he finds Christ to be far down on a list headed by The Virgin, God (whom Twain refers to clinically as The Deity), St. Peter, and a dozen or so selected saints—and then Christ.

These are trenchant criticisms. The basis of each criticism as it relates to democracy is the idea that an educated but crafty clergy is practicing fraud upon an unsuspecting, gullible, and cooperating public, thereby keeping them in a perpetual state of ignorance and backwardness. For Twain, an educated public would not go along with its own hoodwinking. Public education is one of the keys to democracy. Another is the lack of social distinction between clergy and laity; distinction leads to deference, which leads to mental subordination.

Yet, not often noted by critics eager to see him as not only anti-Catholic but anti-religion, Twain provides a balance to his criticisms, either in The Innocents Abroad itself,

in later writing, or in continuing personal openness in the area of religion. This is exemplified by his friendship with the minister Joe Twichell (Bush 68-73, 80, 84-85, and fns. 56, 63, and 113), his attendance at church services in Hartford and Elmira (Bush 73), and his interest in “all manner of spiritual phenomena, whether marginal or even outright bizarre” (Bush 82), including an attempt with the help of spiritualists to communicate with his daughter Susy after her death (Bush 82). Harold Bush insists that “it is vitally important to see much of Twain’s greatest achievement in religious and/or moral terms” (55). Although Bush conflates religion and morality in this assertion, he makes a case for his joining of the two terms to describe Twain’s achievement, through his review of Twain’s reading, family life, friendships, and narrative interests. One example of Twain’s moral sense in evidence in The Innocents Abroad is his frank admiration for Charles Borromeo’s good work among the poor and Borromeo’s deserved designation as a saint (177-78). Another example of his moral sense applied to aesthetics is Twain’s recognition of the beauty of Milan’s cathedral (171-72). His criticism of false miracles in The Innocents Abroad is counterbalanced later in his life by his interest in psychic phenomena, including spiritualism (see Bush 82-83). More generally, on the fraudulence of relics he includes a story about a secular relic, something that a fellow traveler, Blucher, obtains in Russia and plans to give to his elderly aunt as “A Fragment of a Russian General” (385). When Twain carries it into the light to get a good look at it, noting that “it was nothing but a couple of teeth and part of the jaw-bone of a horse,” he challenges Blucher, who replies laconically, ““Go slow—the old woman won’t know any different”” (385). Fraud, then, in Twain’s view, is practiced by individuals in personal

relationships for some of the same reasons he thinks the churches do it and with equal success for the same reasons—the gullibility of the victim of fraud. Moreover, Twain much later sees the value of posterity having authentic relics of someone courageous when he laments through his fictive translator the lack of relics of Joan of Arc, destroyed by rampaging mobs from the French Revolution (Twain, Joan of Arc, 273).

Twain does not extend his criticisms of Catholicism at points where he could. For example, he refers to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception promulgated in 1854 by Pius IX to an audience of 50,000 stating that the Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin, but he does not comment (273). This reference provided him with a prime opportunity to comment on the Pope's overreaching, in the sense of the papal taking of rights belonging to the community of believers or to the individual believer. Because Twain attended a Presbyterian Sunday School in his youth, he would have been aware of the Calvinist doctrine of the sufficiency of Christ as an all-atoning sacrifice and its de-emphasis on such figures as Mary. That he does not comment where he might be expected to suggests that in some way he accepts or is conflicted over the idea of a hierarchy of divine persons and a hierarchy of religious figures on earth. It may also suggest that Twain does not want to be seen in the literary company of writers who automatically target Catholics for satire and criticism. Haddox presses the point that Twain is conflicted over the issue of whether human nature is constructed or essential. His character Hank Morgan might hold that “authoritarian constructions made for the greatest general happiness.” This side of Hank Morgan believes in “indomitable



manhood,” and that it is not the commoners, but the “nobles . . . who seem to possess it in abundance” (Haddox 75-76).

Twain’s longing for a sincere religious faith, whether he associates the institutional affiliation of the faith with democracy or with authoritarianism, is shown in his comments on one of his printed tour guide books. Whereas he criticizes the guide, Rev. William H. Neligan, for speaking too credulously of a miraculous bleeding of St. Joseph Calasanctius from a preserved tongue and heart when the French under Napoleon took Pius VII from Rome, Twain immediately and quite surprisingly praises Neligan. He says, “Still, I would gladly change my unbelief for Neligan’s faith, and let him make the conditions as hard as he pleased” (297). He goes on to add a yet more surprising observation: “The old gentleman’s undoubting, unquestioning simplicity has a rare freshness about it in these matter-of-fact railroading and telegraphing days” (297). Twain extends his questioning of the unqualified positiveness of these new, efficient means of travel and communication by his comparison between the Pope and the American Patent Office. He speaks of Popes as “patrons and preservers of art, just as our new, practical Republic is the encourager and upholder of mechanics” (305). Even though Twain makes humorous comments on such artists as Michelangelo and Raphael, surely he does not believe that their work is the inferior of “a new style of horse-collar or . . . a new and superior method of telegraphing” (305). As a literary artist who did not abandon his art to take a degree in engineering, he did not view artists as less important than engineers. He does, though, make a sly summing up of the similarities between the Pope and the Patent Office when he says that “[t]he Vatican and the Patent Office are governmental

noses, and they bear a deal of character about them” (305). Twain sees the Pope as exercising authority, oversight, and control in the realm of art, just as the Patent Office licenses new inventions. Although Twain does not explicitly say it, he would undoubtedly hold that the reach of the Pope’s intrusive nose was farther than that of the Patent Office.

Twain adds a passage on the church of Ara Coeli from the guidebook, in which Neligan speaks of the ways in which a pestilence infecting Rome in the sixth century was cured by an angel in response to Gregory the Great’s call for penance and prayer. Twain italicizes one word from the quoted passage that refers to an annual procession, a statue, the Regina Coeli antiphon, and the church’s inscription over the altar—which, he says, “*confirm*” the miracle, but he does not scoff at the passage. Rather, his italicization of the word *confirm*, admittedly ironic in context, can also suggest the delicate sense of an unbeliever who seeks to believe, who is caught in an epistemological dilemma. The issue of confirming belief is as old as St. Thomas, St. Augustine, and St. Anselm, and as near to Twain as Kierkegaard. Twain realized from his reading of Hume’s “Of Miracles” (see Gribben 341) that the challenge to post-Biblical miracles raised by the Reformation is carried to its logical conclusion in the position taken by David Hume’s “radical critique of religion in all its manifestations” (Porter 124), resulting in an attack on New Testament miracles and thus on Biblical Christianity itself. Hume’s attack is so complete that it extends not only to the orthodox believer but to the Deist as well, leaving “doubt [as] . . . the only honest and honorable option” (Porter 127). Twain does not rejoice in the loss of belief as did his secular early modernist European and late Victorian counterparts, who

saw God as an instance of a dispensable hypothesis no longer needed for life. Because Twain saw the helpfulness of religion to morality, the problem of confirmation of belief for him would be not only an intellectual, epistemological problem but also a problem with practical consequences for public morality.

Twain also challenges the Catholic interpretation of Matthew 16:17-19, establishing Peter's authority as the head of the church on earth (The Innocents Abroad 471-72). In this challenge he shows not the independence of the individual reader of Scripture, but the problem of Biblical interpretation when two groups derive different meanings from individual verses of Scripture. Twain explicitly expresses his interest in the verse from Matthew, and his dislike for the fact that the edifice and trappings of the Roman Catholic Church worldwide derive, in his disgusted view, from this verse. That the issue of church authority and its textual derivation—ultimately an issue centered on literal vs. nonliteral interpretations of Scripture—would interest Twain is significant as an intellectual focus of his. The issue persisted for Twain at least from 1869 until the mid-1890s, when he would explore it again in Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc. Twain's personal confrontation with two diverging interpretations of a key Scriptural passage is paralleled by the American nation's confrontation in the Civil War with this important exegetical issue directly affecting national history. In Mark Noll's view, the Civil War can be viewed as a theological crisis over interpretations of the Scriptural position on slavery. Should verses be taken in isolation? If so, a number of verses discuss the proper treatment of slaves, without saying or suggesting that slavery is wrong. Verses taken in isolation to sanction slavery parallel what Twain would see as the erroneous Catholic

position on the Matthew 16:17-19 text. Or, should the interpreter regard the tendency of the Bible as a whole? In this case many interpreters were drawn to the abolitionist position. Twain might see the tendency of Scripture as a whole as pointing towards American democracy. According to Bush, Twain embraced an American “civil religion” that included the features of “liberal individualism, the march of progress, American newness and regeneration, and biblical typology” (67). In a form of circular reasoning, both the reading of the Bible as a whole as supporting American democracy, and then a reading back into the Bible from the civil religion that derived from the Bible, could easily lead to a rejection of Catholic claims of church authority.

Twain’s emphasis on Catholicism’s interest in “death and torture” (70), carried out not only in the “brutally lifelike crucifixes” (70) but to an extreme in the Capuchin Chapel, is, in the analysis of Thomas F. Haddox, Twain’s view of the logical consequence of “an institution so preoccupied with its own authority: veneration of one’s fathers culminates in a pervasive morbidity” (70). Haddox sees Twain’s critique as part of his attempt in the immediate postbellum era “to present a unified American front against the lingering wounds of civil war” (70), just as American anti-Catholic writing in the antebellum era represented a way to unify society against an easily identifiable target and create a resistance to the headlong rush to cataclysmic violence (see Billington for his interpretation of the function of the Nativists in the 1850s). Haddox summarizes Twain’s account of his Mediterranean travels as making the assertion that what the southern European countries share “is a lack of Protestant Christianity and a blind reverence for the past, two traits that in Twain’s view imply each other” (68). For Haddox, Twain sees

authority and a tyrannical adherence to the past as joined together in Catholicism, but countered by Protestantism and a democratic openness to a future of possibilities. This view oversimplifies the complex nuancing in Twain's view of Catholicism over the course of his career. In later work, he targets Protestantism as well as Catholicism; he upholds, with severe qualifications, the medieval Catholicism that inspired Joan of Arc's heroism.

His linking of a morbid interest in the past with a hold on authority helps position Twain in the American literary mainstream. That Protestant Christianity emphasizes questioning is one of the linchpins of Paul Giles's study focusing on Catholic artists of American fiction, art, and film. Giles challenges not only the American canon for its emphasis on Romance literature as embodying the American mainstream (25), and the pastoral metaphor that puts the individual at odds with any system (47), but also, and more pertinently for this study, for the automatic assumption, rendered concrete by historian Richard Hofstadter, that "intellectualism" and "questioning" are synonyms (Giles 52). The purpose of my study is not to question Twain's deserved centrality in the American canon. It is simply to underscore, with reference to three of Twain's works, Giles's overall point that the American literary canon has embraced writers who stand in a particular epistemological position that validates questioning, independence, challenging of received wisdom and authority, and striking out on one's own. Twain's intent in both The Innocents Abroad and A Connecticut Yankee is plainly to criticize automatic, unthinking veneration of the fathers, whether racial fathers such as the Portuguese Azores fathers, the ministerial fathers such as the Capuchin deceased

brethren, the church fathers of patristic tradition, or monarchical fathers in the person of England's or France's medieval kings.

### A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court

According to Michael Kammen, Twain carefully distinguished between tradition and history, an intellectual habit that led him to “speculate more engagingly than most American writers about the problematic cultural consequences of romanticizing or misperceiving the past” (171). Twain's well-known blaming of Sir Walter Scott's medievalism for the South's emphasis on manners, settling scores by physical violence, ongoing feuds, backward-looking mentality, and a slavery-based social hierarchy is an example of his effective examination of tradition for dubious gifts that may paralyze a society. Twain carried out his feudal critique even more thoroughly in his 1889 work, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, in which his disdain for “blind reverence for the past” is more consistently realized than in his earlier jesting references to the Sir Walterisms of hierarchy, false manners, and false speech.

Twain's Hank Morgan views himself as having a sort of prophetic office in the Middle Ages, but he recognizes that the role of prophet is difficult. He knows that people have attacked the prophet in antiquity, in the Middle Ages, and during James A. Buchanan's U.S. presidency. Sometimes, attackers of prophets are boys. Hank knows because he was once a boy. When he says that the boy disrespecters of antiquity said jestingly to the prophet, ““Go up, baldhead”” (92), he in fact puts himself in company with Catholic humor on sacred subjects. Giles carefully distinguishes between Martin Luther's seriousness in his theological stance, and Erasmus' and Montaigne's cheerful

combination of “a Catholic sensibility with theological skepticism” (15). One thinks, for example, of the statue of Habbakuk by Donatello in the Florentine Duomo museum, nicknamed El Zucchero by Italians for his prophetic shining head. Mark Twain’s similarity with the Catholics in this form of humor underscores Bush’s claim that Twain’s jesting and flippancy are done for a serious purpose (see 64-65).

Hank Morgan brings his prophetic messages to an individual, Alisande, and to medieval England at large. Morgan describes Alisande’s static narration of fighting between the knights Sir Uwayne and Sir Marhaus. To him, Alisande’s account of their fighting is “just ghosts scuffling in a fog” (122). This epistemological fog, already seen dramatically and movingly in Huckleberry Finn, is not accidental. It is a function of a society that is not moving forward mentally. All fights are reduced to the same fight. Style is the bedrock of meaning. Hank says to Sandy, “[A] couple of people come together with great random—random is a good word, and so is exegesis, for that matter, and so is holocaust, and defalcation, and usufruct and a hundred others, but land! A body ought to discriminate” (121). Language has the capacity for discriminations, and the thoughtful narrator should make the discriminations. Otherwise, a significant historical event—say, Nero’s mad burning of Rome while playing his fiddle—is reduced to nothing but a comment on the town burning, a lack of insurance, a boy breaking a window, and a fireman breaking his neck. Hank Morgan’s point in supplying this example is to show that narrative can give an inadequate account of an event. In this case, the event led to the persecution of Christians and ultimately to the spread of Christianity—the background of Twain’s story. Twain’s narrator’s collection of words

following “random” in the list above is not really random, for him. Since “defalcation” and “usufruct” both suggest financial fraud, one cannot escape the thought that Hank Morgan’s seemingly random selection of these words is actually part of Twain’s criticism of the power of the medieval church in England, especially since Hank Morgan’s priest/newspaper writer was good at the details, having developed “a neat gift of exaggeration” (70) after having been the doorkeeper for a hermit who performed miracles. Again, Twain associates questionable miracles with the intent by an entrenched hierarchy to defraud a gullible public.

To the populace at large Hank Morgan initially brings three concrete things—a patent office, a school system, and a newspaper (70), followed shortly after by industries, factories, and a teacher-factory. The first three inventions are his way of combating the stagnation he sees in a medieval England caught up with aristocracy, knighthood, jousting, tournaments, and a lack of forward thinking. The knights’ pursuit of the Holy Grail is just one instance of their mental blockage. They don’t know where it is, or what finding it means. It is just the expected pursuit. Twain’s point is that stasis in society eventually leads to entropy. The pursuit of goals given by culture and tradition, rather than self-originating goals, is an activity of a too-credulous knighthood, one unprepared mentally for democracy. Democracy is the real Grail the knights should be pursuing.

For Alexis de Tocqueville, the frequently invoked foreign observer of American democracy from the 1830s, errors, messiness, and sometimes lack of achievement of privately determined goals are all part of the democracy he admires. So, too, Twain sees democracy as fostering errors that can, paradoxically, lead to positive changes. When



Hank Morgan includes examples of news coverage in his newspaper (see 383-84), done by his assistant, Clarence, humorous errors occur. The following excerpt from the middle column of type is an instance:

ReMember, the proceeds to a great and free charity, and one whose broad begevence stretches out its helping hand, warm with the blood of a loving heart, to all that suffer [upsidedown f's] regardless of race, creed, condition or color—the only charity yet established in the earth which has no politico-religious stopcock on its compassion, but says Here flows the stream, let all come and drink! Turn (upsidedown T) out, all hands! Fetch along your doughnuts and your gum drops and have a good time. (384)

Clarence, like Hank Morgan and like Twain himself, did not want to see a “politico-religious stopcock” placed on compassion or on the central government. Moreover, for Twain, the multiplication of creeds was not to be feared for the error/heresy it might breed, but embraced for the progress in the long run that it implied. Change in language arises through error, just as evolutionary change arises through mutations. Twain saw the benefits of the free press far outweighing social orderliness arising from suppressing information and differences in point of view; even error in language, when one takes the long view, as James Joyce was to do in Ulysses (1922) about the birth of the English language and English narrative style, could yield development.

Twain is explicit about his narrator’s desire to plant “a complete variety of Protestant congregations all in a prosperous and growing condition. Everybody could be

any kind of a Christian he wanted to; there was perfect freedom in that matter” (77).

Hank Morgan admits that he could have

made everybody a Presbyterian without any trouble, but that would have been to affront a law of human nature: spiritual wants and instincts are as various in the human family as are physical appetites, complexions, and features, and a man is only at his best, morally, when he is equipped with the religious garment whose color and shape and size most nicely accommodate themselves to the spiritual complexion, angularities, and stature of the individual who wears it. (77)

This comment is generous-spirited and tolerant in its acceptance of a variety of sects suited to people’s different capacities. Yet it also renders religion another consumer commodity among other commodities on the market. However, Hank adds a more serious critique, which is the whole basis of his travelling backward in time 1300 years: “. . . and besides, I was afraid of a united Church; it makes a mighty power, the mightiest conceivable, and then when it by and by gets into selfish hands, as it is always bound to do, it means death to human liberty and paralysis to human thought” (77). This is a comment on medieval Catholicism and its hold, for Twain, not only on personal freedom but on thought. Although he insisted on the necessity of having competing churches to suit different individuals, Twain’s view of the need for some church in the lives of individuals is a reflection of his belief in the social and political capacities of churches for reform of the individual. It is also found in such disparate commentators as David Hume and Dwight Eisenhower. For example, Giles quotes Eisenhower on the necessity for

religion in America: “Eisenhower . . . with a blithe prioritizing of form over content, announced in 1952 that ‘our government makes no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don’t care what it is’” (428). Twain saw the influence of the churches as effective in contributing to ordinary morality. For Twain, a plurality of churches was one of the best guarantors of democracy. Through the competition of multiple churches and through each individual’s affiliation to whichever church was best suited to his/her own peculiarities, no one church could gain a stranglehold on freedom and on thought. Twain feared the concentration of power in one church, whether Catholic or otherwise, privileged by the state. Yet, it can also be said that Twain is satirizing late nineteenth-century American culture through his unreliable narrator, Hank, who so unreflectingly holds up the features of American culture throughout much of the novel, only to realize his mistaken judgment of it in the destructive death-dealing climax of the novel.

Twain is skeptical of the actual freedom of the English freeman, most often peasant but possibly also an artisan. They were not called slaves, but had a slave’s mentality, yielding up their rights to a “gilded minority,” the rulers and nobility, who do nothing but consume, waste, and destroy. The workers constituted the nation, but were not aware of it because of their listening to the clergy. Hank Morgan goes on to say that the medieval period was worse than the French Reign of Terror, for the latter was brief and bloody but the former long-lasting and numbing. He refers to his being from Connecticut, with a state constitution saying that power comes from the people, who have

a right to alter the government when they see fit. In an inspired burst of nationalism, perhaps in the wake of the Civil War two dozen years earlier, he says:

‘The country is the real thing, the substantial thing, the eternal thing; it is the thing to watch over, and care for, and be loyal to; institutions are extraneous, they are its mere clothing, and clothing can wear out, become ragged, cease to be comfortable, cease to protect the body from winter, disease, and death. To be loyal to rags, to shout for rags, to worship rags, to die for rags—that is a loyalty of unreason, it is pure animal; it belongs to monarchy, was invented by monarchy, let monarchy keep it.’ (107)

Note the negative, inverse association between monarchy—rule by one rather than democratic rule—and national union. Again, Twain uses clothing as a metaphor for religion and religious institutions. Further on, Twain links an Established Church with “an established crime, an established slave-pen” (128), and sees it as nothing but a political machine, and certainly not as an embodiment or vessel for the gospel (149).

Even though Twain was willing to concede that many priests, “even the great Majority . . . were sincere and right-hearted, and devoted to the alleviation of human troubles and sufferings” (148), he still sees the Established Church as being an enemy to thought. It renders one unable to think of arguments against such tortures as racking. It puts people in prison for having a Richard P. Feynman moment (Feynman, the American Nobel physicist in 1965, author of Surely You’re Joking, Mr. Feynman, who objected to the Pope’s tailor for trying to distinguish him from everyone else through vestments and the triple tiara) of saying that all are alike under their clothes. In short, Twain sees

the Established Church as a form of mental slavery. Physical impoverishment is just an outer indication of an inward state of blight and darkness. Thus, for Twain, the key point was not that many, many priests were good. It was that the system they served was bad. Haddox compares Twain's remarks on the priests with his implied view of slaveholders. Though some individual slaveholders might have been good, just as some individual priests were, the system of slaveholding, as the system of hierarchical church authority and government dominance by one church, was immoral.

One issue remains to be discussed about Connecticut Yankee: the nature of kingship. Haddox says that Twain problematizes the concept of a natural aristocracy. Karen Lystra tells an interesting anecdote about Twain's housekeeper Katy and her disagreement with her parish priest, Father Hardy. The latter asserted that Connecticut Yankee was "an atheistic, anti-Catholic book" (13). Katy countered that Twain was not targeting Catholics, but that he was simply saying that one man was as good as another, a commoner as good as a king (13-14). If Katy Leary was right in her understanding of Twain's purpose in Connecticut Yankee, Twain's thinking about human equality shows the same view of democracy as that espoused by Walt Whitman in his assertions of the equal greatness of woman and man, Body and Soul, President and prostitute. But is this what Twain says about kingship in the book? Is he equating king and commoner?

Even though Twain points out the bias of the king in favor of the aristocracy, he suggests that the king shows nobility when he enters a place where people have had smallpox, feels in his "ancestral blood" (291) that the men the king and Hank Morgan are pursuing should not have escaped, and fights fiercely in combat. In other words, the king

has a nobility that shines through the disguise he has donned to facilitate his pursuit of criminals. This suggests, according to Haddox, that Twain felt a contradiction in his view of human nature. Was it constructionist, or was it essentialist? The question is not incidental, because if the king has an inner nobility of person naturally, then everyone is not really equal at birth. Unless government makes adjustments to render outcomes between individuals equal, differences in nature will have a large impact on differences in outcome.

Twain's reversal of financial fortune in T. J. Jackson Lears's account of Twain's "problematic" (165) optimism may shed light on Twain's interest in this issue of human nature. Lears says of Twain's financially draining investment in the Paige typesetter, "[h]emmed in by financial reverses and restive among the genteel literati whose favor he courted, Twain escaped to the medieval childhood of the race. Arthurian England became at once the object of his progressive scorn and the repository of his fantasies of liberation" (165). If Lears's view of this contradiction in Twain's outlook is applied to Twain's depiction of kingship in A Connecticut Yankee, one can psychologize Twain as saying that personal nobility is inborn, thwarted or hindered by circumstances, but still able to shine through advantageously in situations of crisis. Haddox summarizes Twain's view as an "attraction to a discourse of human nature [that] moves him temporarily towards a conservatism whose claims exceed even Fitzhugh's: the monarchical authority that for Fitzhugh was arbitrary and based in the end only on force becomes for Twain an inherent, irrepressible quality close to the transcendence of southern heroic representations" (75). Even the issue of Twain's espousing of American progress vs.

medieval England's backwardness is challenged by the end of the novel. Alfred Kazin finds the novel to have "all his old charm, but [is] . . . a muddle" (187). He adds that "[t]he triumph of technology over the medieval is mechanical and unfelt," noting that "[t]he book ends in the profound sadness of an irretrievable love that was more and more to darken Mark Twain's mind in the last decades of his life" (187). The prospect of facing financial ruin in old age after a life of hard work and hard-earned success would challenge an optimist's view of national progress, as would the spectacle of national greed, scandals, and the legacy of racial discrimination. It may have been liberating from financial fears to imagine time-travelling and then emerging in an era which recognized personal worth and valor.

In spite of Michael Kammen's praise of Twain for his careful separation of tradition and history, it should be pointed out that Twain was not careful in some of his historical assertions about Catholicism in A Connecticut Yankee. Haddox labels as "historically inaccurate [Hank Morgan's] account" that Roman Catholicism in England had taken two to three centuries to change "a nation of men to a nation of worms," and that "men were men" before Church dominance (73). Haddox comments that "slavery, monarchy, and aristocracy, after all, long predate the establishment of Christianity in Britain and elsewhere in the world" (72). Moreover, a counternarrative praises the Irish monks, not the Teutonic barbarian invaders, for saving civilization.

Twain's misreading of medieval culture was influenced by cultural currents around him. Harold Bush notes a "strong anti-Catholic prejudice" (63) in The Innocents Abroad, as well as "a much more vitriolic criticism of Romanism, . . . seen throughout

Connecticut Yankee, where the church is depicted as the main reason for the stupidity and backwardness of the entire civilization” (64). Bush sees Twain’s anti-Catholicism as reflecting the anti-Catholicism of his Masonic Lodge, “the growing [i.e., resurgence of] nativism in the 1880s” (63), his reading of Lecky’s History of European Morals, his upbringing in which sermons were influenced by writers like Samuel F. B. Morse and Lyman Beecher, as well as “anti-Catholicism in sermons by Horace Bushnell and other Congregational preachers that he heard during the Hartford years” (64). According to Gribben, Twain read and re-read Lecky, as evidenced by his marginalia, and saw what “one part of him wished to write—anti-Catholic, anti-slavery, pro-military-discipline history, buttressed by hundreds of pages of facts drawn from all periods of human life” (401-02). Twain’s being influenced by the anti-Catholicism of his country and culture is not surprising. But he tempered it by satirizing the tendency of his narrator, Hank Morgan, to attack Catholics while ignoring his own reckless faith in progress, the Protestant ethic, and the whole variety of Protestant creeds to cure what ails America. What is surprising is his writing the Joan of Arc, which is very different in tone than the previous two books discussed.

#### Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc

Church repression of the individual and the constructionist vs. essentialist nature of humanity remain intertwined but unresolved in A Connecticut Yankee. They come up again in a more purely religious form in Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc. Twain’s concentration on these issues represents his serious exploration of his lifelong concern with “God, man, and religion” (Kazin 191).



Haddox claims that discussions of Joan of Arc “nearly always begin by noting its uncharacteristic piety” (76). Intrinsically, piety seems to be a less democratic virtue than the civic virtues or even the overemphasis on active theological virtues written about by Pope Leo XIII in 1899 in *Testem Benevolentiae*, addressing a heresy he called Americanism (Dolan 108-109). It is also true that, although Twain and William Dean Howells shared the view that Joan of Arc was Twain’s best work, most critics, both then and now, demur in this estimation, in large measure because of that piety (see, for example, Lystra 17, Bush 81, Horn 70, and Skandera-Trombley 160). Some of the critics who make these observations go on to bracket the piety of the work by finding other bases, particularly feminist bases, rather than piety for Twain’s interest in Joan’s life. These explanations range from his interest in modeling the character of Joan after that of his beloved daughter Susy, to his interest in pursuing female childhood experiences in fiction, to his long-time admiration for rebels, to his depiction of Joan as espousing the causes of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, to his awareness of Joan of Arc’s “popularity among female reformers and suffragists” (Skandera-Trombley 156-61). These explanations work well in supporting the critical argument that Twain wanted to attract two audiences, a female audience and an audience familiar with his rebel characters. By this account, Twain was “continuing his long-established authorial stance of critiquing society while taking a stand on social issues” (Skandera-Trombley 160). These arguments are ways of bracketing the central concern of the novel, which is the piety of the main character and her untutored effectiveness in action. The novel is Twain’s most direct, most sustained, confrontation with Catholicism at a critical point in

his life. His depiction of the character of Joan allows the fullest, most unflinching exploration of how a centralized church affects an individual.

In light of Haddox's emphasis on Joan as a hero of nationalism, it may seem odd to find he reads the novel as concerned with the effect of the centralized church on the individual. In Twain's depiction, religious unity and national unity go hand-in-hand in fifteenth-century France. Yet, in spite of Joan's ability to inspire many followers, including not only people from her village, and her fictive military secretary de Conte, but also accomplished military men like La Hire, the novel is most steadily concerned with Joan herself. Her belief in her Voices, her belief in her mission, her courage in battle and under questioning, and also her faithfulness to the church are emphasized more than is her interaction with church or society. The emphasis is on Joan as a uniquely heroic individual, not on Joan as a member of a collective group. Only slightly more than one-ninth of the book deals with Joan's village and family. Even less is said about her mother's role in her rehabilitation trial or about that trial itself. When opportunities exist for sketching in French aristocratic society, they are handled with delicate strokes rather than with laboring the point. For example, the King is described as "indolent . . . in his butterfly clothes," those surrounding him as lying in "silken idleness" that could not be abandoned for "the rude contact of war" (215). It takes the narrator very few more lines to complete the picture of the spoiled, luxuriant, indolent court: "Leave this silken idleness for the rude contact of war? None of these butterflies desired that. They passed their jeweled comfit-boxes one to another and whispered their content in the head butterfly's practical prudence" (215). The bulk of the novel concerns Joan's call, her

military exploits, which are depicted and then reviewed like an honor roll of valor, her sustained imprisonment and courage in prison, and her repeated court trials.

It is clear in Twain's depiction that Joan's beliefs have been formed by the Church as custodian of Christianity in late medieval France. J. D. Stahl says of Twain's Joan that she "does not merely create herself from unpromising origins, she creates and enacts history itself, without ever denying her origins: her parents, her village, Catholicism, France" (134). While Stahl sees Joan in conflict with these formative features, I read Twain's Joan as emerging from these features and pointing toward something larger—her view of a unified France, a view which subsumes, but does not negate parents, village, Catholicism.

Joan corresponds perfectly to the way continental European medieval art depicts Catholic saints as imbued with qualities of self-sacrifice, courage, surrounded by light around her face, and shown in iconography as a servant of God whose humility before God is emphasized. Twain's depiction of the events leading up to her questioning at Poitiers emphasizes her Catholicity. Even as a young girl, Joan lives an extraordinarily generous life guided by a spirit of giving to the poor, the hungry, the dispossessed, the lowly. She is unafraid of a village maniac with an axe, able to think of the safety of the village and of the maniac's best interest, and not at all of her own. Stahl sees the axe as "echo[ing] the violence of pap Finn, the hermit in The Prince and the Pauper, Hank Morgan, and Morgan le Fay" (128). Joan remains preternaturally calm, as someone with supernaturally inspired power. Yet, she does not use her power for destruction. She shrinks from sights of violence done to the human person, including the time the maniac

is found “hacked and stabbed to death in his iron cage in the corner of the square” (63). She speaks with the calm confidence of a visionary of the will of God in seeing that the ““pauper King,”” undeserving as his character is, ““will mount his throne—he will wear his crown”” (72). She is described as surrounded by light, with a divine illumination about her face, and using a tone of pleading when speaking, overheard by de Conte, to her Voices. She thinks of herself as God’s choice of the lowliest for the accomplishment of her mission of bringing about the unification of France. When she begins to talk of her mission publicly to authorities, she speaks of being sent by her Lord, always meaning the King of Heaven, not an earthly authority. When offered gorgeous raiments, she wishes to “be simply and sincerely dressed, as became a servant of God, and one sent upon a mission of a serious sort and grave political import” (121). When she convinces the authorities at Poitiers of her beliefs having angelic and divine rather than satanic origin, she answers simply, clearly, and patiently. Joan’s virtues are those emphasized in many lives of Catholic female saints. Stahl contrasts her motherly self-forgetfulness with “male self-aggrandizement” (132). The Virgin Mary is often depicted as the mother of Christ, sometimes as the Virgin of milk, and also as the mother of all, the Second Eve, who remained sinless and spotless. Other female saints are depicted in medieval and Renaissance Catholic art showing gentleness to animals, children, and beggars.

The question at hand, then, is how Twain’s depiction of Joan fits with his interest in democracy and his pointed, lifelong distrust of church-state entanglement. Joan’s background and mission all fit with Twain’s concern with democracy. Joan has a peasant origin in a little village in the French countryside. Twain shows the ordinariness of

family life and village life in Domremy, but he also shows Joan's family's awareness of the threats to the unity of the French nation. Joan is a female challenging a male hierarchy. In reviewing works featuring Joan of Arc, which included not only Twain's novel but also a novel by Mary Hartwell Catherwood, a play, a biography, poems, and magazine articles, Lears points out the multiple attractions of Joan to a nineteenth-century American audience: her "'rural simplicity and rhapsodical faith' as well as her forceful leadership" (Lears 113). But in a telling addition, Lears says that "to Americans fretting over an elite's supposed failure to lead, Joan's most impressive talent was her ability to organize a nation from a crowd of nerveless and disunited Frenchmen" (114). For Twain, Joan's unselfish leadership and her relationship to the people, including the villagers, the ordinary soldiers under her command, and the crowds assembled outside her trial and for her execution are among the central features of her character.

Since Twain did employ anti-Catholic rhetoric in two very popular books, The Innocents Abroad and A Connecticut Yankee, in the latter discussing planting a variety of Protestant congregations in medieval England in order to counter the anti-democratic tendencies of the medieval English Catholic church, it may be only natural for critics to read a proto-Protestantism in Twain's depiction of Joan. After all, in The Innocents Abroad, Twain linked Protestant nations with questioning, and Catholic nations with a backward-looking attitude and controlling authority that did not tolerate questioning.

Those who find Joan to be more Protestant than Catholic draw selectively on the evidence from her responses to the questioning at Poitiers. They rely on answers from Joan that support their construction of Joan. For example, even as the Poitiers authorities

press her before giving their initial approval for her mission, Joan uses arguments from ancient church authorities: “Listen! The Book of God is worth more than all these ye cite, and I stand upon *it*. And I tell ye there are things in that Book that not one among ye can read, with all your learning!” (139). Haddox interprets this passage as showing Twain giving Joan “throwaway statements that suggest a nascent Protestantism” (79). This alleged Protestant slant in Joan is confuted by the context in the novel, for the chapter ends with the court applauding a solemnly read pronouncement finding “that Joan of Arc, called the Maid, is a good Christian and good Catholic; that there is nothing in her person or her words contrary to the faith; and that the King may and ought to accept the succor she offers; for to repel it would be to offend the Holy Spirit, and render him unworthy of the aid of God” (140). The best minds, university-trained in theology, including learned Dominicans, had questioned Joan for three weeks in Poitiers, but cleared by their “inquisition” (138), she carried the day, is declared a good Catholic. The overall tendency of the chapter on Joan’s questioning at Poitiers is not to show Joan as a Protestant, but to show her as a Catholic in good standing.

Feminist readings of Twain’s Joan go even farther than those who read her as a Protestant. They seek simultaneously to de-authorize the Saints Joan believes spoke to her and to ascribe more authority to the fairy tree in Joan’s village than Twain allows. Stahl’s reading of the non-Christian origins of Joan’s voices is perplexing in light of the declaration at Poitiers of Joan as a Catholic in good standing. Stahl sees Joan’s power as coming from “[t]he fairy tree and the fairies” and sees these as “transparent symbols of pagan nature” (135). Stahl’s view receives support from Haddox, who sees the tree as

“Joan’s strongest and most original attachment” (78). However, this view is not supported by Twain’s text. Joan argues to the parish priest that even the offspring of demons deserve compassion, thus showing her awareness of the possibility of pagan or demonic linkage, and the unbounded nature of her compassion, not her belief in fairies. Stahl adds, “The fairies, the fairy tree of Bourlemont, and Joan’s voices are numinous signs, but they are not Christian” (135). Again, this view is not supported by Twain’s text. The saints Joan hears are Catholic saints and are named—St. Michael, St. Catherine, St. Margaret, identities deriving from statues Joan saw in her village church. Many Catholic saints have had visions of Christ or of holy people. Also, if Stahl’s view is correct, then the trial run by Cauchon has credibility in its relentless insistence on the demonic origin of the Voices. By this attempted de-authorization of Joan’s Saints, critics are engaging in a democratization of the nature of sainthood, challenging the saints’ Catholic canonicity and reputed ability in Catholic tradition to appear to the living. Yet Twain does not challenge the authenticity of the Voices. According to Rasmussen, “the novel avoids the central issue in Joan’s life—her religious calling. It never tries to explain where her ‘voices’ come from or why she is so devoted to God” (255). In fact, for the story of piety Twain intends to tell and tells, according to his 1904 essay on Joan, he refrains from challenging the Voices, accepting them as real. To do otherwise is to suggest that Joan is fanatical, mentally unbalanced, or self-deluded.

Once Joan has cleared the hurdle at Poitiers and is installed as General-in-Chief of the Armies of France, her actions further show her medieval Catholicism. One of her first actions is to have a banner designed for her:

For device it bore the image of God the Father throned in the clouds and holding the world in His hand; two angels knelt at His feet, presenting lilies; inscription, JESUS MARIA; on the reverse the crown of France supported by two angels. She also caused a smaller standard or pennon to be made, whereon was represented an angel offering a lily to the Holy Virgin. (145)

Many medieval Catholic paintings focus on the enthroned God the Father as maker and preserver of the world. The inscription emphasizes the closeness of Jesus to his mother. The smaller banner emphasizes the Annunciation made by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary. In these choices for her banners, Joan emphasizes the parallel between her own virginal status and Mary's, underscoring Joan's fitness as a vessel giving birth to a unified France. Very frequently, Catholic female saints are celebrated for the purity of their lives and their chaste choice of becoming brides of Christ. Once again Twain comments, through this banner, on the Catholic hierarchy of sacred personages. In The Innocents Abroad, he objected to the prominence of the Virgin Mary in the naming of churches in Rome. Now he provisionally accepts her place of prominence in the Catholic telling of salvation history by stressing the inspirational qualities of Joan's banners rather than what Protestants would consider their heretical qualities of elevating Mary to the level of Christ and the Trinity. Although Twain used both Protestant and Catholic interpretations for his telling of Joan's story, Emerson notes that Twain stayed close to Catholic accounts (211), and Horn remarks that "Twain often accepted the views of his



Catholic sources . . . as his comments [i.e., marginalia] within their works [available to him in his library] attest” (90 fn. 29).

Joan insists on La Hire’s men adhering to personal moral standards. Prostitutes must leave the camp. Drinking is limited. Each man must go to confession and go to daily Mass (154). She forbids swearing, and even insists that the great fighter La Hire adhere to the rules. Joan’s conduct in battle shows her beliefs, too. She will not fight on the Feast of the Ascension. When her horse makes it difficult for her to mount, she has him led to the cross in front of the nearby church, and he allows her to mount. When Joan sees an English prisoner dying on the “red field of Patay,” she sends for a priest and holds the dying man’s head in her lap. One key ability Joan has is her capacity to instill a belief in the common men around her in their own greatness. Thus, power flows from Joan to the people. Yet, in a reciprocal relationship, it also flows from them to her, in the way they trust her, follow her leadership, and pray for her.

The argument that sees in Joan a proto-Protestantism, one pursued later in drama by George Bernard Shaw, is not only based on her answers at the Poitiers inquisition but also on her regulation of the conduct of her army. Both Haddox and Lears suggest that Twain tried to turn Joan into a representative of an incipient Protestantism (see Haddox 79 and Lears 152-53). Haddox finds that Joan’s “specific injunctions to her army . . . have a distinctly nineteenth-century Protestant American flavor” (79). He adds, “If Joan’s destabilizing of gender norms and humble origins are not enough to alarm the church and the aristocracy, her pagan affiliations and Protestant-inflected talk of rights confirm her as a heretic before her time” (79). This conclusion is puzzling. Although

Joan insists on the behavioral reforms of her military mentioned above, she does not challenge Catholic ritual or Catholic sacraments.

The ceremony in which the king is anointed at Rheims Cathedral shows Joan's thorough-going Catholicism. The narrator mentions two striking points of interest. One is that Joan's name is included in the prayers of the church, which the narrator notes is "an honor theretofore restricted to royalty" (267). The other is the importance for the king of obtaining the flask of holy oil for anointing. The narrator says, "This oil was not earthly oil; it was made in heaven; the flask also. The flask, with the oil in it, was brought down from heaven by a dove. It was sent down to St. Remi just as he was going to baptize King Clovis, who had become a Christian" (268). The narrator goes on, "From this flask Clovis had been anointed; and from it all the Kings of France had been anointed since" (268). Twain is simultaneously emphasizing Joan's insight, piety, and also the intrinsic flaws in monarchy in the anointing of the king. Were it not for miracles and Voices, Joan would not have recognized the Dauphin when he sits disguised at their first meeting. Her insistence on the political importance to France of his anointing is part of her insight. The Dauphin's unworthiness of her efforts is Twain's continuing critique of monarchy. For although the Dauphin is weak and undeserving, feckless, and unreliable as a friend to Joan, he is anointed. Unlike Twain's rhetorical stance in A Connecticut Yankee, where he makes fun of the miracles connected with the well that dried up, and shows bomb technology as the restorer of the well, here he accepts the divine origin of St. Remi's oil and its nine hundred year-old history as historical fact. At the ceremony, Joan does not ask for anything for herself from the King as her reward, but rather asks for a

remission of the taxes on her village. Twain's emphasis on this request fits his emphasis on democracy. A little later, we read of her receiving a little image of the Virgin Mary from her parish priest. She pins the image to her clothes. Again, this accords not only with Joan's personal piety but with Twain's emphasis on democracy, for he states through his narrator that the parish priest rules the nation. Thus, clergy from humble villages have as much sway over the people as does the hierarchy. Although this is a very limited democracy, it represents a de-centralized approach to governance based on local control.

The view Joan has of the clergy is more complicated. Echoing Zwarg, Stahl sees "the destabilization of all forms of authority in the novel, especially male authority" (145). Though in her request to be taken to the Pope Joan questions the legitimacy of the trial as conducted by Cauchon, she thereby shows that she sees the Pope as the ultimate religious judge, one authorized to pass judgment on her. In her deference to the weak Dauphin, she shows her adherence to the ideal of monarchy.

Lears goes even further than Haddox in his generalizations about what he calls other late American Victorian writers: "By removing the Catholic framework of medieval sainthood, and concentrating on morality rather than belief, Protestants . . . could transform saints into acceptable models for reviving the bourgeois ethic of self-control" (153). Lears finds that Joan, St. Francis, and St. Bernard of Clairvaux were all popular with American Protestant writers, and that Dante was popular with American scholars. (One striking omission is any interest at all in Thomas Aquinas.) Twain, however, steadily shows the importance to Joan of participating in Catholic sacramental and

devotional life. In prison, she has her confession heard. She wants Extreme Unction before her death. A litany is prayed for Joan by those outside, keeping vigil the night before her death. Twain never challenges the validity or the efficacy of Catholic sacraments for the individual recipient, or the power of Catholic ritualized prayers.

Twain is careful to point out the wicked machinations of Bishop Pierre Cauchon, but he does not suggest that the sacrament of confession was therefore invalid or useless to the recipient. He approaches the matter with the skill and discernment of a church canon lawyer, making careful distinctions. His ultimate conclusion about Joan is that her unique character emerges not because of, and not in spite of, but within the institution of the late medieval French Catholic church. If one were to do a time-travelling mental experiment and transport Joan to nineteenth-century Italy, she would not seem a plausible advocate of Italian nationalism at the cost of the loss of the Papal States and the loss of Vatican prestige. Mark Noll observes that “among the world’s most enthusiastic cheerleaders for the Italian antipapal forces were American Protestants” (130). Given this stance, had Twain set out simply to attack the Catholic Church through a historical novel, he had a ready-made hero in Garibaldi. He could have written about Galileo. He could have chosen a Protestant martyr from the Renaissance to write about. Like other Protestant American Francophiles of the late nineteenth century, he could have written about a figure like Voltaire (see Kammen 172).

Joan is not depicted as a rebel who seeks to leave the church, or even to modify it very much. She is constrained by her time; she is bound by her beliefs. Critics such as Horn, in their eagerness to find criticisms of the Catholic Church in Joan of Arc, assert

that Bishop Cauchon, in his bloatedness and purplish face, is representative of Twain's "dominant line on the Church itself" (89). Stahl is more conservative in asserting a gendered interpretation of Cauchon's role as "a cautionary male villain: sensual, intellectual, deceitful, identified with an oppressive social institution, and sadistic" (135). Horn's reading of Cauchon as representative of medieval Catholicism is countered by Alfred Kazin's claim that Twain's success as a writer gradually resulted in his having deeper awareness of the old as having value, and led him "to adore the Middle Ages in the person of Joan of Arc" (179). If "adoration" is an accurate description, it is a marked change from The Innocents Abroad, where the emphasis is on Twain's pride and belief in American progress and newness, and even from A Connecticut Yankee, which Stahl sees as showing Twain's "faith in the amelioration of life through political and social progress [as] becoming increasingly ambivalent at best" (127). It would be more accurate to say that Twain expressed unreserved veneration for Joan but retained his love for democracy, which Joan embodied, and his hatred for authoritarianism, which he saw epitomized by the Middle Ages.

Twain's critique of the Catholic Church as an institution with too much power over the individual remains unabated in his depiction of Archbishop Cauchon. A member of a hierarchical clergy, Cauchon and people like him can exercise dominance over the public in general and over those perceived as defiant individuals. His rigged trial of Joan contains many unfair, undemocratic aspects. It is packed with people against Joan and favoring Cauchon's side. Joan is not provided a lawyer. By contrast, Cauchon has sixty-two adjudicants on his side. Though they are eventually reduced to the twelve

most in favor of his position, the ratio is heavily against a person unlearned in medieval theological subtleties, whom Twain had described at Poitiers as “a company of holy hair-splitters and phrasemongers” (136). Again, as evidence of Twain’s former complaint about the lack of education going hand in hand with deference to authority, the judges and inquisitors are brilliant Paris-trained university men. Cauchon and his inquisitors are a many-armed hydra with many strategies. Cauchon and his interrogators use their learnedness in many attempts to confuse Joan. They rely on the passage of time to wear Joan down. They use endless repetition. Yet, although Joan is illiterate, she is able to answer their questions well until deception based on literacy is used to obtain a bogus confession from her. In prison, she thinks she is signing a simple piece of paper with limited admissions. Instead, Cauchon slips in a paper with extensive, damning admissions. The trial’s outcome depends heavily on the contrast between the clergy’s literacy and Joan’s illiteracy. The implication is clear. The wider public awaiting results outside the court are also illiterate and thus subject to duplicity, just as medieval England was subject to duplicity.

Rasmussen points out that the church in France may have had reasons for trying to subvert Joan’s popularity and influence with the people, and that Twain does not explore these reasons. But a careful exploration of the motives of the French church would not have accorded with Twain’s interest in democracy. Twain’s narrator notes the flaws of the trial without an attempt to exculpate Archbishop Cauchon as the chief villain of the story. Joan’s trial is secret, the charges are not communicated to her as a prisoner,

and she has no lawyer (375). Moreover, although the King's honor is at stake, he is not represented at the trial.

In spite of the flaws of the trial, however, a record of it does exist. Twain is careful to note the names of the decent people involved as transcribers or questioners, through whose efforts Joan's real accomplishments have been allowed to come down to us. The roll of villains is long. But the roll of decency is not empty, including Manchon, Martin Ladvenu, Maitre Jean Massieu, and Isambard de la Pierre. Records of the first three trials, as well as of the Rehabilitation trial, exist. Twain's continuing concern with democracy is shown in his interest in the documenting of the trial as coming from the lower members of the hierarchy who were honest enough to write truthfully. Twain believed that chronicles and diaries written by lower-level officials and observers closer to the incidents were historically the most accurate.

Twain also shows his interest in democracy in the role of the crowds that support Joan's mission. Their adulation of Joan in fact constitutes one of Cauchon's charges against her (361). An anonymous English soldier utters words about Joan at the beginning of the trial that stand out for their simplicity and incisiveness: "By God, if she were but English, she were not in this place another half a second!" (327). Twain's narrator describes this as "the soldier in him responding to the soldier in her"—not the soldier to the leader, but the soldier to the soldier. An anonymous priest notes the brilliance of her answer when the inquisitors try to trap her about the proper papal authority, asking which one she considers the real Pope. To her "Are there two?" (349), he says "By God it was a master stroke!" Through their prayers and litanies during

Joan's final hours, the crowd offers her sustaining support. The support of the crowd is a greater force in Joan's emotional life than the weak and uncertain support offered her by the King unworthy of his office, one who is called a butterfly by Twain and described as looking like a two-legged carrot.

Joan does advance a political theory of church structure in opposition to the categories of the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant during her trial, and that is her espousal of the Church universal (373, 412). Although this has been read by some, including Haddox, as part of Joan's Protestantism (80), it is a view with ancient and medieval lineage, depending on whether one's emphasis is on doctrine or church authority. Before 450 A.D. Vincent of Lerins gave three criteria by which to determine the authenticity of a church doctrine: that it must be held everywhere, by everyone, from the beginning (O'Brien 1313). His *Commonitorium* is described as "the most influential early statement of the character and authority of tradition and its relation to Scripture and of the possibility of the development of doctrine" (O'Brien 1313). When pressed hard by the inquisitors to sign a confession, Joan appeals to the Church universal. In this appeal, Joan clearly says that there is a universal, horizontal authority that is an authority with greater legitimacy than Cauchon's French trial of her, situated in a vertical relationship to the French people and to Rome above it. In essence, she is espousing conciliarism as the source of church authority, a view of church authority "emanating from canonists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries" (Fahey 341) and expressed at the Council of Basel, held from 1431-1438 (Fahey 342). This theory regards an "ecumenical council . . . as being the highest authority in the Church, superior even to the pope" (342). Though it is not



generally understood historically as the dominant Catholic view, it nevertheless is an alternate model of church authority. It has had proponents from the medieval period onward, and had minority advocates at Vatican Council I, held from 1869-70. Pottmeyer says that the minority bishops at Vatican I “wanted it stressed that the pope could only be infallible if he was supported by the infallible tradition of the faith of the whole Church” (1297). According to the theory, the source of authority was not top-down, but rather, “a general council [was considered] as a representation of the whole Church, not as an assembly of autonomous bishops” (Fahey 342). Moreover, this theory of authority has implications for Joan’s historical situation as well. The Great Schism, a term used here to designate the period from 1378-1417 (it is sometimes also used to refer to the split between the Eastern Orthodox Churches and Rome, which occurred in 1054), when there were two and ultimately three claimants to the papal throne (Myers, “Great Schism” 585), was a matter through which the inquisitors at Joan’s trial tried to trip her up into a wrong answer. Joan’s answer, referred to in the previous paragraph, confounded their attempts, as did her clear answers on many matters.

Even democracy is not a guarantee of fair trials or of fair outcomes to trials procedurally fair. For as wrong as the verdict of Joan’s secret, heavily biased trial is, Twain knew of an example from his own lifetime of a sensational trial that produced the wrong verdict in spite of its being conducted in a democratic country, with an independent judiciary, talented and abundant legal counsel on both sides, ample evidence, a voluminous court record, and stretching over ninety-two days. Twain attended the trial of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, the brother of his neighbor Harriet Beecher Stowe.

According to Robert Weir, Twain was “deeply troubled by the adultery scandal” at the center of the trial, and “his notes indicate that he thought Beecher guilty, despite the hung jury verdict” (205). The attention-getting issues involved in the trial of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, occurring in 1875, were matched only by the flamboyant aftermath, in which Rev. Beecher sought to rehabilitate his tarnished reputation by going on the lecture circuit, temporarily denying the existence of hell, and heavily courting a receptive public (Aymar and Sagarin 153-67).

Even from the time of his travels described in The Innocents Abroad, Twain liked France and French culture. Michael Kammen observes of the period from around 1870 to 1915 that American “[a]cts of cultural Francophilia continued to be diverse and intense, but they took place primarily at the level of high culture” (172). Twain’s tribute to Joan and to France is at this level of high culture. Kammen describes the 1879 painting by Jules Bastien-Lepage of *Joan of Arc Listening to the Voices* as “handsome and powerful” (172), a work immediately bought by an American collector. Twain’s Joan shares with Bastien-Lepage’s Joan an otherworldliness, a rapturous vision, and an eschatological orientation not marred or dimmed by her imprisonment (see Stahl for the contrary view that Joan becomes “tragic and pathetic” rather than “heroic” when her “imaginative orientation toward the future . . . ceases to operate eschatologically” 134). Twain shows Joan as a saint entering her glory, a saint in ecstasy like St. Teresa, both in his depiction of her martyrdom and in his 1904 commentary on his text.

Bastien-Lepage’s painting cannot show voices, but it does show a helmeted St. Michael speaking to Joan, who faces away from the archangel and toward a mission,

gesturing with her hand as she listens intently. In Twain's depiction of Joan's voices, they direct Joan but do not chain her in the same literal way she was chained and caged in prison. They provide an orientation for her, just as they do in the Bastien-Lepage painting. In that work, St. Michael stands behind Joan and she listens, hand outstretched and face rapturous. In Joan's trial, Twain emphasizes her answer about grace as an "immortal" reply "which brushed the formidable snare away as it had been but a cobweb": "If I be not in a state of Grace, I pray God place me in it; if I be in it, I pray God keep me so" (341). Just as the individual has the option of cooperating with grace or refusing it, Twain's Joan can refuse the voices. She has tested their validity for four years in twice weekly hearings of them. The voices do not suspend the laws of nature for Joan. In one of her attempted escapes from prison, she suffered a bad fall (445). In her protracted stay in chains and a cage, her privations lead to starvation and fatigue. In sum, the voices are guides, but Joan's following them is voluntary; they are prophetic, but they are not all-powerful. Joan is still subject to the sufferings of hunger and fatigue an ordinary person placed in Cauchon's cruel confines would be.

Twain describes Joan as a genius, or prodigy, whose natural gifts of soldiering, oratory, legal advocacy, judicial wisdom, and statesmanship simply emerge, not nurtured by years of formal education. In fact, for Twain, Joan is quite unlike the "perfect peach" brought forth from the "humble bitter-almond" by years of cultivation. Her accomplishments are beyond ordinary causal explanation. The one explanation left to Twain is her natural, inner strength. Lears summarizes it for many nineteenth-century writers thus:

For late-nineteenth-century Americans, medieval sincerity was not just a childlike state of grace. It had a more active, demanding side as well—a dimension deriving from republican moralism. In the lives of the saints, innocence was not always innate; it was sometimes won through force of will. An individual hagiographer might treat his subject as both an ethereal child of nature and a robust moral activist. The two notions coexisted and intermingled, often within the same mind. (152)

The dedicated will of St. Joan builds on her gifted nature and confirms it in its path, a path determined by her voluntary decision to cooperate with the voices.

Twain was also consistent in an emphasis stressed by Harold K. Bush in his approach to Twain's work. He sees Twain as Twain saw himself, i.e., as “‘a moralist in disguise’” (66). Alfred Kazin talks of Twain's iconic American views, of not wanting the rule of the dead and of lighting out for the territory. But Twain submits himself to the long discipline of researching and writing about Joan. He does not take the role of atheist debunker of candidacy for sainthood. Rather, Twain liberates Joan from being held as the exclusive property of the Catholic Church and grants her sainthood even before she is officially canonized in 1920, thus legitimizing the existence of a communion of saints, but also saying that others can decide who a saint is, even who a Catholic saint is. He says in The Innocents Abroad that he really has to concentrate his mind to realize that the crucifixion did not take place in a Catholic church. Likewise, he says here that the Catholic Church has saints it does not even recognize as saints, and he tries to free them from their historical and church boundedness.

The religious challenges confronting Twain and all thinking Americans in the post-Civil War era arose from Darwinianism, including Darwin's The Descent of Man (1871), and German higher Biblical criticism. Many critics have suggested that American writers were looking for a way to re-establish the pre-Civil War cultural synthesis which was based on Protestantism and which was transmuted into a national civil religion. These critics include Bush (68), Nolls (8-9), Kammen (101-131), Haddox (70), and Lears (4-7). In the historical figure of Joan, Twain found a way to bring together religious faith and purity of soul. Previously, "[h]e chose to be a satirist, a disturber of convention, rather than a hero" (176). But in Joan he found an undeniable, selfless hero. His heroic subject called for a heroic tone.

In Twain's depiction of Joan as the receiver of voices, he shows that the voices can choose an ordinary, uneducated person, but he also shows they cannot determine the course of that person's action. Through a period of testing, Joan judges for herself whether the voices are authentic. One of Twain's main concerns is to answer the question of whether someone independent-minded can emerge from within an authoritarian system. Joan emerges within the church structure. However, throughout the novel, Joan is portrayed as independent, in spite of the voices pointing out a direction for her. Twain himself, in his account of his interest in this story, said that as a boy a piece of paper came his way in Hannibal, Missouri, with a page from the life of Joan of Arc (Hoffman 27). Just as that paper pointed in him a direction but did not determine him, so Joan's voices pointed her in a direction but left the carrying out of their charge to her own initiative.

In the three works discussed in this chapter, Twain focuses on religion and morality, and on taking a long, hard second look at the Catholic church. His position on Catholicism seems to have shifted from the late 1860s to the mid-1890s. His dissatisfaction with institutional Catholicism may have peaked in A Connecticut Yankee, but his disillusionment with American progress and perfectibility is also in evidence. Twain retained at least one aspect of his dislike of Catholicism, though—its antidemocratic nature, which he felt imposes an entire code of beliefs, thought, and conduct on its followers. Although Twain was not a systematizer, he did not want to be enslaved by another man's system. This view is expressed by William Blake in his last major prophetic work, Jerusalem (1804-09?):

I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans

I will not Reason & Compare: my business is to Create. (lines 20-21 of plate 10)

Throughout Twain's inconsistent portrayals of Catholicism, he was consistent in his belief in democracy as the best political system available to humanity. He saw democracy as being most compatible with the full range of competing Protestant churches that Hank Morgan sought to establish, however quixotically, in medieval England in the time of King Arthur.

Chapter VI Friend of Creoles, Friend of Hispanics: National Catholic Churches in  
Harper and Norris

Two novels that contain sustained presentations of ethnic Catholic American churches are Frances E. W. Harper's Iola Leroy (1892), with its depiction of French/Spanish Creole Catholicism, and Frank Norris's The Octopus (1901), with its depiction of a Southwestern Hispanic mission church and priest. Harper symbolically places a New Orleans cathedral in the background of her story. Church attendance by the Creole character central to the first part of her story occurs, sporadically, only when he is in New Orleans. Harper's concern with the lives of Creoles is, for her, complicated by both race and history in ways not as apparent in Kate Chopin's The Awakening. Norris's mission church is a relic of Southwestern American history: its natural membership is inferior to the Anglo-Saxon ranchers, and its priest, though generous in some ways, is affected by his Spanish heritage. Both depictions occur within the context of the rising nativism occurring in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

The fact pattern describing Catholic growth in America after the Civil War suggests the hypothesis that non-Catholic writers depicting Catholics would find in this pattern ready-made targets for negative attacks. Catholic ethnic identity and American Catholic attachment to national churches can be explained both before and after the Civil War by immigration (Howe 201-02).<sup>38</sup> Twenty-five million immigrants, composed primarily of peoples of Mediterranean and eastern European origin, arrived in the United

States from 1865 to 1915, settling mainly in American cities (Dolan 90). Antebellum American Catholics born outside the United States were mainly German and Irish. By contrast, the post-Civil War Catholic immigrants were a multi-ethnic group. By 1915, “as many as twenty-eight different nationalities or language groups [in the United States] called themselves Catholic” (Dolan 91). Three-quarters or more of the Catholic population then were “Irish, Germans, Italians, Polish, French Canadians, and Mexicans” (Dolan 91). Each group sought to have a parish organized along lines of nationality for the purposes of having a priest of their nationality (Dolan 97), hearing sermons preached in their native language, maintaining familiar customs and devotions (Dolan 91), having Catholic elementary and secondary schools for their own nationality (Dolan 97), and passing on their faith through religious instruction in their native language to their children as a family heritage (Dolan 97). Potentially virulent offshoots of nationalism arose in the United States in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, including expansionism, jingoism, and nativism and racism aimed against Italian, Polish, and Slavic Catholics (Dolan 92). These sentiments were accompanied by attempts to promote patriotism through the public schools and also a debate over whether American Catholics could be loyal to the United States. One might expect, then, that writers would present negative portraits, using familiar, established Catholic groups as stand-ins for Catholic newcomers. It would be an easy move for a writer who was a minority herself to deflect criticism from her group onto other groups. Eric Lott has demonstrated that this tactic was used by Irish immigrants attempting to climb socially in nineteenth-century minstrel shows. It would also be an expected move for a writer educated in an



atmosphere upholding the superiority of Anglo-Saxons as a race and as cultural contributors to America. Yet neither writer in this chapter used this approach in the crude, nativist style adopted a decade later by anti-Catholic yellow journalists and politicians such as Thomas Watson.

Frances E. W. Harper

In a survey of American literature of the last decades of the nineteenth century, Richard Brodhead discusses Frances E. W. Harper as an example of “alternative literary cultures,” a category that includes Mark Twain’s subscription publishing and James Whitcomb Riley’s small-town newspaper publishing. (Riley became more well known only after years of publishing in Indiana newspapers.) Brodhead helps to place Harper’s accomplishment by pointing out that Iola Leroy was the best-selling novel by an African-American in the nineteenth century, that she inhabited a “writing world differentiated by race instead of region,” and that her work and the work of other black American writers remained political and social in its focus at a time when white female authors “had largely reconceived their work as a more depoliticized ‘art’” (“American Literary” 43). In her novel, Harper focuses on racial issues that interest her: the history of the slave trade, the Civil War, the use of religion as an argument in support of slavery, the fate of the mixed-race person, and the challenge to integration represented not only by lynching but by unregenerate race-baiters who have prominent professional positions from which they can affect the lives of black Americans. For Harper, Catholicism historically becomes a friend of the mixed-race person through the ethnic church, but only after a prior dismal history during the slave trade.

In her introduction to Iola Leroy, Frances Smith Foster carries Brodhead's work further, placing Harper's achievement in the context of multiple audiences. Noting the appearance of five printings of the novel in the year of its appearance, Foster comments on its appeal for "persons interested in such areas as religion, temperance, slavery and Reconstruction, woman's fiction, and local color or regionalism" (xxvii). In other words, the book appealed to an audience whose tastes resembled those of Harper's audience when she appeared as a public speaker on such issues as abolition, temperance, and women's rights and women's suffrage, an audience which would have been beneficiaries of her efforts to establish Sunday Schools. Foster points out that by the time of Harper's death in 1911, the book had declined in status with such influential thinkers and critics as W. E. B. DuBois (xxxv). Much later in the twentieth century, her work was subject to Robert Bone's stricture that she was too old at age 67 to write a novel, and to revisionist appraisals by black feminist scholars.

Harper's presentation of the ethnic Catholic church is complicated by issues of mixed race and by Spanish history. The Catholic character in the novel is Eugene Leroy, Iola's father. The narrative uses Eugene's attitudes, behavior, and religious observance as primary means for constructing a portrait of the Creole. Eugene's positive attitudes are displayed, but the novel does not allow him to escape criticism for languorousness and fecklessness. Harper uses his contracting of fatal yellow fever as synecdoche for lack of practical, vigorous commitment to racial equality. Harper recognizes that Creole culture prior to the Civil War, as situated in New Orleans and implicated in the slave trade, extends backward historically to the role of the Spaniards in early phases of the slave

trade between Africa and the Caribbean. Harper suggests that the decline of Spain as a world power is a punishment for the sin of its involvement in slavery.

Iola Leroy covers two generations, the generation of Eugene Leroy and the generation of his daughter, Iola Leroy. Eugene Leroy declares his intention to marry Marie, a slave and nurse on his plantation whose care brought him back to health after years of dissipation abroad. His cousin Alfred Lorraine finds the notion of marriage to a slave or a freed slave an absurdity. Leroy places Marie in an academy in Ohio, goes to her graduation, and marries her. They have three children, two of whom, Iola and Harry, he sends North for an education. With the Civil War about to intervene in their happy lives, Leroy and Marie decide to go North, but he dies of yellow fever before they reach Vicksburg, believing that his property is secured for Marie. With Eugene dead, Alfred gets a Judge to declare Marie's supposed marriage and inheritance unlawful, and remands her and her children to slavery. The remainder of the novel involves Iola's career as a nurse and her decision to reject her white suitor, Dr. Gresham, and marry her light-skinned black suitor, Dr. Frank Latimer. It also works out her reunion with her mother and her brother Harry, who marries Iola's friend Lucille Delany. All four return to the South, either as medical workers or as teachers, to try to uplift the blacks in the South after the Civil War.

Eugene Leroy is a representative Creole. The term "Creole" can mean several things. In this novel, it refers to people who are descended from or culturally related to early French or Spanish settlers of the Gulf Coast, particularly Mississippi and Louisiana. It can also mean a person of mixed European and black ancestry. Iola speaks of her

father as a Creole planter from Mississippi. He is a sentimentalized portrait of a slave owner; he spends his time on the plantation, with books, and with his wife. He is not shown being abusive to slaves. Yet his children did absorb a lesson about the color line, because both Iola and Harry are shocked to learn that they have black blood. In Harper's references to Creoles, the association with Catholicism is a reference to French or Spanish ancestry. Alfred Lorraine's description of Creole women stresses their beauty, consisting of "splendid eyes, dark, luminous, and languishing; lovely complexions and magnificent hair" (62), and their cultured manners. Further on, he speaks of them as "beautiful canary birds, charming and pretty, but not fitted for the wear and tear of plantation life" (63). This suggestion of languorousness and indolence may be part of the decadent quality Thomas Haddox perceives to be an aspect of Catholicism presented by some Southern writers (1-13, 82-111).<sup>39</sup> The comfortable decadence is evident, for example, in George Washington Cable's portrayal of the seven young Mississippi beauties, daughters of Colonel De Charleu, in the short story "Belles Demoiselles Plantation."

Besides associating the Creole with exotic beauty and an indolent lifestyle, Harper associates the Creole with certain marital and religious outlooks. The marital stance is essentially an openness to racial mixing. Eugene Leroy tries to resist the power of the stereotype being put forward by his cousin Alfred. Eugene declares to Alfred his love for Marie and says immediately she "has negro blood in her veins" (65). Alfred believes his cousin "mad" (67), saying that even "one drop of negro blood in her veins curses all the rest" (67). Alfred's resistance to the idea of a racially mixed marriage

reveals Harper's awareness of the social taboo against miscegenation in the South in the 1890s. Authorial and audience interest in the maintenance of an uncontaminated white race is reflected in the fiction of such writers as George Washington Cable, Grace King, and Alice Dunbar-Nelson, though with varying degrees of approval or disapproval.

Eugene's openness to inter-racial marriage is blindly idealistic. Using practical rhetorical persuasion to convince his racist cousin of the rightness of his marriage does not occur to him. Eugene discusses his love for Marie with his cousin with a seeming unawareness of the depth of Alfred's opposition to the marriage. When Eugene tells the story of Marie's care bringing him back to health, he says that there was something different in her from all the fashionable women he had met both in the South and abroad. Alfred sneeringly challenges Eugene to tell him what this difference was. Eugene's answer is based on a simile from his travels abroad:

'It was something such as I have seen in old cathedrals, lighting up the beauty of a saintly face. A light which the poet tells was never seen on land or sea. I thought of this beautiful and defenseless girl adrift in the power of a reckless man, who, with all the advantages of wealth and education, had trailed his manhood in the dust, and she, with simple, childlike faith in the Unseen, seemed to be so good and pure that she commanded my respect and won my heart. In her presence every base and unholy passion died, subdued by the supremacy of her virtue.' (70)

The image of the cathedral saint is meant to suggest the purity and innocence of Marie.

Eugene thinks in the terms available to him, which include the positive connotations an

American Catholic would feel for European cathedrals and their decoration. Alfred leaves the conversation unalterably opposed to the marriage, a sentiment which will have practical consequences for the couple's estate and offspring. The Creole's behavior in love, though tender, is impractical. Eugene proceeds with his plan, but he has not taken the practical steps necessary to secure the manumission of his wife and hence of their offspring.

Eugene's negligence in love is paralleled by his inattention to religious observance, represented not only by Sunday church attendance, but also by daily moral awareness stemming from religious beliefs. He attends services only infrequently; when he is in New Orleans, he goes to the cathedral. He knows New Orleans is a flourishing site of the slave trade, including a trade in Creole women, women with black blood. His rationalizations excuse the moral and practical lapses of some Creole fathers. He defends a Creole friend who plans to send his illegitimate black children North to manumission. The friend is placating his white wife, angry over the resemblance between her husband and the children, by saying that he is going to sell the children in New Orleans (77). Marie disapproves of this combination of marital infidelity and lying, but Eugene tolerates it. Ironically, events in Eugene's own family after his death parallel his moral compromise. A man assigned the task of bringing Iola back to Mississippi refers to her head, her complexion, and her hair, and says that she would command \$2,000 in the market in New Orleans. His interlocutor expresses a casual sympathy for "one of those Creole girls brought to the auction block" (99), saying that although their fathers were

fond of them, sometimes financial exigency or parental death forced the sale of the girls, who then discovered to their dismay that they had “tainted blood” (100).

Harper uses Eugene to demonstrate forcefully the limits of Catholic Creole religious practice. His church attachment is weak. Unlike the late nineteenth-century ethnic Catholics described by Jay Dolan, Eugene does not make an effort to attend services regularly, nor does he follow particular French/Spanish church customs. He sends his children North to private, but not Catholic, schools. His daily religious practice is non-existent. In a conversation with Alfred he says that he opened a Bible “from curiosity” but then saw a “rapt expression on Marie’s face” (71). He interprets her expression as “a loving response to sentiments to which I was a stranger” (71). A stranger to sentiments evoked by the Bible, Eugene fits the traditional notion that Catholics have less acquaintance with Scripture than do Protestants. Later in the novel, Iola’s brother Henry comments that his family were not churchgoers “except when my father took us to the Cathedral in New Orleans. My father was a Catholic, but I don’t think mamma is” (124). Marie and her son Henry are reunited with Iola when they meet up with her at a Methodist Conference. They have found joy and consolation in the preaching and hymn singing of Methodism. As long as Marie was married to Leroy, she did not have an official church membership, although she remembered Methodist hymns from her childhood.

By using Leroy to present the Creole’s nature, Harper creates a balanced picture. On the positive side, Leroy marries for love, and his view of love is not altered by the racial makeup of the beloved. Leroy’s determination to marry Marie when he knows

from the start that she is a plantation slave is an indication of his honorable intentions, commitment, and his true love for her. By contrast, even Dr. Gresham, Iola's white suitor, has to think about whether he wants to propose marriage to her after he learns of her black ancestry; moreover, Iola herself rejects Dr. Gresham's proposal on the grounds that "there are barriers between us that I cannot pass" (109). Harper shows her approval for this aspect of Leroy's character through the goodness of Marie, the goodness of their children, and his comparison of Marie to a cathedral saint. Some Southerners in the post-Reconstruction period feared that the Catholic Church was a promoter of miscegenation and a friend of the mixed-race person. This fear "would [then] easily slide into a perception that the church backed African-American aspirations toward social and legal equality" (Haddox 44). As a Catholic Creole who first seeks to marry a black woman and then actually does marry her, Leroy fits this particular profile of Catholicism in the postbellum South. When Alfred suggests to him that he simply have an affair with Marie, he rejects this suggestion without even considering it. He in fact does desire social and legal equality for Marie before his death, and believes he has secured it for her.

Harper was familiar with the Southern cultural association between Catholicism and miscegenation. Like her character Eugene Leroy, she advocated racial mixing and demonstrated the absurdity of positions such as that of Dr. Latrobe, who asserts that "there are tricks of blood" (229) that allow him infallibly to detect the presence of black blood in an individual. For Harper, the flaw in Leroy is not his racial attitude but his lukewarm practice of religion. She presents it through references to his infrequent church attendance and his lack of knowledge of the Bible. She suggests that it is a limitation of



Catholics, just as did other writers using New Orleans as a setting. (One finds this critique in George Washington Cable's presentation of such Catholic characters as Governor De Vaudreuil as lax and cynical about religious beliefs, De Vaudreuil asserting that "even bishops and cardinals do not believe in Catholicism, except as a necessary pillar of the social order" (Haddox 34)). Harper's critique of Leroy's inattentive practice of his faith is also present in the contrast between the state of dissipation Leroy's permissive faith allowed him to fall into before his marriage to Marie and the warmth and consolation his family feel from their practice of Methodism. Perhaps Harper even intends a parallel between Leroy's careless faith and his incomplete attention to the needs of his wife and children with regard to securing their property rights before his untimely death. On the whole, however, Leroy's racial attitudes are presented as positive; his cousin Alfred's poisonous views are used as a foil to show up Leroy's racial liberality as well as to show the tenacious hold of the stereotyped response to the prospect of miscegenation.

In Iola Leroy, stereotyping is discussed in several academic-sounding conversations that consider the role of Spain as an imperial power in the slave trade and in slave manumission. If Eugene Leroy represents the well-intentioned but indolent Creole, willing to marry a black person but too neglectful to solve practical problems, Spain as the historical originator of slavery is presented very negatively. Homi K. Bhabha discusses the usefulness of the stereotype. To establish hierarchy and keep it firmly in place, the colonized is depicted as "other," "knowable," and "visible" (70) in a discourse whose aim is to "construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on

the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (70). According to Bhabha, the stereotype as a tool is a complex strategy of colonial discourse whose hallmark is ambivalence. By this characteristic Bhabha means that it oscillates between the already known and the compulsive need to repeat the known in new settings and situations. Harper’s novel shows her awareness of the presence of stereotypes among segments of white Southerners represented by Dr. Latrobe as well as their need to keep stating the stereotypes with appropriate variations when challenges to their core beliefs emerge from new situations. Major stereotypes Harper works with in her novel are the allures for the individual of mixed-race marriages and the dangers of miscegenation to the white race. An allied stereotype is the belief on the part of some whites that they can always detect a black person, even in the absence of recognizable black features, by the supposed inferior knowledge and behavior of blacks.

Captain Sybil, a Union officer, and Robert Johnson, a black man who enlists in the Union Army (and who turns out much later in the novel to be Iola’s uncle), discuss Spain’s role one morning near a tent on the battlefield after the Emancipation Proclamation has been issued. Sybil speaks of slavery as “‘an old world’s crime which . . . the Indians never practiced among themselves” (134). He reviews for Robert the history of the Spanish theft of Indian land. Through the intervention of Las Casas, a Catholic bishop, it was decided that it would be better to bring slaves from Africa than attempt to enslave the less physically strong Indians. In Sybil’s brief historical summary, he makes it clear that although the Africans had physical superiority and hence greater

endurance as slaves, they were viewed by the Spanish as malleable and susceptible to being kept within ““a pall of dense ignorance”” (134). In Sybil’s review of Spanish colonialism in the Americas, he speaks of their war against the Indians for their land and their use of systems of capture, administration, and control for the blacks: ““real and invisible chains, the coercion of force, and the terror of the unseen world [a reference to the plantations in the Americas]”” (134).

As Spain is criticized for its role in the slave trade, it is also criticized for its treatment of Muslims historically. At a meeting of black intellectuals towards the end of the novel where papers on the future of blacks are discussed, one reader presents a paper proposing emigration to Africa. This view is opposed by a professor from Georgia who argues that the decline of the American nation will follow, based on an analogy to Spain. According to the professor, Spain was once the light of Europe, Cordova far ahead of London and Paris, until ““[s]he inaugurated a crusade of horror against a million of her best laborers and artisans”” (249). In this allusive reference to the Reconquista and the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from southern Spain, the professor anticipates a similar fate befalling America if it loses its black population to emigration. He speaks of the decline in Spain in agriculture and manufacturing following the Reconquista, and the eventual loss of empire due to Spain’s sinful treatment of a productive population within her borders. Iola’s response is that the black population must remain in America.

In the discussion of another paper at the meeting, the parallels between Spain, Russia, and Japan appear to equate Catholicism to feudalism and to dubious religious status. The context is a response to another paper. Dr. Latimer, the character who

eventually marries Iola, responds vehemently to the paper's strange extolling of whites as the master race with whom it is a privilege for blacks to be associated. Dr. Latimer speaks of the evils of slavery and liquor, in this combination representing Harper's own lecture circuit topics. He says, "Millions of slaves and serfs have been liberated during this century, but not even in semi-barbaric Russia, heathen Japan, or Catholic Spain has slavery been abolished through such a fearful conflict as it was in the United States" (251). The parallel modifiers of "semi-barbaric" and "heathen" align with the modifier "Catholic" for Spain. Although the novel offers a qualified positive view of the individual Catholic in Eugene Leroy as a well-intentioned, generous, pro-miscegenation person, it depicts Spain as hierarchical, authoritarian, slave trading, and unreceptive to individual talent and variation. Spain itself is viewed as being punished for its racial sins by a decline in its historical role of cultural and economic supremacy in Europe.

Standard critical approaches to Iola Leroy stress its representation of race, the Civil War, and the working out of the consequences of the Civil War. In "Remembering Civil War" (2005), Susan Mizruchi refers to a comment by a historian that "characterized the Civil War as 'unfinished'" (421) even now. Mizruchi lists the retrospective novelistic accounts of the Civil War, mentioning Harper's work in a list that includes Ellen Glasgow, Alice Marie Dunbar, and Henry James. She adds to the historian's observation about the war being unfinished even now that "[i]n this sense, the chief cultural effect of the Civil War was to keep Americans permanently fixed in the four years (1861-65) of traumatic conflict" (421). Mizruchi finds Iola Leroy praiseworthy for its portrayal of "subversive slaves" (423), its historical sensitivity to slaves becoming a coherent force of

resistance, and its productive note of uncertainty about the future of race relations in America. In “The Production of Visibility,” Walter Benn Michaels praises Iola Leroy for raising the question “Who is black?” (329). Werner Sollors suggests that the book is one of many works inspired by Uncle Tom’s Cabin in its concentration on a group of outsiders and its attempt to lift the veil obscuring this group from the awareness of Americans.

The discussion of Iola Leroy here began with a reference to Brodhead’s concept of alternative literary cultures. Although some writers in this category, such as Twain and Riley, commanded large audiences, other writers whose work can be classified in that category did not command a broad audience. Foster’s Foreword to Iola Leroy speaks of the recovery work of the Shomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in publishing thirty volumes by nineteenth-century black women. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. laments the difficulty prior to the publishing efforts by the Shomburg Center of locating works by these women, saying that they had “remained buried in obscurity, accessible only in research libraries or in overpriced and poorly edited reprints . . . [with some] never . . . reprinted at all” (xvi). Yet in spite of the lack of a broad audience for their work, the decade of the 1890s was particularly productive when viewed from the perspective of black women writers. Harper’s Iola Leroy was published in 1892, and Anna Julia Cooper’s collection of essays Voice from the South appeared in the same year. The decade also saw the publication of Ida B. Wells’s journalistic work on lynching, Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases, and ended with the publication of the first of Pauline E. Hopkins’s four novels, Contending Forces, in 1900. The decade of the 1890s

was a fruitful decade for black women writers because they were willing honestly from a black perspective to address issues relating to the Civil War, miscegenation, the future of racial mixing and equality in America, and lynching.

Iola Leroy represents Catholicism as a negative agent in the history of slavery but as a positive friend in interracial mixing and marriage. The Creole attitude of promoting racial mixing in nineteenth-century America is seen as a result of Spain's historic responsibility for introducing the slave trade to America. While mixing, or "amalgamation," is viewed as a positive force by Harper, it can lead to destructive legal consequences for offspring of a union unless the marriage is accompanied by legal prudence and responsibility. For Harper, irresponsible racial mixing, associated with Catholicism historically, is not positive, nor is laxity of religious observance. Her novel abounds in slave as well as free Methodists whose fervent faith is depicted as preferable to a lukewarm, casual Catholic observance of religious practice.

#### Frank Norris

Frank Norris's The Octopus (1901) also depicts an instance of a national Catholic church, this time a Southwestern Hispanic mission church, and its priest, Father Sarria. Its subtitle is "A Story of California." On the title page, above the title, the book is also called "The Epic of the Wheat." Based on the Mussel Slough Massacre (Misruchi 677), an episode in California history from the 1880s, Norris's story pits the Pacific and Southwestern Railroad against ranchers. Although the latter are defeated in their struggle against the railroad—a relentless dynamo pushing to the Pacific—the crumbling mission church, the wheat, the mysterious shepherd Vanamee, and Father Sarria survive and

continue. Scholarship on Frank Norris seems to have been heavily influenced by the pro-Anglo-Saxon racist attitudes prevalent on the campus of Berkeley in the 1890s (McElrath and Crisler, 30-33). He has traditionally been seen as a naturalist with a strong strain of historical determinism running through his work. Nevertheless, the bookend structuring of the novel around the wheat suggests that Norris was working with a larger theme than the “Revenge of the Wheat” and the targeting of one racialized villain “through its live burial of the Jewish railroad agent, S. Behrman” (Mizruchi 680). It is an expression of Norris’s view that the sacramentalism represented by the wheat is the only force that can stand up against the relentless greed and deceit of the railroad’s owners or even against the permanence of death.

Before his title page, Norris presents a map of the territory that is the setting for The Octopus. The observer’s eye travels first to the bottom half of the map, where a ranch is labeled El Rancho de Los Muertos. The ranch of the dead is as much the land of the defeated Spanish past as it is the landed property of Magnus Derrick, the owner willing to compromise his principles. The railroad angles threateningly across the top of the map. Tucked into the upper right hand corner of the map in obscurity is the Mission San Juan de Guadalajara. Adjacent to it is Annixter’s Quien Sabe Rancho. The provocative name for this ranch, Who knows ranch?, is suggestive of the inconclusive ending of the novel, a work that was, indeed, envisioned as part of a trilogy.

Norris’s use of a map is an interesting literary strategy. Building on work by Leo Marx, Myra Jehlen, Philip Slotkin, and Lawrence Buell, Martin Bruckner aims to recover geography as textual and to analyze how maps affected American literary production

from 1690 to 1825. His starting point is the simple observation that the word “geography” derives from Greek roots meaning to record, write, and draw the earth. Further, he sees surveyors’ plats as being related to the word “plot.” Bruckner believes that maps, rather than being simply descriptive, make arguments about ownership, identity, community, and national unity.

Through the map that precedes even his title, Norris attempts unsuccessfully to assert the triumph of Anglo-Saxon culture, represented not only by the railroad but also by the ranchers, over California’s Spanish past. His literary strategy is to depict the church as part of the past, not the present, the priest as ministering to an empty church, and the Hispanic and mestizo population as inferior.

First, the church. The mission church is named San Juan de Guadalajara. National identity is based on a shared historical memory, shared language and culture, and a view of the equality of the members of the society (Nordstrom 6). The presence of the mission church in The Octopus is at odds with these criteria for the United States, especially at a time of “increasing nationalism” resulting in appeals to patriotism, “[f]lag exercises, replete with special salutes and pledges” in the public schools, and “antiforeign, anti-immigrant feelings” stoked by economic problems (Dolan 92). It represents a memory of Spain and of European continental Catholicism rooted in Latin Masses, Latin hymns, and an allegiance to a different political leader, the King of Spain, and a different spiritual leader, the Pope in Rome. The interior of the church contains “the inevitable series of pictures representing the Stations of the Cross [rendered in] . . . a hideous crudity of design and composition” (136). The Stations, as images, are a foreign



aesthetic to Norris's Protestant outlook based on an emphasis on the word in church architecture, in sermons, and in daily spiritual practice. The "massive silver candlesticks" on the high altar, so heavy that a man can lift only one of them at a time, are "the gift of a dead Spanish queen." As such, they represent a trans-Atlantic cultural and political tie, just as the name of the mission, under the protection of its patron saint, San Juan Bautista, represents a different linguistic orientation. Although the mission church is located in California, its Spanish saint's name linked to a Mexican location suggests a tie with Mexico and ultimately with Spain, not with the United States.

Other details of the depiction of the mission suggest that the mission's purpose is defunct. At the time of the narrative, the "ancient" (24) mission has pear trees that do not bear fruit and an "ancient campanile" with "three cracked bells;" the church itself emanates a sound of the "de Profundis, [music used in pre-Vatican II Catholic liturgy as a dirge at a funeral Mass] a note of the Old World . . . [,] of the ancient regime, an echo from the hillsides of mediaeval Europe" (48). The priest complains that even though there are many Catholics in the area, including ranch workers, they do not attend services, and he often says daily morning and evening prayers comprising matins and vespers "to an empty church" (202). Even worse, he says, is the fact that on Sundays Americans either sleep or read newspapers (202).

Norris's device of using a centenarian to supply information about the Spanish past of the Southwest reinforces the novel's presentation of the passing of one historical moment and its being superceded by an Anglo-Saxon moment. Early in the novel, Presley, a would-be poet who resembles the author in his literary aspirations, goes to the

Mexican town of Guadalajara for dinner, where he encounters “the centenarian of the town, decrepit beyond belief” (20). From the centenarian he hears a history of the Mission Fathers, the Spanish Governor Alvarado, a bandit named Jesus Tejada, and Spain’s rule over the territory making up the ranch of Los Muertos. Presley learns that California crops originated in the mission Fathers’ efforts to plant in order “to provide the elements of the Holy Sacrament—bread, oil, and wine” (21). From what Father Ullivari and others began, the planting continues apace, but now for commercial purposes of shipping wheat to the transpacific world, especially India. The centenarian observes that Senor Derrick plants “[t]en thousand acres of wheat” (21). The account of the centenarian suggests that past time is gone, including a culture tied to older values and manners not recognized in the new California. The centenarian’s story of the marriage of the original owner of Los Muertos, De La Cuesta, is grounded in Spanish culture. The account emphasizes an arranged marriage, colorful details of a white horse with a red leather saddle, all harnessed with “virgin silver” for the unseen bride to ride upon, a marriage by proxy to De La Cuesta’s brother Esteban, with the marriage repeated at the Mission, followed by a week of feasting, bull-fights, and lavish gifts to tenants (22). The lament of the centenarian that current life in this area is “stupid” is a reflection of the fact that through wars with the United States, primarily the Mexican War, Mexico ceded 40% of its territory to the U.S. Although many parts of the American Southwest were still unsettled by 1890, a mere decade before Norris’s novel, California was settled.

The characteristics of the priest of the Mission, Fr. Sarria, also suggest a defeated Spanish past. His Spanish name accords with the presentation of him as a kind of

physical stereotype of Hispanics. He is small and stout, his coat is “rather dirty,” he wears an old blue cap with a “broken vizor,” and he smokes “cheap cigar[s], very fat and black” (42). Admittedly, in the later presentation of him, he is rendered as wearing a cassock with a “silk skull cap on his tonsured head,” now seeming “far more the churchman in appearance than when Vanamee and Presley had seen him” (139) earlier. In this scene, he is polishing a silver crucifix for the “feast of the Holy Cross” (139). Even this action emphasizes the difference between Hispanic Catholicism and Norris’s Protestantism, Protestantism which, according to Ryan K. Smith, only gradually in the nineteenth century introduced crosses into its church architecture and on grave sites. The crosses would not have the body of Christ on them, and Protestant churches would not have a special liturgical calendar day set aside recognizing the feast of the Holy Cross (September 14 in the Catholic liturgical calendar). In addition to his name, appearance, and actions, Fr. Sarria’s gestures and words reinforce the sense of Spanish pastness and otherness. Fr. Sarria crosses himself when Vanamee, a mysterious, mystically inclined shepherd mourning for a lost love, suggests mysteriously that he should have visited Fr. Sarria in his sleep instead of actually in person. Fr. Sarria’s equally enigmatic response, ““It is occult”” (139), reinforces the idea of Catholics as superstitious rather than rational.

The mission’s graveyard contains nine graves. The listing of who is buried in the graves confirms that Spanish rule is past, and that Sarria, destined for the mission graveyard, is a relic of a dead past. The graveyard includes two previous priests of the mission, three Mission Indians, an “alcalde of Guadalajara” (the very name for the mayor indicating a vestige of a Spanish past), and the previous owner of the vast ranch, “De La

Cuesta and his young wife (taking with her to the grave the illusion of her husband's love)" (140). The parenthetical reference to De La Cuesta's wife's illusion is suggestive to readers familiar with the Spanish literary tradition of the passion and tempestuousness of such Spanish fiction as Ricardo Palma's nineteenth-century short stories about Peru, or Juan Rulfo's twentieth-century Mexican novel Pedro Paramo. The final member of the graveyard is Vanamee's lost love, Angele Varian. Fr. Sarria's comment to Vanamee about the garden and graveyard's peacefulness suggests the Catholic orientation to death and morbidity deplored by Twain in The Innocents Abroad. He says: "How still it is! This is a beautiful old garden, peaceful, very quiet. Some day I shall be buried here. I like to remember that; and you, too, Vanamee." (142) Shortly after this comment Sarria gives a miniature sermon to the doubting, suffering Vanamee in which Sarria unites one of the central structuring elements of the novel, the wheat, with a deeply infused Christian spirituality based on St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Sarria emphasizes seeing death as analogous to the sowing of grain, the sowing of a physical body and the raising up of a spiritual body, exactly the metaphor that dominates the end of the novel.

Besides his devoted pastoral counseling of Vanamee, Fr. Sarria is presented as ministering to a far-flung congregation. Because he is kind to animals, including the mission's lazy burro that refuses to pull Sarria's cart, Sarria goes "fifteen miles on foot" (202). This strenuous day represents Fr. Sarria's way of life many days of his ministry. He carries with him "the materials for the Holy Sacrament" (202), and, on the day of his walking fifteen miles, he "administer[s] Extreme Unction to a moribund good-for-nothing, a greaser, half Indian, half Portuguese, who lived in a remote corner of

Osterman's stock range, at the head of a canyon there" (202). This action, though negative to the man who is the object of Sarria's compassion, emphasizes Sarria's goodness. Likewise, from the point of view of Annixter, one of the main ranch owners and a central character of the novel, "Sarria's kindness and good-will toward the most outrageous reprobates of the ranches was proverbial" (203). Three times a week, Sarria carries ham, wine, olives, bread, and chicken to someone Annixter views as "[t]his particular greaser . . . the laziest, the dirtiest, the most worthless of the lot" (203). Initially, it may appear that Norris sets Sarria aside as being in a different, better category than the people he is ministering to. After all, Annixter invites Sarria to stop for a glass of sherry, they toast each other's health, and Sarria's equality with Annixter is suggested. But the positive image of Sarria's dedicated ministry sustained for several pages is undercut by Annixter's discovery of game cocks in a basket Sarria carries. Annixter says:

"Game cocks! Fighting cocks! Oh, you old rat! You'll be a dry nurse to a burro, and keep a hospital for infirm puppies, but you will fight game cocks. Oh, Lord! Why, Sarria, this is as good a grind as I ever heard. There's the Spanish cropping out, after all." (205)

Annixter's comment is neither involuntary, a misspeaking, nor unrepresentative of the author's own view. Much further on in the novel, when a hunt and killing are combined with a picnic, the narrator makes the following comment about the farmhands with clubs in both hands killing the jackrabbits: "The Anglo-Saxon spectators round about drew back in disgust, but the hot, degenerated blood of Portuguese, Mexican, and mixed Spaniard boiled up in excitement at this wholesale slaughter" (502). Norris thought that

Anglo-Saxons were the rightful inheritors of the United States continental territory extending to the Pacific because of their superiority as a race. The narrator's comment is reminiscent of the narrator's comment in The Last of the Mohicans, about how much the Indians enjoyed the slaughter after the surrender of Fort William Henry.

Through its two members, Angele Varian and Vanamee, Norris depicts the Hispanic congregation of the Mission church as passionate and intense in appearance, in story, and in outcome. Their positive presentations represent an artistic contradiction to Norris's belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority. Angele is described from Presley's point of view as "beautiful almost beyond expression . . . [with] hair of gold . . . round white forehead . . . wonderful eyes, violet blue, heavy-lidded . . . [and having] Egyptian fullness of the lips" (36). Presley's enchanted memory of her as she was when alive, a girl of sixteen, stresses the luminous, the exotic, and even the dangerous, as he thinks of the way she carried her head as "the same movement that one sees in a snake at poise" (36). Her story is as exotic as her looks. She lived with an aged aunt on their Seed (see frontispiece map and 38) ranch. She was passionately in love with Vanamee, and he with her. Words were irrelevant to their summer night meetings under the dark of the pear trees. On a "moonless night" (38) tragedy struck in the form of an unidentified ravisher, after which Angele is "delirious, all but raving" (38). A child was conceived, and after giving birth to the baby, Angele died. She was buried in the Mission graveyard.

Vanamee, Angele's lover, is a shepherd of thirty-five at the time the novel is set. Sixteen years have passed since Angele's death, but Vanamee has never ceased mourning for her and seeking her. Like Angele, he is described as exotic, with long black hair,

hollow cheeks, a “face . . . as brown as an Indian’s . . . the face of an ascetic, of a recluse, almost that of a young seer” (32). His intense expression, suggesting the gaze of “the half-inspired shepherds of the Hebraic legends” (33), matches his elusive quest for his lost love. He is described as being like those who have “their existence in a continual dream, talkers with God, gifted with strange powers” (33). His outdoor, wandering life as a herder suggests a comparison to a hermit, or to a specific seer or prophet, such as Saint Jerome or Elijah (43). The belief in his own power to have acquired a sixth sense has developed from his outdoor life (216-17), his keen attention to natural signs, and his fidelity to his memory of an idealized woman. Because Vanamee has continued his search and been open to the religious messages of Fr. Sarria, the promptings of his own heart, and a close observation of nature, he is finally able to see Angele “realized in the Wheat” (638). He reaches consolation and peace, reflected in his visionary view of the wheat and in his conversation with Presley denying the triumph of death over life (see 635-39). In this triumph and in the magnetism with which Norris invested Angele and Vanamee’s love, Norris demonstrates the superiority of mysticism, which enjoys a long tradition in Spanish Catholicism<sup>40</sup>, over practicality, the superiority of fidelity to an ideal over fidelity to financial profit.

### Conclusion

In Iola Leroy and The Octopus, the fictional presentation of national churches is at odds with descriptions of the accomplishments of some actual Catholic national churches in America (Howe, 200-01, Dolan 90-99). Nevertheless, the portraits are not only internally consistent but substantiate each other. Both Harper and Norris stress the

lack of involvement of the church members with the church. Each mentions an absent French or Spanish past that has left its traces in American Gulf Coast and Southwestern history. Each suggests a lack of attention to practical, worldly affairs on the part of the Creole or the Spanish. Each also suggests an incomplete allegiance to America by the Creole or the Hispanic—for the Creole, the loyalty is to France, and for Hispanics, it is to Spain. In Iola Leroy, Eugene Leroy's wavering allegiance is seen in his willingness to move his family to France if necessary to escape from having his wife and mixed-race children remanded to slavery. In The Octopus, both the narrator and the centenarian emphasize the role of the Spanish king and queen in outfitting the mission church and creating the church's culture, orientation, and purpose. For Norris especially, the clinging to a vanished past is un-American. In Harper, then, a main character who is a member of a national American Catholic church looks to France for refuge and residence; in Norris, the Hispanic characters who are members—or the minister—of a national American Catholic church look to Spain for their allegiance. Each novel shows the divided loyalty the nativists warned about in the 1850s, and were beginning to warn about once again.



Chapter VII. “So Many Cells With So Many Different Kinds of Honey”: Catholic  
Devotional Life in Harold Frederic, Pauline Hopkins, and Henry Adams

The public, communal, and ceremonial aspects of Catholic devotional life play a significant role in Harold Frederic’s novel The Damnation of Theron Ware (1896), Pauline Hopkins’s novel Contending Forces (1900), and Henry Adams’s “The Virgin of Chartres,” a major essay from Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres (1904). The portrayal of verbal ritual and church architecture and music as part of church liturgy and sacraments vitally contribute to these works’ sustained examination of religious conversion. Observation of devotional life is not separable from contemplating conversion, even if only temporarily. By contrast, the novels by Hawthorne, James, and Howells discussed earlier focus on surface aspects of the Catholic aesthetic. Their characters are never depicted as seriously considering converting to Catholicism. However, Theron Ware, Hopkins’s Sappho Clark, and Henry Adams are deeply engaged with Catholicism. The distinction is illustrated in an anecdote about the conversion of Isaac Hecker to Catholicism, retold in R. W. B. Lewis’s The American Adam. Bronson Alcott and Emerson wished to dissuade Hecker from converting. Hecker prevented Alcott from pursuing the topic. Later, though, Emerson persisted, ““Mr. Hecker, I suppose it was the art, the architecture and so on in the Catholic Church which led you to her?”” (Lewis 185 fn 4). Hecker replied, ““No . . . but it was what caused all that?”” (Lewis 185 fn. 4).

Hecker was referring to the system of beliefs underlying the devotional life expressed in church art and architecture.

Theron Ware, Sappho Clark, and the real Henry Adams were strongly attracted to contemporary and even historical Catholic devotional life, although their attraction was coupled with resistance and rejection. They stand in significant contrast to the narrator of Roderick Hudson. Unlike Ware, Clark, and Adams, Mallet does not need to explain why he won't convert. It simply is never an option. Theron Ware and Sappho Clark do not convert, nor does the historical person Henry Adams. Each has a separate set of reasons for finding Catholicism alluring but not sufficiently so to make conversion the outcome of the appeal. Sappho Clark and Henry Adams both see persuasive elements in Catholic devotion, and these two have a positive relationship with the religion. By sharp contrast, Theron Ware's encounter with Catholicism is disastrous spiritually and psychologically.

#### Harold Frederic

A scene involving a workman receiving Extreme Unction in The Damnation of Theron Ware is quite unlike a parallel scene in Howells's Indian Summer. In Howells's novel, the detached observer Colville, a modern man, watches the ritual from his apartment window in Florence, concluding with his thought about the theatricality of the way Catholics are ministered to when they die.

In The Damnation of Theron Ware, the scene of Extreme Unction is the first step in Theron's falling away from the Methodist ministry and ultimately from any theological belief. Theron is walking along in a small New York town thinking about a subject for a scriptural book he wishes to write. He settles on Abraham. He believes that this choice

of subject has “the hand of Providence . . . plainly discernible . . . [and that the] book was to be blessed from its very inception” (38). Theron hereby chooses an Old Testament topic whose story of tested faith is not only inspiring, but also severe and stern. The incident shows in miniature why a contemporary review appearing in Saturday Review stated that the novel was ““destined to live long by reason of the extraordinary analysis it presents of the Puritan conscience”” (Garner 401). At the beginning of the novel Theron is as austere as a Puritan. Likewise, he finds himself in the Puritan context of two trustees of his church, modeled on Harold Frederic’s “puritanical father-in law” (Garner 356). Theron had been rebuked by one of them for using “an outlandish word like ‘epitome’—clearly forbidden by the Discipline’s injunction to plain language understood of the people” (35). Another contemporary critic, writing for the Spectator, compared the artistry of the novel to ““something more than the mere touch of the vanished hand that wrote The Scarlet Letter”” (Garner 399-400). Again, this reviewer suggests that Harold Frederic is exploring a Puritan conscience.

Unlike Colville, who detachedly views the sacramental procession from his window, as soon as Theron sees a procession with an injured workman, he “instinctively joined himself to those who followed the litter” with the nearly lifeless body (39), and immediately hears that someone will run to get the priest to administer the sacrament. Involuntarily, Theron “somewhat wonderingly, found himself, a minute later, inside a dark and ill-smelling room” (40). In the dying man’s room, neighbors talk about his hard work, his bringing his paycheck to his wife, his keeping of “his Father Mathew pledge,” apparently a reference to a temperance pledge, and the fact that he “attended to his

religious duties” (40). They mingle prayers from the rosary with their conversations. Celia Madden enters, and next Father Forbes. At the sight of the priest, Theron “felt his blood tingle in an unaccustomed way” (41). Theron seems to be impressed by his appearance and by the respect he commands from the people in the house. Everyone is asked to remain outside the bedroom of the dying man as he makes his confession.

Theron notices the preparation of a small table on which is spread a white cloth, and on the cloth, candles, a container of water, and a spoon are placed. When the door opens, Theron sees the priest wearing a surplice with a purple band, the traditional Catholic penitential color. He is fascinated by the scene that ensues. The limited third-person narrator describes it in full from Theron’s point of view:

He found himself bowing with the others to receive the sprinkled holy water from the priest’s white fingers; kneeling with the others for the prayers; following in impressed silence with the others the strange ceremonial by which the priest traced crosses of holy oil with his thumb upon the eyes, ears, nostrils, lips, hands, and feet of the dying man, wiping off the oil with a piece of cotton-batting each time after he had repeated the invocation to forgiveness for that particular sense. But most of all he was moved by the rich, novel sound of the Latin as the priest rolled it forth in the *Asperges me, Domine*, and *Misereatur vestri omnipotens Deus*, with its soft Continental vowels and liquid r’s. It seemed to him that he had never really heard Latin before. (43)

As the scene closes, Theron looks at the dying man’s hands folded over the crucifix.

This scene has an immediate impact on Theron, it affects the subsequent development of the plot, and, more broadly, it reflects the novel's cultural context of 1896. Theron, who had just previously taken pride in studying "the mechanism of his own brain" (38), seems carried along by forces outside his conscious control, first by the crowd and then by his own involuntary fascination over the scene unfolding before him. Among the elements which strike him forcefully are the priest's physical appearance, the respect and deference of the assembled people toward the priest, the ceremonial aspects of the sacrament in such things as the tracing of the crosses on each of the five senses (each a possible occasion of sin, the word "occasion" used here as in the Catholic penitential prayer at the end of a Confession, with the penitent vowing to avoid the "near occasions of sin"), and the chanted Latin. The priest's Latin pronunciation strikes Theron as sophisticated, and Celia's recital of the Latin litany of the saints affects him for its sonorous sound and for "its clanging reiteration of the great names—*beatum Michaellem Archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, sanctos Apostolos Petrum et Paulum*" (43).

The scene Theron witnesses mentally jolts him. He realizes that he has been at many death beds but that "no other final scene had stirred him like this" (43). He considers it surprising that he has seen this event and taken part in it. The strict trustees of Theron's church would undoubtedly be equally surprised at his participation and would judge it harshly. Theron is so struck by the event that afterwards "[h]is mind still had room for nothing but that novel death-bed scene, with the winged captain of the angelic host, the Baptist, the glorified Fisherman, and the Preacher, all being summoned down in the pomp of liturgical Latin to help MacEvoy to die" (45). The deep impression

on Theron is caused in part by the use of Latin, the use of repetition, the presence of rhythm in the litany, and the general sense of weight and dignity conveyed by the scene. When he speaks to Father Forbes of the powerful impression the scene has made on him, Forbes replies, “It is a very ancient ceremony . . . probably Persian, like the baptismal form, although, for that matter, we can never dig deep enough for the roots of these things. They all turn up Turanian if we probe far enough” (45). The viewing of the administering of Extreme Unction followed by Father Forbes’s academic, clinical description of the ceremony is the beginning of Theron’s falling away from religious faith.

Theron’s falling away from faith is intensified by his viewing of the inside of a Catholic church. Chapter VIII ends with a one-sentence paragraph: “He had never been inside a Catholic church before” (82). Frederic builds suspense by temporarily delaying following up on Theron’s vision of the church’s interior, using the bulk of the next chapter to fill in background on Celia Madden’s family. Then he returns to the subject of Theron in the closing pages of the chapter. Theron enters “the huge, dark, cool vault of the church” (92) one night when Celia is inside playing the organ. He sees a rail (presumably the communion rail), candles, the altar, side aisles, and a gallery. He also sees the organ in the back of the church, located in a loft. The organ is described as monstrous and huge, like an angry, bellowing giant. Once more, as in the scene of Extreme Unction, he is impelled by forces outside himself: “It was for all the world as if he wandered into some vast tragical, enchanted cave, and was being drawn against his will—like fascinated bird to python—toward fate at the savage hands of these swollen

and enraged geni” (93). This scene is followed by Theron’s misleading his wife about where he has been and about how much progress he has made on his book on Abraham. The image of Theron as a defenseless bird against a python, coupled with his deception of his wife, underscore his continuing fall from faith.

Theron’s exposure to the interior of a Catholic church reveals a difference in devotional emphasis. In the dark church, the altar is prominent, and the organ is in the back. In Protestant church architecture of the nineteenth century, churches shortened the chancel, emphasized the minister’s pulpit, and some congregations placed the organ in the chancel (Smith 112). Not all Protestants were pleased with fancy church architecture and the use of the organ, though. A lay historian named McCulloh writing in 1853 for the Methodist Quarterly Review decried the superstition he associated with Gothic architecture. The editor of the journal agreed with his critique: “we think we see the three stages of declension manifested in choirs, organs, and Gothic churches. . . . Even Methodism is infected with this evil spirit of sensualism” (Smith 100). In the late 1860s a Presbyterian church member and a Baptist church member complained of the imitation of Papist music, the former criticizing the stopping of the service to listen to a choir accompanied by an organ, and the latter complaining that even small towns now thought they needed organs in their churches (Smith 137). The Presbyterian wrote to the New York Observer, complaining about the “apings of the Romish ritual.” The performance of the singers, according to Smith, “dripped with sensuous vanity”; the correspondent criticized the singing style for copying “the childish frippery and mummery of the professed ritualists” (Smith 137). Even as late as 1895, one year before the appearance

of The Damnation of Theron Ware, a Presbyterian seminary teacher complained of the use of the organ in services (Smith 153-54).

Exposure to a different aestheticism and devotional style lead to Theron's loss of faith. Myers sees this loss of faith as a result not simply of late nineteenth-century French and German Biblical criticism and Darwinian science: "equally important is his aesthetic reaction against conservative Methodism. When he witnesses the elegance of the Catholic last rites, Theron is embarrassed by the artlessness of the Methodist service" (124). If Myers's formulation is harshly contrastive, a more subtle analysis is available from an insightful contemporary commentator on religious sentiment. William James analyzes the difference between Catholic and Protestant services for their relative impact on the susceptible mind, stressing the aesthetic element. Theron, who has been part of an individualistic religion, is struck by the hierarchy, authority, mystery, and physically sensual appeal of the Catholic scenes he has witnessed. In the following description of the aesthetic appeal of Catholic devotions to a certain kind of mind, James captures elements of Theron's experience:

Although some persons aim most at intellectual purity and simplification, for others richness is the supreme imaginative requirement. When one's mind is strongly of this type, an individual religion will hardly serve the purpose. The inner need is rather of something institutional and complex, majestic in the hierarchic interrelatedness of its parts, with authority descending from stage to stage, and at every stage objects for adjectives of mystery and splendor, derived in the last resort from the Godhead who is



the fountain and culmination of the system. One feels then as if in presence of some vast incusted work of jewelry or architecture; one hears the multitudinous liturgical appeal; one gets the honorific vibration coming from every quarter. Compared with such a noble complexity, in which ascending and descending movements seem in no way to jar upon stability, in which no single item, however humble, is insignificant, because so many august institutions hold it in place, how flat does evangelical Protestantism appear, how bare the atmosphere of those isolated religious lives whose boast it is that “man in the bush with God may meet.” . . . To an imagination used to the perspectives of dignity and glory, the naked gospel scheme seems to offer an almshouse for a palace.

(349)

Theron’s viewing of a Catholic sacrament, his glimpse of a Catholic church, and his involvement with three sophisticated intellectuals, two of whom are Catholics, lead to his abandoning his ministry and his faith. John Gatta conveniently summarizes Theron’s experiences as drawing “an innocent male Protestant” into an encounter with Irish Catholicism, an encounter with Darwinian science, an encounter with French Biblical criticism represented by Renan, and an encounter with the New Woman, educated, independent, single, athletic, and employed, as illustrated by Charles Dana Gibson (72-3, 76-7). At the beginning of the novel, Theron is depicted as well-intentioned, hard-working, easily impressed, and gullible. However, he is lacking in intellectual sophistication and in subtlety. His rise in his church will be slow, and he is not willing to

take a long, slow road. By the end of the novel, he is disappointed with himself and marvels at the change that has come over him in such a short time. He is fortunate enough to have a forgiving, understanding wife who is willing to go with him to Seattle, Washington, where he plans to start a new career in real estate and possibly the United States Senate. Although the alternate title of the novel is Illumination, the title under which it appeared in England, the suitability of that title is arguable. Neither Theron's exposure to Catholicism nor his loss of his Methodist ministry brings him to a state of illumination. By the end of the novel, he does not seem to attain a penetrating self-understanding. He is simply disillusioned with religion, including the narrowness of the people surrounding him in his own ministry, the deceptions practiced by the Soulsbys, who are a pair of Methodist revivalist fund-raisers, and the theatricality, cynicism, and implied fraud of Father Forbes. But no large worldview or philosophy has replaced his previous trust. He is simply going to sell real estate in the West, and contemplates running for Congress in his future—Frederic's final damning ironic touch.

For Theron, Catholic ritual has an alluring surface, but it proves to be false. His three dangerous acquaintances, Father Forbes, Celia Madden, and Dr. Ledsmar, play a conversational game which an unsophisticated outsider enters at risk. In an exploration of the psychosexual dynamics of Theron's attraction to these three, John Gatta says, "We can only speculate about the lines of sexual interaction hinted to flow every which way within the larger trio of Forbes, Ledsmar, and Madden" (88). This is beyond anything for which Theron's experience has prepared him. He eventually realizes the fact that he

cannot even be admitted to the game without certain credentials of academic learning, which he lacks.

It is possible to interpret the central concern of the novel as something other than the false allure of Catholic devotional life. This line of critical commentary emphasizes the contrast between late nineteenth-century Methodism as experienced in rural and urban life. In establishing the social and cultural context of the novel, Walter Benn Michaels sees the novel as a clash between “professionalism and religious enthusiasm or, more specifically, between middle-class culture (Frederic calls it ‘civilization’) and ‘the severely straight and narrow path of primitive Methodism’” (“Promises” 392). Michaels glosses primitive Methodism as one of various denominations formed in response to Holiness teachings which dominated late nineteenth-century Protestant revivalism. The Holiness movement was opposed to any modernizing of theology and, by extension, to cultural change called for by modernism. Among the specific examples from Theron Ware, Michaels points out the congregation’s opposition to written sermons, organ music, change in congregants’ material wealth, or conformity to the outside world’s dress and manners. Theron Ware’s damnation, according to Michaels, begins when he leaves the farm to seek a profession and greater wealth, becoming exposed to such evils as organ music, theatrical revivals, and the coolly faith-destroying talk of Father Forbes, Dr. Ledsmar, and Celia Madden. It was not without cause that the revivalist Dwight L. Moody “put the theatre ahead of the atheistic teaching of evolution in a list of the four ‘great temptations’ threatening modern Christians” (Michaels, “Promises” 393).

A related line of criticism establishes the oppositions between pre-and post-Civil War American views of faith and materialism. This criticism does not focus on Catholic devotional life as the cause of Theron Ware's spiritual destruction. It emphasizes Ware's exposure to the cynical, worldly outlook of Father Forbes as the most important corrupting influence. In describing the religious cultural context of Frederic's novel, Warner Berthoff sees the book as "dramatizing the retreat of the old faith before the constrictions, and temptations, of the new materialism" (487). He traces the decline of Calvinism after the Civil War to "softer and easier theologies—to Deistic and Unitarian rationalism, to the revived upper-class Episcopalianism of the principal towns and cities, and to the periodic revival fervors of Methodists, Baptists, New-Light Congregationalists, and their Pentecostal, perfectionist, utopian, and humanitarian offshoots" (486). In Berthoff's account, Calvinism is replaced by religions that stress "a blurred faith in progress and collective benevolence" (486). But these religious outlooks were not satisfying to Frederic, who asked a friend to read Twain to him as he lay dying, rather than Hawthorne, the latter having "retained some 'Edenic' sense of American character" (Bennett 178). Like his character Father Forbes, Frederic saw civilization as a veneer, with humanity incapable of progress away from the "blackest barbarism," regardless of such wonderful inventions as the electric light (Bennett 179).

An analysis of the way form relates to theme in the novel can incorporate and build on the views of two critics who concentrate exclusively on the religious aspects of the novel. David Reynolds finds the novel to be "perhaps the period's most trenchant appraisal of mainstream religion" (Garner 406). In a view that extends this insight

philosophically, Patrick K. Dooley analyzes the novel as Frederic's "investigation of a perceived confusion in William James's philosophy between 'the truth of a belief and the useful consequences of holding a belief'" (Garner 408). Dooley views Theron, Father Forbes, and Sister Soulsby, the theatrical church fund-raiser, as lacking belief but manufacturing a show of it to cause some sort of religious experience in the audience. The main character, as a hero of a naturalistic novel, is too passive throughout the novel—impressions and events register on him rather than his taking an active hold of events. Several critics do, in fact, see the novel as flawed in its mix of "Howellsian realism and Hawthornean romance" (Garner 407), or simply in violating the rules of naturalism by blaming Theron for what happens to him (Garner 405). Theron loses the reader's sympathy when he stops trying to be a good minister and pretends to write a book he does not understand and on which he makes no progress. He is depicted as foolish in his pursuit of learning and his pursuit of Celia Madden. He feels an unjustified jealousy and suspicion of both his wife and Celia.

#### Pauline Hopkins

The appearance of Pauline Hopkins's novel Contending Forces in 1900 puts her in company with "contemporaries such as Frances Harper, Anna Julia Cooper, and A. E. Johnson" who showed an interest in writing "novels about black middle-class life in America" (Mizruchi 486). The novel's intellectual discussions of intertwined issues of philosophy, theology, and race show Hopkins's analytic ability. Her oral reading performances and her serial publication allowed her to be in touch with the sentiments and tastes of her reading audience (Carby, "Of What Use" 122). Since the 1990s, she has

“benefited from revisionist approaches to canon building” (Mizruchi 415) by being included in literary critical studies and in college syllabuses.

The story Hopkins tells in Contending Forces has been described as a “brimming plot” (Mizruchi 490). Its sweeping time frame involves the entire nineteenth century. Charles Montfort is a plantation owner in Bermuda. When William Wilberforce is successful in his crusade to have the slave trade abolished, Montfort decides to move to North Carolina out of fear that he may lose his slaves as well as his plantation. North Carolina planters are jealous of him, and one of them lusts after Montfort’s wife, Grace. The word is spread that she may be partially black, though the novel never says explicitly what her racial heritage is. Montfort is killed, Grace is raped and commits suicide in disgrace, and her violator, Anson Pollock, takes Montfort’s property. He also lives with a slave woman owned by Grace, and fathers a child with the slave woman. The descendant of Anson Pollock and the slave woman’s child is one of the villains of the story, John P. Langley. One of Grace Montfort’s children goes with a mineralogist to England; the other one, Jesse, is left with Anson Pollock as his slave. Jesse escapes to Boston, marries, and lives as a fugitive slave in New England. His descendants are William Jesse Montfort and Dora Grace Montfort, two of the novel’s main characters. Will’s and Dora’s mother runs a boarding house. Their last name in the novel is Smith. Her new boarder, Sappho Clark, is a third main character in the novel. In Sappho’s past, she bore an illegitimate child after a rape by her uncle; John P. Langley, fellow boarder and fourth main character, learns this fact and tries to make her his mistress. Sappho is reunited with her child and ends by marrying Will, the hero of the novel. Dora also finds a love

interest, whom she marries. The descendant of the Montfort who went to England is able to give an inheritance to Will and Dora. John Langley dies alone on an ill-fated goldmining expedition to Alaska.

In Hopkins's novel, Catholicism as practiced in America in 1900 is presented positively. Catholicism is associated in the novel with one of the four main characters, Sappho Clark, and her mysterious past connection to New Orleans. Sappho owns and displays a crucifix as a devotional object and attends a Catholic Easter church service in which she experiences uplift for her weary soul. Her black identity is reinforced by her good experiences at a Catholic hospital and a convent. When Sappho first becomes a boarder in Will's and Dora's mother's boarding house, Dora notices an ivory crucifix hanging from the desk in Sappho's room. Sappho explains it to Dora: "I saw you glance at the crucifix. I am not a Catholic, but I have received many benefits and kindnesses at their hands" (100). She goes on to answer a question Dora poses to her by saying that she is not a Christian. Sappho, who is working in an office, has received help in getting employed from Father Andrew. It is significant help because, as Dora remarks, it is difficult for "colored girls" to get office work. The fact that Sappho displays the ivory crucifix in her room indicates that she takes consolation from it, and that she is not ashamed of its obvious evocation of Catholicism. Protestants in the early nineteenth century, who associated the cross as a feature of Catholic church architecture, gradually recognized in the cross a powerful, central symbol of their own message to their congregations. Although they began using the cross in architecture, on grave sites, and as part of personal adornment, they never accepted the use of the body of Christ displayed

on Catholic crucifixes. Sappho's use of the crucifix shows that she is willing to go against prevailing American customs in order to acknowledge her own emotional sustenance from the image of the crucifix.

When Sappho meets other boarders who are from Louisiana, she says that her mother was from New Orleans. The boarders comment appreciatively on her beauty, saying that "'Ol' New Orleans blood will tell on itself anywhere. These col'-blooded Yankees can't raise nuthin' that looks like thet chile; no, 'n deed!'" (108). The narrator has just described Sappho as "[t]all and fair, with hair of a golden cast, aquiline nose, rosebud mouth, soft brown eyes veiled by long dark lashes" (107) with a rosy blush on her cheek. Sappho's description places her as a Creole, someone from Louisiana with mixed-race parentage (French or Spanish and black). Hopkins withholds information about Sappho's personal history until quite late in the novel.

As Sappho and Dora become friends, they do charitable acts together. On one occasion they go to St. Monica's Hospital to give away clothes, flowers, and money (129). Their charity underscores one theme of the novel, the need for self-pride and independence on the part of American blacks. It also relates to Catholic devotional life. Part of the Nicene Creed prayed at the Catholic Mass refers to a belief in the communion of saints. Catholic hospitals, churches, and schools are either named for Christ, the Virgin Mary, or a saint. Hopkins's naming of the hospital may be deliberate for its associative power. St. Monica was the mother of St. Augustine. A North African, Augustine is one of 33 Doctors of the Church and a major figure in Catholic theology.



Hazel J. Carby says of the four main characters of the novel that they “cannot move forward into the future until their relation to the past is revealed” (“On the Threshold” 312). What is true on a personal level for four individual characters is also true for black Americans on a collective level. In order to move beyond the legacy of slavery, they need to learn of the legacy of their African past, not their Puritan past. They will feel freed and empowered when they recognize the poisonous fruit of slavery (Hopkins 42), which brought them from Africa under the pretense that this was a way to spread the gospel (Hopkins 41), and which resulted in such widespread mingling of blood that one of Hopkins’s characters says there is no person with purely African blood. Part of the necessary recognition is a Pan-Africanism such as the view advocated by W. E. B. DuBois. It is a collective sense of identity analogous to the Catholic communion of saints. Jesse Montfort invokes the “help of communion with the dead” (74) on a night when Anson Pollock flogs him. A vision of his murdered parents allows him to become “a man in thought” (75), able thereafter to resist Anson Pollock.

Just as Sappho, Dora, and Jesse recognize their heritage and their bonds to their immediate ancestry and take actions to assert their identities, so must all American blacks. Will Smith, who is actually Will Montfort, stresses this point in his address to the American Colored League. A failure to do so would result in their continuing marginalization after the Civil War, in the period when American memory was being reconstructed. As Michael Kammen points out about the immediate aftermath of the War, “Except for publication of The Negro in the Rebellion by William Wells Brown in 1866, the role of African-Americans in national memory remained nominal; and the

dominant culture inclined to amnesia on the subject” (87). Will Smith poignantly captures postbellum black history in the South: “‘Bitterer than double-distilled gall was the Federal success which brought Negro emancipation, domination and supremacy [the latter two referring to white Southern control of blacks]” (Hopkins 266). Will argues that what the South desires is Negro disenfranchisement (Hopkins 266), to be achieved in part by ignoring the history of slavery and emancipation, by denying blacks educational opportunities, by concocting false accusations of black-on-white rape, and by resorting to lynching as a remedy for black crimes (Hopkins 263-73).

Late in the novel it becomes clear that Sappho’s connection with New Orleans is not simply because her mother was born there, but because of her connection with a convent there. Hopkins’s positive depiction of convents is quite different from the salacious, libelous, prejudicial way they were depicted earlier in the century in the work of such Know-Nothing authors as Maria Monk. Rather than showing actual religious services, Hopkins shows the way in which the convent nuns’ devotion to religious ideals leads them to lives of service to the marginalized. Sappho’s link to the convent is at the heart of the novel’s mystery. Her original name was Mabelle Beaubean. Her father was the son of a planter and a slave; he married a quadroon. Mabelle was one of two beautiful children born to the couple. She attended school in New Orleans at the Colored Sisters’ School, learning well enough to do office work later when it was difficult for blacks to find employment in offices. Monsieur Beaubean’s white half-brother defiled Mabelle when she turned 14. Mabelle, pregnant, stayed at the convent after her uncle raped her, and her child remained in the care of the nuns, who continued to help the

young mother. They suggested that the story be given out that she died in childbirth so that she could start a fresh life. When Mabelle/Sappho becomes ill while pursued by John Langley late in the novel, the nuns help her once more. They take her in during her illness, reunite her with her child, and find employment for her as a governess. They even care for Mabelle/Sappho's Aunt Frances, a fortune-teller, who dies at the convent.

Hopkins consistently presents the convent and nuns at the convent in a positive way. The narrator mentions that the convent was founded in 1842. The other place for "colored women" wishing to study to become nuns in the United States, according to the narrator, is in Baltimore. In a letter to Will, Sappho refers to the nuns in New Orleans as "[t]he good Sisters" (328). The narrator describes them as always having someone at New Orleans railroad stations to "look out for friendless or unfortunate colored women" (348). One nun catches Sappho as she is about to faint on the railroad platform. The nuns belong to the order Sisters of the Holy Family, a name that associates this group of nuns with preserving marriage and family. By contrast, the historical background provided early in the novel to explain the ancestry of Will and Dora suggests the efforts by some plantation slaveholders to break up the black family. Sappho's son, Alphonse, is described as conveying "something holy" (346) to his mother as she holds him in an innocent mother-child embrace. The image suggests the Madonna-Child scene quite familiar to anyone acquainted with Catholic art. The nuns describe Sappho as looking angelic, and say, "She is not of our faith . . . but we will do our best for her" (349). The nuns' efforts on behalf of Sappho over a period of years have occurred without regard to her religious faith. The reader will recall that earlier in the novel Sappho said of herself

that she was not a Christian. The nuns ask Sappho if she herself wants to join the convent. When she says that she does not, they tell her that the convent ““will be a home for you always”” (351). As they try to minister to the weary Sappho, they tell her to ““rest, and pray to the Holy Mother of Sorrow, and Christ will comfort you”” (351). This sympathetic recommendation invoking the Virgin Mary in her title as the Mother of Sorrows demonstrates Hopkins’s awareness of the various titles by which Catholics venerate the Virgin. This particular title shows the nuns’ understanding of Sappho’s suffering as a mother long separated from her child.

Hopkins’s evocation of the Easter services at a New Orleans cathedral shows her knowledge of what occurs during Holy Week and Easter morning in Catholic churches as well as her respect for Catholic liturgical practice. The narrator comments on how the Easter morning service at the church is famous “throughout the South” (391). Prior to Easter, all images in the church are veiled. The priest in 1900 wears gold robes (now the priest wears white on Easter). Hopkins describes the “heavenly strains” of the Kyrie eleison and the “grandeur” of the Gloria in Excelsis, filling “every corner of the building,” entering “into the heart” and filling all space (393). Before this Easter morning service which reunites Will and Sappho, the narrator makes it clear that both were familiar with Catholic liturgical music. Earlier in the novel Sappho hummed a Gloria (316); Will had a dream on shipboard upon his return from studying philosophy and theology in Germany that he was in a cathedral where the Kyrie and Gloria were being intoned. He saw a Virgin and Child who resemble Sappho and her son, Alphonse. Will’s shipboard dream anticipates the actual way in which he and Sappho are reunited.

It is unsurprising that critics writing on Hopkins see her themes as centered on race. Hopkins was on the side of W. E. B. DuBois about conciliation to the white majority in the nation. Contemporary critics approve of Hopkins's resignation from her position with Colored American Magazine when editorial control was taken away by the supporters of the gradualist and social separatist positions of Booker T. Washington. However, black feminists are critical of Hopkins for her failure to "depict a dark-skinned African American major female character" (Vashti Crutcher Lewis 616), her emphasis on the ability of her heroines to pass as white even if they choose not to do so, and for her insufficient refutation of Darwinian views supposedly showing "scientific proof of the inferiority of Black people" (Lewis 618). Recent critics focus on the narrator's voice in Contending Forces as an instance of Hopkins's use of women's domestic fiction. Hazel Carby and Thomas Cassidy discuss the complex ways in which she uses this voice to explore the link between rape and lynching as a late nineteenth-century method of white control over blacks. Yet another line of criticism follows up on Hazel Carby's lead in exploring the significance of Sappho Clark's name mythologically and contextually within the set of female relationships in the novel itself. Carby simply says that the Sappho of the novel "embodies the potential for utopian relationships between women and between women and men; she represents a challenge to a patriarchal order" ("On the Threshold" 314). Siobhan Somerville explores the possibility of latent lesbianism in the novel because of Sappho's name.

My concern with Catholic devotional life supports Carby's restriction of her discussion of the significance of Sappho Clark's name to its challenge to the patriarchy.

Sappho has the opportunity to enter a convent, but she says she wants to be a mother to her child. The Mother Superior replies, ““It is hard for one so young and beautiful to resist the world and its temptations”” (350). This line suggests that the nun recognizes the possibility of marriage for Sappho. The discussion of Contending Forces in this chapter also supports the critical position taken by Thomas Haddox in his readings of George Washington Cable’s Madame Delphine and Grace King’s “The Little Convent Girl.” Haddox summarizes his readings by saying that each of these works, as well as a poem which appeared in an 1845 collection of poems by *gens de couleur libres* from New Orleans, “suggests that Catholicism may be the best friend to individuals of mixed-race ancestry, offering women in particular the opportunity, through a kind of passing, to live a life free of racial oppression and sexual exploitation” (40). (The emotionally charged phrase “through a kind of passing” would need to be discussed fully to explain how the friendship of Catholicism was a benefit rather than a deficit to a mixed-race person. This would require a detailed comparison between Contending Forces and each of the three works mentioned by Haddox. Such a discussion is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it may be sufficient to point out that Sappho does not choose to pass, nor does she choose to remain in New Orleans in the midst of other mixed-race individuals where her race might not be as much of an issue even in the Jim Crow era of 1900 New Orleans.)

#### Henry Adams

Adams’s well-known essay “The Virgin of Chartres,” the sixth chapter of his Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres, is more than an admiring study of the architectural

features of Chartres Cathedral. Adams portrays the spirit of devotion that built Chartres. He combines an historical sense of the twelfth century and an aesthetic sense of the features of the cathedral with an insightful presentation of the devotional spirit of the builders and sensitive discussion of the theological issues related to the Virgin Mary as they affected individual devotional practices.

Adams's historical sense is shown in his knowledge of the culture and intellectual history of the high Middle Ages in France. He amply treats the biography, historical context, and the medieval Catholic legends related to Saint Bernard, whom Adams says "incarnates what we are trying to understand" (98) about Bernard's love of the Virgin. According to Adams, the Virgin rewarded his fidelity with miraculous visions, and his special status was recognized by Dante, who made Saint Bernard the intercessor with Mary in the Paradiso. In discussing one miracle connected with Bernard in legend, Adams writes in a tone of respect missing from Twain's discussion of relics and miracles in his The Innocents Abroad. Adams writes with affection; Twain wrote in disdain at what he perceived as a fraudulent appeal to the pocketbooks of the faithful. Adams shows his awareness of the importance to the medieval university curriculum of the seven liberal arts in his discussion of Albertus Magnus's debate as to "[w]hether the Blessed Virgin possessed perfectly the seven liberal arts" (99), a question resolved in the affirmative. Adams' historical knowledge is also evident in his discussion of the economic basis of the construction of Chartres in the guilds and the military. He supplies the statistical estimate that the eighty French cathedrals built in a one-hundred year period from 1170-1270, plus five hundred other churches, would have cost five thousand

million francs in 1840 (100-101). Adams's aesthetic sense is shown in his description of the color and light of the cathedral, the walls, the placement of windows, the arrangement of the doors, and the layout of the interior.

Adams's description of the devotion of the builders is an appreciative account of their love and faith. He includes a lengthy quotation from the Abbot in charge of the building. The Abbot tells of his urging of the faithful to confess their sins and forgive those who have offended them. Anyone unwilling to forgive cannot be included in the procession to the cathedral. The procession includes people from all ranks of society; they drag carts laden with materials for the building of the church and for their own sustenance. As they proceed, they sing hymns, light candles, pray for the sick, and expose relics of saints for the benefit of the sick. Adams speaks of the presence of the Virgin, and says that the reader must understand this to have "a realizing sense of what [the conviction of her presence] meant" (882). Lacking that sense, nothing would have been built. Lacking that sense, the person of Adams's early twentieth century sits in blank puzzlement at the cathedrals. Adams exhorts the reader who wishes to "get the full enjoyment of Chartres" to "for the time, believe in Mary as Bernard and Adam did, and feel her presence as the architects did, in every stone they placed, and every touch they chiseled" (878). He stresses that Gothic is incorrectly associated with gloom: like Ruskin, he thinks it should be associated with light.

The most insightful part of the essay, and the most unexpected given that Adams was not a Catholic, is his particular combination of knowledge of and sympathy towards the cult of the Virgin. He traces its history variously to Empress Helena, the mother of



Constantine, in 326, to the Council of Ephesus in 431 (873), and in general to its reinforcements by the Eastern Orthodox tradition of devotion to Mary as Theotokos, or Mother of God. He recounts the devotion to Mary of various Eastern rulers, including John Comnenus, who “put the image of the Mother of God in his chariot, while he himself walked” (874). Adams includes several Latin hymns and their side-by-side translation, almost as though he is suggesting that the reader sing the hymns or that he himself is singing them or hearing them sung. Adams also talks of resistance of the Latin church to the elevation of Mary.

He finds many reasons for Mary’s elevation by the East, and for the lesser devotion to her on the part of the church hierarchy. Among the reasons for Mary’s being an object of devotion include her love of beauty, her protection of her friends, and her sense of artistry, philosophy, musicianship, and theology (873). Her devotees related to her as an intercessor, and were flexible in their own views of orthodoxy (881). The Latin church hierarchy did not want Mary’s elevation, for they thought it represented a challenge to official dogma (876).

Ultimately, the view of the Roman Curia is also, curiously, the view Adams attributes to the American tourist or reader. He comments on American literalness, the American religious mind, and American blindness. American literalness demands to know the dates of everything associated with Mary’s ascendancy (97-98); the “religious American mind” wants to know the cost of the cathedrals (100). Adams gives his statistics on cost to satisfy the American mind, but he goes on to refer to American

blindness to the obvious symbolism of the cathedral, including aspects taken to be obscure, such as the bestiaries.

A basic opposition Adams works with is the difference between youth and age. He wants the reader to go to an earlier place mentally. He suggests that the reader who would understand the cult of the Virgin must go back to the idea of playing with dolls. Just as the Virgin offers protection to the faithful, so, too, the modern-day devotee must offer protection to the image of the Virgin. Adams develops the analogy between the Virgin and a doll reigning in a doll house.

Adams attributes a number of key characteristics to the Virgin. John Gatta says that “[s]he is *divinely personal, redemptive, transhistorical, potent, and self-subsistent*” (97). Gatta comments helpfully that “[s]ome of these features are more or less consonant with Christian orthodoxy; others are peculiar to Adams’s outlook” (97). Gatta’s description of the traits suggests that the first fits closely, and the next two at least loosely, with qualifications, into Christian orthodoxy; the last two are stamped with Adams’s own outlook. Gatta uses the term “potency,” for example, to suggest a distinctive emphasis in Adams:

His treatment is distinctive in emphasizing not the sexual purity of the Virgin but her potency and fecundity, the unseen erotic force she contains and channels beyond herself to sustain the creative life of her prolific offspring in the human race. Adams portrays her as a kind of inspirational life force that is at once sexual and pneumatic.” (97)

The Virgin's "self-subsistence (97) is Adams's recognition of her "*radical autonomy* in relation to other persons of the Trinitarian Godhead," an insightful observation by Adams of the "disparity between extravagant popular piety and limits posed by official doctrine" (Gatta 98). Nonetheless, according to Gatta, Adams distorts this gap because of his love for Mary and his dislike for credal logic and certainties.

Adams's portrait of the Virgin has been read symbolically. John Carlos Rowe says that "[t]he Virgin is a symbol of differences, a composite of different forces—the Trinity, masculine and feminine sexuality, lord and vassal, artist and scientist, thought and instinct, experience and desire, truth and fiction" (664). In Rowe's estimate, "Adams's Virgin achieves a fragile equilibrium" only by "balancing as she does the complex demands of medieval metaphysics with the emotional and practical interests of medieval man" (664).

An emphasis on the Virgin's fragile unity is not supported by Adams's text, which heavily stresses her ability to unify medieval culture around common beliefs, activities, and goals. In fact, Adams emphasizes Mary as a reigning Queen, a universal Mother, one who is both clement and powerful, an advocate/intercessor, a provider of consolation to the sorrowing, and, in her person, a living synthesis of logical opposites. The term "universal Mother" used here resembles Gatta's view of her as a transhistorical person, but without the Goddess mythology Gatta brings to bear on his explanation. Her power is indeed like the power of the twentieth-century dynamo driving America, but is a thirteenth-century counterpart to it. She is powerful enough to build cathedrals, to forgive, to grant favors, and to yield good fortune in general. She is a synthesis of logical

opposites in her ability to bring together social opposites of prince and peasant, rich and poor; geographical opposites of East and West; spiritual opposites of mystics and scholastics; intellectual/emotional opposites of academic study and human pity; historical opposites of medieval and modern pilgrim; psychological opposites of youth and age.

In light of this opposition between youth and age, is Adams's doll image positive or negative? In his 1901-1902 Gifford lectures, William James describes the opposition between Catholic and Protestant aesthetic sensibilities and devotional style as an opposition between youth and age:

The strength of these aesthetic sentiments makes it rigorously impossible, it seems to me, that Protestantism, however superior in spiritual profundity it may be to Catholicism, should at the present day succeed in making many converts from the more venerable ecclesiasticism. The latter offers a so much richer pasturage and shade to the fancy, has so many cells with so many different kinds of honey, is so indulgent in its multiform appeals to human nature, that Protestantism will always show to Catholic eyes the almshouse physiognomy. The bitter negativity of it is to the Catholic mind incomprehensible. To intellectual Catholics many of the antiquated beliefs and practices to which the Church gives countenance are, if taken literally, as childish as they are to Protestants. But they are childish in the pleasing sense of "childlike,"—innocent and amiable, and worthy to be smiled on in consideration of the undeveloped condition of the dear people's intellects. To the Protestant, on the contrary, they are childish in

the sense of being idiotic falsehoods. He must stamp out their delicate and lovable redundancy, leaving the Catholic to shudder at his literalness. He appears to the latter as morose as if he were some hard-eyed, numb, monotonous kind of reptile. The two will never understand each other—their centres of emotional energy are too different. Rigorous truth and human nature's intricacies are always in need of a mutual interpreter. So much for the aesthetic diversities in the religious consciousness. (350)

James's explanation of the Catholic view of the childlike in religion supports the view that Henry Adams intended as positive his reference to Chartres Cathedral as a kind of dollhouse for a beloved doll. This image runs through the first part of his essay, and is implied by his reference to the Virgin's "apartments." Adams invokes the spirit of the "eternal child of Wordsworth" and challenges the reader by saying, "Unless you can go back to your dolls, you are out of place here" (97).

Jenny Franchot reads postbellum American fiction writers as needing to miniaturize Catholicism. By rendering Catholicism as something old, distant, and fragmented as a wrecked culture, she says, Stowe, Cable, and Adams employ a stylistic way of containing a threat and building a Protestant identity (39). Franchot develops her argument through study of Stowe and Cable, and comments on Adams only in passing. However, he does not fit the template Franchot attempts to establish through her reading of Stowe and Cable. The works by the latter are set in America and involve Protestant characters. By contrast, Adams travels to France and adopts the persona of a pilgrim, not a critic. American rejection of the sternness of Calvinism in the nineteenth century in

America coupled with Pius IX's 1854 declaration of the Immaculate Conception of Mary can be seen as reinforcing "American romanticism's increasing idealization of womanhood . . . with the result that Mary became an object of reverence in the writings of Stowe, Longfellow, Hawthorne, James Russell Lowell, and Henry Adams" (Giles 80). Giles also refers to the existence of poems by Emily Dickinson honoring Mary for "her human and feminine sympathies" (80).

The question arises as to why Henry Adams did not become a Catholic, given his tolerant acceptance of the cult of the Virgin, a cult not accepted by Protestants historically, and seeming admiration of her devotions. Adams's work definitely shows religious longing. T. J. Jackson Lears says that Adams "transformed his inner conflict between autonomy and dependence [on his father, on his family history and expectations for him, and on his wife] into a cosmic struggle between skepticism and belief" (269). For Lears, Adams more than any other of his antimodern vitalists felt a "dissatisfaction with liberal Protestantism—from the feeling, articulated most clearly by Nietzsche, that protestant culture had evaporated into 'weightlessness.' After his Unitarian upbringing, Adams revealed a deepening respect for older, sterner creeds. Though their visions of damnation were terrifying, they seemed to possess greater intellectual depth and profounder emotional range than their liberal successors" (277). Some posthumous manuscripts of Adams's suggest that he had considered converting to Catholicism (Giles 105). Other scholars argue that Adams had no intention of converting, and that "[o]nly a Catholic church made over to suit his syncretistic and matrifocal tastes might draw his assent" (Gatta 99). Lears sees the drawback for Adams in that he would need to

subordinate his individuality, logic, and common sense to the power of the Virgin, making “an irrational leap of faith in the Infinite” (Lears 294). Adams’s idiosyncratic version of Catholicism may not have found a welcoming home in early twentieth-century American Catholicism, given the emphasis on doctrinal conformity and respect for the hierarchy. Adams expresses a desire for feminism and syncretism at a level unacceptable to orthodox early twentieth-century Catholicism. Also, Adams shows a mystical strain that might not have found a natural home in American Catholicism in the early twentieth century. In his chapter “The Mystics,” he expresses his admiration for St. Francis’s capacity to love even Sister Death. He says:

“Only on his death-bed [Francis] added the lines of gratitude for ‘our sister death,’ the long-sought, never-found sister of the schoolmen, who solved all philosophy and merged multiplicity in unity. The solution was at least simple; one must decide for one’s self, according to one’s personal standards, whether or not it is more sympathetic than that with which we have got lastly to grapple in the works of Saint Thomas Aquinas.” (384)

The essay itself contains the key to Adams’s inability to commit. He refers to the historical period from 1200-1300 as a period of doubt which saw the end of cathedral building in France. He also refers to the “latent skepticism which lurks behind all faith” (878). The charming consolations he found in the Virgin for the sorrows in his own life could not quite make up for what he perceived as a church laden with “metaphysical subtlety” (880). The cult of the Virgin involved no subtlety. Rather, it centered on the unique functions of Mary: “[S]he was a queen, a woman, and a mother, functions, all,

which priests could not perform” (880). Because sweetness was lacking in Adams’s own life, scarred as it was by a domineering father and a wife who committed suicide, he sought it in Chartres Cathedral. He did not feel under any necessity to labor under subtleties and contradictions he felt were incumbent in a belief system. His writing is all the more persuasive for his ability to perceive in Chartres aspects which a believer takes for granted and might, therefore, overlook: the centrality of Mary, the windows, the color, the size, the design of the interior, the mental echo of Latin hymns composed by medieval saints, the historical memory of the work by peasant and prince in the construction.

The presentation of Catholic devotional life by Protestant authors is, then, mixed. Harold Frederic explores the consequences of the Catholic cultural presence in New York State and ends by warning about its dangers. Through Theron Ware’s over-appreciation of the aesthetic features of Catholicism, he succumbs to a dangerous, actually a damning path. In his warning, Frederic’s novel is reminiscent of the laments raised by isolated voices recorded in Ryan K. Smith about Protestant congregations’ adaptations of Catholic church practices, and even more so of the continual alarms raised by the yellow journalists, as recorded in Nordstrom’s Danger on the Doorsteps. Pauline Hopkins demonstrates an appreciation for the expressive power of the Catholic liturgy to resonate with a character’s emotional state, and for the ability of Catholic doctrine to aid in instilling black pride, but also shows the factors which allow Sappho to resist an invitation to join a convent in New Orleans. In Sappho’s embrace of the aesthetic features of Catholicism but her resistance to joining the religion, Hopkins aligns Sappho



with some of the antimodernists discussed by T. J. Jackson Lears. Henry Adams's description of the Virgin of Chartres within the context of medieval piety is the most positive of the three authors' presentations of Catholicism. His affection for the devotional life of the twelfth-century Catholic church is evident—he says, “[g]ranted a Church, Saint Thomas's Church [i.e., the system of medieval scholastic thought] was the most expressive that man has made, and the great Gothic cathedrals were its most complete expression”(422)—but Adams's admiration is ultimately outweighed by his inability to duplicate within himself medieval faith. His observation is telling: that “[t]he trouble was not in the art of the method or the structure, but in the universe itself which presented different aspects as man moved” (422). Time changed. For Adams, the twentieth-century mind had outlived the age of faith.

Chapter VIII “Mother-Women,” Other Women, Creole Men, Celibate Priests: Catholic  
Gender Models in Chopin and Fitzgerald

Kate Chopin in The Awakening (1899) and F. Scott Fitzgerald in This Side of Paradise (1920) challenge or modify Catholic expectations of social roles and proper behavior with regard to gendered identity, to sexuality, and to sex. Jay Dolan sees gender as a significant aspect of the historical Catholic experience in America in the period from 1880 to 1920. His emphasis is on women and their career possibilities in such areas as teaching, medicine, law, and social work. He describes the opportunities positively, especially for Catholic women who remained single or who entered the convent. My analysis shifts from Dolan’s rather exclusive sociological description of work and careers as well as his focus only on women, and will examine both masculine and feminine gender roles as well as the psychological effects of maintaining expected Catholic gender roles.

As a female living in Louisiana in the later nineteenth century, Chopin’s Edna Pontellier faces severely limited roles by which to define herself. She wishes to express herself sexually and artistically, but each desire is closed off by the limited Catholic Creole or American Presbyterian roles available to her. By contrast, Fitzgerald’s Amory Blaine, a male growing up in Minnesota and then living in New Jersey and New York City during and just after World War I, has more options. Even though Amory does not want to become a priest literally—he is not even a Catholic—he is interested in a kind of

artistic priesthood. Also, he admires an ethereal Catholic woman who is a widow and mother but who does not wish to remarry. He accepts and actually idealizes her as a virginal Catholic saint, and says she is one of the few good people he has ever found interesting. In 1920, then, a man has more Catholic gender roles to choose among, unlike Edna in 1899.

### Kate Chopin

At its initial publication in 1899, The Awakening elicited very negative reviews, including the accusation that it was “gilded dirt” (Walker, “Contextual Documents” 166), that it was “the sad story of a Southern lady who wanted to do what she wanted to” (Walker, “Contextual Documents” 165), and that it was another instance of a writer entering “the overworked field of sex fiction” (Walker, “Critical History” 169-70). It disappeared from print for decades but has drawn enormous critical attention since its American rediscovery by Kenneth Eble in 1956.<sup>41</sup> Three years earlier, innovative French critic Cyrille Arnavon compared the novel to Madame Bovary. Arnavon’s approach led the way for treatments of the theme of awakening by comparing Chopin’s novel to works by Willa Cather and by George Eliot which share the theme. It also resulted in comparing The Awakening to realistic, naturalistic works by Theodore Dreiser and Frank Norris, rather than standard critical contextualizing with local color works by George Washington Cable and Sarah Orne Jewett. A bolder critical move, made by Edmund Wilson in 1962, was to compare Chopin’s novel to work by D. H. Lawrence. Walker welcomes such “frank discussion of sexuality and infidelity [as] cause for praise rather than censure” (“Critical History” 173). The novel had continued to

attract censorious reviews following its appearance in 1899 (Walker, "Critical History" 173).

Nancy Walker laments what she considers a continuing reductive approach of discussing the work's literary provenance: is the novel a local color novel and Chopin an example of a regional writer? This line of discussion, according to Nancy Walker, implies that however accomplished a stylist Chopin is, her work is limited in attainment. More recent scholarship on Chopin has been built upon a greater availability of primary sources—"Chopin's stories, two of her diaries, and an assortment of letters, essays, and poems" (Walker "Critical History" 176). Thomas Bonner's *The Kate Chopin Companion* includes

a glossary of the names of places and characters in Chopin's work and life as well as terms used in her work (for example, such French words as *banquette*) and brief synopses of the short stories. . . . Chopin's translations of French fiction (primarily by Maupassant), period maps of the geographical settings of Chopin's life and her fiction, and a detailed bibliographical essay. (Walker "Critical History" 176)

More recent approaches have included feminist, gender, new historicist, deconstructivist, mythological, and reader-response criticism.

My approach to The Awakening uses the structuralist technique of contrasting binaries in order to discuss Chopin's contribution to the presentation of Catholicism and gender in nineteenth-century American fiction.<sup>42</sup> Chopin's portraits suggest a narrow range of gendered female behavior among the Creoles and a wider range of behavior for

the male characters with whom Edna interacts. Chopin also develops a contrast between two cultures in her novel. Priscilla Leder describes them as “the strict, restrained Kentucky Presbyterian [society] in which [Edna] was raised and the cultivated, sensual Creole [society] into which she married” (97). For Leder, Walker, and others, “cultural conflict is more the issue than rebellion” (97).

Each of the female Creole characters in The Awakening forms her identity on the basis of her marital status and maternity. The roles are wife and mother, widowed mother, praying widow, and single, eccentric rebel who has no children and is sexless. The male characters are defined not only by their roles as husbands or lovers, but also by their jobs and their freedoms. They are free to travel, to relocate for their jobs, to socialize with single or married women in various venues such as the race track, to visit prostitutes, to dine out at a hotel while wives dine at the boarding house, and to maintain their families at a distance from their weekday work.

A nonfictional portrait of the Creole by Ruth McEnery Stuart, a contemporary of Chopin’s who is sometimes grouped with Chopin as a late nineteenth-century Louisiana writer, provides clues for a discussion of Creole women and men. For the women, Stuart stresses their accent, their English learned at a convent, their beauty, and their ability to charm men.<sup>43</sup> Creole women are allowed social latitude in their response to Creole men beyond what Edna is accustomed to from her background, but they are not allowed a full range of occupational possibilities.

The Creole woman’s most fulfilling role is embodied in Chopin’s Adele Ratignolle, who is devoted to her children and husband. Adele epitomizes Creole

women, “fluttering about with extended, protecting wings when any harm, real or imaginary, threaten[s] their precious brood. They [are] women who idolized their children, worship their husbands, and esteem it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels” (10). Edna thinks of Adele as resembling a “faultless Madonna”(13). Adele has three children after seven years of marriage and gives birth to a fourth by the end of the novel. Unlike Edna, she would never think of displeasing her husband, especially by such an action as leaving him at home by himself. She will not stay with Edna at the end of Edna’s long Sunday at Cheniere Caminada, “for Monsieur Ratignolle was alone, and he detested above all things to be left alone” (52). To Edna, the “American woman,” Adele and her husband’s foreignness as models of marriage is symbolized by the fact that they both speak English “with an accent” (73), while “Edna’s husband spoke English with no accent whatever” (73). Though Leonce is Creole, his engagement in business has made him thoroughly American in speech and orientation even while he remains an incompatible spirit for Edna’s awakened sensuality. By contrast, the narrator observes that the “Ratignolles understood each other perfectly. If ever the fusion of two human beings into one has been accomplished on this sphere it was surely in their union” (73). A model Catholic Creole couple, the Ratignolles represent a perfect union of mind and heart, but one which Edna repudiates.

Narrower roles are represented by widowed women who run eating and/or boarding establishments at Grand Isle. Robert Lebrun’s mother, Madame Lebrun, has a house “flanked by its dozen or more cottages” (5). She spends her days sewing and

supervising a dining room in her house for the Creoles who live in the cottages during the summer. She also rearranges her dining room for Saturday evening family entertainment followed by cake and ice cream. The income Madame Lebrun garners from the cottage dwellers allows her “to maintain the easy and comfortable existence which appeared to be her birthright” (5). Her emotional life is lived in small compass. It consists of her interest in her two sons, Robert and Victor, and the force of belief lying behind her exclamation ““If your father had only lived!”” (29). The narrator explains that Madame Lebrun is convinced that “the conduct of the universe and all things pertaining thereto would have been manifestly of a more intelligent and higher order had not Monsieur Lebrun been removed to other spheres during the early years of their married life” (29). This fixed conviction gives her the strength to resist easily the attentions of one Montel, a man who has sought for twenty years “to fill the void which Monsieur Lebrun’s taking off had left in the Lebrun household” (29). The remainder of her emotional life consists of her pleasure in watching and commenting on her boarders.

A still narrower role is represented by the black-clad lady who spends her time praying and seemingly following romantic couples. Her occasional appearances punctuate the narrative of the Grand Isle section of the novel. Her presence, though not exactly gloomy, suggests excessive religiosity and scrupulosity. Also, her wearing of black at the beach is unusual, suggesting mourning and injecting a funereal element into the scene. She walks “demurely up and down, telling her beads” (2). The lady in black reads morning devotions on a porch (20), on all Sundays carries her “Sunday

prayer-book . . . and her Sunday silver beads” (42-43), and, at the very moment that Edna feels a surge of jealousy at the sight of the black-eyed brown-toed servant Mariequita, the lady in black is praying her rosary for the third time (44). Her preoccupation with devotion and even with the technicalities of devotion stand in marked contrast to the sensual awakening Edna is experiencing. The lady in black wishes Robert Lebrun, Edna’s attentive admirer, to learn whether the “special indulgence attached” to her prayer-beads from Mexico “extended outside the Mexican border” (55). Thomas Haddox describes her as the “novel’s most obvious Catholic figure, the rosary-wielding ‘lady in black’ who follows Edna and Robert,” and suggests that she “may invite mockery for her nit-picking view of the doctrine of indulgences” (89). But another interpretation is to suggest that cultural Creole Catholicism is more open to women’s questions than Edna’s dictatorial father would have been. The fact that the lady can ask Robert to make this inquiry a part of his attention during his trip to Mexico contrasts with the strict male-centered Sunday services conducted by Edna’s father.<sup>44</sup> Haddox’s observation about the obvious Catholicism of the lady in black also suggests an explanation for Edna’s confusion about vestigial Catholic codes of conduct imposed on a group that has many cultural Creoles who are non-religiously observant.

A very different female role is represented by Mademoiselle Reisz, the single, older woman who plays Frederic Chopin on the piano. Critical assessments of her role vary widely. Elaine Showalter suggests that she is a female mentor for Edna and that, in spite of her attraction to Edna suggesting “something . . . perverse” (214), she nevertheless represents the author’s perspective on art and the artist. In Showalter’s



view, “whereas Adele is a ‘faultless Madonna’ who speaks for the values and laws of the Creole community, Mademoiselle Reisz is a renegade, self-assertive and outspoken” (214). In contextualizing the major alternate roles for Edna, Showalter projects possible story endings for Edna based on Adele as the heroine of a sentimental novel or on Mademoiselle Reisz as the heroine of local color fiction. According to Showalter, “Adele’s story suggests that Edna will give up her rebellion, return to her marriage, have another baby, and by degrees learn to appreciate, love, and even desire her husband” (215). By contrast, “Mademoiselle Reisz’s story suggests that Edna will lose her beauty, her youth, her husband, and children—everything, in short, but her art and her pride—and become a kind of New Orleans nun” (215).

Some gender critics, including Elizabeth LeBlanc, suggest that the relationship between Edna and Mademoiselle Reisz contains lesbian elements, metaphorically on Edna’s part, and literally on Mademoiselle’s part. Other critics reject any notion of Mademoiselle Reisz’s influence on Edna. For example, Gina Burchard describes her as “a stereotype: a dried-up spinster with nothing but contempt for the amorous dalliance of the rest of her set. An accomplished pianist, she derives gratification from ‘higher’ passions. Her essential nature is romantic, without roots in reality, and her passions are realizable only through her art” (42). Burchard’s approach precedes LeBlanc’s by a dozen years, which may account for Burchard’s dismissive summing up of Mademoiselle Reisz in sexist language.

Kathleen M. Streater’s approach offers a more moderate, midway position between the extreme alternative gender models available to Edna. They can be summed

up as selfless mother-woman, working widow-woman, religious-woman in black, and alienated artist-woman. Streater sees more than selfless devotion in Adele, viewing her as someone who “work[s] the patriarchal system to her advantage” (408). For Streater, Adele accomplishes this by occupying “the unpopular middle ground of resistance, far less romantic than the dramatics of extremists, such as Edna, [but at a place] where change is most affected” (410). Streater sees Mademoiselle Reisz’s creativity as involving a denial of “her femininity and adopt[ion of] stereotypical traits most commonly associated with masculinity; e.g., she lacks patience for crying babies, she has a self-assertive temper, and she has a ‘disposition to trample upon the rights of others’” (413).

Edna’s voluptuousness is contrasted with Mademoiselle Reisz’s bony lack of femininity. The criticisms of Mademoiselle Reisz come from unexpected sources. At one point Edna wonders how she has stood Mademoiselle Reisz for so long. The seducer Arobin even comments to Edna that he has heard Mademoiselle is “‘partially demented’” (110). Even if Mademoiselle Reisz represents creativity, art, and the artist, sufficient evidence exists to question whether Edna is as talented at painting as Reisz is at the piano. If Edna’s own artistic ability is limited, Reisz is a qualified model for Edna. The novel does not suggest Edna could remain married and live as an artist in a separate house from her husband. In the unlikely event of a divorce from her husband, she would probably not be able to make a living from her art without supplementing her income through high-class prostitution. She seems to contemplate this possibility in her despairing reflection that Alcee Arobin will merely be the first of many (151).

In sum, the Catholic Creole female roles available to Edna include the mother-woman, the widow who spends her days sewing and who operates a sort of boarding house, the widow who does nothing but pray, and the renegade artist. These are limited choices. The Catholic Creole men with whom Edna interacts enjoy much wider freedom in their professional and their personal lives. They include Edna's husband, Dr. Mandelet, Robert Lebrun, and Alcee Arobin. Chopin's contemporary Ruth McEnery Stuart describes the make-up of the Creole male as French, Louisianian, Democratic, and Roman Catholic. Stuart stresses his religious conservatism.<sup>45</sup>

Edna's husband is by turns indulgent, solicitous, and concerned. His indulgence is shown by the boxes he sends Edna from New Orleans. They are "filled with friandises, with luscious and toothsome bits—the finest of fruits, pates, a rare bottle or two, delicious syrups, and bonbons in abundance" (9). For these gifts, which Edna shares with the women and children at Grand Isle, Mr. Pontellier acquires the reputation as "the best husband in the world" (9). Not only does Leonce send packages to Edna, but he goes to Edna's sister's wedding in place of Edna so that a family member will be present (94). Although supporting his family through his weekday work requires Leonce's absence from his family at Grand Isle, he is an indulgent provider and gift giver. In Edna's own eyes, he falls short because he views her, as on the occasion of her over-tanning in the sunlight, as "a valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage" (3; see also 65 on Leonce's view of his possessions). During the course of the novel, Edna resists his efforts to control and contain her. She feels that women are too readily seen as property rather than as independent persons with independent emotional lives. Yet,

Leonce's compassion for her condition is plain. He seeks the professional advice of his friend, Dr. Mandelet. He listens attentively to the counsel of Dr. Mandelet suggesting that women are delicate and different. He plans to take Edna on a trip to Europe. He writes her a letter from New York protesting her decision to set herself up in a house around the corner from their grand house in New Orleans.

Leonce is not fault-free as a husband. Unlike the Ratignolles, the Pontelliers are not emotionally close. Elaine Showalter points to Leonce's interests as a way of highlighting the emotional differences between Edna and her husband:

They do not have an interest in each other's activities or thoughts, and have agreed to a complete separation of their social spheres; Leonce is fully absorbed by the business, social, and sexual activities of the male sphere, the city, Carondelet Street, Klein's Hotel at Grand Isle, where he gambles, and especially the New Orleans world of the clubs and red-light district. (216)

Leonce sees no conflict between his lukewarm Catholicism and his gambling and use of prostitutes. When he is at Grand Isle, he does not attend Mass. Still, Edna does have a provider, protector, and substitute father-figure in Leonce, who is a dozen years older than she.

Leonce's friend Dr. Mandelet is portrayed as a compassionate, caring professional man who has insights into psychological conditions as well as into physical healing. Dr. Mandelet typifies the insight of medical men on female psychology in 1899. He advises Leonce not to interfere with what he characterizes as Edna's moody behavior. He says

women are ““peculiar,”” ““delicate,”” and ““sensitive”” (87). He suggests that Edna is experiencing a passing mood. However, in his inner reflections, he shows greater acuity of insight, wondering if Edna has become interested in another man. After Edna’s dinner party in honor of her father, Dr. Mandelet fears presciently that Alcee Arobin is the man distracting Edna. The narrator’s judgment of Dr. Mandelet is that “[h]e knew his fellow-creatures better than most men; knew that inner life which so seldom unfolds itself to unanointed eyes” (93). Dr. Mandelet is thus depicted as a man of understanding but also one who does not engage in severe moral judgments. Edna’s whole life has been an inner life; this is largely what she is awakening to—her need somehow to match the dreamy, romantic inner life with her outer life. Dr. Mandelet tells Edna to come and talk to him—that he will understand her. He also assumes the role of secular priest absolving Edna of possible future sins, advising her quite generously, ““I don’t want you to blame yourself, whatever comes”” (148). One of the very last thoughts she has as she swims far out into the Gulf is of Dr. Mandelet and the possibility of his understanding her.

The two young Creole men with whom Edna becomes involved are single men who play the game of chivalrous partner to many different women. Reminiscent of how Cooper saw the negative side to Catholic chivalry in General Montcalm, Chopin explores Creole chivalry with acute sensitivity and critical insight into its potentially destructive effects. While Robert Lebrun recognizes and abides by boundaries, Alcee Arobin is a seducer who uses women and then discards them. In spite of Arobin’s adulterous transgressions, he is a member of the Creole community of men who as a whole indulge women’s whims, running to get things for them, helping them with their domestic

projects, providing them flirtatious—or seductive—company. Marilynne Robinson notes that “[i]n contrast to Edna’s father with his whiskers, military airs, and padded coat, the Creole men in The Awakening seem notably free of masculine pretensions” (xii). She observes that the “men frequently accept roles that elsewhere are normally delegated to women” (xii). Robert Lebrun carries Edna’s umbrella (3), checks on Adele’s sleeping children, fetches her thimble, reads Daudet to her (13), brings Adele bouillon and crackers (27), instructs Edna in swimming (36). Arobin, Edna’s seducer, puts on a dustcap to help Edna move pictures, curtains, and other wall ornaments to her small house around the corner from her grand New Orleans house. The lives of both men show that many more types of employment are available to men than to women at the turn of the century. Robert worked in a “mercantile house in New Orleans, where an equal familiarity with English, French and Spanish gave him no small value as a clerk and correspondent” (5). Arobin hangs out a sign on Perdido Street as being part of the “firm of Laitner and Arobin, lawyers” (116). Arobin’s own words raise a question about how much work he does: ““There are so many inquisitive people and institutions abounding . . . that one is really forced as a matter of convenience these days to assume the virtue of an occupation if he has it not”” (116). Arobin’s fecklessness about his actual employment shows that Creole society allows more latitude to male frauds than to female poseurs.

Edna’s religious background has points of contact and contrast with Catholic Creole culture. As Nancy Walker says, “Edna . . . is not flaunting the mores of the society she finds herself in. Rather, by succumbing to the sensuality of the Creoles, she is denying what she has been raised to believe, so that in some ways the novel deals with

the clash of two cultures” (99). Edna’s Kentucky Presbyterian background emphasizes strict religion and strict, authoritarian male roles. In an early conversation with her friend Adele, Edna talks about her memory of a “summer day in Kentucky” (21) when she was walking in a large meadow “that seemed as big as the ocean” (21). When pressed by Adele about her destination and about the meaning of the memory, Edna says, “Likely as not it was Sunday . . . and I was running away from prayers, from the Presbyterian service, read in a spirit of gloom by my father that chills me yet to think of” (21). Edna’s description stresses the dourness of the reading, its power to spread fear into her, and her need to flee from it into something vast, however aimless her path. It also stresses the primacy of her father as authority figure.

Adele’s responses show pity for Edna and, when read in light of the ending of the novel, suggest a parallel between Edna’s thoughts of escape into formless vastness as a girl and her thoughts as a woman. The narrator describes Edna as “an American woman” (5) who talks early in the novel “about her father’s Mississippi plantation and her girlhood home in the old Kentucky blue-grass country” (5). The emphasis in Edna’s description of her background on parental strictness and limited female roles as a consequence of strict Sunday religious observances does not distinguish Edna from other American—or Creole American—females.

Edna is described by her husband as coming from “sound old Presbyterian Kentucky stock” (87). This echoes a more diffuse description made by Edna herself in her conversation with her friend Adele (21). As a Presbyterian, Edna is an outsider to the Louisiana Catholic Creole society she insisted on joining through her marriage to Leonce

Pontellier. In summers at the beach the Creole society plays elaborate games of manners governing the conduct of its men and women toward each other. The games are heavily stylized male-female interactions which Priscilla Leder describes as “sexual play involv[ing] a kind of parodic reenactment of courtly love” (99). Unwritten rules allow Leonce to watch Edna as she walks about the beach with Robert Lebrun, and then casually tell Edna in front of Robert to dismiss him when she becomes bored with him (2-3). They allow Adele to counsel Robert to leave Edna alone, since Edna might mistake his playful attentions for serious attentions (25-27). The rules require that Robert make the sudden decision to leave for Mexico as the romantic games threaten to ensnare him, too (54), and later, to leave permanently.

Edna’s entry into Creole society and its games is jarring to her. She is, for example, at first surprised by the Creoles’ “entire absence of prudery. Their freedom of expression was at first incomprehensible to her, though she had no difficulty in reconciling it with a lofty chastity which in the Creole woman seems to be inborn and unmistakable” (12). As an inexperienced player of Creole cultural games, Edna takes seriously a playful romantic situation with Robert Lebrun. But Catholicism imposes limits on transgressive marital behavior in Creole culture, especially for women, which Edna does not recognize. Edna’s inability to accept Catholic Creole rules governing male-female relations and her inability to adopt the Catholic Creole female roles available to her, particularly the “mother-woman” role, lead to Edna’s suicide.

The contrast between Kentucky Presbyterians and Louisiana Creoles is embodied in the differences in masculinity between Edna’s father and her husband. Edna’s father is



strict; her husband, and especially his Creole culture, are languid and relaxed. Edna's father shows a lack of compassion for the role of wife and the way a wife should be treated; Edna's husband seeks medical advice for what ails Edna. Creole men are allowed wide latitude in their chivalrous behavior towards women. Edna's father's Presbyterian Sunday devotions are repressive; the Creole devotions are a languorous part of an indolent weekend.

The training Edna's father gave her and the example he set prepared Edna better to enter Creole society as a Creole man rather than a Creole woman. The Creole man enjoyed freedoms and personal fulfillment; the Creole woman's sphere was maternal, domestic, and self-renouncing. Edna's father, who raised her, offered an aggressive male role model for her to copy. When he visits Edna, his behavior resembles Edna's emerging self-assertive demeanor. He reciprocates Madame Ratignolle's flirting with him; he talks lugubriously but compellingly at dinner about his special interest, the Civil War; he is opinionated; he feels free to dictate a social situation and to place others under obligations; and he takes credit for fathering Edna's talent. Just as Leonce wanted Edna to maintain her Tuesday at-homes because of their potential business benefit to him (66-67), Edna's father takes credit for her artistic talent because it would redound to his favor. In spite of his ease at Edna's dinner party, Edna has a different memory of her father from her youth and adolescence—his conducting sour church services on the Sundays. The narrator states—and Leonce thinks—that Edna's father drove Edna's mother to an early grave.

Edna is dissimilar to two female types in late nineteenth-century American literature, the “sentimental heroine” and “the abstemious local color heroine” (Showalter 211). Elaine Showalter says the former “nurtures others” and the latter “subsists upon meager vegetarian diets.” By contrast, according to Showalter, “Chopin’s heroine is a robust woman who does not deny her appetites. Wilkins’s New England nun picks at her dainty lunch of lettuce leaves and currants, but Edna Pontellier eats hearty meals of pate, pompano, steak, and broiled chicken; bites off chunks of crusty bread; snacks on beer and Gruyere cheese; and sips brandy, wine, and champagne” (211).

Further, Edna is unlike portrayals of Catholic women in much American Catholic fiction of the period. Plentifully available “parochial fiction” (Messbarger distinguishes parochial, cosmopolitan, and anomalous Catholic fiction in the period 1884-1900) commonly treated “threats to purity from feminine immodesty” (Messbarger 142). A novel by Eleanor Donnelly “depicts the dire effects of an offense against modesty: an aspiring opera singer unwisely wears a low-cut dress to her professional debut, takes a chill and is ruined” (Messbarger 88). Novelist Lelia Hardin Bugg used her work to promote correct behavior for Catholics, particular Catholic women. Her nonfiction advised that “the Catholic woman always precedes her husband into the church pew, eyes downcast, hands folded” (Messbarger 87); her fiction centered on church social groups with a religious dimension, “the necessity for absolute pastoral authority” (Messbarger 87) and “varieties of class behavior within the parish” (Messbarger 88). If the danger from female immodesty was treated in some fiction, a very common theme was “the dangers to faith of marriage with a non-Catholic” (Messbarger 142), often resolvable

only by the conversion of the non-Catholic partner or by having recourse to church canon law. Many Catholic writers of the period did not try to describe married life and love, preferring to end a novel with the “untimely death of the heroine or her removal to a convent . . . familiar conclusions to the Catholic romance” (Messbarger 142). Catholic fiction of the period, then, presented a heroine quite unlike Kate Chopin’s heroine, who enjoyed her sensuality, was not subservient to her husband, did not join a church social group, and did not convert to Catholicism. Also, Edna’s artistic ambitions would have made her unlike the Catholic fictional heroine of the period in one other respect: “the greatest threat to the faith of the Catholic layman, other than mixed marriage, stemmed from the ambition for worldly success” (Messbarger 142). Edna’s attitudes and behaviors and Chopin’s exploration of her consciousness align Edna with the heroines of British New Woman fiction of the 1890s.

The characteristics that emerge with Edna’s awakening seem in fact masculine. They make her very unlike the Catholic Creole woman represented by Adele. Adele’s sexuality is expressed in her pregnancies, her giving birth, and her nursing. Adele’s wearing of a nightgown and her physical inactivity are part of her maternal role. By contrast, the various physical descriptions of Edna are a frank celebration of her body and an awakened animality. Her body is not delicate; rather, she notes its fullness on the Sunday of her boating trip with Robert Lebrun “as if it were something she saw for the first time, the fine, firm quality and texture of her flesh” (48). She is described as having “strong, white teeth” (49). Her hair and eyes are yellow-brown, almost cat-like in color (19), a description relating her to an independent, not docile, animal. At the dinner party

in honor of Edna's father, Dr. Mandelet thinks of her as being changed from "the listless woman he had known into a being who, for the moment, seemed palpitant with the forces of life." She shows "no repression in her glance or gesture. She remind[s] him of some beautiful, sleek animal waking up in the sun" (92).

Unlike women in sentimental women's fiction, Edna has overt sexual desires. She has fantasies in which she imagines the opposite sex naked (33). As her relationship with Alcee Arobin progresses, she overcomes her reddening over his frank talk and comes to be pleased by it, because it "appeal[s] to the animalism that stirred impatiently within her" (103). When Robert Lebrun returns from Mexico late in the novel, Edna is the sexual aggressor as Robert attempts to remain delicate. Edna takes the lead in pursuing him: "She lean[s] over and kiss[es] him—a soft, cool, delicate kiss, whose voluptuous sting penetrate[s] his whole being" (141). Robert expresses his reluctance to pursue a romance with Edna because she is married and because in his own estimation it would make him a "cur" (142). Edna easily dismisses his reservations in declaring her love for him. After she is called away to Adele's harrowing accouchement, she returns to her little house full of expectations of "possessing" Robert, not of yielding to Robert: "When she thought that he was there at hand, waiting for her, she grew numb with the intoxication of expectancy. It was so late; he would be asleep perhaps. She would awaken him with a kiss. She hoped he would be asleep that she might arouse him with her caresses" (149). Edna imagines herself in an active sexual role.

Unlike Creole women who revel in the role of motherhood, Edna's frankest expression of her nature is in her gastronomic and sexual appetites. Unlike Adele and the

other women at Grand Isle, Edna lacks enjoyment in her maternal role and, from her husband's and her friend Adele's point of view, neglects her children (7, 9-10, 70). Her most tender maternal feelings are evoked by pictures of Robert Lebrun when he was little (60-61), by her talking to the children's dog about the boys as she dines alone while the children are staying with their grandmother in Iberville (96), by the letters she receives and writes to her children when they are staying with their grandmother, and by a one-week visit to the children in Iberville. Edna's maternal feelings, albeit limited, reflect the Catholic Creole ideal, but her frankly expressed appetites challenge the ideal.

Edna acquires the habit of speaking her mind quite directly, a habit which she acknowledges to Robert is "what you would call unwomanly" (140). She also chafes in the generally restricted role of woman, not just the role of wife. She explains to Robert her liking for a little out-of-the way "garden out in the suburbs" where she goes to drink coffee, sometimes to eat dinner, and to sit for hours at a time: "It's so out of the way; and a good walk from the car. However, I don't mind walking. I always feel so sorry for women who don't like to walk; they miss so much—so many rare little glimpses of life; and we women learn so little of life on the whole" (140).

Her conversational style becomes more that of a man than of a conventional woman. She is plain-spoken rather than coy, especially when she hears of Robert Lebrun's plans to move to Mexico (36). She enjoys listening to Robert's nineteen-year old brother Victor's account of his trip into New Orleans from Grand Isle and his encounter with a girl "peeping and smiling at him through the shutters" since "a man needed occasional relaxation . . . and a pretext to bring him to the city" (79). Edna, from

her husband's perspective, seems to develop some sort of suffragette or women's rights notions that he finds odd and inexplicable (86). These views, Edna's blunt statement that "a wedding is one of the most lamentable spectacles on earth" (87), and Edna's combatively siding with her father in an argument with Leonce over horse-racing as a pastime all seem at odds with the woman earlier in the novel who uses Madame Antoine's thoughtfully placed *poudre de riz* to dab on her face after her day-long sleep at Cheniere Caminada.

Edna's cultural masculinity and also her artistry find expression informally in her conversational skills. She can narrate a story at dinner that is so gripping that

every glowing word seem[s] real to those who listened. They could feel the hot breath of the Southern night; they could hear the long sweep of the pirogue through the glistening moonlit water, the beating of birds' wings, rising startled from among the reeds in the salt-water pools; they could see the faces of the lovers, pale, close together, rapt in oblivious forgetfulness, drifting into the unknown. (93)

The audience's reaction shows that Edna is a masterful story-teller. While the novel leaves ambiguous the answer to the question of how talented an artist Edna is,<sup>46</sup> Edna shows many times that she is a forceful, direct conversationalist. Other signs of her masculine-style communication include her letter to her husband "brilliant and brimming with cheerfulness" informing him that she is moving out to a house around the corner, rather than asking permission. She aggressively asks Robert Lebrun about his female

companions in Mexico (133-34) and asks Alcee Arobin whether he tells every woman the same lines (135).

Edna feels competitive in a masculine way in such areas as physical sports and gambling. After she learns to swim, she “want[s] to swim far out, where no woman had swum before” (36). She enjoys gambling and meets with success at the race track. Her gambling success leads her to develop in another important area as well, one usually associated exclusively with men in the late nineteenth century. She acquires more knowledge about money management. When Mademoiselle Reisz challenges Edna about her scheme of moving around the corner from her house, Edna mentions three sources of money to support her little house: money from her mother’s estate, “a large sum [won] this winter on the races” (105), and the sale of her art. Although Edna had seemed oblivious to her husband’s work, she has begun to be aware of the need for domestic economies and asset protection. Adele’s account to Edna that Leonce “had gone over to Klein’s, looking up some cotton broker whom he wished to see in regard to securities, exchanges, stocks, bonds, or something of the sort . . .” (52) shows only a vague, feminine knowledge of business matters. But Edna moves beyond this initially fuzzy knowledge shared with Adele about business matters to a more realistic, independent, masculine knowledge of finances.

Edna’s father’s tendency to morbidity and a psychological centering on the Civil War may account for Edna’s escapism into romance. From her early adolescence, she dwelled on romantic ideas about the handsome young men visiting the plantations, one a “dignified and sad-eyed cavalry officer who visited her father in Kentucky” (23). This

fleeting episode witnessed by the impressionable young girl forms a memory that nourishes her secret inner life. It is the last thing, together with “her father’s voice and her sister Margaret’s” (153), that she remembers when she walks into the Gulf. Her reading of Emerson (96) has made her think too much of her “soul’s slavery” (151), too much of her need for freedom, and too little of her obligations to her husband and children. She ends by knowing this, facing it squarely, and choosing suicide rather than family. Having been released by her marriage from the strict religion of her childhood, Edna entered another society where religion exercises control over behavior, self-expression, and personal freedom, especially for its female members. Edna rejects conventional Creole Catholic female roles. Within the world of the novel, Edna’s final act can be seen as an act of her self-realization as a female heroine following her awakening to her artistic and appetitive self. She rejects the roles available to her and prefers complete self-determination over half-hearted compromise. However, judged by the standard of Adele’s Catholic moral code which affirms the value of life, however much the life is impaired, Edna’s ending is a capitulation. By this standard, at the end, Edna embraces lassitude, not freedom. She embraces weariness, not self-expression. She has abandoned herself to the elements, and merges with the elements. Her final action is emblematic of surrender, not of conquest.<sup>47</sup>

#### F. Scott Fitzgerald

Catholicism and gender together lie at the heart of the meaning of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s This Side of Paradise.<sup>48</sup> Emphasizing one to the exclusion of the other distorts the novel and causes critics to question the novel’s coherence.<sup>49</sup> Greg Forter and



Pearl James have written about Fitzgerald and gender, though not on Catholicism and gender. Forter considers Fitzgerald as an individual within his family unit, within his marriage, and within his social and cultural context.<sup>50</sup> Pearl James focuses on gender in This Side of Paradise. James reads the novel as “a paradigmatic expression of an unease about masculine coming-of-age that surfaces in early-twentieth-century American culture generally and in the bildungsroman in particular” (2). She says that while most critics have read it as a novel of apprenticeship, she sees it describing “a crisis in male formation” (2). She sets it in the context of “a larger cultural anxiety about the coherence of masculinity [a “coherence” challenged by the pace of change in the early twentieth century that offered a “new, more fluid identity” that seemed “effeminate”] in the early twentieth century, an anxiety exacerbated by World War I” (2).<sup>51</sup>

This Side of Paradise was Fitzgerald’s most popular work during his lifetime, although since his death it has been eclipsed by the The Great Gatsby. Amory Blaine is a young man who has been spoiled by his mother, Beatrice, who treats him almost as her partner in life. She introduces him to Monsignor Darcy, who, prior to his entering the priesthood, was a suitor of Beatrice. Amory goes to Princeton, meets various women, enlists in the service, but unlike some of his friends is not sent overseas to fight in France, and at the end of the novel talks like a socialist and looks forward to a literary life. The novel shows the emergence of a sensitive observer of life with enough self-understanding to release his creativity in writing. It contrasts the strength of his understanding of himself and the meaning of personhood generally, with the weakness of his capacity to experience happy male-female relationships.

Evident Fitzgerald themes include youth, the allure of unattainable female beauty, and the reckless—and ethically damaging—pursuit of wealth, status, and the glamorous life. The novel demonstrates the central character’s yearning for both a father figure and for a male community. What is different in Fitzgerald themes in This Side of Paradise are the ways in which Catholicism functions as an overt organizing principle for the main character’s gender concerns. Joan Allen speaks of the novel’s Joycean subject matter, by which she means a preoccupation with Irish Catholicism, which Fitzgerald dropped after this novel and his short story “Absolution” (22).<sup>52</sup>

Although limited in number, Catholic gender roles in This Side of Paradise are clearly developed and identifiably Catholic. A masculine role model is not available to Amory Blaine from the expected source, his father. The latter makes virtually no appearance in the novel until his death, which Amory scarcely mourns. The primary male role model for Amory is Monsignor Darcy, who has chosen priesthood after his unsuccessful courtship of Amory’s mother. The portrait of Monsignor Darcy is, in the words of Joan Allen, an “affectionate portrait” of Fitzgerald’s real friend Monsignor Fay. Dedicated to Monsignor Fay, the novel draws on letters from Fay to Fitzgerald and a poem Fay wrote for Fitzgerald called a keen, an Irish poem of lament for the dead (69-70). In his Catholic priesthood he combines celibacy, religious dedication, innocence, sexual purity, spiritual fatherhood, and a life of service to others. His life as a single person has allowed him the time to cultivate a literary and aesthetic sense, which is reinforced by his interest in Catholic ritual and Catholic writers.

The priest's appeal to Amory is his unusual combination of innocence and sophistication, his friendship, and his literary knowledge. One of the memorable events of Amory's life is his first lunch with Monsignor Darcy. The narrator describes the Monsignor as resembling an exiled Stuart king and a "Turner sunset" in "full purple regalia" (24). Children and adolescents like him because he is "like a child" and "like a youth" (24). This depiction suggests an innocent, Peter Pan quality about the priest. In another time and place, he would have been like Cardinal Richelieu. He is a moral and religious clergyman. The Monsignor is able to bring out "the best that [Amory] had thought by question and suggestion" (26), and he gives "the effect of sunlight to many people" (26), a quality Amory has in his youth but loses. Because of Pearl James's emphasis on history as a unifying trope for the novel and as a way of structuring manhood, she dismisses Monsignor Darcy as "the effeminate and celibate priest, hardly the masculine ideal Amory ostensibly needs" (20). James says that Amory, "[r]ejecting the religious—and effeminate—source of the Monsignor's personagehood, . . . adapts his lesson and selects a more masculine truth on which to found himself: not religion, but history" (21). The text does not support James's characterization of Monsignor Darcy. Amory yearns for an admirable male role model on a very deep level. The culmination of the novel with Amory's Joycean decision to "help in building up the living consciousness of the race" (265) shows that the novel's "masculine truth" is not grounded in history but in aesthetics, an aesthetic sensibility Amory has learned about from Monsignor Darcy.

Monsignor Darcy's letters to Amory make explicit claim of his spiritual parentage. He tells Amory that he enjoys "imagining that you were my son, that perhaps when I was young I went into a state of coma and begat you, and when I came to, had no recollection of it . . . it's the paternal instinct, Amory—celibacy goes deeper than the flesh. . . ." (158). The only way he can imagine biologically fathering him is to think of it as occurring when he was in a state of coma. The Monsignor includes a poem with the letter titled "A Lament for a Foster Son, and He going to the War Against the King of Foreign." It is replete with Celtic words, phrases, and allusions. The opening of the lament, for example, begins:

Ochone

He is gone from me the son of my mind

And he in his golden youth like Angus Oge

Angus of the bright birds

And his mind strong and subtle like the mind of Cuchulin on Muirtheme

(159)

One stanza demonstrating Monsignor's paternal affection for Amory says:

My heart is in the heart of my son

And my life is in his life surely

A man can be twice young

In the life of his sons only (159)

In both letter and poem, the Monsignor claims kinship to Amory, giving advice and expressing fatherly affection. The structure of the novel underscores the kinship claim.

It begins with a section titled “Amory, Son of Beatrice” and ends with a section titled “The Egotist Becomes a Personage.” Book Two is “The Education of a Personage.”

Monsignor Darcy’s last appearance in the novel, confirming an instinct Amory feels about a life of service, occurs as the Monsignor lies in his coffin in his purple vestments. Catholic liturgy is color-coded; purple is a color of penitence. The funeral is described as “magnificently Catholic and liturgical” (265), an event Monsignor “would have enjoyed” (265). Many people are in attendance, including church dignitaries, ambassadors, friends, and priests. The narrator notes people’s dependence on Monsignor Darcy, especially for consolation and comfort: “These people had leaned on Monsignor’s faith, his way of finding cheer, of making religion a thing of lights and shadows, making all light and shadow merely aspects of God. People felt safe when he was near” (266). Amory decides at the funeral that he himself wants to be needed as the Monsignor was needed. He recognizes Monsignor Darcy’s generous giving of self to others as significant for the way he wants to be as a man.

As important as Monsignor Darcy’s generosity and friendship in helping Amory resolve his gender conflicts is Monsignor Darcy’s interest in aesthetics. The Monsignor is depicted throughout as a cosmopolitan, cultured clergyman. He raises the ghosts of Catholic civilization which haunt the novel, haunt Amory’s imagination and conversation at school and afterward. Monsignor Darcy’s interests center less on the incipient puritanism of Savonarola and his bonfire of the vanities (133) and more on the diplomacy, shrewdness, and theological conservatism of Richelieu in politics (149), the asceticism and intellectualism of Cardinal Newman (151), the fiction writing and wit of

Chesterton, and the repentance and conversion of Oscar Wilde. The Monsignor consistently urges Amory to strive for aesthetic and philosophical heights as well as for personal chastity, introspection, and honesty, and for union with and fidelity to the church.

Amory's mother Beatrice is important for her influence on Amory's gendered sense of himself in his relations to her and to Monsignor Darcy. She represents the negative potential of women, described by Joan Allen as a legacy of Augustinian theology on Irish Catholicism. Amory views women through an Augustinian lens<sup>53</sup> that sees them, with few exceptions, as evil seducers. According to Pearl James, Amory's mother is "paradigmatically modern" (6) in her interests in alcohol, shopping, and travel, and in her theatrical "nerves." She encourages indolence and languorousness in Amory by such things as encouraging him to lie in bed until late in the morning, to eat his meals in bed, and to look after his nerves (4-5). She also encourages a sense of the theatrical and a tendency to hysteria that Amory manifests especially around strong-minded women at Princeton and later. Amory seems more like his mother's partner than her husband does. Amory calls her by her first name, speaks to her in terms of casual intimacy, drinks her apricot cordial in his early adolescence, and goes for at least one long walk in the moonlight with her. Importantly, she encourages a sense of the aesthetic in him, although her aesthetic sense is filtered through her alcoholism.

Beatrice is at best a lapsed or lukewarm Catholic. The narrator introduces her on the first page as someone who has studied "in Rome at the Sacred Heart Convent—an educational extravagance that in her youth was only for the daughters of the

exceptionally wealthy” (3). In Rome she was a social as well as religious Catholic, versed in “the latest gossip of the Older Roman Families [and] known by name as a fabulously wealthy American girl to Cardinal Vitori and Queen Margherita” (3). Yet she leaves the Catholic Church in America, “deplor[ing] the bourgeois quality of the American Catholic clergy” (6). Her expensive education, her well-cultivated and nourished sense of herself, and her wealth all lead her to be disdainful of socially less polished people. Also, she had “discover[ed] that priests were infinitely more attentive when she was in process of losing or regaining faith in Mother Church” (6). Because she enjoys toying with people, especially certain male figures of social rank and authority, “next to doctors, priests were her favorite sport” (7). Nevertheless, in spite of her selfish religious whimsicality,<sup>54</sup> Beatrice makes sure that Amory gets to know a former suitor of hers, who, after he gave up on courting her, “joined the Catholic Church, and was now—Monsignor Darcy” (7).

The priest’s insistence on his spiritual fatherhood to Amory is both believable in context and in the thought of him as a sort of spiritual partner, if not a conjugal partner, to the sophisticated though wasted Beatrice. Darcy’s spiritual fatherhood affects Amory’s reactions to his parents’ deaths. Amory’s lesser attachment to his largely absent father is represented by the casual way in which he thinks of his father’s death. The narrator says, “His father died quietly and inconspicuously at Thanksgiving” (99). Amory spends the day after the funeral thinking about whether he himself should adopt the posture in his casket recommended by Monsignor Darcy—“arms crossed piously over his chest (Monsignor Darcy had once advocated this posture as being the most distinguished), or

with his hands clasped behind his head, a more pagan and Byronic attitude” (99).

Amory’s main reaction to his father’s death, then, is to consider whether in his own death he should appear as a pious Catholic or a flamboyant pagan aesthete.

Amory’s angry reaction to his mother’s death, or rather, to her last will and testament, is also filtered through Catholicism and gender. Although female influence and power in the church in the 1920s were limited and indirect, women did have the power of the purse. Beatrice’s testamentary bequeathals to the Catholic Church represent an attempt to reinstate herself with the church, possibly an indirect expression of a wish that her son go to a seminary, and definitely the one way in which a wealthy Catholic woman in post-World War I America could be remembered by the church. Amory writes to Tom D’Invilliers that he will receive less money from his mother than he thought. He says, “I can forgive mother almost everything except the fact that in a sudden burst of religiosity toward the end, she left half of what remained to be spent in stained-glass windows and seminary endowments” (161). Amory contemplates in half-hearted fragments the question “did Beatrice go to heaven?” His answer is a slack “probably not,” as he decides that he himself “represent[s] Beatrice’s immortality” (259). Although Amory never thought of himself as his father’s son, he does think of himself as his mother’s son; this is confirmed by her death. After her death, he considers himself her legacy to the world. This legacy includes in Amory a suppressed desire to be wooed back to the church by vigilant, sensitive priests.

Only one woman in the novel represents a Catholic ideal of femininity. Clara, a third cousin whom Amory decides to meet as a favor to Monsignor Darcy, is a



representative of Catholic womanhood. Although she is a widow with two small children, she is depicted in terms that relate her more to the eternally virginal mother of Christ than to any highly sexualized model of female behavior. She writes poetry about convent life and dreamily contemplates convent life. She would enter a convent were it not for her children. However, she is devoted exclusively to church and to her children, so she does not consider the idea of remarriage a viable choice.

Clara's appearance suggests an etherealized, saintly beauty. The narrator describes her as having a "golden radiance that she diffused around her" (139). In their conversations, the narrator compares Amory to Adam in Paradise. Amory learns that she wrote a poem at school "about a gray convent wall on a gray day, and a girl with her cloak blown by the wind sitting atop of it and thinking about the many-colored world" (140). Amory falls in love with her and thinks about marriage. She is "the first fine woman he ever knew and one of the few good people who ever interested him" (141). He listens to her, takes her advice about distinguishing his will from his imagination, the latter of this pair being his enslaver, she says (143)—the only advice he ever took from anyone other than Monsignor Darcy. They go to church together, she being very devout. He admires her devotion, thinking of her as music and as light. He cries out that she resembles St. Cecelia (144); he wonders "what heights she attained and what strength she drew down to herself when she knelt and bent her golden hair into the stained-glass light" (144). She refuses Amory's offer of marriage because she says she has never been in love, not even with her dead husband. He realizes she is a "daughter of light alone," and he "long[s] to touch her dress with almost the realization that Joseph must have had of

Mary's eternal significance" (145). She conclusively rejects any thought of marriage by saying she should really have been "a quiet nun in the convent" (146).

The psychological effects on Amory of trying to maintain Catholic gender expectations are profound. He struggles with sexual morality, the corollary of sexual Puritanism; expectations of male heroism; and the sense of personal identity as a male, an artist, and a friend. He also grapples with the concerns related to marriage and celibacy. Marriage, the only proper state of life for sexual intercourse for either Protestant or Catholic in 1920, frightens Amory. During Amory's ride in the car of a wealthy industrialist, he spouts an ill-digested socialism to the rich man. He also expresses his fears of both marriage and celibacy. If a man is married, says Amory, "[h]is wife shoos him on, from ten thousand a year to twenty thousand a year, on and on, in an enclosed treadmill that hasn't any windows. He's done! Life's got him! He's no help. He's a spiritually married [i.e., trapped] man" (271). The only way of escaping this pressure in marriage is to marry a wife who has "no social ambitions [because they] . . . hit a sentence or two in a 'dangerous book' that pleased them" (271). A little later, Amory says to the wealthy man that he will not be satisfied working "ten years, condemned either to celibacy or a furtive indulgence, to give some man's son an automobile" (277). Amory's use of the phrase "condemned to celibacy" indicates that he has normal sexual desires that will not be satisfied by denying himself because he is an artist without an income. Thus, the celibacy of the priesthood holds no charm for him at this stage in his life.

Among the many Fitzgerald critics who have noted Fitzgerald's sexual Puritanism is Leslie Fiedler. Paul Giles cites Fiedler's observation that in Fitzgerald we see how the "sensibility of the Catholic in America becomes, like everything else, puritan" (Giles 170). Although in 1920 Fitzgerald's novel was considered frank and racy for its discussion of college-aged men and women, in fact even the section in the novel entitled "Petting" is tame and evasive rather than explicit by today's fiction and movie standards. Several times when Amory is in a hotel room with a young woman, he imagines he is being watched. Pearl James analyzes these scenes as gothicism related to but concealing homosexual panic.<sup>55</sup> But they can also be read as scenes in which Amory imagines that he is being watched by Monsignor Darcy, as an agent of strict Catholic teachings on sex, however cosmopolitan Darcy himself is. When Amory hears of the Monsignor's death, he explicitly links his fear of being watched in the hotel room with Monsignor's passing: "Last of all, on a dazed Sunday night, a telegram told him of Monsignor Darcy's sudden death in Philadelphia five days before. He knew then what it was that he had perceived among the curtains of the room in Atlantic City" (253). This linkage suggests that Monsignor Darcy's ghost was watching him, watching over him, expecting him to behave, and hoping that Amory would not be involved in a tawdry sex scandal, even though the particular instance in question was merely Amory's attempt to rescue his friend Alec from the reach of the Mann Act. In this scene involving an imminent police raid, Amory "slipped into Alec's B. V. D.'s" (249-50). Amory's sensation of being watched by "that familiar thing by the window" (248) functions as a warning not only about illicit heterosexual conduct but also any tendency to homosexual conduct.

Another gendered aspect of Amory's struggle is related to his military service. Fitzgerald described the American Catholic attitude<sup>56</sup> toward and record of enlistment in World War I as follows: "[It] is most loyal—barring the Sien-Fien—40% of Pershing's army are Irish [American] Catholics" (Mizener 66). Amory refers very little to the service. He comments on the war to his friend Tom: "I'm not sure that the war itself had any great effect on either you or me—but it certainly ruined the old backgrounds, sort of killed individualism out of our generation" (213). Amory thus dismisses his personal war experience as insignificant. The war's minor effects on him contrast sharply with the death in France of his Princeton friend Jesse Ferrenby (277-78), which he learns of from Jesse's father during their car ride just pages before the end of the novel. Jesse had made the ultimate sacrifice, the manly sacrifice of Rupert Brooke, the source of Fitzgerald's title and one of his two epigrams to the book. Amory did not make the ultimate sacrifice and has fallen short of Catholic gender expectations of heroism,<sup>57</sup> sexual purity, and possible entry into the priesthood, as advocated by, among others, the Knights of Columbus (a Catholic men's service organization) and by a more vigilant Catholic press combating anti-Catholicism.

Nonetheless, the influence of Monsignor Darcy on Amory has been significant. It becomes apparent in literary advice Amory gives Tom D'Invilliers, his best friend at Princeton. When Amory first gets acquainted with Tom, he thinks of Tom as long-haired and not a "regular guy" (47), someone "with stooped shoulders [and] pale blue eyes" (50) who writes love poems, obscure pieces, and loves interior decoration. Yet Tom comes to represent the youthful, non-celibate possibility of combining an aesthetic sense

with masculinity. When Amory and Tom are in the service, Amory writes Tom a letter with the following advice:

Tom, why don't you become a Catholic? Of course to be a good one you'd have to give up those violent intrigues you used to tell me about, but you'd write better poetry if you were linked up to tall golden candlesticks and long, even chants, and even if the American priests are rather bourgeois, as Beatrice used to say, still you need only go to the sporty churches, and I'll introduce you to Monsignor Darcy who really is a wonder. (162)

Amory makes it clear that he thinks the somewhat feminized deficiencies in Tom's poetry would be remedied by Catholic ritual and aesthetics. The aesthetic dimension of Catholicism, represented by "tall golden candlesticks and long, even chants," would add a richness to Tom's poetry that it presently lacks.

Monsignor Darcy's influence on Amory also becomes evident in a heated exchange between Amory and the young woman Eleanor, one of Amory's short-term romantic interests. In the Augustinian dichotomy of the good celibate male and the female who is the source of evil, she represents the female as temptress. Amory himself thinks of her as an alluring but morally dangerous enchantress: "Eleanor was . . . the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty, the last weird mystery that held him with wild fascination and pounded his soul to flakes" (222). He first meets her when he is walking through a ghostly rain (224). He has been reciting Poe's "Ulalume," when a voice in "a weird chant" (224) reciting Verlaine<sup>58</sup> comes to him from a haystack.

Amory enters into a “trance” (228) listening to her talk, but the trance ends when Eleanor pushes Amory too far with regard to Catholic expectations for male behavior towards women. When she declares her lack of belief in God and says she is a materialist, Amory insists that he has a soul (229). Though their encounter makes Amory’s “paganism soar . . .” (230), he tells her he can’t fall in love in August or September, but only ““Christmas or Easter. I’m a liturgist”” (230). Their summer love ends abruptly on a night and in a location Eleanor calls “ghostly” (234). First, Eleanor complains that she has “brains” but is ““tied to the sinking ship of future matrimony”” (237). When Amory tries to kiss her, she resists. Amory persists with a strange line of seduction: ““Intellect is no protection from sex any more than convention is . . .,”” to which Eleanor responds with a sarcastic parry: ““What is? . . . The Catholic Church or the maxims of Confucius?”” (238). Pursuing this line further in a strange conversational turn that takes Amory “aback” (238), Eleanor attacks the Catholic Church:

“That’s your panacea, isn’t it? . . . Oh, you’re just an old hypocrite, too. Thousands of scowling priests keeping the degenerate Italians and illiterate Irish repentant with gabble-gabble about the sixth and ninth commandments. It’s just all cloaks, sentiment and spiritual rouge and panaceas. I’ll tell you there is no God, not even a definite abstract goodness; so it’s all got to be worked out for the individual by the individual here in high white foreheads like mine, and you’re too much the prig to admit it.” (238-39)

This sudden, unbidden, extreme attack upsets Amory. He tells her, “. . . like most intellectuals who don't find faith convenient . . . like Napoleon and Oscar Wilde and the rest of your type, you'll yell loudly for a priest on your death-bed'" (239). In retaliation for this dare, Eleanor rushes her horse to the edge of the cliff they have been riding fifty feet from. She jumps off at the very last moment possible, but the horse plunges over the cliff to his death. Amory takes her back home, but his love “waned slowly with the moon” (240). They end not in love but in hatred. Eleanor has been a “mirror” (240) for Amory, but a distorting, fun-house mirror that shocks and appalls. He sees that her witch-like beauty can entice him to a plunge spiritually and physically no less fatal to him than the plunge she madly spurred her unsuspecting horse into.

Amory's letter to Tom and heated exchange with Eleanor are both aspects of Amory's development. The key distinction on which the novel is based is introduced in a conversation between Amory and Monsignor Darcy. The priest is a helpful, formative influence who shapes Amory's consciousness around a central, Thomistically resonant (substance vs. accidents) distinction, that of personality vs. personage. Personality is ephemeral and can alter or virtually disappear with age and sickness. Personage is a core substratum that continues in spite of external changes. The novel traces Amory's growth towards personage rather than mere personality. As noted above, Book Two is titled “The Education of a Personage,” and its last chapter is “The Egotist Becomes a Personage.” Amory's advice to Tom and defense of religion are part of his growth into manhood and personage.

Each of the characters associated with Monsignor Darcy and Amory contributes distinctively to Amory's gendered sense of self. Monsignor Darcy is the celibate priest. Although Amory rejects literal celibacy as not the life he has in mind for himself, he veers towards the Joycean concept of artistic priesthood near the end of the novel. In Clara, he admires the ideal of a Catholic paradox, virginal generativity. The blonde, refined Clara connotes unattainable, etherealized, but desirable goodness, especially associated with the fine arts, through her comparison to a female saint and virgin associated with musical composition, St. Cecilia. Traditionally, the male artist seeks a muse or mentor; the muse is almost always female. Amory sees in Clara a unique source of faith and wholeness for himself. Not only does his alcoholic mother contribute a basic sense of identity to Amory (again, the first section of the novel is entitled "Amory, Son of Beatrice"), but in her turning on and off of her faith, she models for Amory how something as basic as faith—or in his case, gendered identity—can be adjusted to circumstances and desires, resulting merely in extensions of self, not intrinsic changes in selfhood.

### Conclusion

Kate Chopin and F. Scott Fitzgerald, raised as Catholics but not practicing Catholics as adults, had a perspective on Catholicism unlike most of the writers in this study. Both appreciated the aesthetic potential of Catholicism and utilized it for constructing the background of the story they wish to tell, delineating psychologically insightful characterizations, and creating powerful, memorable imagery. To achieve these artistic aims, each relies heavily on Catholic characters, references to such practices



as indulgences or such sacraments as Extreme Unction, allusions to writers such as Daudet or Chesterton or to history-laden places which give names to American churches such as Our Lady of Lourdes, and such concepts as the Augustinian notion of sin. Both, however, could also be critical of Catholicism.<sup>59</sup> In the two works discussed here, both writers depict central characters engaged in struggles related to gender, available gender roles, the social contexts of gender, and artistic self-expression. Each ultimately rejects the available Catholic gender roles emphasizing celibacy, virginity, or marital fidelity and maternal fecundity.

An excerpt from the ending of The Great Gatsby can clarify the Janus-like direction of these two writers. Nick Carraway reflects on the “shore places” in New York:

And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors’ eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby’s house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. (182)

Just as Nick Carraway thinks about the beginning of America, Chopin and Fitzgerald think about the elements in the history of the American story: the presence of Catholicism

side by side with the presence of American Protestantism; the desire for Edenic freshness in life; the desire for a life unbound by the past; the dream of newness, wholeness, openness; the desire to embrace the promise of a future not trammled by any restrictions, including and especially restrictions related to gender. And yet, this dream is more aesthetic than real. Just as Carraway realized, we are “borne back ceaselessly into the past” (182). Chopin and Fitzgerald have gone away from the doctrinal disputes, issues of morality, and depictions of church devotionals discussed overtly in works by earlier American writers. Yet for both writers, their central characters’ embrace of the future and embrace of a life centered on aestheticism is thrown back to the past of this study and the American past, back to Catholic deceptive surface chivalry, back to the Catholic Creole, back to the Catholic link to gothic, and back to, if not the Puritans and Dutch sailors’ eyes, back to the puritanical. Gravity matters; it was not overthrown by modernism; historical gravity matters a lot. Artists work to discover and reveal its rules.

Chapter IX The Changing Presentations of Catholicism after the Civil War: From Fear  
and Fascination to Accommodation and Common Cause

This study was undertaken in recognition that an important but largely unexplored question existed about the literary representation of Roman Catholics, once a tiny minority but currently the largest single Christian religious group in America. Some literary historians had ventured into this territory, but not many. My study has concentrated on the representation of Catholicism from the 1820s to the 1920s, examining presentations of clergy and lay characters, Catholic doctrine, Catholic worship and liturgical practices, Catholic aesthetics, and American national Catholic churches. It has also looked at American literary perceptions of how Catholicism interacted with democracy and with American gender roles. Some critics who have surveyed parts of this terrain have dealt with questions that logically follow more extensive basic knowledge about the literary presentation of Catholics (see Fussell, Fox-Genovese, and Giles). This study has been restricted to establishing the presentation itself.

In a work whose special concern is to highlight the catholicity of Henry James, Edwin Fussell discusses the nineteenth-century literary background James inherited. Fussell asserts inarguably that “the literary representation of Catholics in nineteenth-century America . . . is almost entirely owing to Protestants” (7). He claims that this tradition is compounded of “mixed romantic adulation and skeptical or hostile distaste [defining] . . . the *feel* of American attitudes toward Catholicism” (7). While

acknowledging that James was acquainted with “British Catholicizings” (7), Fussell emphasizes “their American counterparts [because] the British examples [lack]. . . that special American blend of political toleration, paranoia, secret admiration, and contemptuous superiority” (7). Fussell’s is one way, though biased and sketchy, to describe American literary tradition preceding Henry James. In a far-ranging study that analyzes sermons, newspapers, letters, historical writing, popular fiction, canonical authors, and biographies of Catholic converts, a succinct expression of the tradition is found in Jenny Franchot, who characterizes the antebellum period as displaying a combination of fear and fascination towards Catholicism. Franchot’s view is the basis for Thomas Haddox’s study of just exactly how Southern American literature fits into this picture.

Very broadly speaking, the trend in the presentation of Catholicism in American literature from 1820 to 1920 by non-Catholic writers is towards more positive depiction. This finding concurs with Susan Griffin’s conclusion that by the end of the nineteenth century, “anti-Catholicism becomes less and less manifest in British and American fiction” (207). She views turn-of-the-century critiques of Catholicism as occurring in nonfictional writing rather than in fiction, with the exception of regionalist women’s writing (207).

In traditional literary terms, the trend this study corroborates is explainable as a constituent part of a change in emphasis from romance to realism. Five of the six writers from the antebellum period analyzed in this study wrote romances, as defined by M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham.<sup>60</sup> The works by the ten writers after the Civil War

are realistic novels or travelogues. Not historically surprising, a different literary, cultural, and social milieu after the Civil War produced a different literary product. The trend can also be explained as a change in the key elements of “narrative theology,” Susan Griffin’s term for the persuasive use of fiction, employed by such writers as Harriet Beecher Stowe in Uncle Tom’s Cabin, to “powerfully move its readership” (2). For the present study, key characters in narrative theology are priest, nun, Papist, and the Virgin Mary; plotting includes conversion, marriage to a Catholic, or sacramental Confession; dialogue and underlying themes involve a weighing of doctrinal differences between Catholicism and Protestantism. Chapters Two and Three examine the evidence for concluding that the presentations involved in “narrative theology” are more favorable towards Protestant characters and doctrine, and critical of conversion to Catholicism, pessimistic regarding the possible success of a Protestant-Catholic marriage, and suspicious of the hidden mercenary and power-seeking motives of Catholic clergy. With Hawthorne, who is discussed in Chapter Four and is viewed as a pivotal figure, this presentation changes to a narrative aesthetic, involving a concentration on artistic elements inherent in Catholic worship, paintings, and settings, and the aesthetic component of Catholic characters. The thinking and motives of Catholic characters are explored sympathetically or neutrally, with some notable exceptions.

Beyond these two explanations based on textual evidence are two ways of contextualizing the findings of this study within the social and cultural milieu in postbellum America. A feature of literary history is the marked change in the conditions of professional authorship in America which began before and intensified after the Civil

War. A fourth point to note emerges from social and intellectual history, the coming together of Protestants and Catholics, the “old enemies,”<sup>61</sup> to confront the perceived challenge posed by modernism to religion and values. The fifth and final way in which the trend can be commented on is for what it shows about certain key characteristics of Americanism: its belief in freedom of thought in religion and the corollary, freedom of expression; the interest in, particularly, political compromise allowing differing groups to find common cause—an instance of cultural pluralism; and its optimistic sense and focus on the future.

Theorists of romance differ in their analysis of how connected with history and actual society romance is. In linking conspiracy and romance, Robert Levine distinguishes his view from that of influential 1950s literary historian Richard Chase. The latter thought that romance “ignore[s] the spectacle of man in society,” focusing rather on “the marvelous, the sensational, the legendary, and . . . the heightened effect” (Levine 11). Chase emphasized romance writers’ use of melodrama to explore “moral and psychological absolutes” (Levine 11). While agreeing with him that melodrama is a key element of romance, Levine sees its use in romance as accomplishing the opposite of the “veering toward abstraction” (Levine 11) emphasized by Chase. For Levine, the interest of American writers in romance was tightly linked to America’s precarious situation at the time of its founding. In 1796, George Washington’s Farewell Address emphasized the nation’s danger from “batteries of internal and external enemies” (qtd. in Levine 4). Levine, then, sees romance as a “form of countersubversion,” one that responds in a symbolic way to specific historical dangers. Washington’s address

emphasized “*sameness*”—the necessity for Americans to have ““the same Religion, Manners, Habits and political Principles”” (qtd. in Levine 5). Levine’s own study concentrates on the fear of conspiracy raised by the Illuminati, the Free Masons, and the Catholic Church in the early Republic.

By looking specifically at works by Cooper, Sedgwick, and Wilson, my study has uncovered evidence of negative treatment of Catholic missionaries, characters, and priests in their antebellum fiction, corroborating Franchot and Reynolds. These writers presented the dangers of Catholicism to American colonists in mid-eighteenth-century New York, colonial Massachusetts, and 1830s Texas. The dangers were presented in similar terms: missionaries working in the wilderness with menacing Indians who sought to abduct and marry or cohabit with white women, or priests conniving at the bedside of the dying in order to extract wealth from them. For the writer of historical romance, the Catholic religion—and particularly the Catholic clergy—provided a ready-made villain to complete a plot centered on devout Protestant settlers in vulnerable situations.

Although it is tempting to think of the writers preceding and including Hawthorne as romancers and the writers after Hawthorne as realists, Twain and Frederic wrote works which bear affinities with romance. In fact, the nineteenth century did not always distinguish the two forms. As Levine points out, “Nina Baym has shown that among nineteenth-century reviewers the terms ‘romance’ and ‘novel’ were often used interchangeably” (3). Philip Fisher asserts that with A Connecticut Yankee and also with The Prince and the Pauper Twain “exploited the popularity of children’s books and European romance fantasies” (635). Fisher also contextualizes Joan of Arc “in the years

that saw Lew Wallace's Ben-Hur and Henryk Sienkiewicz's Quo Vadis? become widely discussed best-sellers as religious, historical costume romances" (635). Similarly, Eric Sundquist identifies The Damnation of Theron Ware as not only a novel combining "Howellsian moral realism with a provocative psychology of sexual and spiritual desire," but also a work in which "the young Methodist minister Theron Ware harks back to Hawthorne [writer of romances] even as he anticipates the spiritual wasteland of modernism" (522). Not surprisingly, then, it turns out that Twain's and Frederic's presentations of Catholicism were less positive than those of other postbellum writers.

Hawthorne represents a major change from other romancers, especially Cooper, Sedgwick, and Wilson. He does not resort to the Catholic population for a stock villain. Is Donatello, one of four central characters in The Marble Faun, a sympathetic sinner—a simple, easily influenced man in love who commits a crime of passion to defend the woman he loves? Or, is he instead the complicated, sophisticated Count Beni who has years of Italian history behind him? Hawthorne's complex treatments of Catholic or Catholic-leaning characters demonstrate his broad perspective on human history (Millicent Bell 354-70). The progression in Hawthorne's fiction, from his short stories of the 1840s to the romances discussed in this study, is from a preoccupation with Puritan history, Hawthorne's own ancestors and their guilt, to the much larger stage of human history. This stage is represented by the crumbling ruins of Rome, as described in The Marble Faun, and the general atmosphere of decay which Hawthorne sees as enveloping museum-and-monument-travel book Italy. Significantly, this depiction does not extend to his rendering of countryside Italy, where a Pope's statue can give a kindly benediction



to its observers, and where Catholic carnivalesque customs provide a momentary relief from obsessive focus by Miriam and Donatello on Donatello's murderous sin. Through his characters, Hawthorne instructs his readers in an understanding of the human condition, particularly in the Catholic understanding of sin and forgiveness. As Levine discusses what he calls America's romancers, he describes their characteristic language as "[a] rhetoric of extremity," displaying "at its least flexible and most repressive a culture's dominant ideology—the network of beliefs, values, and, especially, fears and prejudices that help social groups to construct and make sense of their social identity and reality" (12). He distinguishes "America's greatest romancers" as able to challenge through the use of irony and through varying degrees of distance the ideology and politics of "conspiratorial discourse" (12). Nevertheless, even these romancers see the ideology as dominant, though "not necessarily imprisoning," (12) and as an important cultural belief which they wish to discuss.

Hawthorne's romances, then, show a transitional state in antebellum depictions of Catholicism, and less biased depictions of Catholicism are the case in most, though not all, of the post-Civil War work in this study. Realism emphasizes an honest, objective depiction of reality as opposed to the polemical tendency described above in romance. Realists such as the French writer Flaubert or the French painter Courbet conceived of art as "based on the accurate, unromanticized observation of life and nature, an art often defiant of prevailing contention" (Sundquist 502). The European tradition emphasized "precise description, authentic action and dialogue, and moral honesty" (Sundquist 502). The American tradition "adds a democratic openness in subject matter and style that

breaks down rigid hierarchies even as it may indulge in imaginative disorder or utopian fantasy in order to probe the limits and power of a prevailing social or political reality” (Sundquist 502). Post-Civil War American writers were confronted with Catholic reality in numerous ways, including a dramatic increase in the American Catholic population,<sup>62</sup> the realists’ reading of Hawthorne, associated with a more positive response to Catholic aesthetics, and the writers’ own European tours and sojourns in Europe.

Many postbellum realist writers in this study show an appreciation for Catholic church art, architecture, and painting. Although Hawthorne wrote on the eve of the Civil War, his difference from the other antebellum authors in this study is marked. His affirmative view of Catholic art can be seen in miniature in The Scarlet Letter (1850) and in a much more considered way in The Marble Faun (1860). Hawthorne preceded the postbellum realists’ sense of aestheticism with his 1860 novel detailing his responses, through his character Hilda and through the narrator, to Italian Catholic medieval and Renaissance religious art found in Italian museums. He also treats Italian churches, including St. Peter’s, positively. It is worth noting that Twain, James, and Howells all read Hawthorne’s The Marble Faun. Henry James shows a robustly positive sense of Catholic aestheticism in his early novel Roderick Hudson (1875) and in a more muted way in The Portrait of a Lady (1881) and The Golden Bowl (1904). In the latter two works, Catholic sculpture and church art have receded into the background. Still, the heroine of The Portrait of a Lady makes an enthusiastic, admiring visit to St. Peter’s in Rome before her marriage, and finds consolation in her visits to old, deserted Roman churches after her ill-conceived marriage. Although William Dean Howells makes

scoffing remarks at the theatricalism of Catholic sacraments in Indian Summer (1886), he, too, shows an appreciative awareness of Catholic medieval art through his main character's visits to Florentine churches. Henry Adams's nonfiction work, Mont St. Michel and Chartres (1904), depicts the Virgin of Chartres in a loving, admiring way, showing awareness of her and of the devotion she inspired among her followers, the cathedral builders ranging from prince to peasant. Pauline Hopkins writes appreciatively of New Orleans Easter church music, liturgy, and priestly vestments in Contending Forces (1900). Likewise, F. Scott Fitzgerald writes briefly but positively about the Catholic wake and funeral for Monsignor Darcy in This Side of Paradise (1920), noting the Monsignor's purple vestments as he lay in the coffin and commenting wryly but unironically on how much the Monsignor would have enjoyed his own funeral.

Artistic touring in Europe exposed Americans to a European Catholic aesthetic. The Marble Faun became a travel guide for Americans in Italy after the Civil War. European touring became extremely popular. By 1873, "25,000 American tourists were visiting Europe annually" (Lears 186). Going to European cathedrals was a major part of touring, and guidebooks extolled the beauty of the cathedrals, "likening their appeal to that of other ancient monuments" (Lears 186). The aesthetic response of tour book writers was to denude "Catholic and other religious monuments from specific historical meaning and [transform] them into relics of a cult of taste" (Lears 186). Cathedral touring in Europe is represented mostly favorably in work by Hawthorne, James, Howells, and Henry Adams; Twain admired French cathedral architecture and, though he

has much to say that is critical about Portuguese and Italian Catholicism, he concedes that the cathedral at Milan is beautiful.

Another textual way to describe the change in emphasis in literature from romance to realism is provided by a summary of the alteration in narration—from narrative theology (Susan Griffin's term) to narrative aesthetics. If realism became the dominant form for serious writers after the Civil War, it is instructive to look at the shift in narratology. Cooper, Sedgwick, and Wilson locate Catholics lurking in forests or along borders, and in Puritan courts and prisons. They concentrate in their depictions on sinister Jesuits trying to extract money from the dying, missionaries preaching the abomination of racial mixing, menacing and savage Catholic Indians, or ruthless Mexicans attacking Texas settlers. The Protestant central characters, all victims of Catholic treachery, are colonials in Massachusetts, New York, or Texas. Catholic thinking is not explored in depth; its presentation is stereotyped. That is, narrative theology develops along the lines of the captivity narrative as described by Jenny Franchot (87-193). In the telling of the first captivity narratives, the Puritans fled continental and English persecution, only to discover that Catholicized Indians threatened their security in the New World. The captivity narrative began in the seventeenth century with stories about Indian captors and extended to the end of the nineteenth century, with its expanded early and mid-nineteenth century variants, slave narratives and, more pertinently, convent-escape narratives (Franchot 87). Romance writers use anti-Catholic elements of the captivity narrative. Their work focuses on Catholic villainy, such as Sir

Philip Gardiner's desire to capture Hope Leslie and her fortune, or Padre Mazzolin's designs on Inez and her money. In Franchot's account,

Roman Catholicism figured crucially in this American captivity tradition as a principal and historically resilient captor of the New World Protestant settler. Changing its guise in response to the psychosocial anxieties of successive generations of Protestants, the specter of Romanism played captor to each [generation] in turn, looming as menacing figure in the New England forests, the [old] Southwest, and the Mississippi Valley region.  
(88)

With Hawthorne, a dramatic imaginative change in subtlety takes place. In The Scarlet Letter, he explores the hypothetical Papist's imagination, his emotion engendered by his discerning in Hester with babe in arms a resemblance to artistic portraits of the Blessed Virgin. Twain's rendering of Joan of Arc is of an exceptional Catholic of unsurpassed sanctity. Her motives are service to God, to country, and to her Catholic faith, motives Twain presents with care, delicacy, and respect.

The figure of the priest undergoes the greatest change in the works studied here. Through characters and through their narrators, Cooper, Sedgwick, and Wilson pointedly make negative comments about priests. Brownson expresses skepticism about Protestant and Catholic clergy, with few significant exceptions. But Hawthorne's Rev. Dimmesdale is a Puritan minister resembling Cardinal Newman in his appearance, high seriousness, and asceticism (Wright 1-11). The confessor Hawthorne's Puritan character Hilda goes to in St. Peter's is kindly, soothing, and helpful to her in both spiritual and practical ways.

The “gold-robed priest” who intones the Easter service in Pauline Hopkins’s Contending Forces presides over a liturgy thrilling to the congregation. It reminds one character of a prophetic dream he had of singing of parts of the Catholic Mass, the *Christie eleison*, *Kyrie eleison* and *Gloria*, preceding his actual reunion with the woman he loves and her illegitimate child, appearing from an altar as “a vision of the Virgin and Child” (386-87).

Even in the two notable exceptions to the generally more positive presentation of the Catholic priest, Twain and Frederic provide nuanced portraits. Twain’s Archbishop Cauchon, Joan’s Inquisitor, is a villain, but several other clergymen of lesser rank involved in Joan’s trial are good. They preserve the record of her encounter with the Inquisition, not falsifying her answers, but representing them fairly and with an eye to accuracy for the historical record. Father Forbes, the priest in Harold Frederic’s novel, is apparently not a believer, but he ministers to the Irish working class who constitute his parishioners, getting the men to take the temperance pledge seriously.

Frank Norris’s Father Sarria is a compassionate man who ministers widely on foot to a vast, poor congregation, and who helps the mysterious shepherd Vanamee regain his spiritual and psychological equilibrium over his long-lost love. Fitzgerald’s Monsignor Darcy is a close adviser to Amory Blaine. He gives good advice, cares for many people, writes sensitive Irish poetry, keeps in touch with his young protégé by letters, and is eulogized at his death as a man who had generously helped many people. Fitzgerald’s novel is dedicated to his own priest friend, Father Fay.

Nuns do not figure as prominently as do priests in nineteenth-century elite fiction. (The term “elite fiction” as it is used here applies to most of the authors in the study.

Elite authors are anthologized, written about by scholars, included in college syllabi, and generally known to scholars in the field. The designation of authors as “elite” or “highbrow” begin in the post-Civil War era, with the emphasis on elite culture by editors such as William Dean Howells who sought to create a place and enhanced prestige for authors who published in such magazines as Harper’s, Atlantic, and The Century (see Brodhead’s discussion, “American Literary Field” 33-40). The concept of American literary high culture that emerged from the work of late nineteenth-century editors and anthologizers continued with the work in the 1940s of such scholars as Lionel Trilling and in the 1950s by such writers as Henry Nash Smith, Charles Feidelson, R. W. B. Lewis, and Richard Chase (Baym, “Melodramas” 131), but has been subject to revision by the work of such scholars as Nina Baym.) However, as part of the progression from narrative theology to narrative aesthetics, the image of nuns undergoes a change towards a more positive presentation also. Wilson includes a long attack on nuns in Inez (1855): they will help only people who have money to pay for their care, and will not help Protestants at all; they make an unGospel like display of their charity by walking in the streets old-fashioned garb (159); they use their schools, hospitals, and orphanages to make converts, and are ““tools of the priests”” (159). Only five years earlier, Hawthorne’s presentation of nuns in The Scarlet Letter is quite different. Ultimately, the letter worn by Hester associates her with Catholic nuns. After the death of Governor Winthrop, the red letter seen in the sky is taken as an A for Angel in reference to the newly deceased Governor Winthrop (143). Shortly thereafter, many refuse to see the “A” on Hester as meaning Adulteress, saying instead that the “A” means Able. The letter,

together with Hester's demeanor, simple costume, and physical isolation, eventually makes the town see Hester as a kind of nun. The narrator describes her approvingly as "self-ordained a Sister of Mercy" (146), based on her helpfulness to so many people in so many ways. Hester feels safe in walking anywhere; the town refers to her with fondness as their very own. Men come to see the letter as resembling "the cross on a nun's bosom" (147). Later in the novel, when Hester attempts to carry out her plan of leaving the colony and going to the Old World with Dimmesdale and Pearl, she is able to make arrangements with the ship captain because she knows him from her "vocation, as a self-enlisted Sister of Charity" (197). By using the names of two different orders of nuns, Hawthorne is associating Hester's irreproachable life under her punishment with the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience taken by nuns. Throughout the novel Hester's poverty and her chaste life have been stressed.

Even in a work not discussed in this study, Theodore Dreiser's character Hurstwood, naturalist hero and victim in Sister Carrie, calls out for nuns to help him during his fall in a hostile New York in reputation, health, sanity, and self-respect from his once respected position as club and bar manager in Chicago. For Fitzgerald's character Clara, the convent is almost a place of Keatsian dreamy insight, quite opposite to the picture of desperate sequestration for forced thought with a forced conclusion portrayed by James's Osmond. One day Fitzgerald's central character Amory Blaine reads a "poem that [Clara] had written at school about a gray convent wall on a gray day, and a girl with her cloak blown by the wind sitting atop of it and thinking about the many-colored world" (140).



Confession as a narrative plot element changes as well. The image of the sacrament of Confession, negatively presented by Wilson and expressly discussed in the chapter on morality, is positively presented by Hawthorne. Rev. Dimmesdale's forest encounter with Hester has been a vision and a release for him. In his Election Day sermon, he is able to "foretell a high and glorious destiny for the newly gathered people of the Lord" (229). That destiny begins shortly afterward, with his act of confession. His release from his inner torment and escape from Chillingworth's torments come only with his confession. Hawthorne's character Hilda feels guilt simply from witnessing Donatello's murder of the Model. She seeks solace in a Catholic confessional, after which she goes temporarily for safety to a convent to contemplate what she has witnessed. Hilda's conversation with the priest at St. Peter's both during the confession and afterwards helps her to achieve mental peace. Hawthorne's narrator carefully points out that many sinners enter the Confessional, and come out cleansed, comforted, and buoyed up for their future combats in daily life (275). As Jenny Franchot points out, Hawthorne seems to regret that a comparable sacramental practice is not available to Protestants (263).

In quoting from an Abbot who described the building of Chartres Cathedral, Henry Adams includes in his 1904 work an account of the confessions that occurred along the road to Chartres: "'When they [i.e., the cathedral builders] halt on the road, nothing is heard but the confession of sins, and pure and suppliant prayer to God to obtain pardon. At the voice of the priests who exhort their hearts to peace, they forget all hatred, discord is thrown far aside, debts are remitted, the unity of hearts is established'"

(111). In this account of the spirit of the builders of the cathedral, Adams adds, “if anyone is so far advanced in evil as to be unwilling to pardon an offender, or if he rejects the counsel of the priest who has piously advised him, his offering is instantly thrown from the wagon as impure, and he himself ignominiously and shamefully excluded from the society of the holy” (111-112). By quoting the Abbot’s views approvingly, Adams contributes positively both to the image of the priest as peacemaker rather than as wealth-monger and to the presentation of Confession as a serious exercise in spiritual direction and rebuilding. This is an image very different from Wilson’s 1855 depiction of Padre Mazzolin as a menacing confessor with mercenary motives.

The preceding contextualization has concentrated primarily on internal textual evidence for supporting the claim of a less polemical presentation of Catholicism in literary work, concluding that post-Civil War writers generally concentrated more on aesthetics than on morality and theology in their presentation of Catholics. The following two sections will examine and comment on social, cultural, and intellectual conditions undergirding or accompanying this change in emphasis. The change in presentation described here was part of a much larger, quite dramatic change in the nature of writing and publishing in nineteenth-century America, in the status of elite writers in society, and in the materials they considered worthy of attention in their art. The dividing line roughly, but only roughly, coincides with the Civil War. Prior to that, the literary effort of American authors was “very largely . . . an unsupported activity” (Brodhead, “Literature and Culture” 467) in which writers were unsure of whether they could earn a living through their art. Also, their work was “a virtually *undistributed* literature,” that is,

unsure of reaching a particular audience (Brodhead, "Literature and Culture" 468), demonstrated in opposite ways in Whitman's poetic voice ("whose poems address everyone" Brodhead, "Literature and Culture" 468) and in Dickinson's ("whose poems address no one" Brodhead, "Literature and Culture" 468). As a legacy from the colonial period, subject matter and standards of literary judgment were imported from England (Brodhead, "Literature and Culture" 467). Such necessary supporting institutions as publishers and literary magazine outlets, though beginning to emerge early in the century, were still unstable and not widespread even by the 1840s (Brodhead, "Literature and Culture" 468).

A description of the change and the resulting characteristics of American literary high culture provides literary context for my findings about the generally positive emphasis on the aesthetic aspects of Catholicism. Richard Brodhead identifies the shift, using an essay by William Dean Howells to do so. The essay, "My First Visit to New England," written in 1894 and published in Literary Friends and Acquaintance in 1900, tells of Howells's trip to Boston from the Midwest in 1860. Howells recognizes Boston, in Brodhead's words, as "a place where a new and extraordinary kind of value is being conferred upon authors" ("Literature and Culture" 470). A "new American literary high culture was being fashioned and spread" (Brodhead, "Literature and Culture" 470) from Boston, its center.

Writers and readers who formed this high culture had a distinct perspective different from other nineteenth-century American writers and their audiences. (In this category Brodhead includes "women's writing and a middle-class domestic audience"

and Erastus Beadle's Dime Novels—one prolific Beadle author, Prentiss Ingraham, wrote six hundred dime novels, and “is said to have written one thirty-five-thousand-word piece in a day and a night—for a “mass audience of youths, factory workers, and others at a lower level of leisure and literacy.” “Literature and Culture” 469-70). As Brodhead describes it, the high culture literary group “was secularized in outlook, mentally removed from the urgencies of a religious piety still intensely active in other parts of American culture. It was cosmopolitan in range, looking to the European cultural world—more than to socially remote areas of American life . . . . It cared about the traditional high arts and letters—indeed, it located in the domain of the arts the sort of founding or elemental value no longer located in religion” (“Literature and Culture” 471). Brodhead's analysis of post Civil War literary high culture suggests that writers saw themselves as representers of aesthetic reality rather than as instructors and polemicists. This literary high culture succeeded in several significant ways. It did not bring about an end to dime novels or women's novels, but it “did make the great mass of readers defer to it as the realm of ‘literature’ proper” (“Literature and Culture” 471). Also, it created a readership “around the matter of serious writing” (“Literature and Culture” 471). Brodhead summarizes this high culture's overall achievement as “the closest thing to a coherent national literary culture that America has ever had” (“Literature and Culture” 472-73).

The spirit of tolerance reflected in literary writing produced after the Civil War may have been intensified by a sense of anxiety about the state of religious belief in postbellum America. Beyond the sheer numerical growth of Catholicism and the

Protestant adaptation of Catholic features of worship, several significant broad sociological trends regarding religion, general philosophy, and world views became evident at the end of the nineteenth century. One was the feeling of weightlessness, a Nietzschean term, caused by the logical carrying out of the implications of rational Protestantism, specifically the loosening hold of old mainline Protestant religions, and the perceived threat caused by Darwinian science.

This phenomenon is described and analyzed by T. J. Jackson Lears, who analyzes the response of a group of culturally elite members of postbellum American society that he terms the antimoderns. In Lears's analysis, the antimoderns turned to and considered the authority of Catholicism as a possible remedy for the feeling of drift given rise to in late nineteenth-century American culture. Causes of the feeling of "weightlessness" were multiple. The collapse of a previous feeling of Biblically-based certainty came about for several reasons, including continental Biblical criticism as practiced by Strauss and Renan, and the theorizing of German thinkers such as Feuerbach. Another source of assault on Biblical belief came from science, represented by Darwinism. An additional source of assault has been presented by Mark Noll in an intriguing recent analysis of the Civil War as a conflict between literal and nonliteral interpretations of Scripture. According to Noll, prior to the Civil War anti-Catholicism was one of the components of the belief system of "[e]vangelical Protestants of British background" (Civil War 17-18), a belief system challenged and shaken by the war. For Lears, the antimodernists, which include a range of prominent American thinkers and writers in the nineteenth century, turned against contemporary society and looked for

alternatives in the past. Their responses are not univocal; in their variety such figures as Mark Twain and Henry Adams are described by Lears under the encompassing term antimodernist. Lears's analysis is given tacit support by the work of Messbarger, who describes the joining of forces of Evangelicals and Catholics in common cause against perceived destructive anti-religious forces of modernism.

If not the nativists, at least the antimodernists, then, were able to make common cause with Catholicism. As Messbarger states, "such diminution of anti-Catholic feeling as did occur was at least partly the result of shared objects of distrust" (154). Although Catholic writers did not show the same "anguish" over industrialization and the shift from rural to urban populations as did the "secular prophets like Howells, Norris and Crane" (Messbarger 154), they did view two forces as opposed in the modern world, liberalism and Christianity (Messbarger). By liberalism, they meant "agnosticism, socialism, and hatred for the Church and other religious bodies," amounting to a "force subversive of national and personal integrity alike" (Messbarger 152).

The papacy of Pius IX, in particular, was against liberalism, modernism, and republicanism, but Popes Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X all took strong stands against modernism. In his Syllabus of Errors, Pope Pius IX condemned "socialism, public education, rationalism, and other such iniquities" (McPherson 132): "It is an error," declared the Pope, "to believe that the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile himself to, and agree with, progress, liberalism, and modern civilization" (qtd. in McPherson 132). Catholics and evangelical Protestants were able to unite against modernism.

Finally, what may American writers' portrayals of Catholics say about Americanness—the American mind and American culture? Present in the public sphere from the beginning of the nation was an assertion of separation of church and state, even if it did not always work out that way in practice. The Constitution specified that no religious test should be applied to candidates for the presidency. In Query XVII from Notes on the State of Virginia, Jefferson upheld the principle of restraint on the scope of government by saying, “The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others” (1008). He specifically states that “[r]eason and free enquiry are the only effectual agents against error. Give a loose to them, they will support the true religion, by bringing every false one to their tribunal, to the test of their investigation” (1008). He holds strongly to the view that correct beliefs in religion cannot be imposed on others by force, and that “[r]eason and persuasion are the only practicable instruments,” free inquiry being essential. Twain's view in A Connecticut Yankee and in Joan of Arc is the same, that imposition of religion by the state is incompatible with free thought and free inquiry. Twain's view in Joan of Arc is complicated, though, by his deeply held belief in Joan's sanctity and exceptionality from all other human beings, and the emotional connection of the work for him to the loss of his favorite daughter.

There have, however, been attempts in practice to impose uniformity of religion. The American colonies had antipriest laws; penal laws against Catholics were imposed after 1688: “These penal laws subsequently became applicable to all papists within the colonies, with the result that imprisonment and execution became fairly commonplace, and the early eighteenth century was a particularly difficult time for the Catholic church

in America” (Giles 35). The attempt did not succeed, but even in the late eighteenth century the Episcopalian church was the official state religion in some states. According to Mark Noll,

[s]ignificantly, both Puritan Congregationalists and colonial Anglicans retained the European ideal of a comprehensive, established state church. Both sought the protection of government, assumed a right to influence the state, treated each other’s missionaries as civil threats, and opposed efforts by other Christian groups to settle in their colonies. Yet, even as the Puritans and Anglicans strengthened their positions, a rising number of alternatives—either to the Protestantism of the English colonies or the assumptions of establishment—were emerging as well. (31-32)

The nineteenth-century picture is at least as complex. Antebellum Catholicism represented a challenge to the “assumptions of the establishment” in a number of areas, including political differences regarding separation of church and state, approaches to interpretation of Scripture, views of the Enlightenment, the very practical matter of the make-up of Catholic immigrants, views of the nature and purpose of church bodies, the position on slavery and abolition, and the views of the Papacy on modernism.

Reflecting the separation of church and state already existing in national law, ultimately, uniformity of religion could not be imposed in American daily life. Daniel Walker Howe sees the year 1848 as a “pivotal year for the development of American history” (796). Among the reasons he cites for selecting this year as pivotal is the arrival of the “refugees from the Irish potato famine” (796). Howe says that “[t]he Catholics in



particular initiated a profound and prolonged transformation of America from a generically Protestant society into a religiously pluralistic one” (796). James M. McPherson describes the change in American society induced by waves of Catholic immigration as a “long and painful retreat toward acceptance of cultural pluralism” (7).

Other salient characteristics of the American mind emerge prominently from this gradual move towards realization of professed national ideals, including acceptance of pluralism. Americans are known for a sense of fairness, based on the Constitution’s emphasis on the equality of all and the regularly espoused belief in the pledge of allegiance calling for “liberty and justice for all.” A trait which follows from belief in freedom of speech, equality, and independence, is an interest in compromise. Cathy Davidson summarizes work by Christopher Newfield as follows: “Christopher Newfield argues eloquently, in The Emerson Effect, that ‘moderation’—not freedom, equality, free speech, dissent, difference, individualism, or separation of church and state—is the most consistent and foundational American value” (17). She then states her opinion in a footnote to her summary of Newfield: “I fully concur with Newfield’s argument about compromise and moderation, but would argue that Emerson articulates impulses in American culture that go back to its founding moments” (371 fn. 35). Note Davidson’s equating of the words “compromise” and “moderation.” Did American culture compromise with the presence of a large population of Catholics, or did it persist in regarding Catholics as unwelcome Others? Does anti-Catholicism remain a permanent feature of the American mind?

Although Dolan and other scholars, including Griffin, Reynolds, and Franchot, recognize an absence of anti-Catholic works in the period of the very early Republic, it should be pointed out that anti-Catholicism was a recurring feature of American cultural history until at least the ecumenical period of Vatican II (1962-65). It is strongly evidenced in the rise of the Know Nothing Party in the 1840s and 1850s, in the American Protective Association in the late 1880s and 1890s, in the charter, targets, and activities of the Ku Klux Klan, in the presence of the popular anti-Catholic press in the period from 1910-1919, and in the broadcasts of Paul Blanshard in the 1940s and 1950s. The anti-Catholic popular press which flourished in the second decade of the twentieth century included newspapers with such patriotic sounding titles as The Crusader, The Mountain Advocate, The Rail Splitter, Woman's Witness, The Liberator, Jeffersonian; such alarmist titles as The Yellow Jacket, The Peril, The Menace; and Watson's Magazine, one named after its founder. At their height in the middle of the decade 1910-1919, their circulation totaled two million (Nordstrom 103). Their steady target was the Catholic menace in the United States. Giles notes that Blanshard's American Freedom and Catholic Power (which went through six printings in 1949 alone) "raised the old specter of a Vatican takeover and called for the registration of American Catholic higher officials under the Foreign Agents Registration Law" (427).

American anti-Catholicism during the period which is the concern of this study can be seen in such disparate events as a remark in 1900 by President William McKinley during the Spanish-American War and the assassination of Fr. James Coyle in Birmingham in 1921 by a Methodist minister. McKinley said of our war in the

Philippines that “our mission there was ‘to uplift and . . . Christianize’ a people largely Roman Catholic for 300 years” (Beatty 387). William James, among others, including Mark Twain, opposed the Spanish-American War. James suggested that our involvement was “‘one protracted lie towards ourselves’” (Beatty 387). Beatty says, “The lie to ourselves began with the president, who couldn’t find the Philippine Islands on a map” (387). Fr. Coyle was shot to death by Rev. Edwin R. Stephenson, whose daughter Coyle had married to a Puerto Rican. Stephenson’s attorney was Hugo Black, later a U. S. Supreme Court Justice, who gained an acquittal for Stephenson by playing to the jury’s anti-Puerto Rican and anti-Catholic prejudices.

Nevertheless, in spite of some occasionally virulent strains of latent anti-Catholicism, the trend in American history is away from religious prejudice in society and in literary presentations. Andrew Delbanco’s perspective on American religious history, quoted at the end of Chapter Two, bears repeating: “American history is notable for the absence of pogroms and religious wars. Perhaps this is because Americans deflect their worst impulses into racial hatred or xenophobia—but, all things considered, the experiment in religious liberty started by the founders has worked remarkably well” (23).

The evolution of nineteenth-century Protestant-Catholic relations was towards a form of compromise or adaptation, reflecting perhaps the American belief in pragmatism. The growth of Catholicism in the United States prompted many responses by the larger society. For one thing, it led to a Protestant acceptance and adaptation of selected Catholic liturgical, architectural and decorating features. The adaptation indicates that a line was drawn about what was acceptable in Catholic worship and what was not

translatable into the Protestant idiom. The building of Catholic churches in the United States in the nineteenth century had an influence on the decoration and liturgical practices of Protestant churches. In the mid-nineteenth century, Hawthorne wrote in his notebook ““Oh, that we had cathedrals in America were it only for the sensuous luxury”” (qtd. in Lears 186). This spontaneous and confidential expression of admiration is echoed by later Protestant church building practices. Ryan K. Smith documents the influence as well as the spirit of denominational competition that was underlying this willingness to adopt once forbidden practices. Protestants began building churches with gothic architectural features. They included crosses on their churches and on gravesites, something Protestants had not done earlier. They added flowers and candles to the decoration of their churches. Also, they began to recognize such events and seasons in their liturgical calendar as Christmas, Easter, and Lent. Smith speaks of “cross-pollination” (157) between Protestants and Catholics. He devotes only a page of his study to the Protestant influences on Catholicism in the nineteenth century, but they were also significant, including Catholic church missions similar to Methodist revivals, the presence of lay trustees attempting to control parishes, summer schools and summer Chautauqua institutes, and the use of gospel music in church (157).

A final characteristic of Americanism that was reflected in or that affected the writing examined here is a sense of optimism. The Spanish mind has been characterized as being bounded by orthodoxy and having a tragic sense, one intensified by defeats at the hands of Americans in 1898 (see Arredondo). By contrast, the American mind is seen to be independent, iconoclastic, and optimistic. Deep in the American mind, and

enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, is said to be a love of independence and a love of freedom of speech. The implication is that free speech is a value worth singling out and preserving; its espousal implies belief in the expressive and persuasive powers of speech. Attitudes towards the past and towards the future form a line of demarcation among the authors in this study, and even look towards authors who lie beyond this study. Cooper and Sedgwick use the American past to reflect on the American present and future. Both Chopin and Fitzgerald show an interest in the future, in growing beyond given gender roles by creating new, broadened gender roles for men and women. Edna Pontellier believes that she can control her future as an artist and that the future is promising—at least, she believes this until the return of Robert Lebrun from Vera Cruz. Fitzgerald's Amory Blaine ends by believing that "he was safe now, free from all hysteria—he could accept what was acceptable, roam, grow, rebel, sleep deep through many nights . . ." (282).

In the closing chapter of Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres, Henry Adams conveys a generous-spirited sense of appreciation for the magnitude of Thomas Aquinas's achievement. He describes the difficulty of Franciscans and Jesuits when confronted with authoritatively explaining Thomas's twenty-eight quarto volumes, and leaves that job to Thomas's order, the Dominicans. He deprecates the presumption that "summer tourists" to the cathedrals would be able "to handle these intricate problems in a theological spirit," calling such a presumption "altogether absurd" (387). He uses Thomas's own analogical method to suggest that just as there was a "Church Architectural" represented by the great cathedrals and, built up slowly, a "Church

Administrative,” so there was a “Church Intellectual,” built largely though not exclusively by Thomas as the architect of the intellectual (387). He asserts that Thomas has outlived many scholastic thinkers, as well as “Descartes and Leibnitz and a dozen other schools of philosophy more or less serious in their day . . . [and] mostly outlived Hume, Voltaire, and the militant skeptics” (387-88). In the tone of antimodernist vitalism described by Lears, he concedes that “[g]ranted a Church, Saint Thomas’s Church was the most expressive that man has made, and the great Gothic cathedrals were its most complete expression” (422). In spite of his praise of Thomas, though, Adams concludes that “[t]he trouble was not in the art of the method or the structure, but in the universe itself which presented different aspects as man moved” (422).

The universe and man moved. America and Americans changed. One apt symbol of this movement may be found in the frenetic action of Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald in the days after their marriage in St. Patrick’s rectory. In Mizener’s account, “the Fitzgeralds moved from their honeymoon cottage at the Biltmore to the Commodore and settled down to another round of parties. They celebrated the move by whirling about in the revolving doors for half an hour” (110). This is exuberant movement arising out of sheer high spirits.

Another apt and more purposeful symbol may be found in Alice James’s characterization of her brother William as a man “‘born afresh every morning’” (Berthoff 497). If ever there were a reflection of American optimism and future orientation rather than worry and fuss about a charged past raising difficult issues, this is. Berthoff observes, “It is fitting that an account of American intellectual life during the half-century

end with James, who became as ebulliently persuasive a writer of speculative prose as America has produced . . . [Already by 1880] as regards hope and its painful contraries, he announced to the Harvard Philosophical Club that ‘the permanent presence of the sense of futurity in the mind has been strangely ignored by most [philosophic] writers’ (“The Sentiment of Rationality”). The fact is . . . that our consciousness at a given moment is never free from the ingredient of expectancy” (497). Even if serious thinkers like Twain continued to have reservations about the possibility of Catholic-Protestant détente, a softening of both historical boundaries and actual differences was well underway as America and American literature moved into the twentieth century.

## ENDNOTES

1. Franchot describes the complex identification between reader and Babo's gaze as follows: "[T]he narrator supplants Delano and appropriates his mystified Romanizing gaze, enticed and thwarted by a foreign Catholic interiority. If the ship's hull has disclosed that antebellum America's secrets are those of race, not religion, those aboard retreat back into the mute Catholic interior. Babo's and Cereno's passage into voicelessness recontextualizes race within religion as the conspirator's decapitated head gazes toward (and into) St. Bartholomew's Church and toward (and onto) the monastery on Mount Agonia. In positioning these concluding narrative moments as all emanating from Babo's gaze, one directed on the Catholic 'vaults' (117), Melville forcibly identifies his antebellum reader with Babo. We look at Babo's head, which, 'fixed on a pole in the Plaza, met, unabashed, the gaze of the whites' (116), only to be suddenly looking with that head toward the church and monastery that enclose the vanishing Catholic slaveholders, Aranda and Cereno" (180-181).

2. Hallock sums up the views of ethnohistorian Philip J. Deloria that Cooper's technique of using Hawk-eye, a character who "plays Indian," is a way writers "assuaged insecurities about entitlement in the once colonial (but now colonizing) state. As authors in the early republic imagined a dying race [such as the Delawares], Deloria observes, they sought to legitimate the United States as an ascending empire: Anyone who participated in the mourning, in turn, would be a 'member of a special extra-American



elite” (Hallock 209). For Cooper’s audience, this means that feeling bad over the disappearance of the Indians was a way of feeling good. While this comment applies to Hawk-eye’s creation of this affective response in the reader, it can also apply to Hope Leslie’s ways of being able to negotiate the forests around her home and maintain a friendship with Magawisca.

3. Ray Allen Billington discusses eighteenth-century colonial American fears of a French-Indian alliance and legal measures taken against the French for the protection of colonists. For example “[r]umors that the Papists and Indians were plotting together ‘to cut the throats of the Protestants’ inspired the House of Burgesses to pass laws preventing Catholics from acting as guardians, from serving as witnesses, or from settling in large groups” (10). The Seven Years War saw the removal of weapons from Catholics in Virginia and restrictions on the value of horses they could own. Catholics in the Carolinas were prevented from holding political office (10). The Seven Years War fueled a fear of French priests working among the Iroquois (14-15). Early in the eighteenth century Massachusetts required “the registration of all Frenchmen within the province and the immediate imprisonment of all French Catholics” (15). A reward was offered for the capture of a French Jesuit, Sebastian Ralle. His “influence over the eastern Indians convinced the Massachusetts governors that vigilance was necessary to prevent similar French Catholic activity in the west” (15). In her study of the unifying of England, Scotland, and Wales in the long eighteenth century, Linda Colley stresses their “common commitment to Protestantism” (18) and their view of the French as a “Catholic state” (25) that was “Britain’s most dangerous and obvious enemy” (24). She discusses

the causes of “English Francophobia” (24-25). She particularly notes its effectiveness as an ideological glue extending “far into the nineteenth century” (22). The latter point is important to her argument about the making of the English, Scottish, and Welsh into a unified state, but it is often overlooked “because it is often supposed that intolerance of this kind receded rapidly in the face of growing rationalism and literacy” (22). This point supports my study in that Cooper was working within well-established anti-Catholic American rhetoric and the colonial tradition of anti-Catholic law.

4. The reader is asked to recall the copper plate known as the Restitutio view of New Amsterdam, named after the temporary Dutch recapture of New York from the English in 1673. The inset displayed at the bottom of the map on the plate shows the regained city New Amsterdam, on which a kneeling, loin-cloth clad Indian is handing a fort on a platter to a white breast-plated Minerva. The map as a whole shows Nieuw Engelandt. At the far left of the map, between the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> latitudes, stand two forts, one circular and one rectangular, images of colonial claim-staking over contested territory. One critically important image for both the structure and meaning of Cooper’s novel is the image of Fort William Henry. The English fort, alone and vulnerable to dangerous enemies who operate by different combat rules, stands bravely isolated and defenseless at the edge of the wilderness of colonial New York in 1757.

5. Axtell comments on the regressive approaches to minorities in American history textbooks of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the “well-meaning but unproductive remedial approaches” to minorities, including Indians. Clearly Cooper’s fictionalized

account of the Indians is in the former category in that it shows Indians as barriers to white progress (981). The critical response to Cooper's view of history is complex. Howard Mumford Jones reads Cooper as a moralist whose themes are the grandeur of God and the decay of empire (145). In this view, just as primitives decline, so, too, could more sophisticated nations suffer decay. Similarly, John J. McAleer says that Cooper uses the figure of Natty Bumppo in his novels to warn against the destructive impulses unleashed in America by scientific materialism. McAleer believes that Cooper felt a lifelong suspicion of Puritanism and viewed with dismay the nineteenth-century legacy of the Mosaic myth of conquest and prosperity believed in so fervently by the Puritans (221). With some difference in emphasis, Michael Butler argues that "Cooper clearly showed that the future lies with the American" (132) but reads The Last of the Mohicans as littered with characters in decay and decline as well as with symbols of past civilizations once ascendant but now eclipsed in the New World—the French, the Dutch, the mound-building Indians (132). However, even though Butler thinks Cooper makes an argument for a "theory of progressive history" through Duncan Heyward, Butler thinks Cooper implies the eventual decline of the Americans (138-39). In a nuanced argument, Robert Milder sees Cooper as confronting the difficult challenge of recognizing Indian grievances "while affirming his belief in the superiority of white civilization, and hence in the desirability as well as the inevitability of the white man's annihilation of the Indians" (413). Milder writes insightfully about Cooper's linking of Magua and Shylock; he sees Cooper asserting that pre-Christian people "cannot be assimilated into the Christian America to come" (420). While Milder sees Cooper as making a careful case

for historical progress (418-19), for Roy Harvey Pearce the case is outright. Destruction of the Indians was “part of a universal moral progress which it was the special destiny of America to manifest. The myriad Indian fictions after 1823 are so many attempts to expiate the sin rising from the cruelty which was a necessary quality of American progress westward. In the fiction of the Indian, American pity and censure came to find their fullest and most public expression. . . [and] a means of making men know the triumph, the pain, and the final glory in being a civilized American” (212). In Astrid Wind’s view, depicting Indians as savages helped justify American aggression towards them in seeking land (47-48). Also, depicting the Indians as dangerous to settlers not only physically but morally—the danger of captured settlers becoming Indianized—as well as depicting the Indians as static and homogeneous rather than as differentiated tribes, helped reinforce American acquisitiveness.

6. Richard Slotkin notes that “By the novel’s end all of the mixed characters are either dead—like Cora, Uncas, and Magua—or settled in a path of sterility—like Gamut, Chingachgook, Hawk-eye, and Colonel Munro. Only the pure-whites, who have never even yearned for a dark lover, will marry and produce heirs. The future belongs to Heyward and Alice. All the color is dead” (xxvi).

7. Wood also notes the reaction of the American colonists to the Quebec Act of 1774, in which the British allowed French laws and religious toleration for French Catholics living in Canada as well as giving Quebec the control of land and trade between two rivers, the Ohio and the Mississippi: “As enlightened as this act was toward

the French Canadians, it managed to anger all American interests—speculators, settlers, and traders alike. This arbitrary alteration of provincial boundaries threatened the security of all colonial boundaries and frightened American Protestants into believing that the British government was trying to erect a hostile Catholic province in the Northwest” (22-23).

8. The Old Catholic Encyclopedia, begun in 1907 and completed in 1914, contains a heroic portrait of Montcalm very different from the one found in Cooper’s novel.

9. Paul Giles emphasizes the link for Americans between Catholicism and Machiavellianism.

10. Michael Butler comments that Cooper’s work, like Frankenstein and Wieland, shows that “monsters once set in motion stay in motion” (119); moreover, he says of both Montcalm and Magua that each one “sets in motion a red engine he cannot control” (126). Satanic imagery underlies the comparisons.

11. Historian Gary Nash notes a number of significant contrasts in a comparison of the Jesuits with the Puritan missionaries: the Jesuits accepted Indian beliefs and sought to build on them, whereas Puritans did not; Jesuits accepted native culture, even if in a patronizing tone, whereas Puritans did not; Jesuits focused on powerful tribes for conversion, whereas Puritans focused on weak tribes (106). Although the Jesuit order was suppressed by the Vatican in the late eighteenth century, it was reinstated in 1814.

Soon after 1814 the Jesuits once more were thriving, with a membership in the thousands. Within a year the Jesuits were once more sending missionaries abroad (Bokenkotter 272). Jesuit racial tolerance exhibited as early as the seventeenth century was not shared by the English in North America in the eighteenth century, nor was it shared by Cooper and his audience in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Also, Cooper may have felt anxiety over Jesuit success, revitalization—and Jesuit intentions—in the missions.

12. Cooper reflects a suspicion of Jesuits which had been an undertone in American culture since the days of the earliest Puritans. Several factors contributed to this outlook, including unusual elements in the charter of the Jesuit order as well as Jesuit beliefs and practices that may have connoted a moral outlook at odds with Cooper's own view. Unlike other Catholic religious orders, they did not wear habits distinguishing them as priests or brothers, nor did they have to meet as a body for daily recitation of their liturgical prayers (O'Malley 692). Also, they became more explicitly opposed to the Reformation by 1550 (O'Malley 692). The fact that historically the Jesuits were not identifiable on sight may have contributed to a reputation for elusiveness and deceit as opposed to moral plain-spokenness.

13. The French Jesuits, a religious body that would be associated for Cooper's audience with the Catholic Counter-Reformation of the sixteenth century, came to the New World to preach to the native Americans. They met with success with various Indian groups, including Iroquois, Hurons, and Abenaki. Jesuit missionary efforts in the seventeenth century were focused on the Hurons. Interestingly, the very success of the Jesuits in missionary work eventually produced a response from the Vatican. Matteo

Ricci had met with success in China in the late sixteenth century. Ricci's "toleration of the continuation of semireligious rites by Chinese converts later occasioned much controversy among missionaries and was only finally settled by Pope Clement XI (d. 1721), who decided against Ricci's methods" (Bokenkotter 233).

14. It should not be taken as a given in the conversations between Hawk-eye and Gamut that Cooper sides with Hawk-eye's confidence in God's omnipotence and goodness. Lawrence J. Oliver finds an "Edwardsian motif in Cooper's novels," for "in Cooper's fictional universe, mercy *is* only for the "elect"—for those characters who embody Cooper's own values and religious ideals; the cries for mercy uttered by dangling 'unregenerates' inevitably fade into an abyss. Thus the pits that swallow Cooper's damned souls are 'fissures' in more than one sense: they expose the contradiction between a surface theme of brotherly love and compassion, and a subtext in which Cooper unconsciously displays a Calvinistic sense of justice and a less-than-charitable impulse to punish 'sinners.' In the little, lower layer of Cooper's complex mind lurked a Meek Wolf" (447). Critics are divided as to how Cooper views history, whether as cyclical or progressive.

15. Even map-making could be perceived as a threatening activity. French territorial aggression, aided by Jesuit mapmaking, accompanies and is supported by an underlying illegitimate moral aggression, undertaken by those without rightful claim. Historian Helen Tanner shows a 1671 map of the Great Lakes region done by Jesuits which was "not rivaled in accuracy until the nineteenth century"(36). The map's unusual

perspective suggests that the possessor of the map is surveying the rivers of North America ranging from the Hudson to the Mississippi from the vantage point of Sault Ste. Marie—perhaps for proselytizing purposes. Although this particular map was little known, Cooper may have had other kinds of indications of alarming Jesuit intentions.

16. Many works were published about American Indians in the 1820s, 1830s, and early 1840s. They include Catlin's Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians; Sir Charles Augustus Murray's Travels in North America during the Years 1834, 1835, 1836, Including a Summer of Residence with the Pawnee Tribe of Indians, in the Remote Prairies of the Missouri in 1841; Henry Rowe Schoolcraft's Algonic Researches, comprising inquiries respecting the mental characters of the North American Indians in 1839; Thomas Loraine McKenney's Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes, of the character and customs of the Chippeway Indians, and of incidents connected with the treaty of Fond du Lac in 1827. McKenney published a work in 1836 which included Indian portraits; Karl Bodmer published Indian portraits; Samuel Gardner Drake published books on American Indians in 1833 (Fuller 444, 450).

17. "The Catholic Iroquois" appeared in The Atlantic Souvenir for 1826, described by Koppelman as "the first U.S. literary annual, or gift book" (1). The publisher was the Philadelphia Catholic Matthew Carey.

18. "The Catholic Iroquois" is about two Iroquois girls Christianized and raised with close religious supervision as strict Catholics by Pere Mesnard, a French priest in Canada. One, Françoise, marries a French officer. The other, Rosalie, enters a convent



in Montreal. When Francoise's husband is killed and she is captured by her own Indian father, she refuses to renounce the crucifix and marry a young Indian chief. For her refusal she is martyred for her refusal by her own father, who both burns her and carves a cross on her breast after snatching a crucifix from her.

19. A biretta is a square-shaped hat worn by Catholic priests. A red biretta would designate a cardinal; a black biretta would designate a priest.

20. The purchase led to important nation building consequences: the admission of Louisiana as a state in 1812, the nation's westward push to the Rio Grande (Black 40), "an unprecedented westward extension of American sovereignty" (Black 85), and Jefferson's interest in sponsoring the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Lewis and Clark pushed to the Pacific by November 1805 (Black 185). Cooper's work, written as it was in the context of early nineteenth-century American expansionism, also contributed to the eventual expression in 1845 of the concept of Manifest Destiny rather than to disinterested appraisal of the emerging outlines of the map of the United States in the nineteenth-century, an appraisal which would have recognized the legitimacy of the presence of native Americans in territory sought by the United States. Cooper helped the United States to imagine itself spreading westward.

21. Martin Bruckner comments that Lewis and Clark "used the Western geographical archive for training Amerindian group elders how to conceptualize the land properly, that is, as a textually defined container holding up for scrutiny land and people like so many literary objects" (230). Like the explorers, Cooper uses the geographical

framework of his novel to establish an American homogeneous identity. Bruckner comments: “Cooper . . . still finds it necessary to open his epic fiction The Last of the Mohicans with a lesson in geography. As if Native American geographies must be placed into the open before being displaced permanently, Cooper details for the audience, first, the disparate modes of geographic representation that underpin both native and Anglo-American cosmologies by asserting, much like Jefferson in his presidential message, the authority and two-dimensional framework of the traditional Western geographic discourse” (231).

22. McBrien distinguishes doctrines, which are “subject to error as well as other linguistic and conceptual deficiencies deriving from the limitations of the culture and circumstances in which they were initially formulated” (424), from dogma, which is a “definitive, or infallible, teaching of the Church” (425). According to McBrien, the test of doctrine is clear: “[t]he word of God is the norm of every official teaching” (424). For a doctrine to be promulgated as dogma, however, it must be found in Scripture or the “postbiblical tradition of the Church”; it must be “explicitly proposed by the Church as a divinely revealed object of belief”; the explicit proposal is by decree or in the “Church’s ordinary, universal teaching” (425).

23. Protestant theologian Martin E. Marty describes the difference in approach as follows: “Indeed, from the viewpoint of Catholics in 1529 [the date of the Diet of Speyer in Germany from which the term “Protestant” arose] or even at the end of the twentieth century, Protestantism has had only two distinguishing marks: it is divided, fragmented,

and ever capable of generating more offshoots and divisions, and it has no positive set of common doctrines or practices that characterize its life. Only one aspect is universally present: the rejection of obedience to the hierarchical system that finds its pinnacle in papal authority, personified by the Bishop of Rome, the pope” (1059). In further discussion, Marty stresses the commonalities across Protestant bodies: rejection of papal authority, embracing of Scripture and an increasing emphasis from the eighteenth century onward towards “the freedom to interpret the Bible apart from community,” a celebration of the Lord’s Supper, but “attaching a wide range of meanings to it,” and a keeping of Baptism, a stress on God’s graciousness, and on “[w]orks of love [following] the response in faith, an emphasis on Christ’s atonement for human “fallen[ness]” and a belief in the afterlife (1060-62). A more detailed exposition of the differences between Catholicism and Protestantism is contained in Martin Marty’s entry on Protestantism.

24. Theologian George Griener expresses the link as follows: “An explicit appreciation of history as integral component of all created reality, not merely as a chronology of divine or human events, is a modern presupposition with consequences for theology: Christianity can be understood only in relationship to history; theology and dogma are historical realities and are subject to critical and contextual interpretation” (616).

25. Faust says, “Only four months after the book’s appearance, Evans’ publisher boasted that a million people had already read it. Names of places and characters adopted from the novel became commonplace throughout the South, even including a camellia

designated 'St. Elmo.' Modern readers may be more familiar with Eudora Welty's comic heroine Edna Earle Ponder, who, as it happens, owns the Beulah Hotel in 'The Ponder Heart'" (x).

26. Ray Allen Billington says that "[t]he average Protestant American of the 1850's had been trained from birth to hate Catholicism . . ." (345).

27. For example, Pope Benedict XVI's speech at Regensburg on September 9, 2006 emphasized the link between faith and reason.

28. Smith et al explain Arminianism succinctly in the context of their study of Jonathan Edwards: "Since the term 'Arminianism' was often used quite broadly to denote a number of doctrines that stood opposed to Calvinism, let us take note of the theses posed by Arminius which were the direct object of Edwards' attack. Chief among them are that God's sovereignty and human freedom are not incompatible, that Christ's death secured universal atonement for all sinners and was not limited simply to the elect, and that a regenerated person can freely choose what is right. For Edwards, such teachings represented all that was wrong with the 'fashionable' schemes of divinity that were then on the rise, for they compromised the absolute sovereignty of God and the need for Christ's incarnation and sacrifice. As such, they were to be opposed at all costs" (xxiv).

29. As discussed in the chapter on morality, American authors found that gothic romance as a genre allowed for a fuller, sustained fictive narrative exploration of issues connected to American borders and in particular an exposition of the authorial views on

the pressing question of “Who is an American?” This knotty question involved numerous tangles, including the place of Indians, blacks, women, and Catholics in the new nation, and the threats to the nation’s borders represented by Indians, Mexicans, French, Spanish, and Catholic nuns and priests and to the nation’s integrity by Catholic doctrine. By its very nature as something taught by popes and by international synods, Catholic doctrine involves a violation of American continental boundaries. But in order for a modern nation to be formed, it must be imagined as limited, as sovereign, and as a community (Anderson 7). According to Benedict Anderson, many historical changes came together near the end of the eighteenth century which allowed these imaginings of nations to occur. Further, he argues that two forms of writing facilitate people’s imagining of nations and that the novel is one of the two. (The other form is the daily newspaper.) According to Anderson, the novel allows people to be linked in societies even if they don’t know each other (25-6). After a colonial history in which many forms of nonfiction were the dominant genres, novels began to be very important in the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century American Republic. This trend accelerated in ante-bellum America.

30. As Richard Hofstadter observed, “Anti-Catholicism has always been the pornography of the Puritan” (qtd. in Griffin 158). Wilson’s portrait of the leering Padre Mazzolin fits this description.

31. Alder observes of Wilson’s style, “Additionally, Evans [Wilson] weaves erudite discourses on history, theology, astronomy and natural sciences throughout the

dialogues in a way singularly different from the average romance novel of the time. By writing on a high intellectual level about subjects generally denied to women in formal education, she challenged common beliefs about women's inherent intellectual levels" (78).

32. Reynolds notes one famous parody of Wilson's style in St. Elmo (1867). According to Reynolds, it was "answered by Charles Webb's *St. Twel'mo; or, The Cuneiform Cyclopedist of Chattanooga* (1867), in which Wilson's ostentatious erudition and garbled religion were mocked" (206).

33. As Chapter III opens, a convent bell rings for the Angelus, the noon-day prayer of Catholics, and a statue of St. Francis with the stigmata is nearby (38). The reader is immediately introduced to the character of Regina, who is described as a beautiful child compared to the Madonna della Misericordia by Fra Bartolomeo. When Regina seeks St. Francis's intercession to cure her rabbit and pigeon, following a lesson from the reader in the convent Refectory, and the Saint does not intercede, Regina declares her intention never to pray to St. Francis again. She tells her intention to Sister Angela, who upbraids this as wicked. Nevertheless, Sister Helena refers to Regina as being "as spotless in soul as one of our consecrated annunciation lillies" (46). Regina's bold repudiation of St. Francis as an intercessor, as well as Pastor Peyton Hargrove's sister's declaration that it is "Tant mieux!" (57) that Regina has been living in a convent for seven years when Regina comes to live with Pastor Hargrove as his ward, are the few

vestiges in the text of the nativism Augusta Jane Evans Wilson gave such free rein to in Inez.

34. Examples include references to Dante, to Regina singing the Ave Maria by Schubert (139), to music by Mozart and Rossini, and to Regina playing a *de profundis* (188) as, unknown to her, Pastor Hargrove quietly dies in his sleep. Regina's long-absent, long-suffering working mother is illustrated in a commissioned portrait in the pose of Mona Lisa (290). Although at one point Regina's friend Olga threatens to take refuge from a disappointed love in an Episcopal convent in the west (437), it is the Catholic convent and Catholic nuns that are held up as models of kindness, discipline, and security. In one of the convoluted turns of plot late in the novel, Regina's grandmother plans to put Regina's mother, Minnie Merle/Odille Orme, in a convent to get her away from a planter's son whom she views as a dangerous suitor for Minnie/Odille (491). After a three-week marriage during which Regina is conceived, Odille receives help during childbirth from "'one of [the] noble-hearted Sisters of Charity . . . [who] visited the hospital and ministered like an angel of mercy'" (497). The book concludes with a description of Minnie/Odille at long last united with her straying husband, as she appears with a "nimbus around the golden head, . . . [that] rendered her in her violet drapery like some haloed *Mater Dolorosa*, treading alone the *Via Crucis*" (571). Here the image of the sorrowing mother of God, walking her lonely way on the Way of the Cross, is presented without irony. Instead, Minnie's sufferings are meant to be elevated, her seeking of revenge against General Laurance justified, and her ultimate reunion with her weak but presumably reformed husband a reward for her constancy.

35. Brownson and Wilson looked at history, and in particular the Reformation, through very different doctrinal lenses. According to Franchot, once Brownson converted to Catholicism, he came to think that “Lutheran and Calvinist theology had not only spoiled the ethical nature of Americans but also deeply damaged their interpretive capacities” by unleashing “unrestricted individual interpretations of the Word. Premised on the validity of private judgment, Protestantism finally reduced to the single absurd principle that ‘each and every man is in himself the exact measure of truth and goodness’” (346). Although Franchot says that this individual interpretation was a goal for Emerson, it was not so for Brownson. Wilson’s view was not Emersonian in manner of expression, but she would have shared Emerson’s emphasis on individual interpretation as a repudiation of Catholicism and its emphasis on the teaching and doctrinally interpretive functions of the hierarchy. Wilson’s historical perspective on the Catholic-Protestant doctrinal conflict is reflected in a review of a recent historical work on Luther by another writer named Wilson, this one Derek Wilson. Peter Marshall cites as the historian Derek Wilson’s “main argument . . . that Christian emancipation from the tyranny and constraints of ecclesiastical law was Luther’s singular achievement and legacy” (27), and that Wilson argues that Luther, far from “tear[ing] asunder the seamless robe of Latin Christendom,” instead allowed for human individualism. Augusta Jane Evans Wilson stresses that Catholicism allows no liberty of conscience (177) and results in whole countries of mental darkness (160).

36. Brownson’s Christ may well remind the reader of the cosmic Christ described by the twentieth-century theologian and anthropologist Teilhard de Chardin.



37. In his discussion of Wilson and other popular nineteenth-century writers of religious fiction, David Reynolds comments, “To be sure, religion was never as commercialized in the nineteenth century as it would become in the hands of twentieth-century Hollywood producers, who would find that ‘Jesus sells almost as well as sex’” (206). Reynolds makes a clear distinction between the popular writers and the more serious writers of religious fiction in the nineteenth century. He says: “As a whole, elite nineteenth-century American novelists, while not centrally concerned with religion, were dismayed by the liberalization of the religious mainstream. Hawthorne satirized the facile optimism and mechanized morality of liberals so pointedly in The Celestial Railroad (1846) that the work was pirated and distributed as an orthodox tract. Both Hawthorne and Melville showed themselves to be more attracted to the ambiguities and darkness of Puritan Calvinism than to the more hopeful views of the nineteenth century. In Clarel (1876), Melville criticized, among other things the easy overcoming of doubt, the recreation of Biblical scenes, and the accommodation to bourgeois values on the part of mainstream religionists. The popular Henry Ward Beecher was branded shallow and duplicitously worldly by Orestes Brownson and Henry James Jr.” (206-07).

38. Howe notes, “Thanks to the energetic devotion of the religious orders and the ecclesiastic statesmanship of Hughes [John Hughes, archbishop of New York, responsible for beginning work on St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City] and other bishops [the church hierarchy and religious orders] kept pace with Catholic (or more accurately, potentially Catholic immigration)” (200). Howe attributes much of the antebellum growth of the Catholic Church in America to “its success in ministering to

this immigrant constituency” (200-01). One of the benefits for the immigrants is that “[b]elonging to the church helped immigrants adjust to a new and unfamiliar environment while affirming the dignity of their own ancestral group and preserving an aspect of its heritage” (201).

39. See Haddox’s discussion, in his Introduction, of Faulkner’s Charles Bon in Absalom, Absalom! (1-13) and his chapter “The Pleasures of Decadence: Catholicism in Kate Chopin, Carson McCullers, and Anne Rice” (82-111).

40. Two well-known names associated with the tradition of Spanish mysticism are St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. Both were Catholic reformers, part of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and mystics.

41. Nancy A. Walker’s essay “A Critical History of The Awakening” details the book’s critical reception from the time of its publication in 1899 to the appearance of her edition of the novel in 2000.

42. This study has emphasized the portrayal of Catholics and Catholicism by non-Catholics. Thus, a question may arise about the inclusion of Chopin in such a study. In his study of late nineteenth-century Catholic fiction writers, John Messbarger includes an Appendix in which he discusses “bogus Catholics” (165). He challenges the questionable worth of including works by such writers as Joel Chandler Harris and Kate Chopin in Walter Romig’s 1940 The Guide to Catholic Literature. Messbarger says of Chopin that she was born and educated as a Catholic, but “had left the Church by the time her

professional life began. . . . Miss Chopin never publicly repudiated the Faith; she simply did not practice it” (165). Thomas Haddox makes a more reasoned judgment of the place of Catholicism in Chopin’s thinking, faith practice, and fiction: “Although she ceased practicing her religion after the death of her mother, criticized the church’s prohibition against divorce, and was known to read books placed on the infamous Index, her fiction abounds in Catholic characters, references, and imagery” (87). Clearly, both scholars stress her lack of practicing Catholicism during her adult professional life.

43. Stuart’s observation on Creole women is as follows: “The Creole gentlewoman will charm your ear with an inimitable accent, but her enunciation will be clear and fine. Her English, acquired at the convent of the Ursuline nuns, will have a certain stilted form and a bookish flavor, which you will quickly confess to be an added charm when you get it from her own pretty lips, and in the sonorous voice of the South. And it will have, too, the flavor of delicacy and refinement. Even though she may occasionally give you a literal translation of a French idiom, she will give it to you with a naivete at once so piquant and so dignified, and in so fine a setting of finished English—the English that the good sisters in the convent have taught her out of their very correct textbooks—that you, if you are a man, will be ready to crawl at her feet. And if you are a woman--? Well, there’s no telling. Women are so different. Some are charm-blind as regards other women, and it is not their fault” (161).

44. In Catholic theology, an indulgence attaches to a prayer or an action and a prayer and involves a remission of the length of punishment in Purgatory. The word

“indulgence” and the emphasis on human action contrast with the Presbyterian notion of Christ’s all-sufficient atonement for humanity’s sins. Another contrast is implied by Our Lady of Lourdes, the name of the Catholic Church where Edna attends part of a Sunday Mass. Lourdes water, which comes from a grotto in Lourdes, France, at which a young girl experienced a vision of the Blessed Virgin, is known among Catholics for its curative properties. The shrine at Lourdes is the site of many Catholic pilgrimages by people seeking healing and has been so since the Virgin’s apparition in the 1850s.

45. She says: “The Creole is as true a Frenchman at heart as his great-grandfather was. He is not half-American—no, he is no more half-American than he is half-Acadian or half-negro. He is American-born, but he is French—which is to say he is Creole. And is he not American? Well, yes, afterward—maybe. But first he is a Frenchman. Then--? Well, after that he is a Louisianian—and a Democrat—and a Roman Catholic, of course. Cera va sans dire. . . . one of the most distinguishing qualities of the Creole is his conservatism. His family traditions are of obedience and respect. It begins in his church and ends in his wine cellar. He cares not for protesting faiths or new vintages. His religion and his wines are matters of tradition. Good enough for his ancestors, are they not good enough for him and his children? His most delightful home is situated behind a heavy battened gate, somber and forbidding in its outward expression—asking nothing of the passing world, protecting every sacredness within” (The Awakening ed. Nancy A. Walker 161).

46. The novel raises some doubt about the extent of Edna’s artistic talent, although Edna’s talent does grow during the course of the novel. Adele’s reactions seem

overly naïve and possibly an attempt at satire by the narrator. She praises a portrait of a “Bavarian peasant” as deserving a picture frame, and a basket of apples as looking so “lifelike” as to entice the viewer to want to reach out and take one (73). Leonce tells her not to let her house and family go down because of her art, stating his blunt view that Adele is “more of a musician than you are a painter” (75). Mademoiselle Reisz raises the possibility that Edna has “pretensions” (83), saying that art requires not just gifts but the “courageous soul” (84), one that attempts things and resists society. When Edna begins to sell her sketches, her agent says of her art “it grows in force and individuality” (105). One dealer asks her for “some Parisian studies to reach him in time for the holiday trade in December,” if in fact the notice in the newspaper about the Pontelliers travelling abroad is true (137). Whether Edna has genuine artistic talent and temperament or whether she is merely able to draw in such a way to please popular tastes is left unresolved.

47. According to Gina Burchard’s review of Kate Chopin’s personal life, there is no reason to assume that Edna Pontellier is a stand-in for Chopin’s attitude to marriage, motherhood, femininity, or women’s roles generally (35-36).

48. A question may again arise about the validity of the inclusion of Fitzgerald in a study of the presentation of Catholicism by non-Catholic authors. After all, Fitzgerald was raised Catholic. Joan Allen refers to This Side of Paradise as “Fitzgerald’s most sustained overtly Catholic piece of fiction” (63). But Fitzgerald was not a practicing

Catholic when he wrote the novel. Also, he left Catholicism behind after his marriage to Zelda and was not allowed burial in a Catholic cemetery in 1940.

49. Scholars have complained about the novel's lack of coherence, and have raised a question about what point it makes. Because the novel seems formally incoherent, critics try to account for this structural looseness. Jack Hendriksen dismisses the charge of incoherence against the novel by saying it works as a *bildungsroman* (see James 26-27 fn. 6). According to Pearl James, the novel's alleged incoherence is over gender, not uncertainty as to its central character's class position. In her essay, she "traces the signature aspect of Fitzgerald's fiction—what Malcolm Cowley called Fitzgerald's 'sense of living in history'—to an attempt to recuperate the coherence, integrity, and narratability of masculine identity" (4). She argues that the masculine ideal is unachievable, "complicated from without by contradictory cultural imperatives and from within by homoerotic desires, experiences of loss, and feelings of inadequacy" (4).

50. Forter observes that "masculinity was in crisis during the years 1890 to 1920, due to a breakdown in gendered roles that had been largely naturalized in the middle years of the nineteenth century" (296). American manhood had been characterized by a male-female division of labor. The man's role was to achieve economic success, including "ownership of productive property" (296), during the day in the "capitalist marketplace," and be, in a sense, repaired in the evening by the "softer virtues" from women laboring in the domestic sphere. This established division was damaged in the years 1870 to 1910 by the influx of workers into white-collar jobs in bureaucracies.

They did not gain property and “felt a sense of dependence and disempowerment that many men described as emasculation” (297). The end result of this change was a “heightened need to police the borders between male and female identities” (298). Forter applies his psychosocial approach to Fitzgerald’s family in a detailed fashion.

51. Many cultural elements of the late 1890s and the first two decades of the twentieth century are indicators of an anxiety over masculinity. According to Forter, these range from an emphasis on sports and the formation of the Boy Scouts to the strenuous masculine role model of Teddy Roosevelt (3). James notes Fitzgerald’s use of history as a trope to structure the novel (see 17-23). Fitzgerald’s title and one of his two epigraphs come from a poem by Rupert Brooke, who died from blood poisoning while a soldier in World War I.

52. By Joycean subject matter, Allen means a respect for “a romantic and literary sort of Irish heritage . . . with pride [in] his own Celtic background” (21). Fitzgerald’s friend Monsignor Fay, as well as Shane Leslie and critic Edmund Wilson, led Fitzgerald to recognize Irish literary history; “Fay and Leslie suggested that Ireland was a romantic lost cause and that the Irish are charming people. These men knew about Celtic music and literature, and the priest had received a dispensation to say mass in Celtic” (22).

53. “The repressive and puritanical cultural mores which prevailed in this country at the turn of the century and which both affected and were affected by the moral posture

of the Roman Catholic Church . . . were certainly influential forces in Fitzgerald's background " (Allen 1). The writings of St. Augustine "form the basis of much of Western theology and specifically the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church . . . . Augustine was one of the models Monsignor Fay held up to Fitzgerald in his attempts to demonstrate that the Church had produced great and even glamorous men. But even if Fitzgerald had never heard Augustine's name, still he was inevitably influenced by the teachings of Augustine, for they have been retained in large measure in the catechisms used in educating young Catholics" (Allen 4-5). In her discussion of the Augustinian influence on Catholicism, Joan Allen adds a standard interpretation of the church's traditional view of women and sexuality: "In Adam's fall we sinned all, as the Puritans said, who adopted this Augustinian tenet along with the doctrine of predestination. Women pull down from their spirituality men who strive for purity. Sex is legitimate only for purposes of procreation, and even within marriage sex is essentially shameful, for it is a thing of privacy and darkness. These attitudes account for the church's teaching about the superiority of celibacy and the inferiority of women since they are ever the occasions of sin" (6).

54. Amory's mother does not raise him as a Catholic. Still, Amory's closest adult male friend in the novel is not his own father but Monsignor Darcy. Joan Allen says that Fitzgerald thought of this novel as "a somewhat edited history of himself and his imagination" (70).



55. James reads the novel's central character, Amory Blaine, as someone made hysterical by his mother Beatrice, who tells him to eat meals in bed, and who spends a lot of time coping with nerves herself. At school, an all-boys' college, Amory does such gender-transgressive things as perform as a chorus girl. His admiration for Oscar Wilde is part of reveling in a homosexual atmosphere. He develops a "discursive self" (12) rather than a coherent, authentic self. He discovers the "dangers posed by male bonds" through his admiration for Dick Humbird, who dies unexpectedly in the novel. James comments that this death and Dick's appearance as a ghost in Amory's hotel room is an example of the fact that "[t]he gothic often signifies homosexual panic in literature" (14). Dick is equated with the devil. James's ultimate comment is to note the conflation of Dick's death with the failure of Amory's love for Isabel, one of his early attractions in the novel. James says that "the impact of Dick's death is disguised as a disappointment in a heterosexual love plot and in other normative male coming-of-age story lines. Love for another man can only find disguised expression. Fitzgerald creates an overabundance of reasons for Amory's feelings of panic" (15).

56. Nordstrom describes a complex set of reasons for the dissolution of the nativist movement when America entered World War I—costs of periodicals, costs of defending lawsuits in court, American wartime preoccupations (193). Nevertheless, the main reason was the extent of American Catholic involvement in the war, "enlisting for military duty in the thousands and participating in wartime service in greater proportions than their Protestant counterparts" (193).

57. Nordstrom studies the phenomenon of popular press anti-Catholicism in America in the period immediately preceding publication of Fitzgerald's novel. Nordstrom does not discuss Fitzgerald or literary works in general; nevertheless, his comments shed an interesting light on the combined issues of Catholicism and gender. Groups which did police gender boundaries include the nativist press prominent in America in the period from 1910 to 1919. Because of the perceived threat to American masculinity wrought by social changes in this period, the nativist press relied on the "trope of manhood's defense of vulnerability [represented by women, children, the sick, and the elderly]" (Nordstrom 108-09), a trope that could easily draw on familiar anti-Catholic rhetoric. Nordstrom's analysis of the nativist press establishes the link between masculinity and anti-Catholicism in a compact fashion: "Through their emphasis on masculine duty and valor, anti-Catholic papers echoed powerful cultural shifts within many facets of American society in the early twentieth century. Scholars have pointed out that the 1910s witnessed a dramatic masculinization of Protestant churches and an increased male attention to the duties of fatherhood" (109). Nordstrom adds the following observation to his discussion of nativist rhetoric: "Furthermore, nativist writers co-opted the dominant language of rugged masculinity, 'muscular' Christianity, and militarism, infusing their papers with accounts of vigilant 'armies' whose strength would safeguard the weak and drive out the corrosive agents of Romanism" (109).

58. Eleanor's choice of Verlaine is not happenstance, but at least partially parallel to Tom D'Invilliers's introduction of Amory to Oscar Wilde. The nineteenth-century French poet Verlaine's life is marked by his marriage, ended by his affair with fellow

male poet Rimbaud, his conversion to Catholicism, his love for a male student, and his impoverished drinking himself to death on absinthe in Parisian cafes. By the recitation of Verlaine, Eleanor succeeds in finding an even more extremely sensationalized, gender-ambiguous artistic model than Amory's interest in Poe, also noted for his drinking, tragic heterosexual loves, and too-early death. Eleanor offers to be Amory's Psyche (226), and Amory thinks of her as witchlike (227), with her eyes "that gleamed like a cat's" (225) and "glittered green as emeralds" (227).

59. Haddox says that "Chopin's early work treats Catholicism dismissively, as a system of petty legalisms that would be ridiculous were it not for the power to make people miserable" (87). Giles says of Fitzgerald that "he turned to an enthusiastic apostasy, displaying open contempt toward the piety and bigotry of the Irish with whom he had come in contact in his hometown. Nor was Fitzgerald enamored of the religious fervor he encountered on a trip to Rome in 1925, declared a Holy Year by Pope Pius XI, or 'Pope Siphilis the sixth and His Morons' as Fitzgerald vengefully named the papal entourage" (170).

60. A definition of romance by M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham is included in Chapter II. Statements by Nathaniel Hawthorne on romance are included in Chapter IV. Henry James's complaint about The Marble Faun being a contradiction in terms, an international romance (Colacurcio 225), bears repeating in this context. Richard Slotkin, Carolyn Karcher, and Robert Levine are among the scholars who have classified one or more of the antebellum works in this study as romances.

61. The term is taken from the title of Wheeler's study of nineteenth-century British Protestant-Catholic relations.

62. Putting some personal human faces on nineteenth-century Catholic growth statistics can make clear that many of the writers in this study, including Hawthorne and many of the writers from the postbellum period, knew Catholics and knew them well. Whereas with some of the antebellum writers it is possible only to hypothesize about their acquaintance with Catholics (see, for example, Sara Frear's view that Augusta Jane Evans Wilson must have—or might have—known Catholics from living in Mobile), establishing the intimacy of many later writers' connections with Catholics is not at all speculative. Hawthorne's daughter Rose became a Catholic nun after her marriage to her alcoholic husband ended; she founded an order of Dominican nuns called the Hawthorne Dominicans, whose special charism was working with cancer patients early in the twentieth century, when people still believed that cancer was contagious. Twain's housekeeper was an Irish Catholic named Katy Leary, who "worked for the family for more than thirty years" (Skandera-Trombley 68) and who discussed her priest's response to Twain's work with Twain's wife. Henry James had friendships with Mrs. Clarence Strong, a Catholic convert, and with John La Farge, a sophisticated Catholic who was "European in manner and ambience" (Fussell 3). La Farge introduced James to French Catholic writers, including Balzac, who composed his novels "dressed in Benedictine garb (Fussell 6). Fussell lists a number of other English Catholics either known to James or whose work and whose conversions to Catholicism James was familiar with (3-4). Fussell also asserts that James was familiar with Twain's "anti-Catholic (anti-Anglican?)

occasion,” by which he means A Connecticut Yankee and his “mixed performance” in Joan of Arc (Fussell 4), as well as with what he describes as the “almost exclusively Marian” Catholicity in the work of Henry Adams (5). Although Kate Chopin stopped going to church after her mother died, she was raised a Catholic and educated by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart (Haddox 87). Harold Frederic was good friends with a Catholic priest, Father Edward A. Terry, with whom he roomed for a time in Utica, New York. He wrote letters of defense of the priest to the local newspaper (Myers 20-21). Beyond the fact that F. Scott Fitzgerald’s parents were Irish Catholics and that Fitzgerald was raised Catholic, he became a close friend of Catholic priest Monsignor Fay, on whom his figure of Monsignor Darcy is based. Fitzgerald and Zelda were married by a Catholic priest “in the rectory of St. Patrick’s cathedral” (Mizener 109). Pauline Hopkins lived in Boston and worked at M.I.T. as a stenographer from 1905 to 1930. She read parts of Contending Forces out loud to the Boston Woman’s Era Club, founded by Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin (Carby 304), a woman who belonged to organizations seeking to bridge differences among races, ethnicities, and classes. Ruffin had been an officer in the Women’s Educational and Industrial Union, a Boston women’s group that counted among its membership “Mrs. Louis Brandeis, Josephine Ruffin, and Mary Kenney O’Sullivan (a Jewish woman, a black woman, and a female Irish-Catholic labor organizer” (Deutsch 388). It seems it would have been impossible for Hopkins not to have encountered Catholics during her life in Boston.

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