

# **Confessional Crossings: American Protestants, post-*Risorgimento* Italy, and the anti-Catholic Gothic**

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In 1876, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, a writer who would later become editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, published in that magazine an account of his visit to a “certain old gentleman” in Rome. The gentleman, he said, had “formerly occupied a high official position, but now he was retired, so to speak, into private life.” During his career, he had “exercised almost unlimited influence, and for the most part with moderation and wisdom.” Aldrich’s language is fond if a bit patronizing: He describes a “gentle and altogether interesting figure...with his small, sparkling eyes, remarkably piercing when he looked at you point-blank, and a smile none the less winsome that it lighted up a mouth denoting unusual force of will. His face was...the face of a man who had led a temperate, blameless private life.” He was, Aldrich concludes, “a very beautiful old man.”<sup>1</sup> Aldrich—a Unitarian—was talking about Pope Pius IX.<sup>2</sup>

A wealthy Bostonian traveling through Italy, Aldrich is in one sense a familiar figure. For much of the nineteenth century, the well-educated sons and daughters of white, northeastern Protestant elites had been sailing and steaming across the Atlantic to educate themselves amid the treasures, tastes, and textures of the “Old World.” For many, the experience included an encounter—real or imagined—with the Roman pontiff. In their writing—everything from polished essays to long letters home—the pope was most often described as a gilded despot, the head of a hierarchical, obscurantist, and territory-hungry church.<sup>3</sup> If Aldrich’s itinerary meant that he was almost literally following in the footsteps of

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his predecessors, his sympathetic depiction of a “certain old gentleman” appears to be something new.<sup>4</sup>

And Aldrich was not alone. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many American travelers described themselves encountering an Italy transformed by the *Risorgimento*—the decades-long struggle for Italian independence and unification—and wrote this sense of transformation into their depictions of encounters with Italian Catholicism. After 1870, when the Italian army occupied Rome and Pope Pius IX retreated to the Vatican as a self-proclaimed prisoner, U.S. travelers composed narratives suffused with a sense of rapid change, filled with commentary on how the Catholic Italy of the past was morphing into something new before their eyes. They repeatedly depicted the end of the *Risorgimento* as a radical historical break, one that they believed marked the decline of Catholic power in Italy and perhaps even throughout the world. And they depicted this radical break by writing newly positive depictions of the pope and monks.

In their tales of adventure and observation, travel writers such as Aldrich adopted Pope Pius IX’s characterization of himself as a “prisoner in the Vatican.” They figured the imprisoned pope (Pius and those who came after him) as a sympathetic symbol of thwarted patriarchy and territorial desire. They also visited formerly inaccessible monasteries, newly opened to travelers, and wrote at length about their movement through these storied buildings and their new, friendly relationships with the monks. These were not the only ways U.S. travelers wrote about encounters with Italian Catholicism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: some waxed rhapsodic about Catholic art and architecture; others issued blistering critiques of what they took to be Catholic theological error. But it was a common theme among white, well-off, non-Catholic Americans: in their travel narratives, anti-Catholic tirades against the pope and monks receded, replaced by depictions of friendly tête-à-têtes and shared pleasures.<sup>5</sup>

On the surface, this might look like a radical rejection of the anti-Catholicism that was so popular in the nineteenth-century United States. But this is a story of consistency as much as it is of change. Even when writing in newly positive tones, Aldrich and his compatriots were still playing with the themes and settings of the anti-Catholic Gothic, a mode of writing that had long suffused U.S. travelers’ accounts of Italy. They wrote about the pope in ways that invoked the Gothic trope of captivity in Catholic space, casting the pope now as a prisoner. Writing about visits to monasteries, they invariably raised the specter of monasteries as lurid, secret, low spaces before revealing monastic life to be benignly domestic and monks to be charming hosts. In short, in American travelers’ depictions of post-*Risorgimento* Italian popes and monks, there is both a rejection

of anti-Catholic vitriol and a continuation of anti-Catholic Gothic scenes, characters, and plot conventions.

And this was not just a neat literary trick. The anti-Catholic Gothic was a language about power and authority, and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American travel writers were participating in a decades-long conversation about Catholic figures as a way of thinking about appropriate forms of authority. Like their forebears, they continued to reflect on the uses and abuses of authority through reflections on encounters with Roman Catholicism; what changed was what they wanted to say. Writing in the wake of both the *Risorgimento* and the U.S. Civil War, they were no longer concerned with defining American liberties against Italian Catholic despotism. They registered, instead, an identification with deposed forms of authority, a rejection of the idea that these forms were threatening to American individuals or social order, and a nascent fear that the real roots of social disorder lay in a breakdown of such authority.

In short, the travel writing of Aldrich and his compatriots provide us with examples of explicit rejections of anti-Catholicism that cannot be fully understood as either an advance in religious toleration or a step along a putative path toward liberal pluralism.<sup>6</sup> Instead, they present a more complicated picture, one that acknowledges the continuity between these accounts and older anti-Catholic ones: their writing points to the persistent, protean, and densely packed connections between language about authority and order and about Catholicism, particularly when articulated by elite, white Americans.

This essay sits at the intersection of two overlapping bodies of scholarship: first, scholarship on Grand Tour travel literature (which stretches back to the sixteenth century and includes travelers from Britain, the United States, and elsewhere) and, second, scholarship on the place of Catholicism in U.S. culture and society (which extends from the colonial period to the present). Anti-Catholicism is a central theme in both.

Scholars of the Grand Tour argue that anti-Catholicism is one of the most consistent features of travelers' narratives. Art historian Clare Haynes, for example, notes that it was a "constant" element of British Grand Tour literature from the late sixteenth century into the nineteenth.<sup>7</sup> Historian Daniel Kilbride claims that, though "Americans disagreed over how they should behave toward aristocrats, whether free government would ever thrive in Italy, if poverty was endemic to the Old World, and practically every other issue," one issue was a source of agreement: "Anti-Catholicism was the single most consistent characteristic exhibited by American travelers in Europe from 1750 through 1861."<sup>8</sup>

The picture, however, is less monolithic than it may initially seem. Grand Tour anti-Catholicism was neither unitary in form nor static over

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time, and it was often rhetorically combined—sometimes even in the same texts—with attractions to certain elements of Catholicism. Scholars have found it useful to distinguish between different kinds of anti-Catholicism—between zealous theological or nativist anti-Catholicism on the one hand and more casual and easily dispensed with nods to common anti-Catholic prejudice on the other.<sup>9</sup> As the historian Gerrit Verhoeven argues about early seventeenth-century Dutch burgers on the Grand Tour, “Despite extreme anti-popish slander in sermons, pamphlets, prints, and songs, ordinary Calvinists, Lutherans, and Anglicans were not necessarily turned into blind adversaries of the old church.”<sup>10</sup> Others note that during periods in which Britons felt that the “papist threat [had] receded” or were more concerned about other threats, travelers’ anti-Catholicism became less intense.<sup>11</sup> Scholars demonstrate that non-Catholics on the Grand Tour expressed admiration for, among other things, Catholic art and architecture, Catholic devotional culture, and even sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Catholic hospitals.<sup>12</sup> According to literary scholar Elizabeth Harrison, the Russian thinker Vasilii Rozanov pushed back against widespread Russian anti-Catholicism, admiring what he saw on a 1901 trip to Italy as Catholic strength and action.<sup>13</sup> In short, scholars demonstrate that whereas anti-Catholicism was a consistent theme among various travelers on the Grand Tour, many travelers nonetheless revised, rejected, and played with anti-Catholic ideas as they wrote.

Anti-Catholicism is also a central concern among scholars of American religion. Much academic ink has been spilled tracing the forms and fates of anti-Catholicism in the United States from the anti-papery of the early national period to the anticonvent scare of the antebellum years to (and beyond) the nativist anti-Catholicism of the 1920s.<sup>14</sup> Whereas successive waves of Catholic immigration fueled bursts of anti-Catholic nativism—including the Italian immigration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—anti-Catholicism in the United States, as elsewhere, has not required a reliable supply of Catholics. Indeed, the Roman Catholic Church has proven, over the years, to be a constant foil, useful for American Protestant self-fashioning. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Aldrich and his compatriots were writing, anti-Catholic ideas, publications, and organizations flourished in the United States: from the Protestant clergyman Josiah Strong’s panicked paean to “Anglo Saxon” civilization, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (1885), to the rise of the American Protective Association, which counted more than a million Americans as members in the 1890s, to the existence of an early twentieth-century anti-Catholic press with titles such as *The Menace* and circulations exceeding that of the nation’s largest dailies.<sup>15</sup>

As with Grand Tour scholarship, however, scholars of American religion have been successfully chipping away at assumptions of anti-Catholic dominance, pointing to myriad ways in which appreciations of, or attrac-

tions to, Catholicism could exist alongside and in contrast to anti-Catholic rhetoric. Some scholars point out that, from at least the mid nineteenth century, middle-class and elite American Protestants sometimes cast themselves in opposition to anti-Catholicism and did so in a way that turned anti-Catholic logic on its head. In their depictions of their own tolerance and insight into Catholic faith and ritual, American Protestants tarred anti-Catholicism with its own "Romish" brush, depicting those who hated Catholicism as blind and incapable of independent thought.<sup>16</sup> Other scholars illuminate a sporadic history of American Protestant attractions to elements of Catholicism, ranging from the popularity of Catholic church design among nineteenth-century Protestant ministers to turn-of-the-century Protestant commemorations of historical Catholic missionaries as American founding fathers to the Depression-era rise of Hollywood films featuring charming and heroic urban priests.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, alongside the history of anti-Catholicism in American thought and culture, there is another history of attraction to and even admiration for the "Romish" other.

In short, scholarship on the Grand Tour and on Catholicism in U.S. culture is clear about the importance of an often-powerful, always multifarious anti-Catholicism. But recent work also pushes back against the notion of an entirely hegemonic anti-Catholicism, pointing to many examples of persistent, equally multifarious attractions to or appreciations of Catholic faith, forms, and people. The Italian travel writing of Aldrich and his compatriots is one such example, testifying to the limitations of any straightforward narrative of overwhelming anti-Catholicism, either in U.S. Grand Tour narratives or nineteenth-century American Protestant culture more generally.

But the writing of Aldrich and his compatriots also points in another direction, away from the anti-/pro-Catholicism binary altogether. Their writing is not only, or even primarily, a refutation of anti-Catholic animus. It is also, significantly, a continuation of the long-standing Protestant practice of talking about power and authority while talking about Roman Catholicism. It, thus, both rejects and carries forward the conventions of the anti-Catholic Gothic, constituting a literature of both change and continuity. The methodological argument at the heart of this essay is that if we only ask where Aldrich and the other writers might be placed along a linear anti- to pro-Catholic spectrum (or, even worse, where they stand in a putatively progressive historical trajectory from American anti-Catholicism to religious pluralism), we miss how their language about Catholicism registers and advances other hopes, goals, and assumptions. The distinction between anti- and pro-Catholicism is important: anti-Catholicism has wrought considerable violence on Catholic lives and communities. But if we focus primarily on valence—on whether non-Catholic observers are celebrating or deriding Catholicism—we lose our ability to explain what is going on. We risk missing how talk about Catholicism has historically

been a mode for talking about questions of power and authority, gender and sexuality, individuality and community, and much more. To engage those histories, we must attend to the long public conversations that move from anti- to pro-Catholicism and back again and that sometimes—as in a winking reference to a winsome pope—play in the space between.

### **Roman Catholicism, the Anti-Catholic Gothic, and the American Grand Tour**

Though the Grand Tour is most commonly understood as an eighteenth-century British phenomenon with Americans following suit and a little delayed, scholars trace its origins to sixteenth-century English travels for diplomacy, trade, and pilgrimage.<sup>18</sup> Most U.S. travelers followed a route inspired by the eighteenth-century British Grand Tour: They began in London, crossed the channel to Paris, and then laboriously made their way over the Alps to Italy, heading for Rome.<sup>19</sup> Whereas, in the antebellum years, this activity was open only to those Americans with wealth and leisure, pleasure tours to Europe became more popular and somewhat more widely available toward the end of the century, inspired by cheaper steamship fares and the new availability of package tours.

The most universal theme among the many Americans who wrote narratives of travel to Europe was the difficulty of finding anything new to say.<sup>20</sup> Already by the nineteenth century, travel writers from the United States were contributing to an already enormous and popular body of Grand Tour literature. What they wrote was triangulated through a transnational body of literature stretching back centuries. By 1869, the conventions of American Grand Tour travel literature had become so familiar to U.S. audiences that Mark Twain could satirize them in what would become his first big popular success, *The Innocents Abroad*.<sup>21</sup>

When American travelers passed through the Italian peninsula, they were often struck by what literary critic Van Wyck Brooks called a “gothic mood.” Italy inspired reflections on death: American travelers mused on the malarial fogs that descended upon the ruins of the Roman coliseum in the summer or the threat of brigands patrolling the back roads.<sup>22</sup> Italian Catholicism seemed, in particular, to evoke flights of Gothic fancy. Protestant travelers reported on what they deemed the excessive corporeality of Roman Catholic images of the suffering Christ and the martyrs. They compared Italian convents and monasteries to sites in Gothic novels such as Anne Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), focusing on what they described as the dark, secret enclosures that characterized the interior architecture of Catholicism.<sup>23</sup> The comparison became so common that it even made it into a children’s magazine: in 1884, in an attempt to describe a European abbey to the young readers of *St. Nicholas*, Frank R. Stockton found the Gothic the most obvious reference point. “Did any of you ever read ‘The Mysteries of Udolpho,’ by Mrs. Radcliffe?” he asked

his young readers. "If you have, you will remember that the story is full of secret passages, concealed door-ways, trap-doors, and dungeons. The two great round towers which stand on each side of the main entrance to this abbey are very much like my idea of the Castle of Udolpho."<sup>24</sup>

American travelers' "Gothic mood"—particularly its anti-Catholic elements—drew on fiction such as Radcliffe's, on Gothic themes in British Grand Tour narratives, and on homegrown Gothic dramas of convent captivity.<sup>25</sup> Gothic novels frequently employed Catholic characters (priests, monks, and nuns), Catholic settings (monasteries, convents, and churchyards), and Catholic materials (church bells or incense) to evoke a sense of mystery and power. They drew on and advanced anti-Catholic stereotypes about the titillating, dangerous interiority of the Church's secret spaces and fears of the intimate authority possessed by Catholic priests in the confessional.<sup>26</sup> Closer to home, the popular proliferation of anticonvent speakers and exposés in the 1830s and 1840s invited American Protestants to imagine the horrors of Gothic captivity as threatening their own sisters and daughters. The most famous of these, Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery* (1836), was a gripping, fabricated testimonial of a young Protestant woman being lured first into conversion by a clever priest and later into a convent's secret world of rape, murder, and infanticide.<sup>27</sup>

The anti-Catholic Gothic was always more than just a shiver up the spine. U.S. writers' tales of imagined captivity in Catholic spaces were, in literary scholar Jenny Franchot's words, "a strategic displacement for actual and ongoing captivities in antebellum America": these narratives achieved their fantastic antebellum popularity because they allowed white, Protestant Americans to project anxieties about enslavements—political and psychic as well as physical—onto a politically safe imaginative space.<sup>28</sup> Scholars point to the ways the anti-Catholic Gothic indexed Northeastern white anxieties about the corruptions of Southern slavery as well as fears about how the art of persuasion might corrupt deliberative democracy (American Catholic converts were, after all, persuaded to offer themselves, of their own free will, as "slaves" to the pope).<sup>29</sup> The anti-Catholic Gothic defined American freedom and independence against a putatively Catholic despotism. It offered a way to rhetorically construct the Protestant, democratic virtues of the nascent republic against an authoritarian foreign Catholic foil, while at the same time registering a fear that the seeds of the republic's corruption already lay within it.

The "Gothic mood" of antebellum-era Americans traveling in Italy constituted, then, a ritual of casting out the nation's demons and projecting them onto the Catholic people and places of Italy. But neither those demons nor that Catholicism remained unchanged as the nineteenth century unfolded. The U.S. Civil War ended in 1865 and, in 1870, so too did the Italian *Risorgimento*.<sup>30</sup> What happened, then, to this travelers' language?

## The Risorgimento

The *Risorgimento* is a term usually given to a nineteenth-century political movement for Italian national unity and independence. Its roots extend to the liberal and republican ideas of the French Revolution and to eighteenth-century Italian reformers. Its proximate cause in the nineteenth century, however, was the 1815 Congress of Vienna, which established Restoration governments throughout the Italian peninsula and made the Habsburg monarchy the dominant power in Italy. A number of attempts to unify the peninsula and throw off Austrian hegemony followed, including the Italian Revolution of 1848–49, the creation of the short-lived Roman Republic of 1849, and the 1859–61 Wars of Italian Unification. By the early 1860s, much of the peninsula was united under the Kingdom of Italy, but Rome remained the territory of the pope, protected by French forces. In 1870, Napoleon III withdrew his Roman garrison after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, leaving the pope defenseless. On September 20, 1870, Italian forces overcame a token defense by papal troops and took the city. The last remaining site of papal temporal power was incorporated into a unified, secular Italian state.<sup>31</sup>

The term *Risorgimento*—or “rebirth”—reflects nationalists’ claims that the peoples of the peninsula shared a common history of Italian greatness, ready to be renewed and reborn into an Italian nation. Historians since have denaturalized the notion of a pre-existing Italian people: they point to local and regional divisions, cast doubt on the idea that the *Risorgimento* marked a radical historical break, and seek to de-exceptionalize Italian state formation by placing it in a larger European and global context.<sup>32</sup> Yet the nationalist romance of the *Risorgimento* was itself a powerful cultural construct: powerful to Italians themselves and powerful as a story told by many across the world.<sup>33</sup>

The Italian Revolution was a popular topic of conversation among Americans in the antebellum era, particularly among New England literary elites and those who read their work. Andrews Norton, a leading Unitarian preacher and theologian in New England, translated Alessandro Manzoni’s romantic *Risorgimento* novel *I Promesi Sposi* in 1834, and his wife Catharine translated Silvio Pellico’s memoir of imprisonment in Habsburg dungeons, *Le Mie Prigioni*.<sup>34</sup> The writer and transcendentalist Margaret Fuller, in Europe as the *New York Tribune*’s foreign correspondent, wrote dispatches from Italy supporting the Revolution, worked for the cause in an Italian hospital, and married a revolutionary.<sup>35</sup> A number of *Risorgimento*-related books were written by Americans, including the first book-length account of the Italian Revolution, *The Roman Republic of 1849* (1851) by the New England writer Theodore Dwight.<sup>36</sup>

When Pius lost Rome to Italian forces in September of 1870, many American Protestants were jubilant. Newspaper editorials proclaimed it a victory for liberalism and—in response to American Catholic rallies in

support of the pope—Protestants held rallies in New York, Boston, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Lawrence, and San Francisco. Rally participants sang a new composition by Julia Ward Howe—the author of the Battle Hymn of the Republic—called the “Hymn for the Celebration of Italian Unity.”<sup>37</sup> Many imagined (falsely) that Italian nationalists were primarily inspired by and intent on following the United States’ own revolutionary, republican path.<sup>38</sup> Optimistically conflating Italian Catholic anticlericalism with anti-Catholicism, the U.S. Protestant religious press celebrated what it perceived to be a decline in the hegemonic power of Roman Catholicism in Italy. It reported jubilantly on the conversion of Italian monks and priests to Protestantism and made confident predictions for the future of Protestant Christianity in Italy. “It is pleasant,” notes a writer for the *Friends Intelligencer* in 1875, “to see that the world is moving onward, and that the experience of the long generations tends ever to wisdom and light.”<sup>39</sup> As historian Peter D’Agostino demonstrates, Protestant criticism of the pope’s continued ambitions to regain control of a territorial state remained alive in American political debates for generations, constituting a key source of political division between American Catholics and Protestants until the 1920s.<sup>40</sup>

For many American observers, the *Risorgimento* was understood as a part of a progressive historical narrative of Italy moving from a land of the past into a land of the present. American travelers in Italy saw this in the changing landscape around them. They marveled at the civic and technological changes, particularly in Rome: at the free press, freedom of religion, railway, telegraph, healthier drainage systems, boulevards, electric lights, beautiful shops, and “five or six theaters and the opera every night during the season.”<sup>41</sup> To one observer, it seemed that, as a result of the *Risorgimento*, “the great railway train of human progress and civilization [was] on the move.”<sup>42</sup> Yet there was also a nagging sense of loss. As Henry Tyrrell pithily observed in 1891 to the readers of *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly*: as his train approached Rome through “kitchen gardens and machine shops, and gas plants and factory chimneys...[one] *could* find it in one’s heart to wish that Rome looked a little more unlike Newark, N.J.”<sup>43</sup> And so astonishment and admiration for what was perceived to be a rapidly modernizing Italy—what many Americans took to be a new nation following in the United States’ footsteps—was also accompanied by nostalgia: one did not travel to Rome, after all, to muse upon the loveliness of Newark.

### Imprisoned Popes

Among travelers on the peninsula, nostalgia for an older Italy was often expressed as nostalgia for the exotic Catholic beauty of the “papal” era. This yearning could be about aesthetic appreciation or an imagined escape from the enervating forces of modernization. But it was also, distinctly, about the pope. When referencing the “papal” era, American travelers harkened back to an era of papal temporal power. In descriptions

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of Pope Pius IX and later Pope Leo X and Pius X, they cast the current popes as sympathetic protagonists, weakened by forces beyond their control. They contrasted the earlier days of papal freedom and power with the current era of papal constraint. In doing so, they continued the Gothic tradition of rendering stories about Catholicism and power in Italy in terms of imprisonment and captivity, but now reversed. The post-*Risorgimento* popes became inverted Gothic victims: the head of the Roman church now trapped in his own Catholic castle.

Perhaps the most famous connoisseur of the Catholic picturesque, Henry James, put it best when he bemoaned in 1873 that he missed “the elements of picture and colour and ‘style’” that had permeated “fully papal Rome.”<sup>44</sup> Expressions of yearning for the colorful past continued throughout the next few decades. Lillian Gilbert Browne, writing in the *Massachusetts Ploughman and New England Journal of Agriculture* in 1880, was typical in remembering that “in the old days of Rome, when the Pope was absolutely ruler...the last week in Lent...used to be celebrated so prettily that strangers went from far and near to see the spectacle. There were all sorts of processions in the streets, fine music in the churches, ceremonies in the great basilica of St. Peter, and everybody looked happy.”<sup>45</sup> And as late as 1902, Katharine Putnam Hooker struck the same note. She recalled that, during a Holy Week visit to Florence, she and her traveling companion had “looked for more pomp and circumstance,” but were disappointed. She quoted an Italian friend as explaining, in mournful color, that, “as black is to white, so is the Holy Week of to-day to that of Pio Nono’s [Pope Pius IX’s] time,” and solemnly observed, “It is not now as it once was.”<sup>46</sup>

Even those writing in Protestant religious publications, who expressed less regret over the end of papal rule, occasionally also eulogized the old, beautiful Catholic Italy: a writer signing herself “J.A.S” wrote in the *Christian Union* of 1884 that, though as a “Christian and a lover of mankind,” she “rejoice[ed]” at the “perishing of a power that has always held men’s souls in slavery,” she still felt a loss. “To my artistic and romantic sensibilities,” she distinguished, “there is something sad in thus daily witnessing the decay of institutions so venerable and invested with so much picturesque beauty.”<sup>47</sup>

Aesthetic attractions to Catholicism were not new: Grand Tour narratives are littered with appreciations of Catholic art and architecture. Throughout the nineteenth century, American travel writers so often celebrated Catholic beauty that scholars argue that American Protestants had a divided perception of European Catholicism, one that distinguished between the aesthetics of Catholic practice—which they admired—and dogmatic or theological Catholicism—which they abhorred. In his 1958 study of American writers and artists in Italy, Brooks explains Harriet Beecher Stowe’s tender descriptions of Catholic ritual in the otherwise anti-Catholic antebellum novel *Agnes of Sorrento* as rooted in such a

distinction and argues for evidence of an aesthetic attraction to Catholicism in James Russell Lowell's writing as well.<sup>48</sup> Historian Paola Gemme notes that even Margaret Fuller—who worked with Italian revolutionaries for the establishment of the Roman Republic in 1849—was drawn to the poetic aspects of Italian Catholicism and quotes her admitting with a touch of regret that the Republican Carnival of 1847 “has not been as splendid as the Papal.”<sup>49</sup> And T.J. Jackson Lears, in his path-breaking *No Place of Grace*, argues that a growing antimodernist attraction to Roman Catholic forms appeared among elite Northeastern American Protestants in the late nineteenth century as they found in these forms an available—and ultimately commodifiable—answer to modern feelings of weightlessness and alienation.<sup>50</sup>

As American travelers came increasingly to identify the old Catholic forms with a “papal” era, however, their expressions of nostalgia went further: they could bleed into an affection for the figure of the pontiff himself. Recall that James and Hooker reflect not only on an earlier Catholic age, but an age they identified with papal power, and Hooker even uses Pope Pius IX's affectionate nickname. Browne connects the “processions in the streets” and “fine music in the churches” not only to “pretty” celebrations, but also explicitly to a time when the “Pope was absolutely ruler.” When writing about papal audiences—a feature of the Grand Tour for some travelers since at least the eighteenth century—post-1870 American Protestants turned affectionate.<sup>51</sup>

Some, like Aldrich in his “certain old gentleman” essay, explicitly express affection for the head of the Roman Catholic Church. After 1870, along with Aldrich, other American Protestants in Rome wrote about the pope as “the good old man at the Vatican, whom none can see without loving”<sup>52</sup> or as a “kindly old grandfather.”<sup>53</sup> They frequently repeat a story about him, about how he was, in the words of Henry Tyrrell:

...that most gracious and sociable of Popes, [who] used to ask his foreign visitors the duration of their stay in Rome. If it was only a few days, he would say at parting, “Well, good-by;” but if the stranger was tarrying for weeks or months, then it would be, “A rivederci!” For who, after having eaten the lotus of the Tiber-side, could depart thence for good and all, nor hope ever to taste it again?<sup>54</sup>

After Pius died in 1878, American writers continued to use similar language to talk about subsequent popes, often expressing fondness for and even identification with the pontiff. In a 1903 *Lippincott's* essay, Maude Howe—Julia Ward Howe's daughter—claims that, despite her politics, she “feel[s] a personal sympathy for the Pope.” She describes Leo XIII as her neighbor in Rome and notes her own feeling of similarity to the man even

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while registering the oddness of such a claim. She cheekily declares that she, like him (but unlike the fashionable set), did not leave Rome for the summer, and imagined herself as his personal friend, a friendship that was “one-sided, like a book friendship.”<sup>55</sup>

A year later, *Harper's Monthly* published an account of the humorist Booth Tarkington's audience with the pope—who, by that time, was Pius X. Like Aldrich, Tarkington framed his papal visit as a lark, but his tone becomes more earnest when he gets to the depiction of the pope himself. The arrival of the pope brought “inexplicable tears” to the eyes of a young American couple standing nearby, Tarkington writes,

For Pius X has the effect of pathos; perhaps it is the transparent and touching quality of the simple goodness that is in his face. Many a town in the United States has been blessed with a citizen (but usually not more) whose look was of this type; a strong and kindly “Uncle Billy Jackson,” an old fellow carrying the radiance of a life spent in good works, the service of those in need; one whose hale greeting on the street made the recipient better and gayer all day; that rare thing, a genial philanthropist, whose heart and hand and scanty store were not for the orphan alone, but for all who lacked, or sinned, or mourned; for the grieving child, the lame dog, the drunkard, for the stranger fallen sick.<sup>56</sup>

Tarkington's reference to “pathos” and Howe's to her “sympathy” for a pope who could not (or would not) leave Rome, derive from the fact that, after the loss of Rome, Pius IX declared himself a prisoner in the Vatican, and subsequent popes followed suit. Some American Protestants—at home and abroad—mocked the popes for this claim, accusing them of playing prisoner to drum up support. But others took a different approach, adopting the papal language of imprisonment and expressing sympathy. In 1871, the children's author “Oliver Optic” told his young readers that Pope Pius IX “was practically a prisoner in the Vatican, with the soldiers of United Italy in possession of his dominion.”<sup>57</sup> A *Christian Union* article from 1878 describes Pope Leo XIII as enfeebled by captivity and “slowly dying of confinement, want of air and exercises, and more than all, of a broken and wounded spirit.”<sup>58</sup> Tarkington, too, concludes, “Looking upon the Pope, one feels the great pity of it that the man should be a prisoner.”<sup>59</sup>

Maude Howe dwells at length on the idea of a captive pope in her 1903 description of Pope Leo XIII, particularly in her account of his aborted attempt to give his first public benediction. “Like Pius,” she writes,

Leo began by trying for a liberal policy. The power behind the throne...was too strong for him. When he was elected he wished to give his benediction to the people in the Piazza outside from the window over the door of St. Peter's, like his predecessors. This was opposed, but the news spread through the city that the new Pope stood firm. The Piazza was crammed with waiting people; at the Quirinal the royal carriage stood ready to bring the Queen to the Piazza to receive the blessing. Those who watched with glasses saw a small white figure hurrying down the passage which leads to the window. The Pope was coming! Suddenly the white figure hesitated, paused, turned back, retreated. The way had been barricaded with benches!<sup>60</sup>

In Howe's account, Leo XIII is a diminished pope and man—a "small white figure"—thwarted by benches. In fact, Leo XIII most likely did not hopefully rush into the expectant arms of the faithful but strategically waited, deciding not to appear when it became clear that the government would not fire the customary cannons from Sant'Angelo Castle in honor of his election.<sup>61</sup> Whether or not she heard rumors about this strategizing, Howe could have chosen to cast the pope's failure to appear as a rejection of the democratic act of speaking to the people. Instead, she foregrounded the pope's status as a prisoner.

These expressions of affection for a beleaguered pontiff did not represent an embrace of all things Catholic. Indeed, whereas there was almost universal interest in the pope's prisoner status, there was disagreement about the identity of his jailer. Some U.S. writers joined Oliver Optic in finding "the soldiers of United Italy" responsible. Others, like Howe, argued that the popes were imprisoned for public relations reasons by forces within the church. Whatever affection American writers expressed for the "imprisoned" pope did not necessarily extend to the church as a whole. Nevertheless, the pope himself, once so consistently described as a threatening despot, was now frequently cast instead as a beleaguered, sympathetic figure of declining authority.

This focus on the pope as prisoner was new, but the link between captivity and Catholicism was not. Post-*Risorgimento* American Protestant travel writers recapitulated common Gothic plot devices when talking about the prisoner-popes. Maud Howe's description of Pope Leo XIII's attempt at a public benediction—in which he is "hurrying down the passage" only to find it "barricaded"—echo Gothic scenes of captive heroines rushing through the narrow corridors of their prisons, attempting (mostly futile) escape. Discussions of the popes' loss of territory resemble a common tale of Gothic misfortune, in which the heroine's imprisonment

prevents her from claiming her rightful inheritance. And like Gothic heroines, the “imprisoned” popes were depicted as both captive and physically threatened: their bodies described as weakened from lack of access to the outside world.<sup>62</sup> This writing did not so much reject the anti-Catholic Gothic, then, as invert it, turning the popes themselves into Gothic victims.

What made Catholic settings so compelling in Gothic literature was the anti-Catholic conviction that Roman Catholicism in general—and papal rule in particular—was premised on enforced obedience and a refusal of independent thought. It was, in short, enslaving. For antebellum Americans, it was not hard to make the leap from Gothic heroines fictionally held captive in anti-Catholic Gothic stories to enslaved people quite literally held captive in the U.S. South.

Throughout the antebellum and Civil War period, not only were slavery and an abstract notion of “popery” linked, but Roman Catholicism was often explicitly equated with U.S. chattel slavery. Prior to the Civil War, U.S. abolitionists repeatedly called for an end to the “twin evils” of slavery and “popery,” an association that was only strengthened by the Catholic Church’s position that, whereas racial slavery was an evil, slavery itself accorded with accepted understandings of natural hierarchy.<sup>63</sup> This connection was also a staple of antebellum and Civil War-era travel narratives. Traveling in Italy in 1829, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote to his sisters that Italian Catholics were similar to enslaved people in the United States, but he found the enslaved people better off.<sup>64</sup> In treating U.S. racial slavery as a broad rhetorical referent, Longfellow ignored the specific horrors and brutalities of enslavement in order to argue that Catholic clerical authority prevented freedom of thought and behavior. (His sisters may well have been unsurprised by his claim: at the same time, other white U.S. writers were depicting nuns as occupying positions equivalent to enslaved people, arguing that U.S. abolitionists should extend their concern to convents.)<sup>65</sup> Gemme argues persuasively that “the primary, if often unnamed, subject of many U.S. narratives of the Risorgimento was, in fact, chattel bondage, as becomes evident when the commentary over the condition of foreign subjects is interrupted by analogies with the circumstances of the domestic slaves.”<sup>66</sup> Margaret Fuller notes this herself—that Americans in Italy tended to compare the Italian state to slave states at home—and she too became more sympathetic to American abolitionism as she fought what she understood to be a similar battle in Italy.<sup>67</sup> Finally, this analogy appears in abolitionist fiction, most notably in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*: toward the end of the book, Augustine St. Claire describes the threat of slave uprising as similar to the unrest brewing in Italy under the dominion of Austrian and papal rule.<sup>68</sup>

White Americans were not the only ones comparing Catholic power in Italy to U.S. chattel slavery: so too were some Italians. For example, the parallel drove Giuseppe Rota’s popular 1853 adaptation of *Uncle Tom’s*

*Cabin*, the ballet *Bianchi e neri* (Whites and Blacks).<sup>69</sup> The argument was also made in the press, from the liberal Florentine newspaper *La Nazione*'s claim that, in the words of the historian Axel Körner, "the Roman Question and the emancipation of the American slaves" could be compared, to the Republican almanac *L'amico di casa*'s claim in 1863 that it "saw no difference 'between Jews in the Papal States and Negroes in America.'"<sup>70</sup>

The anti-Catholic Gothic mode of writing about encounters with Catholicism focused on captivity, and related—sometimes indirectly and sometimes directly—to questions raised in both U.S. and Italian contexts about the parallels between Catholic power and U.S. chattel slavery, about the morality of enslavement and the limits of appropriate authority. In late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century travel writing, then, American writers were not just rejecting anti-Catholic depictions of the pope in favor of something more humorous or more affectionate. Rather, they were invoking and playing with old anti-Catholic Gothic conventions about papal power and captivity and inverting them. The Gothicized setting of Catholic Italy remained, but the roles had switched: the pope was no longer a shadowy force enslaving the faithful, an object of liberal American horror, but rather a captive himself, an object of pity, affection, and affiliation.

### Welcoming Monasteries

U.S. travelers' fascination with figures of Catholicism often followed them out of Rome, beyond the pope, and to the doors of Italian monasteries. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century travelers often visited these monasteries, newly opened to tourism by the forces of the *Risorgimento*. Like the pope, monks and monasteries had been cast in a villainous light in anti-Catholic Gothic literature, but here, they were benignly transformed. The monks themselves were depicted as hospitable hosts, denizens of domesticated space. Like the popes, the monks too were depicted as disinherited, the monastic spaces they used to control now populated by a skeleton crew obliged to serve the needs of curious travelers. And, as in travel writing about the popes, American writers did not simply embrace the monks and monasteries, laying aside prior anti-Catholic language. Rather, they explicitly engaged and played with readers' expectations, placing themselves in the context of reworked Gothic scenes. If encounters with the pope were depicted as a reversal—the representative of an enslaving "popery" now cast as a Gothic victim—encounters with monks and monasteries involved an often-gleeful rejection of the idea that Catholic power could imprison at all. The men and women who wrote about post-1870 encounters with monks describe themselves as breaking through the surface of anti-Catholic Gothic notions of monastic evils and safely entering Catholic space to discover a benign sociability within.

During the course of the *Risorgimento*, antimonasticism was a topic

of intense debate in Italy: the introduction of an 1854 draft law for the suppression of religious orders created such an upheaval in Parliament that approximately 100,000 people signed an (ultimately unsuccessful) petition against the law, and the pope threatened to excommunicate its supporters. Antimonastic feeling ran high among Italian liberals; was championed by some of the Italian press; and was embraced by the Prime Minister of Piedmont, Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, among others. By the 1870s, monasteries throughout the Italian peninsula were secularized: some were closed entirely, their buildings and lands converted to public property, and others remained in a semi-operational state with a few elderly monks remaining as caretakers for buildings remade into hostels.<sup>71</sup>

Though post-*Risorgimento* U.S. travelers wrote as if they were exploring new precincts when they visited monasteries, some monasteries had already been stopping points on the Grand Tour. Remote monasteries provided places to stay in areas where accommodations were few; others functioned as private museums, allowing visitors to see the collections of art contained within. In fact, these visits were common enough that eighteenth-century British women on the Grand Tour wrote in frustration about monks who barred their entry into these all-male preserves.<sup>72</sup> By the late nineteenth century, American travelers—women included—found themselves with increased access to monasteries and new opportunities for conversation with individual monks.

In 1886, Elizabeth Robins Pennell wrote and her husband Joseph Pennell illustrated an account of their own version of a Grand Tour. Like other such tourists, they began in England and headed south, over the Alps, to Italy. But they did so by tricycle, publishing an account of their unconventional trip in *Century Illustrated Magazine* as they went. More than a fifth of the narrative of travel through Italy was dedicated to their stay at the Mt. Oliveto monastery in Tuscany, where the Catholic writer and her Quaker husband found a friendly welcome.

Pennell reports that the monastery had been taken over by the government and turned into a “public art gallery and *pension* for artists” with a few monks remaining as innkeepers and guides. “[T]he strangest part of this dream-life,” she testified about her time there,

was the friendship that sprang up between us and the monks. I would not have been more surprised if St. Benedict and Blessed Bernardo had come back to earth to make friends with us... [H]e [the Abate] came to our room early in the morning to drink his coffee with us, and in the evening, after he had said his Office, for a little talk. And when we finished our supper we sat together long over our wine, talking now in French, now in English, now in Italian, and occasionally understanding each other. Like

all good fellows, we too had our jokes. But the Abate's favorite was to tell how he had seen us coming up the mountain, monsieur push-pushing the *velocipede* and madame puff-puffing behind him.<sup>73</sup>

At the center of Pennell's "strange" account is the blurring of the line between American tourism and Italian monastic seclusion. Not only did the Abate become her and her husband's "good fellow," but they, in turn, became temporary members of the community. On their last day, she wrote, unexpected visitors arrived at the monastery, and Pennell and her husband found the Abate grumpily preparing a last-minute dinner for the new guests. "Were they to dine with us [at the refectory table, with the monks]? we asked. No, indeed, was his answer. They were not members of the community." His answer proved that Pennell and her husband belonged: as Pennell joked, "This confirmed our doubts as to whether we might not be monks without our knowing it."<sup>74</sup> Insider-outsider distinctions at the monastery turned out to be surprisingly malleable.

The monks at Mt. Oliveto reappear in an account of travel in Italy written almost two decades later by the Los Angeles writer Hooker. Perhaps unfamiliar with Pennell's account, Hooker notes that, at first, she was cautious:

I could not help feeling that the padres must still harbor resentful feelings toward intruding women who come to invade a retreat once closed against their objectionable sex, but to my surprise when the last course, of small sour raisins and tough cheese, was served, Don Giuseppe came in, seated himself at the table with us and affably entered into conversation.<sup>75</sup>

And this camaraderie was not limited to the monks at Mt. Oliveto: by the end of her travels, Hooker seems to have come to expect such camaraderie from monks in general. Later in her book, having evolved as narrator from ingénue to expert, Hooker advises fellow visitors to Perugia that "there are old monasteries hidden among the mountains where if you would carry pleasure with you it is well to take an offering of coffee to the monks, keenly relished by them but rarely enjoyed."<sup>76</sup>

Even a Presbyterian minister, writing for the *Congregationalist and Christian World* in 1906, reports a similar experience. William Byron Forbush was not known for his love of Catholicism: in 1926, he edited an edition of the gory anti-Catholic classic *Fox's Book of Martyrs* (a book that one scholar describes as an Ur-text of the anti-Catholic Gothic).<sup>77</sup> But, when recalling a visit to the Franciscan monastery of La Verna in the Tuscan Apennines, he describes him and his wife befriending a jolly corps of monks. Forbush recounts "photographing Brother Samuel in the act of

throwing his arms charmingly across the shoulders of two peasant boys whom he had called to his side, when the Superior Father Saturnino da Caprese, joined us. 'Here is our president,' said Brother Samuel, laughing gayly [sic] at the republican allusion." When Forbush and his wife "audaciously" asked to take the reverend director's photograph, "nothing could delight him more and he smiled with the blandness of a child as he meekly suffered himself to be posed against the chapel wall. And when we said our adieux and looked for the last time into such kind and courteous faces we felt that the barriers of faith and nationality between us were completely obliterated."<sup>78</sup> Just as Pennell jokes that she and her husband had become monks without knowing it, Forbush describes how he and his wife easily surmounted the differences between themselves and their new friends.

In anti-Catholic thought, monks and monasteries were not symbols of Catholic authority in the same way the pope was.<sup>79</sup> They did not, after all, claim territorial, political power. But the fact that monasteries could be held apart from prying outsider eyes was itself a sign of power and privilege. Monks, in these protected spaces, were cast as men free to commit gross crimes with impunity.<sup>80</sup> Conversely, the idea that monks took vows not only of celibacy, but also of obedience positioned them in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anti-Catholic thought as willingly, unnaturally subservient.<sup>81</sup>

Indeed, in the anti-Catholic Gothic, monasteries were at best secret spaces and at worst dens of sloth (because the monks were perceived as not engaging in "productive" labor) and debauchery (because the pressures of celibacy were imagined to encourage explosions of sexual vice).<sup>82</sup> The monk in Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764)—arguably the first Gothic novel—was merely an interference, but an early imitation of the book, William Hutchinson's *The Hermitage: A British Story* (1772), made the monk into a more threatening character.<sup>83</sup> In subsequent works—including Walpole's own and, notably, the popular work of Ann Radcliffe—the lecherous, dangerous monk became a stock Gothic character. Matthew G. Lewis' *The Monk*, published in England in 1796 to excited and horrified reviews, is perhaps the most notorious example: it features a title character drawn by supernatural forces into first breaking his own vow of chastity and then committing rape, murder, and incest. Lewis's text inspired legions of imitators, including at least a hundred cheap chapbooks spreading the tale of the murderous monk to less literate readers and printed in both the United Kingdom and the United States.<sup>84</sup> Whereas nineteenth-century Americans may have been loath to admit to reading books such as Lewis'—arguably the most pornographic of the eighteenth-century Gothic novels—travel writers to Italy did frequently cite Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*, which features a sinister monk appearing like a specter in the underground catacombs of St. Calixtus in Rome.<sup>85</sup> At the end of Hawthorne's novel, the innocent Hilda disappears for days into a fortress-like monastery, the de-

tails of her visit there never fully explained.<sup>86</sup> The meanings of monasteries were closely tied to their opacity.

After the *Risorgimento*, the very fact that American travelers were visiting Italian monasteries belied this opacity. The authors played with this contradiction, repeatedly invoking Gothic themes only to deny them. Hooker does so obliquely, calling attention to her presence as a woman in what had previously been an all-male space, even figuring herself as an “invader,” in sharp contrast to the image of threatened female captives in male-dominated Catholic enclosures. Pennell and Forbush were more explicit.

Before Pennell describes her and her husband’s blossoming friendship with the Abate at Mt. Oliveto, she invites her readers to recall that she was stepping into Gothic space, reporting how her own Gothic imagination was stirred upon their late-night arrival at the monastery:

[I]t was so dark that we groped our way through the hall and a small cloister. Then we came to a flight of steps where, at the bidding of the Abate, as if to reassure us that we were not being led to secret cells or torture chambers, the man carrying our bags struck a solitary match. By this feeble light we walked up the broad stone stairs, and through many passage-ways, not a sound breaking the stillness but our steps and their loud echoes, to a door where the Abate left us, and at the same time the match burnt out.<sup>87</sup>

They were rescued by the jolly Abate, but Pennell’s references to darkness and “secret cells or torture chambers,” orient the reader to a specific set of Gothic expectations.

Forbush also invokes and denies the Gothic: when describing the friendliness of the Franciscan monks at La Verna, he imagines their mid-night devotions in Gothic color:

Twice a day the brown cassocked file of monks marches chanting down the long moldy gallery to the chapel of the Stigmata. Three times a week they kneel at midnight around its [the chapel’s] central marble slab, and as the five lamps in memory of St. Francis’s five wounds are extinguished they scourge themselves in the darkness, and the clashing of their chains and the wail of the Miserere meets the howls of the winds around the stone corridors without.<sup>88</sup>

In evoking the “clashing of...chains” and the “howls of the winds around the

stone corridors" at midnight, Forbush moves beyond simple description into Gothic atmospherics. His doing so throws into sharp relief his and his wife's friendly (and technologically modern) attempts to photograph the monks and renders his claim that "the barriers of faith and nationality between us were completely obliterated," all the more heroic.

American travelers had long fantasized about invading the inner sanctum of European Catholic spaces and expressed this fantasy in ways both physical and literary: by making tourist visits to Catholic cathedrals where they could gaze upon Catholic interiors and rituals as spectators, and by writing and reading anti-Catholic Gothic narratives that claimed to expose the secret abuses going on behind Catholic doors. Indeed, as Franchot's reading of Robert Weir's 1863 painting *Taking the Veil* makes clear, for some antebellum American Protestant travelers to Italy, the pleasure of Catholic tourism was at least in part the pleasure of voyeurism.<sup>89</sup> Hooker, Pennell, and Forbush play with this idea of secret, closed spaces. Hooker figures herself as an "invader," Pennell dwells on the way she and her husband became like monks themselves, and Forbush draws attention to his ability to represent his visit (in photography as well as in narrative) to other outsiders: all of them rewrite monasteries as suddenly devoid of opacity, now open and transparent to the eye (or camera) of the curious visitor. Yet, even as they figure themselves as agents of invasion or exploration into a formerly closed Catholic interior, they do not aim to expose the corrupt heart of these monasteries: rather the opposite. Allowed finally inside a hidden Catholic space, they report that within its Gothic trappings lay something much more benign.

The anti-Catholic Gothic cast Catholic spaces as dangerous in a particular way, drawing on the widespread Protestant notion of Catholicism as physically and theologically transgressive and disordering. Catholic worship was often derided by Protestants as an unholy mixture of the physical and the spiritual. Protestant travelers in Italy found that Catholic images of the suffering Christ and martyrs, meant to inspire devotion, were surprisingly gory. Alternately disgusted and amused, they commented frequently on blood-soaked images of saints or the way the Catholic faithful would approach statues of the crucified Christ and kiss his wounds. Lou J. Beauchamp, a temperance speaker from Ohio who published an account of his European sojourn in 1896, wryly notes that "all over Europe [St. Sebastian] is to be found exposing his arrow ridden person, and looking as if he were saying to each beholder, 'Go thou and do likewise.'" <sup>90</sup> Hooker even reports coming across a statue of Christ "terribly real, and covered with wounds ghastly in their verisimilitude and crimson with streaming or coagulated blood."<sup>91</sup> Catholic images of torn and bleeding bodies were cast as transgressive of both the theological categories of matter and spirit and the bodily integrity of the pierced and bleeding figures. This

characterization seems especially apt in reference to images such as the monastic scourging of the self that Forbush describes, wherein an act of prayer broke the body's skin and produced physical (and potentially erotic) extremes of feeling.

In the anti-Catholic Gothic, the notion that Catholic faith and practice was transgressive of categories became linked with the threat—directed toward those who adopted the Catholic faith or entered Catholic space—of the transgression of their physical selves. The threats to the victim and even the general atmosphere of Gothic novels are filled with the crossing of bodily barriers: sex, rape, violent death, and decaying bodies surround the heroines menacingly. Catholic interiors themselves often figure as architectural renderings of these bodies, characterized not by boundary integrity but by invasion and flow, filled with twisting, dirty corridors through which victim and villain rushed. Accordingly, Pennell's and Forbush's depictions of their visits to monasteries contain references to their potentially low, Gothic character: both Forbush and Pennell explicitly draw their readers' attention to the "long mouldy gallery" or the "many passage-ways" of the monasteries. Their narratives of monastic visits are narratives of their own entrances into transgressive spaces.

But their narratives end by highlighting not physical and mental disorder, but health and well-being—often tied to food as both pleasure and nourishment. Hooker advises bringing monks "pleasure" by bringing them, simply, coffee, which they "relished." In Pennell's monastery tale, she too focuses on shared meals with the monks, even noting that the Abate entered their room—a potential intrusion into intimate space—only to chat over coffee. She plays with the idea of being physically endangered but simultaneously highlights her own physical strength and ability: she describes her muscles working and her lungs "puffing" to propel her forward on her tricycle. And Forbush, too, describes his monastery stay in connection with his own physical fortification: on their arrival, Forbush and his wife were met by a "kindly-faced monk" who provided each with "an enormous bowl of thick rice soup containing nourishment for six men."<sup>92</sup> The couple enjoy their visit and their meal. In the last paragraph of his travel narrative, Forbush even points to an enduring sense of well-being, one that mixes pastoral nature and Catholic ritual:

As we went down the mountain, the shepherdesses were returning to their farms, the lambs were bleating before the fold, the birds were singing vespers, the sun hung like the Host over a mountain altar, and at the Inn of the Little Brothers at Bibbiena we found clean rooms and quiet rest.<sup>93</sup>

The picture he paints is of social and natural order, of everything in its

proper—and Catholicized—place.

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American travel writers (and their readers) stepped into monasteries with certain expectations. Long imagined as secret Catholic redoubts, monasteries became the sites of repeated and playful acts of unveiling: in each account, the monastery is depicted as a potentially secret, threatening space and then revealed to be safely domestic. Like sympathetic depictions of the pope, these appealing monastery stories were not simply rejections of anti-Catholicism, but were, in fact, a continued engagement with anti-Catholic Gothic plots and figures. When Hooker, Pennell, and Forbush described their stays in monasteries as physically and psychically nourishing, they were not only deriding the Gothic flights of fancy of previous writers. They were also denying the logic behind that fancy, the idea that the greatest threat to the American body politic was to be found in strongholds of “Old World” authority and privilege. Travel writers played with the idea that spaces of Catholic secrecy and power could be bodily threatening and instead repeatedly revealed such ideas to be comic misapprehensions, dark fantasies that did not accord with the benevolent affection of the monks and the calming, even restorative atmospheres of these monasteries.

### **Threats to Rome and Newark**

In real or imagined encounters with the Pope or on visits to Italian monasteries, some American writers turn blithely away from critiques of Catholicism as the embodiment of excessive power and authority, secrecy and captivity. But references to problems with authority are not absent from post-1870 American travel writing in Italy: they just turn in another direction. When U.S. travelers walked the streets of Italian cities or advised others on planning trips through the countryside, they sounded a constant drumbeat of concern for Italian crime, bemoaning the lack of a restraining authority in post-*Risorgimento* Italy. And, just as the anti-Catholic Gothic echoed U.S. domestic concerns about the fragility of a republic committed to slavery, so too did these worries about Italian crime echo U.S. domestic worries: this time the concerns of middle- and upper-class white Americans about the perceived social “disorder” of the Gilded Age.

While Aldrich was admiring the pope and Forbush visiting a Tuscan monastery, other American writers reported with alarm on what they claimed was the lawlessness of independent Italy. An eyewitness to the end of the *Risorgimento*, writing in *Lippincott's* in 1871, recalls that, after the pope's retreat to the Vatican, “the brigands have escaped from Civita Vecchia and are out on the Campagna, and...prices of apartments, carriages, everything, in short, have risen frightfully. Indeed, the coachmen, with pleasant Italian knavery, laugh and say there exists no tariff any longer, and they can charge what we [sic] please.”<sup>94</sup> In 1872, *The Albion*, a New

York weekly, explains,

It is supposed by a great many honest people that the Italian bandit exists nowadays only on the stage. United Italy and the railways together, in the fancy of these optimists, have finally routed him from his fastnesses, and either eliminated him entirely from society, or transfigured him into the harmless and happy peasant, or the peaceful, if exasperating, organ-grinder.

But it was not true: "Some of the exploits related of the modern banditti take us back to that hey-dey [sic] of romantic villany, when the Abruzzi swarmed with swarthy and beribboned desperadoes."<sup>95</sup> According to reports like these, the triumph of the *Risorgimento* had not produced a law-abiding, orderly society. It may even have made things worse.

Twelve years later, the *Christian Union's* Rome correspondent sounded an even more dire note of ever-increasing disorder. J.A.S., the writer who called the pope a "kindly old grandfather" and expressed sympathy for him in his imprisonment, also worried about what was happening outside the Vatican doors.<sup>96</sup> In 1884, she tells her readership:

It is now war to the death between the upper and lower classes, between the governing and the governed. Here in Rome newspapers daily print insolent attacks on the Government, for which even four or five years ago they would have been sequestered and even prosecuted: but the Government now knows that it is impossible to prevent this and has, alas! too much cause to blush to dare even to notice the attack. Mingled with all this resistance to authority there is at the same time a great increase of crime. Murder, stabbing, and suicide are of daily occurrence, and seem to have lost their horror. For a slight offence, for a few hot words, the knife is drawn and a life taken.

She claims that "[t]here seems to have come among the lower classes a climax of carelessness and wickedness beyond remedy. There is no religious influence that could overtake this nor is there one that even tries." She concludes the article by noting that the newspapers could not even find a leader to champion—and, remarkably, she suggests that even papal rule would be better than the current state of affairs. "It is not the old cry, 'Le roi est mort! Vive la roi!'" she declares, "or the old saying, 'The Pope never dies;' it is, 'The king is dead, and there is no king to succeed!'"<sup>97</sup> In

the face of an “insolent” press, widespread “resistance to authority,” and lower class “wickedness,” this correspondent for a Protestant paper cannot fully endorse the return of the pope as religious and political ruler. But she can, and does, mourn the loss of his steadying hand.

Running like a bright seam through these warnings about crime and corruption is a particular characterization of the Italian people. Unlike in U.S. *Risorgimento* literature—which often presents Italians as incipient republicans, the younger brethren of American patriots—now Italians are presented as possessing an essential “wickedness” or “knavery,” crying out for a restraining hand. Travelers describe the Italians they encountered abroad as looking “a great deal more like grown-up children than like men and women” and worry aloud that they are childish, impulsive, violent, and ultimately incapable of self-rule.<sup>99</sup> This language echoes what many middle- and upper-class, white Americans were saying back home about new immigrants and the growing industrial working class (many of whom were themselves Italian) and also about African Americans fighting through and beyond Reconstruction for equity, opportunity, and a full measure of citizenship.

Notably, amid this widespread concern for social order in independent Italy, the old American Protestant claims to an equivalence between Catholic rule in Italy and chattel slavery at home were almost completely dropped. Tracking antebellum arguments in the United States, Gemme notes that Frederick Douglass’s “1861 comments on Garibaldi constitute one of the last instances of the articulation of the debate on slavery through the discussion of Italy’s political situation.”<sup>99</sup> And, as we see, after the end of the Civil War and the *Risorgimento*, U.S. travel writers in Italy did not celebrate recent victories over the “twin evils”: slavery eliminated at home, “popery” perhaps fatally injured in Italy. Rather, once the pope declared himself a prisoner, they murmured their condolences.

One might, of course, assume that the decline of papal power would inevitably lead to a newly sympathetic language about the pope or that rhetorical connections between enslavement and Roman Catholicism would naturally cease to be relevant after emancipation. Yet these were choices: whereas most travel writers dropped earlier allusions to Catholic enslavement, not all of them did.

In 1913, Booker T. Washington—the African American educator and leader of the Tuskegee Institute—published an account of his 1910 travels called *The Man Farthest Down: A Record of Observation and Study in Europe*. The book was written with the sociologist Robert E. Park, whom Washington hired to be his researcher and ghostwriter. The title derives from the premise of the book: the first chapter tells readers that Washington went to Europe to learn about “the condition of the poorer and working classes in Europe, particularly in those regions from which an ever-increasing number of immigrants are coming to our country each year,”

and also to compare national “race problems.”<sup>100</sup> “I believed,” he writes,

that I would find in some parts of Europe peoples who in respect to education, opportunity, and civilization generally were much nearer the level of the masses of the Negro people in the South than I was likely to find anywhere in America. I believed, also, that if I went far enough and deep enough I should find even in Europe great numbers of people who, in their homes, in their labour, and in their manner of living, were little, if any, in advance of the Negroes in the Southern States, and I wanted to study at first hand, as far as I was able, the methods which European nations were using to uplift the masses of the people who were at the bottom in the scale of civilization.<sup>101</sup>

His descriptions of Italy are suffused with comparisons to the American South, from the “soft southern air” of Rome, “such air as I had not found anywhere since I left my home in Alabama”<sup>102</sup> to the “popular superstitions of Sicily,” which reminded him of “many of the notions that the Negroes are supposed to have imported to America from Africa.” He even describes the Virgin as having “become, among the lower class of people, little more than a fetish, a thing to conjure with.”<sup>103</sup> Like his white compatriots, Washington bemoans the rate of murder and other violent crime in Italy. But, unlike them, he does not mourn the loss of a “papal” era. Instead, he blames the Catholic Church in Italy for keeping the people in a state of poor education—much like enslaved people were kept in the United States—and prescribes the same remedy for both: his own form of industrial education.

What Washington interprets as social disorder in Italy was not a native Italian “knavery” let loose without the restraining hand of religious authority, but rather a people who needed education in order to take up the mantle of responsible citizens. The point here is not that one vision of Italy was more accurate: both read Italian politics and society in Italy through faulty comparisons to the United States.<sup>104</sup> The point is that Washington’s narrative illuminates the ideological work in either the continuation or the more common erasure of antebellum-era rhetorical associations between American slavery and Italian Catholic authority.

In short, white U.S. travel writers’ rejections and inversions of anti-Catholic Gothic tropes should be read together with a rising American concern about social unrest and crime in Italy, concerns tied to a perceived failure of the *Risorgimento* and articulated in language that mirrors domestic fears among well-off white Americans about new immigrants, the working class, and freedpeople. In this sense, the topic of U.S. slavery re-entered the conversation but notably not—for most white writers—in

an ongoing abolitionist key, as a celebration of modern liberal victories over authority and (a broadly writ) enslavement. Instead, it entered as a rejection of earlier anti-Catholic Gothic fears of enslaving power and secrecy in favor of nostalgic appeals to paternalist authority and anxious allusions to rising disorder.

Aldrich's tale of his visit to "a certain old gentleman" can seem, on the face of it, too tongue-in-cheek to be taken seriously. The Boston Unitarian could never fully embrace the pope's own convictions or goals. Even as Aldrich expressed sympathy for the pontiff, he did not advocate for what Pius IX and legions of Catholics the world over were fighting: the return of territorial authority to the head of the Catholic Church. And so Aldrich's expressions of sympathy and admiration for the pontiff can seem insincere, possibly the stuff of comedy.

Yet, understood as part of a larger pattern of inversions and rejections of the anti-Catholic Gothic, Aldrich's account of his visit to Pius IX appears, in the end, to look more like tragedy. In writing about the pope as a "certain old gentleman," Aldrich wryly signals that the pope he admired was a pope who represented not specific claims to Catholic temporal power, but rather a more general claim to paternal authority. Cavil as he might about what he took to be the superstitions of Catholic ritual, he could also mourn a time when a "gentleman" might "exercise almost unlimited influence, for the most part with moderation and wisdom," all while living a "temperate, blameless private life."

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Europe began to seem to American travelers less like, in the words of Daniel Rodgers, "the Old World, the continent of decadence and decay," and more like a site of modern industry and technology.<sup>105</sup> In study-abroad programs and investigative junkets, visits to slums and settlement houses, even socially conscious package tours, progressive-minded Americans crossed the Atlantic to search Europe's cities for answers to the so-called "social question." Convinced that the United States and Europe were similarly plagued by the social disruptions—the misery and conflict—brought on by the rapid and uneven growth of industrial capitalism, they turned to their European colleagues for advice and ideas. In the process, they rejected American exceptionalism, positioning themselves as Americans in relation to Europe not as forerunners and exemplars in an age of revolution and republican nation building, but rather as colleagues and interlocutors in an age of industrial modernity and social politics.

Many white, well-off American travelers in Italy expressed different concerns and ambitions—and spoke the language of religion rather than that of policy and planning—but they voiced a similar rejection of American exceptionalism. Catholic Italy, for them, was no longer a corrupt and fascinating Romish other, but rather a society much like their own, weath-

ering familiar changes and facing familiar problems. One young American woman might have a “book friendship” with a pope, tourists on tricycle might find themselves welcomed as part of a monastic community, and Rome might even turn out to be—to recall Henry Tyrell’s lament—quite a lot like Newark.

In this vision, as in that of the Progressive solution-seekers, both the United States and Europe were similar societies on similar paths. But, if reformist travelers in England and Germany pointed to settlement houses and sewage systems as what they might hope for the future of modern, industrial American society, white American travelers in post-*Risorgimento* Italy charted the underbelly of those hopes: a disorder that seemed to beg for the controlling influence of a pope.

Anti-Catholic Gothic travel narratives written by early nineteenth-century Americans visitors to Italy told an optimistic story about how American republican democracy was banishing the dangers and corruptions of Rome. Stories such as Aldrich’s—late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century stories rejecting or inverting the anti-Catholic Gothic—added a discomfiting coda. Perhaps, the United States-as-republican-exemplar had not, actually, solved the riddle of history. When one demolished papal power and opened sites of monastic seclusion, only to find a weakened old man and sociable communities of coffee-loving monks, one might conclude that popish despotism and monastic privilege were not the dangers they had seemed to be. In writing about imprisoned popes and hospitable monks, well-off white Americans argued that the real thing to fear—in Newark as in Rome—might be the challenge to authority itself.

## Notes

1. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, “A Visit to a Certain Old Gentleman. Leaves from a Roman Note-Book,” *Atlantic Monthly* 37, no. 223 (May 1876): 541, 549–50. Aldrich’s essay, slightly modified, was also published in his travel book *From Ponkapog to Pesth* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1883).

2. For a different reading of Aldrich’s essay, see William L. Vance, *America’s Rome: Volume Two, Catholic and Contemporary Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 39–40. Vance argues that Aldrich “trivializes” the pope, but also calls his description of the pope’s “force of will” “remarkable,” noting a distinction between Aldrich’s overall tone and his particular depiction of the pope.

3. My understanding of American Protestant engagements with Catholicism in Europe and Italy is influenced by the work cited throughout, but in particular by T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) and Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

4. This essay is based on an analysis of nineteen book-length post-1870 travel narratives and approximately 200 articles on travel in Italy published in both the secular and Protestant press as well as a survey of pre-1870 travel narratives for the purposes of comparison.

5. Whereas I cannot be sure that everyone quoted in this essay would have understood themselves to be white—some of their bylines include only their initials—my survey of narratives published by non-Catholic African American travelers in Italy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not reveal similar expressions of attraction to the pope and monks. For more on travel in the Black Atlantic, see Alasdair Pettinger, ed., *Always Elsewhere: Travels of the Black Atlantic* (London and New York: Cassell, 1998); Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); and Eve Dunbar, *Black Regions of the Imagination: African American Writers Between the Nation and the World* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012).

6. For other work that challenges the oft-presumed link between rejections of anti-Catholicism on the one hand and the development of liberal pluralism on the other, see Fenton, *Religious Liberties*; Fessenden, *Culture and Redemption*; Anna Su, *Exporting Freedom: Religious Liberty and American Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); Tisa Wenger, *Religious Freedom: The Contested History of an American Ideal* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); and Udi Greenberg, "Catholics, Protestants, and the Violent Birth of European Religious Pluralism," *The American Historical Review* 124, no. 2 (April 1, 2019): 511–38.

7. Clare Haynes, "A Trial for the Patience of Reason? Grand Tourists and Anti-Catholicism after 1745," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33, no. 2 (2010): 195–7. In addition, travelers during the *Risorgimento* would have encountered forms of anticlericalism and—as Manuel Borutta argues—anti-Catholicism among Italians and within contemporary Italian print culture. Borutta, "Anti-Catholicism and the Culture War in Risorgimento Italy," in *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, ed. Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall (New York: PalgraveMacmillan, 2012), 191–213.

8. Daniel Kilbride, *Being American in Europe, 1750–1860* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 115. See also Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., and Susan Cragg Ricci, "American Painters and the Lure of Italy" in *The Lure of Italy: American Artists and the Italian Experience, 1760–1914*, ed. Stebbins and William H. Gerdtz (Boston and New York: Museum of Fine Arts and Harry N. Abrams, 1992), 48.

9. Gerrit Verhoeven, "Calvinist Pilgrimages and Popish Encounters: Religious Identity and Sacred Space on the Dutch Grand Tour (1598–1685)," *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 3 (2010): 615–34; Kilbride, *Being American in Europe*, 119–20; and Steven Conn, "Political Romanism: Re-Evaluating American Anti-Catholicism in the Age of Italian Revolution," *Journal of the Early Republic* 36, no. 3 (September 9, 2016): 521–48.

10. Verhoeven, "Calvinist Pilgrimages," 616.

11. Rosemary Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, c. 1690–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 147, 268. Jeremy Black, *France and the Grand Tour* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 168.

12. On art and architecture, see Kilbride, *Being American in Europe*, 119–20; Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 148; and Brigitte Bailey, *American Travel Literature, Gendered Aesthetics, and the Italian Tour, 1824–1862* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 198. On devotional culture, see also Vance, *America's*

*Rome: Volume Two*; Stebbins and Ricci, "American Painters," 48-9; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, chapter 5; and Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, chapter 10. On hospitals, see Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations Since the Renaissance* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998), chapter 11.

13. Elizabeth Harrison, "Italy Opened the Doors of My Religious Consciousness': Catholicism in Rozanov's Italian Impressions" *Slavonic & East European Review* 94, no. 1 (January 2016): 1-28.

14. The classic historical surveys of U.S. anti-Catholicism are Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of the American Nativism* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1938); John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992); and David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47, no. 2 (Sept. 1960): 205-24. More recent surveys include Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Philip Jenkins, *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Mark Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003); John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003); Timothy Verhoeven, *Transatlantic Anti-Catholicism: France and the United States in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Maura Jane Farrelly, *Anti-Catholicism in America, 1620-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

15. Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (New York: The American Home Missionary Society, 1885); Les Wallace, *The Rhetoric of Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association, 1887-1911* (New York: Garland Science, 1990), 2; and Justin Nordstrom, *Danger on the Doorstep: Anti-Catholicism and American Print Culture in the Progressive Era* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 8-10.

16. Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 86-181; Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, 107, 140, 160; Farrelly, *Anti-Catholicism in America*, 143-5. For examples of rejections of anti-Catholicism from American travel narratives specifically, see George Stillman Hillard, *Six Months in Italy*, 6th ed. (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1857), 210 (in which he advises that one should avoid behaving like the "sourest of Puritans" when traveling abroad) and Rebecca Harding Davis, "In Old Florence," *St. Nicholas: an Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks* 25, no. 7 (May 1898): 592 (in which her protagonist, a boy named Tom Ross, from "Freetown" U.S.A., learns to recognize Italian Catholic ritual not as a lack of "common sense," but rather as having "a solemn and sacred meaning to these people").

17. Ryan K. Smith, *Gothic Arches, Latin Crosses: Anti-Catholicism and American Church Designs in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Anthony Burke Smith, *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010); and Katherine D. Moran, *The Imperial Church: Catholic Founding Fathers and United States Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020). See also Lears, *No Place of Grace* and McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*. Jenny Franchot's *Roads to Rome*, often cited as a study of

American anti-Catholicism, is also a careful study of the dynamics of both attraction and repulsion in American Protestant attitudes to Roman Catholicism. Readers interested in other work that complicates an anti-/pro-Catholic binary should see Paula M. Kane, *Separatism and Subculture: Boston Catholicism, 1900-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Michael P. Carroll, *American Catholics in the Protestant Imagination: Rethinking the Academic Study of Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Colleen McDannell, ed. *Catholics in the Movies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); James T. Fisher, *On the Irish Waterfront: The Crusader, the Movie, and the Soul of the Port of New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Elizabeth Fenton, *Religious Liberties: Anti-Catholicism and Liberal Democracy in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Kathleen Holscher, *Religious Lessons: Catholic Sisters and the Captured Schools Crisis in New Mexico* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Tracy Fessenden, *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Kristy Nabhan-Warren, *The Cursillo Movement in America: Catholics, Protestants, and Fourth-Day Spirituality* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Brett Hendrickson, *Border Medicine: A Transcultural History of Mexican American Curanderismo* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); David Mislin, "Against the Foes That Destroy the Family, Protestants and Catholics Can Stand Together: Divorce and Christian Ecumenism" in *Faithful Republic: Religion and Politics in Modern America*, ed. Andrew Preston, Bruce J. Schulman, and Julian E. Zelizer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 9-21; and Hendrickson, *The Healing Power of the Santuario de Chimayó: America's Miraculous Church* (New York: New York University Press, 2017).

18. For an introduction to scholarly literature on the Grand Tour (some of which have a particular focus on Italy), see Jeremy Black, *The British and the Grand Tour* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); Christopher Hibbert, *The Grand Tour* (London: Thames Methuen, 1987); James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations Since the Renaissance* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998); Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999); Clare Hornsby, ed. *The Impact of Italy: The Grand Tour and Beyond* (London: British School at Rome, 2000); Brian Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour: British Women in Pursuit of Enlightenment and Adventure in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001); Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Michael G. Brennan, ed. *The Origins of the Grand Tour: The Travels of Robert Montagu Lord Mandeville (1649-1654) William Hammond (1655-1658) and Banaster Maynard (1660-1663)* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2004); and Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*. See also Stanford University's digital history project "The Grand Tour Project" (<https://grandtour.stanford.edu/>).

19. For surveys of American travel to Europe and travel writing, see: Foster Rhea Dulles, *Americans Abroad: Two Centuries of European Travel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964); William H. Stowe, *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University

Press, 1994); Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), chapter 4; and Kilbride, *Being American in Europe*. For work on nineteenth-century Americans in Italy (a scholarship focused largely on artists or literary men and women), see Van Wyck Brooks, *The Dream of Arcadia: American Writers and Artists in Italy, 1760-1915* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1958); Paul R. Baker, *The Fortunate Pilgrims: Americans in Italy, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964); Nathalia Wright, *American Novelists in Italy. The Discoverers: Allston to James* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965); Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., and William H. Gerdts, *The Lure of Italy: American Artists and the Italian Experience, 1760-1914* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1992); Vance, *America's Rome*; Beth L. Lueck, Sirpa Salenius, and Nancy Lusignan Schultz, eds., *Transatlantic Conversations: Nineteenth-Century American Women's Encounters with Italy and the Atlantic World* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2017); and Brigitte Bailey, *American Travel Literature, Gendered Aesthetics, and the Italian Tour, 1824-1862* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

20. This was not just an American and not just a nineteenth-century phenomenon. Buzard argues that, during the period after the Napoleonic Wars, British and some American travelers felt "their attentions much divided between the sights they saw and the consciousness of their own belatedness in seeing them." Buzard, *Beaten Track*, 106 for the quote; see also pages 156-8.

21. Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869; New York: Book-of-the-Month Club, 1992).

22. Brooks, *Dream of Arcadia*, 22.

23. Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho: A Romance*, edited and with an introduction and notes by Jacqueline Howard (1794; London: Penguin Books, 2001).

24. Frank R. Stockton, "Personally Conducted," *St. Nicholas: an Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks* 12, no. 1 (November 1884): 21. Stockton remains most famous for writing the story "The Lady, or the Tiger."

25. Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, chapter 6.

26. For more on Catholic themes in Gothic novels, see Mary Muriel Tarr, *Catholicism in Gothic Fiction: A Study of the Nature and Function of Catholic Materials in Gothic Fiction in England (1762-1820)* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1946), especially chapter 5, in which she advances the argument about the mystery and power of Catholic materials, as well as Victor Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Patrick R. O'Malley, *Catholicism, Sexual Deviance, and Victorian Gothic Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Maria Purves, *Gothic and Catholicism: Religion, Cultural Exchange and the Popular Novel, 1785-1829* (Cardiff : University of Wales Press, 2010); Diane Long Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology: Religious Hysteria and Anti-Catholicism in British Popular Fiction, 1780-1880* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014); and Farrell O'Gorman, *Catholicism and American Borders in the Gothic Literary Imagination* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017). For work that, like this essay, is interested in American writers' explicit rejections of anti-Catholic Gothic conventions, see Yael Shapira, "Whatever Bigots Say": Isaac Harby's *The Gordian Knot* and the Anti-Catholic Gothic," *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 33, no. 1 (2014): 107-29.

27. Maria Monk, "Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery," in *Veil of Fear: Nineteenth Century Convent Tales* by Rebecca Reed and Maria Monk, ed. Nancy Lusignan Schultz (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1999), 1-137. On antebellum convent captivity narratives, see Mary Ewens, *The Role of the Nun in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 161-200; Joseph G. Mannard, "The 1839 Baltimore Nunnery Riot: An Episode in Jacksonian Nativism and Social Violence," in *Urban American Catholicism: The Culture and Identity of the American Catholic People*, ed. Timothy J. Meagher (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), 194-5; Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, chapters 4-7; Mannard, "Protestant Mothers and Catholic Sisters: Gender Concerns in Anti-Catholic Conspiracy Theories, 1830-1860," *American Catholic Studies* 111 (2000): 1-21; and Susan M. Griffin, *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), chapter 1. For a larger discussion of the popularity of the Gothic in the United States, including a reconstruction of the appearance of English and German Gothic novels in American book catalogs, see Ringe, *American Gothic: Imagination and Reason in Nineteenth Century Fiction* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), especially chapter 2. On the American Gothic, see also Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Robert K. Martin and Eric Savoy, eds., *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998), and Robert Miles, "Transatlantic Gothic," in *Transatlantic Literary Studies, 1660-1830*, ed. Eve Tavor Bannett and Susan Manning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 202-18.

28. Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, 103-6, 171.

29. Tracy Fessenden, "From Romanism to Race: Anglo-American Liberties in Uncle Tom's Cabin," *Prospects: An Annual Journal of American Cultural Studies* 25 (2000): 229-68; and Fenton, *Religious Liberties*, chapters 4 and 5. On the Gothic and American antislavery, see also Karen Halttunen, "Gothic Imagination and Social Reform: The Haunted House of Lyman Beecher, Henry Ward Beecher, and Harriet Beecher Stowe" in *New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin*, ed. Eric J. Sundquist (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

30. Most scholarship on the American Grand Tour stops in the 1860s, and some scholars argue that this moment—marking the unification of most Italian states and the start of the U.S. Civil War—combined with the development of railroads and steamboats marks the end of an era. For arguments about the difference in late-century travelers, see Stebbins and Ricci, "American Painters," 59; William L. Vance, "Seeing Italy: The Realistic Rediscovery by Twain, Howells, and James" in Stebbins and Gerdtts, *The Lure of Italy*, 97; and Kilbride, *Being American in Europe*, 7-8.

31. For an introduction to the *Risorgimento*, see Lucy Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society, and National Unification* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); Derek Beales and Eugenio F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy* (London: Pearson Education, 2002); and Riall, *Risorgimento: The History of Italy from Napoleon to Nation-State* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

32. Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento*.

33. Recently, *Risorgimento* scholars have worked to make the subject accessible to scholars outside the field of Italian history and so to expand the range of

scholarship available on the international dimensions of the *Risorgimento* in part by publishing and arranging conferences in English. As a scholar of U.S. history and culture, I am indebted to this work. See Axel Körner and Lucy Riall, "Introduction: The New History of Risorgimento Nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 15, no. 3 (2009): 396–401, and Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall, eds., *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (New York: PalgraveMacmillan, 2012). For additional work reflective of the transnational turn in Risorgimento historiography, including but hardly limited to work on U.S.–Italian connections, see Maura O'Connor, *The Romance of Italy and the English Political Imagination* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Tim Roberts, "The United States and the European Revolutions of 1848," in Guy Thompson, ed., *The European Revolutions of 1848 and the Americas* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2002); Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Paola Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles: The Italian Risorgimento and Antebellum American Identity* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005); Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of Hero* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007); Dennis Berthold, *American Risorgimento: Herman Melville and the Cultural Politics of Italy* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2009); Silvana Patriarca, *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Simon Sarlin, "The Anti-Risorgimento as a Transnational Experience" *Modern Italy* 19, no. 1 (February 2014): 81–92; Nick Carter, ed., *Britain, Ireland, and the Italian Risorgimento* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015); Conn, "Political Romanism"; Axel Körner, *America in Italy: The United States in the Political Thought and Imagination of the Risorgimento, 1763–1865* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017); and Ann L. Tucker, *Newest Born of Nations: European Nationalist Movements and the Making of the Confederacy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020). For a classic take on U.S. responses to the *Risorgimento*, see the work of Howard J. Marraro, especially *American Opinion on the Unification of Italy, 1846–1861* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932); "American Travelers in Rome, 1848–1850," *Catholic Historical Review* 29 (1944): 470–509; "American Opinion of the Occupation of Rome in 1870," and "The Religious Problem of the Italian *Risorgimento* as seen by Americans," *Church History* 25 (1956).

34. James Turner, *The Liberal Education of Charles Eliot Norton* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 31, 33. Van Wyck Brooks depicts the Nortons as a *Risorgimento* power couple: in his words, their son Charles Eliot Norton, the future art historian, was "brought up on the *Risorgimento*." Brooks, *Dream of Arcadia*, 125.

35. On Fuller in Italy, see Charles Capper, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life*. Vol. 2, *The Public Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Leonardo Buonomo, *Backward Glances: Exploring Italy, Reinterpreting America (1831–1866)* (London: Associated University Presses, 1996); Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*, chapter 3; Charles Capper and Cristina Giorcelli, eds., *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007); and Ernesto Livorni, "American Writers in Rome during the Risorgimento" *Forum Italicum* 47, no. 2 (August 2013): 364–96.

36. Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*, 109, 111.

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37. D'Agostino, *Rome in America*, 48; Marraro "American Opinion" 240-1.

38. Axel Körner's work has neatly refuted this myth of American influence. Körner, *America in Italy*.

39. S.R., "From our European Correspondent, No. 62: Ecclesiastical and Mythological," *Friends' Intelligencer* 32, no. 27 (28 August 1875): 428.

40. Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America*. See also Conn, "Political Romanism."

41. The quote is from Eugene Didier, "Some Phases of Italian Life," *Christian Union* 34, no. 11 (September 9, 1886): 7. The list was taken from Didier's article as well as George F. Fiske, "Italy from a Bicycle," *Outing* 11 (1887): 165-9, and "Modern Rome," *The Friend* 49, no. 29 (March 4, 1876): 230.

42. Bidwell, "Some Jottings in Rome," 1.

43. Henry Tyrrell, "Roma—Amor," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* 32, no. 4 (October 1891): 390.

44. Henry James, *Italian Hours*, edited by John Auchard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 123. Originally published as "A Roman Holiday," in the *Atlantic Monthly* 32 (July 1873), 1-11.

45. Browne, "Easter In Rome," *Massachusetts Ploughman and New England Journal of Agriculture* 39, no. 26 (27 March 1880): 4.

46. Katharine Hooker, *Wayfarers in Italy* (San Francisco: D.P. Elder and Morgan Shepard, 1902), 63.

47. J.A.S., "Modern Italy—A Dark Picture," *Christian Union* 29, no. 19 (18 May 1884): 440.

48. Brooks, *Dream of Arcadia*, 128-30. For more on Agnes of Sorrento in the context of the Grand Tour, see Bailey, *American Travel Literature*, chapter 5.

49. Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*, 103.

50. Lears, *No Place of Grace*.

51. See Hibbert, *The Grand Tour*, 138-9; Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, 170; and Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 149-51. The attention did not only go one way: Ilaria Bignamini argues that the popes of the late eighteenth century made "clever, planned use of the Grand Tour" by shrewdly negotiating with British and other Europeans who wanted to excavate nearby archeological sites, building the collections of Vatican museums in the process. Bignamini, "The Italians as Spectators and Actors: The Grand Tour Reflected" in Hornsby, ed., *The Impact of Italy*, 45-7).

52. C.C., "Rome on the Twentieth of September: Extracts from a Diary," *Lippincott's Magazine of Literature, Science and Education* 7, February 1871, 141.

53. J.A.S., "A Visit to the Pope," *Christian Union* 12, no. 22 (29 May 1878): 385, 387.

54. Henry Tyrrell, "Roma—Amor," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* 32, no. 4 (October 1891): 385, 387.

55. Maud Howe, "A Presentation to Leo the Thirteenth and Other Roman Notes," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* 72, no. 430, (October 1903): 460.

56. Booth Tarkington, "A Vatican Sermon" *Harpers Monthly Magazine* 109, no. 649 (June 1904): 72.

57. Oliver Optic [William Taylor Adams], "Editorial Correspondence," *Oliver Optic's Magazine* 10, no. 216 (July 1871): 481.

58. Quote from J.A.S., "The Sick Pope," *Christian Union* 17, no. 26 (26 June 1878): 533. Also see J.A.S., "An Important Ceremony," *Christian Union* 25, no. 2

(12 January 1882): 30.

59. Tarkington, "A Vatican Sermon," 72.

60. Maud Howe, "A Presentation to Leo the Thirteenth and Other Roman Notes," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* 72, no. 430 (October 1903): 466. See also her depiction of Leo XIII as feminine and feverish. Maud Howe, "A Presentation to Leo the Thirteenth and Other Roman Notes," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* 72, no. 430, (October 1903): 465.

61. David I. Kertzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican: The Popes' Secret Plot to Capture Rome from the New Italian State* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 155.

62. For examples of a corridor a scene, see Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 403-8, 423-4. For common tropes in anti-Catholic Gothic tales—which include "disputed estates"—see Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology*, "Introduction."

63. The phrase is borrowed from John R. McKivigan and Mitchell Snay, "Introduction: Religion and the Problem of Slavery in Antebellum America," in McKivigan and Snay, eds., *Religion and the Antebellum Debate Over Slavery* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 4. "Twin evils" language was also applied to Mormonism in nineteenth-century United States. For a study of Mormonism and tourism that has informed my understanding of religion and tourism generally, see David Walker, *Railroading Religion: Mormons, Tourists, and the Corporate Spirit of the West* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

64. Charles C. Calhoun, *Longfellow: A Rediscovered Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 56-7.

65. Kara M. French, *Against Sex: Identities of Sexual Restraint in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 30.

66. Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*, chapter 4.

67. Bell Gale Chevigny, "Mutual Interpretation: Margaret Fuller's Journeys in Italy" in Capper and Giorcelli, eds. *Margaret Fuller*, 11-2, 14, 17. Livorni notes that Fuller even uses Gothic language to describe Pius IX's role as prisoner after 1848 though she was not a fan of the pope and felt betrayed by his decision. Livorni, "American Writers," 370-1.

68. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, ed. Elisabeth Ammons (1852; New York: Norton, 1994), 234, quoted in Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*, 121.

69. Körner, *America in Italy*, 200. See pages 200-17 for a general discussion of *Bianchi e neri* and the Italian reception of Stowe.

70. Körner, *America in Italy*, 214.

71. Borutta, "Anti-Catholicism and the Culture War," 195-7. See also D'Agostino, *Rome in America*, 38, 45 and Riall *Risorgimento*, 28.

72. Haynes, "A Trial," 200; Verhoeven, *Transatlantic Anti-Catholicism*, 622. On women, see Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 55-6.

73. Elizabeth Robins Pennell, "Italy, from a Tricycle," *Century Illustrated Magazine* 31, no. 5 (March 1886): 664.

74. Pennell, "Italy, from a Tricycle," 664.

75. Hooker, *Wayfarers in Italy*, 68. Hooker calls the monks "padres," a term commonly used in Southern California—where Hooker lived—to refer to the history of Spanish friars there.

76. Hooker, *Wayfarers in Italy*, 203.

77. On the *Book of Martyrs* as an Ur-text of the anti-Catholic Gothic, see Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology*, 6 and 101.

78. William Byron Forbush, "The Mountain Eyrie of St. Francis," *Congregation-alist and Christian World* 91, no. 35 (1 September 1906): 273-4.

79. This distinction should not be too finely drawn. As Bailey notes in discussing the *Marble Faun*—in which monks play important roles as symbols of Catholicism—"the Catholic Church generally serves in this Protestant romance as a representation of the power and potentially repressive authority of the state, especially the state seen as an archaic European institution, controlling its subjects through a mixture of coercion and idolatry." (Bailey, *American Travel Literature*, 200.)

80. On Gothic monks as "aristocratic criminals," see Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology*, 145. For more on antimonasticism, particularly in earlier Grand Tour narratives, see Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 91; Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, 167; Haynes, "A Trial," 200; and Borutta, "Anti-Catholicism and the Culture War," 198.

81. O'Malley, *Catholicism*; and Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology*, chapter 3. For a related discussion of Euro-American anti-Catholic themes of male religious as challenging binary gender roles, though not specific to the Gothic, see Verhoeven, *Transatlantic Anti-Catholicism*, especially chapter 4 and Monika Mazurek, "Perverts to Rome: Protestant Gender Roles and the Abjection of Catholicism," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 44, no. 3 (September 2016): 687-723.

82. Tarr, *Catholicism in Gothic Fiction*, especially chapter 5.

83. Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology*, 41.

84. Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology*, chapter 3. See also her appendix, particularly 322-41, for a list of anti-Catholic Gothic chapbooks about monks. Farrell O'Gorman notes that Poe referenced a murderous monk in "The Black Cat," in which the narrator cites Medieval monks as inspiration for interring his victim's corpse in a wall. O'Gorman, *Catholicism and American Borders*, 14.

85. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, edited and with an introduction by Susan Manning, Oxford World's Classics ed. (1860; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Stephen King, in his introduction to the Oxford World's Classics edition of the book, describes *The Monk's* author as the "Johnny Rotten of the Gothic novel." King calls the novel itself "a black engine of sex and the supernatural" and notes that the Marquis de Sade was a fan. King, "Introduction," in Matthew Gregory Lewis, *The Monk*, Oxford World's Classics Edition (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), vi-vii.

86. Bailey, *American Travel Literature*, chapter 5 and Buonomo, *Backward Glances*, chapter 2.

87. Pennell, "Italy, from a Tricycle," 661.

88. Forbush, "The Mountain Eyrie of St. Francis," 273.

89. Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, 182-93.

90. Lou J. Beauchamp, *What the Duchess and I Saw in Europe* (Hamilton, Ohio: privately printed, 1896), 65.

91. Hooker, *Wayfarers in Italy*, 58.

92. Forbush, "Mountain Eyrie," 273.

93. Forbush, "Mountain Eyrie," 274.

94. C.C., "Rome on the Twentieth of September: Extracts from a Diary," *Lippincott's Magazine of Literature, Science and Education* 7 (February 1871): 146.

95. "Fra Diavolo Again," *The Albion, A Journal of News, Politics and Literature* 50, no. 32, (10 August 1872): 507.

96. J.A.S., "A Visit to the Pope" and J.A.S., "The Sick Pope."

97. J.A.S., "Modern Italy—A Dark Picture," *Christian Union* 29, no. 19 (18 May 1884): 440.

98. Browne, "Easter In Rome," 4. See also James, *Italian Hours*, 9. Paola Gemme considers this characterization in relation to American immigration debates. Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*, 134-5.

99. Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*, 129.

100. Booker T. Washington, *The Man Farthest Down: A Record of Observation and Study in Europe* (Garden City and New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1913), 3-4. For more on Washington abroad, see Gary Totten, *African American Travel Narratives from Abroad: Mobility and Cultural Work in the Age of Jim Crow* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015).

101. Washington, *Man Farthest Down*, 7-8.

102. Washington, *Man Farthest Down*, 105.

103. Washington, *Man Farthest Down*, 172-3.

104. For arguments about Italian unrest in the 1860s and 1870s as part of political violence and in the context of an economic crisis, see Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento*, 76 and Riall, *Risorgimento*, 149.

105. Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 34. For his larger discussion of this change, see pp. 33-52.

