“I HAVE NOT A HOME:”
CATHOLIC CONVERSION AND ENGLISH IDENTITY

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by

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Abstract

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Throughout the nineteenth century, religious identity, national identity, and
domesticity converge in the depiction of broken homes, foreign invaders, and homeless
converts which abound in anti-Catholic literature. This literature imagines conversion to
Roman or Anglo-Catholicism as simultaneously threatening the English home and the
English nation through the adoption of the anti-domestic practices of celibacy and
monasticism. However, constructions of conversion as a rejection of domesticity and
English identity were not limited to anti-Catholic propaganda: mainstream novelists made
use of stock anti-Catholic tropes for rather more complicated purposes. In light of this
convergence between religion, nation, and home, this dissertation explores novels by
John Henry Newman, Margaret Oliphant, Charlotte Yonge, and Charlotte Brontë in the
context of mid-century journal and newspaper articles, court cases, religious tracts and
popular anti-Catholic fiction.

I argue that in literature concerned with Catholic conversion and the Tractarian
movement, the trope of finding a home became a tool for imagining new domestic,
religious, and national communities. Victorian constructions of English national identity and domesticity were always mutually constitutive, as domesticity was understood to be one of the identifying markers of “Englishness,” while the home served as a microcosm of the nation. At the same time, as recent critics have shown, religious identity was an essential part of English national identity, and anti-Catholic literature used Roman Catholicism as an Other against which to construct a Protestant and domestic English identity. Pro-Catholic or pro-TRACTarian novels, on the other hand, often sought to reshape English national identity, incorporating alternative versions of domesticity and alternative conceptions of the role of the church.

While religion and domesticity are both firmly connected to national identity, the literature of Roman Catholic or TRACTarian conversion was also invested in constructing transnational identities. The concept of Catholicity offered mid-century novelists a means through which to explore the possibility of communities that transcended national and denominational boundaries. From Newman’s Catholic cosmopolitanism to Yonge’s view of the communion of saints, religious conceptions of the universal allowed mid-century authors a way to construct identities that, while remaining firmly grounded in English identity, also reached beyond it.
INTRODUCTION

Surely this is the case on all sides of us; the outward world is found not to be enough for man, and he looks for some refuge near him, more intimate, more secret, more pure, more calm and stable. This is a main reason and a praiseworthy one, why a great number of the better sort of persons look forward to marriage as the great object of life. . . . The mind finds nothing to satisfy it in the employments and amusements of life, in its excitements, struggles, anxieties, efforts, aims, and victories. Supposing a man to make money, to get on in life, to rise in society, to gain power, whether in the higher or the lower sphere, this does not suffice; he wants a home, he wants a centre on which to place his thoughts and affections, a secret dwelling-place which may soothe him after the troubles of the world, and which may be his hidden stay and support wherever he goes, and dwell in his heart . . . . There is no rest for us, except in quietness, confidence, and affection; and hence all men . . . seek to make themselves a home, as the only need of their nature, or are unhappy if they be without one. (188-189)

The paragraph above, with its emphasis on the home as the place of refuge from worldly ambitions and strife, seemingly might have been excerpted from the work of any number of nineteenth-century advocates of marriage and domesticity. The passage seems to represent a sample of the well-documented and much discussed Victorian domestic ideology, implying as it seems that the home is a region distinct from the field of
economics, in which a man—and it is clear that the passage is speaking specifically of men, not generically of human beings—may find solace.¹

In fact, however, this passage is not pro-domestic at all, at least not in the conventional sense. It is the work of a man who chose never to marry, who advocated celibacy for others, and who eventually left the closest thing he had to a home (Oxford University) in order to embrace an institution which, in the eyes of many of his contemporaries, threatened the English home. The passage is taken from John Henry Newman’s sermon “The Church a Home for the Lonely,” published in 1838 in Plain and Parochial Sermons.² In the paragraphs following the one cited above, Newman goes on to clarify what he sees as the real significance of the universal desire to make a home, namely that “Our Lord Jesus Christ” after his death and Ascension, “left in the world what before was not in it,—a secret home, for faith and love to enjoy, wherever found, in spite of the world around us” (190). This secret home is not to be found in the domestic sphere, or among one’s family, since it “is the Church of God, which is our true home of God’s providing, His own heavenly court . . . in which we forget the outward world and its many troubles.” And, unlike the national temple of Israel which prefigured it—a

¹ Thus, this passage might initially seem in keeping with works such as Mary Poovey’s Uneven Developments, which suggests that virtue and moral life were increasingly separated from the fields of economics and politics and relegated to the domestic sphere, where virtue became the province of women (10). As Elizabeth Langland points out, this nineteenth-century ideology of the home as haven presided over by an “angel” obscured the reality that “the house and its mistress served as a significant adjunct to a man’s commercial endeavors” (8).

² Note the publication date: this sermon was delivered and published several years prior to Newman’s conversion to Roman Catholicism. When he speaks of “the Church” it is clear that he does not, at this point, mean the Roman Catholic Church, but rather an invisible universal church made up of all believers.
temple which “could not be a home for the whole world”—the Christian temple could be
everywhere, for, though “that which is local is but partial,” the Church, found wherever
its members are found, “is as fully in each place as if it were everywhere” (192). It is a
universal which can be made local; it is a home which can be entered from any nation,
and, Newman thought, it was meant to draw members from all the nations of the world
(194).

I open with this lengthy quotation because “The Church a Home for the Lonely”
takes us at once to the issues at the heart of this dissertation. In this project, I call
attention to a conjunction of mid-century rhetoric concerning domesticity, national
identity, and Roman Catholicism and the Tractarian Movement in chapters focusing on
the fiction of Newman, Margaret Oliphant, Charlotte Yonge, and Charlotte Brontë. I
argue that these novels, all of which deal with the question of conversion and the Catholic
Church in one way or another, do so as a means of offering new constructions of
domesticity and English national identity, while also exploring the possibility of
transcending the nation through affiliation with cosmopolitan or transnational
communities. Not all of these authors conflated home and church in the way that
Newman does, nor did they all attempt to negotiate the tension between the national and
the universal in the same way, but all of these texts are haunted, in differing and
fascinating ways, by the three communities of home, church, and nation. Through
analysis of the connections between these three discourses, this project intervenes both in
the recent critical turn towards religion and in criticism concerned with national and
transnational or cosmopolitan identities. As I hope to show, both these fields can benefit from analysis of the trope of “home.”

By “home” I mean the domestic space, which, like the hearth that symbolizes it, is a place around which the nuclear family gathers. It is a space set apart for certain kinds of activities (rearing and education of young children, leisure, devotion, and certain kinds of gendered work), which is supposed to be impervious to other activities (sexual transgression, sedition against patriarchal authorities, excessive ambition, etc.). Or, to put it in terms used by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall in *Family Fortunes*, for middle-class English families, the home was a space which offered a “practical as well as symbolic form” for the effort by which “people struggled to control their destiny through religious grace and the bulwark of family property and resources” against threats such as poverty, disease, etc. (357). Perhaps more importantly, the domestic is demarcated as the realm of affect. Domesticity, as I use the term, indicates a preference for (or nurturance of) this affectional space as much as it does the fulfillment of certain kinds of work labeled as domestic.

The relationship between evangelical Protestantism and domesticity has long been taken as a given; likewise, scholars of anti-Catholicism such as Susan Griffin, D.G. Paz and others have amply demonstrated the way that Catholicism was constructed as anti-domestic, threatening the English home. Thus, it could be argued that Tractarianism shaped English domesticity through an oppositional relationship with evangelicalism: as

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3 Davidoff and Hall go on to define the home as the space in which middle-class Britons did the work of “creating a life programme which would at once guide their own aims and behavior while proclaiming status and spreading influence to others” (357).
Elizabeth Jay points out, evangelicals may have adopted a domesticated form of devotion, with piety centered in the home, in part to distinguish themselves from their Tractarian fellows, with their focus on the church (13). However, adequate work has not been done on the ways in which Roman Catholicism and Tractarianism more directly shaped English domesticity. At times, anti-Catholic rhetoric could even provide a means for critiquing domesticity, as Jenny Franchot notes in regard to ante-bellum American literature and culture. This potential for critiquing the domestic ideal provided by the figure of Catholicism is one of the focuses of this project. I show that the rhetoric of Catholic conversion in mid-century British literature (whether it was anti-Catholic or pro-Catholic literature) was frequently invested in the construction of new versions of English domesticity. In constructing new conceptions of the home, writers exploring Catholic conversion offered new understandings of the role of the individual in relation to society. At the same time, these varying conceptions of the home were intimately connected with constructions of English identity. Scholars of anti-Catholic rhetoric have long noticed that anti-Catholic rhetoric frequently depicted Roman Catholicism (and sometimes, Tractarian or Ritualist Anglicanism) as simultaneously attacking the English identity.

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4 This is all the more puzzling given that the emblem of domesticity chosen by Nancy Armstrong in *Desire and Domestic Fiction* was the “Angel in the House” of Coventry Patmore’s poem. Patmore began the poem in 1854, and completed the last part in 1862. In 1864 he entered the Roman Catholic Church. Unless his conversion is read as a sudden theological about-face (and, given his long-time association with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, that seems unlikely), it would appear that (this version of) the domestic angel’s religious genealogy is High Church, rather than evangelical.

5 In *Roads to Rome*, Franchot suggests that when “the discourse of anti-Catholicism was released into the domestic sphere of [American] middle-class culture . . . it voiced anxieties about that domesticity . . ..” (117). She argues more specifically that convent captivity narratives offer “covert, if ambivalent, validation of female separation from domesticity” (134).
nation as well as the English home. Thus, in Anti-Catholicism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel, Susan Griffin shows that the anti-Catholic fictions of William Sewell and Frances Trollope share “a central ideological framework that informed most nineteenth-century social theories: the belief that society’s structure should mimic that of the family” and that the family and the nation can thus be equated (64). As I will argue, the situation is a little more complicated than this. Griffin is right in stating that the family served as “analogy for” the nation (24). What she overlooks is the way some anti-Catholic rhetoric constructs the relationship between family and nation as constitutive rather than merely analogical, suggesting that the family was a kind of building block on which the national community rested. In the anti-Catholic imagination, the infiltration of Catholics or crypto-Catholics into the Protestant home did not merely threaten the nation by analogy, but by assaulting it at the level of its (presumed) foundations.

Domesticity was connected with English identity in yet another way, as a key trait of English character.⁶ One of the arguments of this dissertation is that in the realm of the

⁶ For an extensive analysis of the traits which make up English character, see Paul Langford’s Englishness Identified. Langford includes domesticity in the list of traits which made up Englishness, noting that “Faith in the human warmth that home life permitted was recognized as an English phenomenon from at least the mid-eighteenth century, dating perhaps from the vogue of that time for the English novel” (111).

Lauren Goodlad touches upon the connection between domesticity and national character in her article “‘A Middle Class Cut In Two’: Historiography and Victorian National Character.” According to Goodlad, “theorists of national character . . . were as eager to construct the autonomous English home in contradistinction to its subjugated Continental counterparts as they were to contrast English free agency with Continental superintendence, and the free industrial energy of Britons with the servility, sycophancy, and lassitude of the Continent” (153). Goodlad’s emphasis here is on the autonomy of the home and its relationship to British liberalism. The issues at stake in my project are considerably different, in part because in most of the texts analyzed, the home is connected (sometimes quite tightly) to larger communities. Nevertheless, I believe my project makes a contribution to the turn towards English national character.
mid-century novel, to be English was to be domestic, and anything anti-domestic, therefore, was at least potentially threatening to English national identity. Conversely, enacting domesticity could serve as a means of performing Englishness. References to “home” or constructions of domesticity need to be read with an eye towards issues of national identity, particularly in novels which deal with anything constructed as “foreign.” This is not to say that every invocation of the home is intended to refer also to England or Englishness, nor that the domestic is always being employed to make a statement about national identity, but the possibility of such connections is worth watching for.

Whereas Lauren Goodlad describes Englishness “as both the effect and constituent of rhetorics concerning class, nation, and gender,” I want to add the rhetoric of religion to the list (“Middle Class Cut into Two” 154). As Linda Colley argued in Britons, British national identity was constructed as distinctively Protestant in opposition to the Catholic continent. Recent critical work has sought to explore in more detail just how religion and national identity were related. Unlike Colley, however, I speak of “English” national identity rather than “British” national identity because, for the most part, that is the language found in pro- and anti-Catholic literature of the mid-nineteenth-

7 For example, Michael Ragussis’ Figures of Conversion, through its readings of evangelical rhetoric about the conversion of the Jews, demonstrates that religious conversion could function as a means of shaping concepts of English identity. Guari Viswanathan’s Outside the Fold, though primarily concerned with postcolonial literature, also devotes some space to connections between the work of John Henry Newman and English national identity. Most recently, Patrick O’Malley devotes considerable attention to national identity in Catholicism, Sexual Deviance, and Victorian Gothic Culture, which explores the rhetorical connections between Catholicism and sexual deviance over the course of the Victorian era. Given the shared focus on Catholicism, there is some overlap between O’Malley’s project and my own, but as the other terms of his project (sexuality, the Gothic) are different from mine, his project naturally has a different emphasis.
century. The emphasis in these works tends to be on specifically English character and the English nation, not on Britain as a whole or British character. In part, no doubt, this is because the religious makeup of Great Britain (with Catholicism in Ireland and Presbyterianism in Scotland) presented complications for the use of Catholicism as an Other against which a national identity could be constructed. However, I do not think this fully explains the apparent preference for Englishness over Britishness in these contexts. As Cannon Schmitt points out in *Alien Nation*, the latter half of the nineteenth century generally saw a turn away from the concept of Britishness to that of Englishness (15-16). Thus, though Linda Colley’s *Britons* provides a useful approach to understanding the role Protestantism played in the construction of British identity, I find that Englishness is the more useful trope for tracing out the work of national identity in the mid-nineteenth-century novel. In this respect, I differ from Krishan Kumar, who claims that “it is not until the late nineteenth century, at the earliest, that we find a clear concern with issues of ‘Englishness’ and English national identity—let alone any strong expressions of English nationalism . . .” (xi). As I will show, a concern for English character was already at play in the mid-nineteenth-century.

The rhetoric of Catholic conversion was invested in transnational as well as national identities. One of the issues at stake in anti-Catholic rhetoric was the very

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8 Study of the Tractarian movement may provide a unique perspective on developing conceptions of Englishness, since the Tractarians were deeply concerned with the English church and the history of England, as can be seen in their privileging of English ecclesiastical architecture and in projects such as *Lives of the English Saints*. Interestingly, the latter project excluded the saints of Cornwall, ostensibly because their number was too great, but one wonders if they were also too Celtic to qualify as English (Newman *Apologia* Note D).
definition of the term “Catholic,” long associated with the Roman Catholic Church. Part of the Tractarian project was the claim that the Anglican Church was a true branch of a larger Catholic Church and a full partner to the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Tractarian “three branches” model of the church assumed that the Anglican Church was the local part of a universal Church. In reclaiming the Anglican Church as Catholic, Tractarian Anglicans sought to reconnect with Pre-Reformation theology and practice. An additional implication of this reclamation of Catholicism was that the literature associated with the movement often showed an interest in the concept of the universal Church as a transnational community, one which connected Christians of different lands and even of different creeds. In the hands of evangelical authors who sought to separate the “Catholic” from the “Roman” in “Roman Catholicism” (preferring terms like “Papist” or “Romish”), the “holy catholic church” of the Apostles’ Creed was understood as an even more inclusive community, including all Christians regardless of denomination. Converts to Roman Catholicism rejected the “three branches” theory, but continued to stress the universality of Catholicism: they believed that the Roman Catholic Church, with its “universal” worship, could be a home for the lonely wanderer precisely because it was (supposedly) found in every land.

Each of these uses of the word “Catholic” opened the way to a kind of religious transnationalism. I have labeled this movement—from local church to transnational church—“Catholicity.”\(^9\) What I call Catholicity was not the province of a specific

\(^9\) “Catholicity” was in use at the mid-century as a term describing the universality of a church, but not all of these authors would necessarily have used it as I do. I am, therefore, guilty of imposing my own
theology. Instead, it could be found in Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism, and even in Dissent (though I am not concerned with that third possibility here). Catholicity entailed a desire to transcend national boundaries through affiliation with a transnational religious body. In its desire to reach beyond the nation, it is allied with cosmopolitanism; indeed, it could sometimes manifest as a form of cosmopolitanism. Though it frequently involved some degree of detachment from national identity, Catholicity was not about detachment for detachment’s sake, so much as it was about detachment as a way of enabling affiliation with a larger community.¹⁰ Because of this, it could sometimes coincide in seemingly contradictory ways with nationalistic or imperial projects. Since the emphasis was on bringing people into community (in this case, a transnational community), Catholicizing projects could sometimes be used in conjunction with more localized terminology on nineteenth-century movements. In referring to “Catholicity” rather than the more usual “Catholicism” I mean to suggest that the implications of the concept extend beyond the field of religion. I also hope to avoid any confusion of terms: given that this was a trope invoked by Christians who identified as Roman Catholic, Tractarian, or simply Anglican as well as Roman Catholic, it is difficult to know how to refer to all these groups collectively, even though they clearly share common assumptions and, at times, common goals. Other critics have dealt with this situation differently: for instance, Patrick O’Malley extends the use of the word “Catholic” to include those who would have self-identified as Tractarian, Ritualist, or Anglo-Catholic (10). I have chosen not to do this, in part because the meaning of the word “Catholic” was itself an issue under debate; in part because I think that the word “Catholic” by itself still tends to suggest “Roman Catholic” to twenty-first century readers. Instead, I have chosen to use “Catholicity” to refer specifically to the universalizing/ transnational movement, and elsewhere have tried as much as possible to use terminology which would be understandable to present-day readers but which was also in use during the nineteenth-century.

¹⁰ In this respect, Catholicity bears some similarity to the forms of detachment examined by Amanda Anderson in *The Powers of Distance*. Anderson sees at work in writers like John Stuart Mill, for example, “a complex dialectic of detachment and engagement” (17). Engagement here suggests a sympathetic engagement with others, not necessarily engagement in a concrete community. As Anderson notes, contemporary studies of the cosmopolitan frequently focus on a conception of common humanity with which to affiliate (30). In the cases I study, affiliation is with a more specific religious community rather than with the broad category of humanity. This is the primary distinction between what I call Catholicity, as opposed to secular forms of the cosmopolitan.
projects of bringing people into society: bringing them into the life of a town, bringing them into the life of a culture, or bringing them into the life of an empire.

Since recent critical literature on cosmopolitanism is often deeply invested in questions about global ethics, I should clarify that I do not propose Catholicity as some kind of ethical norm for twenty-first century life. Indeed, such a project of “bringing in” carries with it the danger of coercive proselytism, imperialism, or other forms of oppression. Moreover, Catholicity offers a very limited form of the universal, since one of its operating assumptions is the truth and necessity (for salvation, right living, etc.) of Christianity. The various constructions of the Catholic Church examined here, even the ones most inclusive of denominational difference, still exclude those of other faiths or of no faith. However, I believe that the concept of Catholicity offers a useful approach to qualifying the role religion played in nineteenth-century constructions of national and transnational identities. Yes, the Catholic-Protestant distinction was part of the construction of English identity. But for many writers taking up the question of Catholic conversion, Catholicity provided a way to get beyond national identity, even if only in a limited way.

The trope of conversion to Roman Catholicism offers a fruitful entry into thinking about national identity and domesticity because these rhetorics converge in striking ways

11 For example, philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah describes “two strands” to the idea of cosmopolitanism: first, “the idea that we have obligations to others . . . that stretch beyond those to whom we are related” by ties of kinship or shared nationality, and second, “that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance” (xv). Appiah also wants to assert the existence of both universal and local values, even while granting that different people will rank these values differently (xiii).
around the figure of the convert. Conversion offered both a chance to define proper English character and a chance to dissent from the predominant domestic, national, and religious ideals. In order to examine this conjunction, I center the project around three mid-century events which gave rise to an outburst of literature concerned with the possibility of conversion. These three distinct moments in English literary history are the Tractarian Movement in the years immediately following its 1845 “catastrophe” (to use R.W. Church’s term); the Papal Aggression Crisis of the early 1850s; and the rise of Ritualism in the mid-1860s. Of these three events, only the Papal Aggression Crisis focused exclusively on Roman Catholicism; it is not surprising, then, that some of greatest anxiety about Catholic conversion arose during this period. Nevertheless, both the early Tractarian Movement and its later Ritualist branch were associated in the popular imagination with the spread of Roman Catholicism: it was feared that both movements represented a “Romanizing” influence in England. Popular literature also suggested the possibility that the Tractarian or Ritualist might go over to Rome.

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12 With regard to the concept of conversion as enabling dissent, I am indebted to Guari Viswanathan. In *Outside the Fold*, the dissent is presumed to be against the secular state; I suggest that it may also apply to other situations.

13 In 1845, Oxford’s Convocation condemned W.G. Ward’s *Ideal of a Christian Church*. According to Church, this brought about “a great crisis in the development of religious opinion . . .” (387). Ward, Newman and several other Tractarians subsequently left the Anglican Church for Roman Catholicism.

14 Strictly speaking, the Papal Aggression Crisis, which culminated in the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, lasted only from 1850-1851. However, the wave of anti-Catholic sentiment prompted by the event lasted for several years, resulting in public protests, occasional riots, and an outburst of anti-Catholic literature (see Chadwick 306-308). I use the term more loosely to include reactions to Papal Aggression as late as 1853 or 1854.

15 Ritualism, a second-generation development of the Tractarian Movement, worked to transform Anglican worship through greater emphasis on the sacraments and more elaborate liturgy.
To some extent, the time span of this study is artificial: it could have been extended either backward or forward in time, as there were certainly anti-Catholic fictions circulating prior to the 1840s (including pro- and anti-Tractarian works prior to Newman’s conversion) and both High Church novels and anti-Ritualist literature continued to be published well into the 1880s. Although the kinds of issues involved in literature of conversion remained fairly constant, the emphases and political applications changed over the course of the nineteenth. In the first half of the century, Catholic Emancipation loomed large on the horizon in literature dealing with Catholicism. Towards the end of the century, on the other hand, increased secularism and the rise of agnosticism became complicating factors in fictions dealing with conversion. These issues, though interesting in themselves, are beyond the scope of the present project. Narrowing the focus to present span (1847-1864), therefore, allows me to make a more specific argument about the literature of conversion.

Finally, a word on methodology may be in order. In as much as I am interested in tracing a line of rhetoric wherever it is found—whether in canonical novels, in works only recently recovered as a result of feminist scholarship, or in works generally known only to scholars of Victorian religion—this dissertation should be read as a cultural studies project. At the same time, I remain interested in the forms of novels (specifically, the form of the marriage plot) and the ways in which these forms both structure and are structured by didactic purposes. To some extent, then, I seek to contribute to recent

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16 Following John Shelton Reed, I understand Ritualism to be a development of the Tractarian Movement rather than an alternative or separate movement (14-15). However, it remains the case that a rhetoric that was specifically anti-Ritualist, rather than generally anti-Tractarian, emerged in the late 1860s.
developments in literary criticism which call for a “strategic” focus on literary form. In reading popular fiction in terms of its narrative form as well as its rhetorical content, I do not intend to claim that all of these novels are of equal literary character. Even bad fiction has a literary form, however, and even bad novels may benefit from close readings.

Because my focus is on the arch-narrative of the homeless individual seeking to make or find a home, I turn towards a genre deeply invested in the narrative of the individual moving towards the home: domestic fiction. Admittedly, not all of the novels I examine strictly qualify as domestic fiction: those discussed in the first chapter are more strictly novels of ideas, for instance. However, all of these novels are deeply interested in the concept of home or the domestic. Moreover, they are all shaped by the basic structure of the marriage plot. Some conclude with the expected wedding, suggesting a privileging of domesticity based on heterosexual coupling even as they turn this domesticity towards religious or social purposes. Others mimic, revise, or even thwart the marriage plot to allow for other vocational possibilities.

While the fictions that I discuss all engage in the work of defining national, religious, and domestic identities, there is considerable variation both in the identities they construct and in the relationship between these identities. Each of the four main authors wrote from a different religious stance, for one thing. Newman was a Roman Catholic with connections to the Tractarian Movement; Margaret Oliphant could probably be described best as a middle-of-the-road or mainstream Anglican, but she had

17 Though I think it remains to be seen precisely what the “strategic formalism” advocated by Caroline Levine would look like, I find her terminology to be useful.
been raised in the Free Church of Scotland and thus had more practical experience with Non-Conformist Protestantism than any of the other writers; Charlotte Yonge was a distinctively Tractarian Anglican; Charlotte Brontë, on the other hand, was an Anglican with an evangelical background but Broad Church leanings. Religious affiliations necessarily shaped each writer’s understanding of the church, and that, to some extent, shaped the way in which their novels construct religious bodies in relation to the home and the nation. Because both the Tractarian Movement and the Roman Catholic Church endorsed celibacy, for example, the Tractarian and Roman Catholic fictions seem most radical in their revision of domesticity. Likewise, though each chapter explores some version of a broader English identity available through Catholicity, these identities vary widely in degree of national affiliation considered desirable or even necessary. Furthermore, all these aspirations after the universal are limited. Those which emphasize the “universality” of the Catholic Church do so at the risk of limiting such universality to a specific denomination or theology. The resulting construction may appear to have a greater ability to transcend nation, but it does so only by demanding a high degree of religious specificity. Broader approaches to Catholicity (those which connect evangelical and High Church belonging, or Catholic and Protestant belief), involve a different set of limitations. In these cases the degree of transcendence achieved may be personal rather than communitarian, existing only in isolated spaces or rare instances.

The first two chapters of the dissertation take up the subject of the conversion of Anglican clerics (or would-be clerics) to Roman Catholicism, demonstrating that the narrative of the Oxford scholar drawn to Catholicism was bound up in constructions of
English domesticity and English national identity. In Chapter One, I examine how journalistic and literary reactions to the prominent separation of converts Pierce and Cornelia Connelly used marital breakup as a metaphor for the threat Catholic conversion posed to the English nation. Elizabeth Harris, a convert disappointed with Catholicism, fictionalized one such depiction of a broken marriage in *From Oxford to Rome*, an 1847 tale of the tragic disappointment suffered by Catholic converts which provided a launching-point for John Henry Newman’s pro-conversion novel, *Loss and Gain*. I argue that Newman co-opted Harris’ connection of conversion and homelessness in order to claim that the transnational home and cosmopolitan identity found in Catholicism were superior to a narrow conception of English identity centered on the Anglican Church.

My second chapter picks up the thread a bit later in the century, looking at the start of the turn towards Ritualism. I show how Margaret Oliphant’s *The Perpetual Curate*, which revisits Harris’s broken-marriage plot through a subplot centered on a clerical convert to Roman Catholicism, makes use of contemporary anti-Catholic narratives and tropes as a foil against which to construct a less provincial English identity. Gerald Wentworth’s conversion, which impoverishes his family and which nearly results in his abandoning wife and children to become a Roman Catholic priest, demonstrates the anti-domestic nature of Roman Catholicism. His younger brother Frank Wentworth, in contrast, is able to combine his vocation as an Anglican clergyman with marriage to fellow Ritualist Lucy Wodehouse, and the resultant Anglican identity, enabled both by domesticity and by Ritualist zeal, entails bringing the impoverished
urban working class out of the outskirts of Carlingford society and into the Church through Frank and Lucy’s mission to the dockside slums.

Whereas the first two chapters focus on the fate of male converts to Catholicism, the last chapters of the dissertation are more concerned with the fate of young women who may be drawn to Tractarianism or Roman Catholicism—a possibility that holds promise as well as peril. Chapter Three returns to the climate of the Papal Aggression crisis, arguing that in the mid-century novels of Charlotte Yonge, service to the church and affiliation to a redefined family replace marriage as the culmination of an individual’s life. The vision of celibacy Yonge offers, however, is not so much a rejection of English domesticity as a reorienting of it: her unmarried protagonists, unlike Newman’s, do not need to leave either England or their homes in order to be active agents of change in the community. Instead, Yonge redefines both Anglican identity and the domestic sphere in *The Daisy Chain*, establishing the church as a means of bringing outsiders (from laborers to South Sea Islanders) into the fold of English civilization. At the same time, Yonge’s embrace of (Anglican) Catholicity is also the means of affiliating with the transnational community of the universal church.

Finally, in Chapter Four, my analysis of the rhetoric of conversion and religious identity restores a crucial context for understanding how Lucy Snowe’s rejected conversion functions in Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette*. My reading of the novel reveals that Lucy Snowe’s refusal to convert to Catholicism plays a pivotal role in Brontë’s construction of a cosmopolitan identity which remains rooted in English national character. Through Lucy’s proposed union with Paul Emanuel, Brontë offers an
alternative to both excessive insularity and superficial versions of cosmopolitanism: Lucy, unlike the other displaced English characters, can be at home in continental spaces. At the same time, Lucy’s retention of her “Puritan” heritage underscores her continued affiliation with England. Nevertheless, despite the novel’s critique of Roman Catholic celibacy, Lucy is left celibate through Paul Emanuel’s shipwreck, rather than finding her “true home” in a mixed-faith suburban household at Faubourg Clotilde. Reading Villette through a critical lens informed by the preceding studies of contemporaneous narratives of Catholic conversion, I suggest that the novel’s ambiguously tragic ending represents uncertainty about whether such a house built on religious and national division could stand.
CHAPTER 1:
LOSING A FAMILY, GAINING A CHURCH:
NEWMAN’S CHALLENGE TO VICTORIAN DOMESTICITY

In 1848, a mere three years after he entered the Roman Catholic Church, John Henry Newman anonymously published his first novel, *Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert*. The book was a response to *From Oxford to Rome* (1847), the work of dissatisfied Catholic convert Elizabeth Furlong Shipton Harris, which included a subplot in which an Anglican minister abandoned his wife and children to become a Roman Catholic priest. Harris’ novel, like much mid-century rhetoric surrounding Catholic conversion, presented conversion to Catholicism as a threat not only to the English Church, but to the English home and, subsequently, to the English nation. In doing so, *From Oxford to Rome* offered a fictional parallel to the claims of another dissatisfied convert to Catholicism, Pierce Connelly, who argued that Roman Catholicism challenged “the sacredness of that law of domestic life, which is a true basis of English, as it must be of all well-ordered human society” (*Domestic Emancipation* 9). Thanks in part to the Connelly case and writers such as Harris, the Papal Aggression Crisis of the early 1850s was driven as much by domestic concerns as by fear of foreign influence.
Newman, Harris, and reporters of the Connelly case were alike invested in a project of determining how an individual ought to relate to imagined communities on the level of the nation, the family, and the church. In Victorian terms, what was at stake was the location of the proper spiritual, national, and domestic home. Harris employs domestic ideology as a defense of the English Church and the English home in a complicated ideological triangle. She depicts Anglicanism as superior to Roman Catholicism because it respected domesticity, while domesticity was both a support of the English nation and an identifying marker of an insular form of English identity. Newman’s fictional converts, in contrast, reject the overly-luxurious domesticity enjoyed by married Anglican clergymen, opting instead for celibacy and a life of Catholic asceticism. By offering conversion as a substitute for marriage and the church as an alternative to the domestic hearth, *Loss and Gain* offers what may be an unexpected criticism of middle-class domestic ideology.

In these fictions of conversion, the interplay between church, state and individual is imagined as a search for the true home, with competing versions of “home” corresponding to competing models of English identity. I argue that Harris constructed an insular and domestic identity that was bound to the family home and to the very soil of England and which was thus threatened by the foreign influence of Roman Catholicism, while Newman depicted Catholicism as a universal spiritual home, arguing that the transnational home and religious-centered identity provided by Catholic conversion were superior to the materialistic conception of English identity he associated with the Anglican Church. Newman’s version of Catholicity, which entailed a more cosmopolitan
approach to national identity, offered distance from which his protagonists could critique their homeland institutions. Because this stance involved the replacement of marriage and the domestic sphere with celibacy and religious communal life, it also complicated the connection between English national identity and domesticity.

Although it went through nine editions during Newman’s lifetime, *Loss and Gain* has received little serious critical attention. While its existence is no secret to Newman scholars, discussion of the novel is often relegated to a page or two in passing in studies devoted to more important Newman works. The criticism which does exist tends to address one or more of three areas: its failure as a novel, its relationship to Newman’s life and his later autobiography, or its relationship to Newman’s theology. The first two categories are by far the most prevalent. In particular, much earlier criticism devoted at least some space to an explanation of why or how a brilliant man like Newman wrote such a bad novel.18 For example, Joseph Baker, in his early work on novels about the Oxford Movement, argued that Newman’s belief system prevented him from writing a naturalistic novel.19 A claim that no one with a belief in the supernatural can write a realist novel may seem rather bold, but Baker is not the only one to connect Newman’s

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18 This was true of contemporary criticism as well. In fact, Nicholas Wiseman, in an otherwise positive 1848 *Dublin Review* note on the book, did not even think that it was an attempt at writing a novel, because “It pretends to no plot, it has no prominent characters complicating the issue, it aims at producing no artificial suspension of judgment as the winding up and purpose of the whole” (218). In her 1848 *Fraser’s Magazine* article on “Religious Stories,” George Eliot similarly noted that “The story is very slight— little more than a thread on which to hang the sketches of character and the arguments” (164).

19 Baker says of Newman as a novelist: “A naturalistic novel, as a study in mundane cause and effect, makes the background a part of the story, almost one of the actors, that could not be removed without breaking a link in the sequence of events. Newman’s supernaturalism allows him to write without achieving that intimate fusion of setting and plot. We feel that the subjective study has been worked out first, then the frame fitted rather awkwardly around it” (63).
bad fiction to his theology. George Levine somewhat similarly focuses on Newman’s novels as “representative in failure: serving a propagandist cause even while pursuing the truth as honestly as possible, they limit and narrow human experience and with all integrity sacrifice it to need and will” (360). Likewise, in her study of Anglican Evangelicalism and the novel, Elizabeth Jay claimed that “novelists like Hannah More and J.H. Newman, who openly declared that they seized upon this genre as the most favorable for the promulgation of their doctrine, accorded little of the aesthetic respect to their tool that we might expect from the committed artist” (4). In such readings, the novel’s failures are due to its purpose as propaganda, while its interest is found in its relationship to Newman’s life or theology.

More recently, Alan Hill has challenged this view of Loss and Gain, arguing that it is, in fact, a work shaped by the developing school of literary realism. Loss and Gain, according to Hill, exhibits both psychological realism in the character of Charles Reding and realism in its depiction of Oxford undergraduate life. Hill convincingly details Newman’s use of Oxford slang (some of which Newman was the first to use in print) and ephemeral details of Oxford life, noting that “Within this authentic Oxford setting, the dialogues dramatize the workings of Charles Reding’s mind as step by step he pursues his quest for certainty, and finds his destined home in the Catholic Church” (29). Likewise, when Hill briefly discusses the relationship of Loss and Gain to From Oxford to Rome, he is primarily interested in the ways in which Newman’s novel represents an aesthetic and stylistic improvement over Harris’ badly-written anti-Catholic novel, claiming that Newman “confronted the challenge, not by detailed refutation, but by writing a much
more lively and entertaining novel” (26). Here again, Hill’s concerns with the novel are primarily stylistic: what interests him about Harris’ novel is how bad it is, not how it makes its argument. Interestingly, though, he also comments that “The success of his [Newman’s] riposte turned on showing that the converts were not bizarre adherents of some foreign creed, but more truly ‘English’ than their opponents” (26). Hill does not follow up on this comment about national identity. However, in her book *Outside the Fold*, Guari Viswanathan explores the relationship between Newman’s vision of a transnational Catholicism and his view of true Englishness in *Loss and Gain*, though she unfortunately does not look at it in the context of *From Oxford to Rome*. More work, therefore, needs to be done concerning the relationship of the two novels to each other and to popular conceptions of Catholicism.

I want to set aside issues of aesthetic or stylistic merit and make a different kind of argument. It is not my intent to argue for any aesthetic merits of Newman’s novel, or to compare its style and psychological depth to *From Oxford to Rome*, but, as I will show, *Loss and Gain* intervenes in Victorian constructions of Catholicism and domesticity in significant ways, even as it is shaped by those conventions. Hill’s description of Reding’s conversion as the process of finding his true home is right on the mark, but this linkage of conversion and home needs to be explored in the context of commonplace Victorian constructions of Roman Catholicism. Likewise, while Hill is right to note that Newman offers a vision of Catholicism’s relationship to nation which challenges *From Oxford to Rome*, I argue that Newman’s goal is not primarily to assert
the Englishness of his protagonist, but to structure Catholicism as a locus of religious and quasi-domestic sentiment that transcends nation.

Home, religion, and nation converge in *Loss and Gain*, as they do in *From Oxford to Rome*. Though this convergence has not been studied by previous Newman critics, it has important implications for our understanding of Victorian constructions of Catholicism. What is at stake in these two novels, as in non-literary discussions about Catholicism, is the definition of the true home: is it domestic, Protestant, and English; or spiritual, Catholic, and transnational? Before discussing *Loss and Gain* itself, I will turn my attention to Harris’ work in particular and Victorian depictions of Catholicism in general in order to demonstrate that Victorians linked Roman Catholic conversion with the break-up of the family, and particularly, with the fracturing of marriages. I will then show how *Loss and Gain* contributed to and complicated the uneasy association of conversion, the home, and the loss of the family.

1.1 Converts and Broken Homes: *From Oxford to Rome* and the Connelly Case

Elizabeth Shipton Harris was a convert to Catholicism who appears to have regretted the move but who never returned to the Anglican Church (Wolff 43). She wrote two novels, both of which were published anonymously, although her identity was quickly revealed.20 Both novels argue that an individual is bound to stay in the church of his or her origins regardless of its flaws or doctrinal corruptions: Roman Catholics should

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20 Her second novel, *Rest in the Church*, was published in a basically unfinished form. Those interested can consult Robert Lee Wolff or George Eliot for brief plot synopses.
remain Roman Catholics, and Anglicans should remain Anglicans. From Oxford to Rome further suggests that anyone who has converted and taken vows in a new church (that is, the Roman Catholic Church) is morally bound to honor those vows even if convinced of having made a mistake. Some contemporaries criticized this stance, arguing against the morality of a decision to remain in a church that one believed to be false. Other critics labeled Harris mentally unstable rather than immoral. In her essay “Religious Stories,” George Eliot claimed that the state of mind depicted in From Oxford to Rome was “diseased” and that “the whole air of the book was like that of a sick man’s dream” (158). Robert Lee Wolff would later call Harris “unfortunate, confused, and possibly hysterical,” claiming that her novels were among the most remarkable Victorian novels written by a Catholic convert “from the psychological if not from the literary standpoint” (43, 42). In fact, From Oxford to Rome is of interest not merely because of the moral or psychological ambiguity of the author’s position, but because of the degree to which it depicts Catholic conversion as disruptive to the family. Harris’ work stands as evidence that in the years following Newman’s conversion, English Protestants were disturbed not just by the strange and seemingly unbiblical doctrines of Catholicism, but by the way Roman Catholicism, with its privileging of the celibate and monastic life, seemed to threaten marriage, the family, and the domestic ideal.

From Oxford to Rome begins with its central protagonist, Eustace A., leaving Oxford—where he has been mentored by an unnamed older member of the Tractarian movement—and taking a position as curate of a larger parish. He is given free rein to put his Tractarian tendencies into practice, and the novel relates a series of conflicts and
conquests in the course of his curacy. Gradually, he and his unmarried sister Augusta become convinced that the Roman Catholic Church, rather than the Anglican Church, is the One True Church, but Eustace doesn’t act until after a trip to the continent, where the religious art and climate of Italy are apparently instrumental in leading him to abandon his position as an Anglican clergyman and become a Roman Catholic. After his conversion, he leaves England and enters a continental monastery, but before he can make his final vows, Eustace sickens and dies, expressing regret for having left the Church of England.

Meanwhile, the novel traces the course of Eustace’s other sister, Margaret. Margaret’s husband, Mr. F., is another Anglican clergyman who converts to Catholicism, insisting that he and Margaret must separate so that he can enter the celibate religious life. Although Margaret protests, they do separate, and F. joins Eustace’s monastery. For a short time after the separation, Margaret lives with her children and her sister Augusta, but Augusta plays on Margaret’s sympathies in order to convince her that she should follow her husband into the religious life. As a result, Margaret takes her daughter and enters an Irish convent with Augusta, intending to take the veil. Eventually a combination of ill-health and increased dissatisfaction with Roman Catholicism causes her to leave the convent. Margaret leaves Ireland and lives with Anglican friends for a short time before dying, apparently of a broken heart resulting from her husband’s abandonment of her.

Thus, Margaret and Eustace, the two characters most sympathetically portrayed, die as a result of conversion to Roman Catholicism. In both cases, their deaths serve as warnings of the dangers of conversion. Eustace’s death calls attention to the
homesickness suffered by converts who leave their homes behind for the monastic life. Margaret’s death, linked to her grief over the break-up of her marriage, stands as a warning that conversion to Catholicism is a threat to the family and the English domestic ideal. Both deaths indict Roman Catholicism for failing to provide a proper “home”—literally or figuratively—for English converts. In Eustace’s case, at least, the sense of homelessness is also rooted in his exile from England.

Harris is not unique in depicting Catholic conversion as a threat to the family. As D.G. Paz and Susan Griffin note, associating Catholicism with a broken home in one way or another was a common theme of anti-Catholic literature, from stories in anti-Catholic magazines to novels. Patrick O’Malley locates similar themes in Gothic novels in which “the transgressions of Catholicism” are described as “symbolic transgressions against the family . . . the linchpins of the heterosexual and patriarchal order” (50). The anonymous novel Trevor: Or the New Saint Francis (published by Longmans in 1847) is an example of another broken-home conversion narrative contemporary with From Oxford to Rome. Trevor follows the fate of Mrs. Arden, a would-be Madame de Chantal, who, drawn to mysticism by the instruction of a Tractarian curate, attempts to abandon her family for the retirement of the cloistered life.21 As George Eliot pointed out, though Trevor was written by a “latitudinarian” rather than a High Church author, the fact that it was advertised with From Oxford to Rome suggests that it was assumed to appeal to the same audience (155). The timing of Trevor’s publication indicates that Harris’ construction of

21 The references to St. Francis de Sales and Madame de Chantal may indicate the influence of Michelet’s Priests, Women, and Families, translated into English and published by Longmans in 1845.
Catholic conversion and family break-up was part of a larger mid-century conception of Catholicism as opposed to domesticity.

Though not the first novelist to link conversion with the fracturing of the family, Harris may have been the first Victorian novelist to focus on the specific narrative of an Anglican clergyman who abandons his family to become a Catholic priest. This narrative was revisited and revised in the 1860s by Margaret Oliphant, in *The Perpetual Curate*, and Emma Worboise, in *Overdale: The Story of a Pervert.* If the publication of the later novels is any indication, the narrative of family abandonment proved popular in the long run, but it was also controversial. William Gladstone, reviewing the novel for *The Quarterly Review*, was quick to cast doubt on the probability of such broken marriages, claiming that “we are persuaded that the writer is here leading us into the region of pure fiction . . .” (135). The Catholic *Dublin Review* stated that *From Oxford to Rome* was “calumnious, detestably false” because it suggested that “any married clergyman who joins the Catholic Church will be, not merely permitted (where there is mutual consent) to separate from his wife, but compelled to do so . . .” (“Notices of Books” 262-263).

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22 In *The Perpetual Curate*, the Catholic convert plot is only a subplot, and ultimately, Gerald Wentworth, the Catholic convert, chooses not to seek separation from his wife. *Overdale*, however, is focused even more intently than *From Oxford to Rome* on the break-up of an Anglican family when the husband and father converts to Roman Catholicism. Since *Overdale*’s clerical convert is named Eustace Aylmer—reminiscent of Harris’ Eustace A.—we can reasonably assume that Worboise was influenced by *From Oxford to Rome*. Thus, even if *From Oxford to Rome* is not the first novel built around the abandoned wife narrative, it is at least an influential one.
Harris, in a subsequent retraction published in a number of periodicals, admitted her errors on this point, stating that:

the incident of the story which has been taken, though never meant, to presuppose the compulsory (!) separation of married persons in the Church of Rome, was founded solely on information about one of the converts, which information was, as I now find, ridiculously false, while the thing supposed is impossible according to the law of the Church itself.” (“Mr. Oakeley” 563)

Regardless of any errors Harris made, the fact that she crafted such a story of seemingly compulsory separation indicates how significant was the presumed threat Catholic conversion posed to the happiness of the family.

To some extent, the anxieties over broken homes exhibited by Harris, the anonymous author of Trevor, and later novelists were supported by historical events. As the Dublin Review note on From Oxford to Rome admitted, in rare cases the Roman Catholic Church did grant a married man permission to separate from his wife in order to pursue an apparent vocation to the priesthood, provided that any children of the marriage were cared for and that both spouses were willing to enter the religious life. In 1844, for example, a brief notice in the “Foreign Intelligence” section of The Tablet, Britain’s new Catholic newspaper, reported that in Rome:

23 According to letters printed The Church and State Gazette, Harris’s retraction was published in six newspapers, including The Guardian and The Table as well as The Church and State Gazette (“Mr. Oakeley, The Pervert” 573). The retraction also appeared in The Dublin Review (Harris “Letter”).

24 I have been unable to determine which convert Harris means here. It is possible that through connections among English Catholic society, Harris had heard of the Connelly’s separation and the couple’s admission into the religious life prior to the Connelly vs. Connelly trial, which began in 1848. Alternatively, she may be speaking of a different situation entirely, one which did not make it into the newspapers or the history books.
Doctor Conolly [sic], late Protestant minister in America . . . has given a new proof of his attachment to [the Catholic] faith, by consecrating himself to the ecclesiastical state, at the same time that his young wife, endued with the most amiable qualities, and distinguished for angelical piety, has entered as a postulant into the Convent of the Nuns of the Sacred Heart. (518)

The notice refers to Pierce and Cornelia Connelly, who had traveled to Rome in 1843 to petition the Pope for a decree of marital separation so that Pierce could become a Roman Catholic priest. The editors of *The Tablet*, who described conversions to Catholicism in triumphalist terms, were evidently pleased that a convert from the Episcopal Church chose to serve the Catholic Church as a priest. Not everyone following the Connellys’ progress, however, took such a positive view of the separation. The couple’s separation and entrance into religious life looked more problematic from the perspective of the domestic ideal. As a seminarian writing home about Pierce’s ordination observed, there was “much in the American papers about Mrs Connelly’s pining away upon Monte Pincio” (qtd. in Flaxman 102).

In fact, as Cornelia’s biographers record, though Cornelia felt sure that she had a religious vocation and was indeed happy to see her husband ordained, she was not happy with the convent of the Sacred Heart in Italy. While in Rome, she began drafting plans for a new religious order, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, which she hoped to establish in America. English Catholics, including the Earl of Shrewsbury and Nicholas Wiseman, convinced her to come to England instead, where a teaching order such as the one she envisioned would be highly useful, particularly in reaching out to converts (see Lancaster and Flaxman). Pierce followed Cornelia to England to serve as chaplain to Shrewsbury, and the two became members of English convert society. *The Tablet* lauded the opening
of the first Society of the Holy Child convent in October 1846, remarking that “We hope soon to hear more of a congregation that appears peculiarly adapted to the wants of England at the present time, and we shall watch its success with great interest” (“St. Mary’s Convent” 696). In a few years, ironically, the entire nation would be watching the new order and its unusual Mother Superior for an entirely different reason when Pierce sued for restitution of conjugal rights, demanding that Cornelia leave the convent and resume living with him.

The Connelly divorce case brought the possibility of a clerical convert separating from his wife and children to national attention though a number of newspaper articles, pamphlets, letters to the editor. Although the case did not go to court until after the publication of From Oxford to Rome, the rhetoric surrounding the case can shed light on mid-century ideas about the conjunction of Catholicism, domesticity, and English identity. In the remainder of this section, I will examine the Connelly case in connection with From Oxford to Rome. After giving some necessary background of the case, I will show how the rhetoric of the London Times accounts of the case in some ways resembled the depiction of Margaret F. in From Oxford to Rome, despite differences between the fictional narrative and the Connelly case. I will then examine the ways two institutions that challenged marriage and the home—celibacy and monasticism—are represented in both the novel and the rhetoric surrounding the Connelly case, demonstrating the degree to which Victorians viewed Catholicism as opposed to the domestic ideal. Understanding this construction of Catholicism as anti-domestic is essential for understanding how Loss and Gain intervenes in on-going rhetoric about Catholic conversion.
Pierce Connelly, an American Episcopalian priest, became drawn to the Catholic Church and gave up his ministry in 1835. His wife, Cornelia Connelly, converted to Catholicism in 1835; Pierce converted shortly afterward, in 1836, while in Rome. In 1840, after having served as a teacher in America for some years, he announced that he wished to enter the Catholic priesthood. For this purpose, the family traveled to Rome again, living there for some time. Although Pierce’s own writing suggests that the Vatican offered him the chance to serve as a married priest in the Greek Catholic Church (which, unlike the Latin rite, did regularly ordain married men), he sought ordination in the Latin rite (Connelly, “Emancipation from Domestic Rule” 5; Paz Priesthoods and Apostasies 105). This required that he and his wife separate, and that she take vows in a religious order. Cornelia consented to this separation, and, as The Tablet announced to an English Catholic public, she entered the religious life in 1844, accompanied by her youngest children (Paz Priesthoods and Apostasies 109-111). After residing in Rome for some time, both converts traveled to England, where Pierce served as chaplain of Lord Shrewsbury’s household, while Cornelia was chosen by Cardinal Wiseman to found an order of English teaching nuns (Paz Priesthoods and Apostasies 112).  

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25 It should be pointed out that this was before the wave of conversions resulting from the Tractarian movement. At the time, the conversion of an Episcopalian clergyman was important enough to merit a note in the Dublin Review, as well as American papers: in a small way, Pierce was a figure of international interest. Ironically, the Review commented that “It is to be regretted that Mr. Connelly’s marriage state of necessity prevents him from entering the sacred ministry of our church;” evidence that marital separation and ordination was not the normal or expected route for a clerical convert (Jeffrey xii).

26 Cornelia Connelly, unlike the fictional Margaret F., who wasted away in the cloister, appears to have done quite well in religious life. The order she founded expanded, and her work was so successful that in the twentieth century she was proposed for beatification. A number of books have been published about her work as an educator and founder of a religious order. As a result, however, most of the material available today on the Connelly case is written from a decidedly pro-Cornelia, hagiographical stance. (For
In England, Cardinal Wiseman refused to allow Pierce to visit Cornelia regularly in the convent, as he had been allowed to do in Rome. This prohibition was the immediate cause of Pierce’s quarrel with the Catholic hierarchy, though Chadwick cites Pierce’s diminishing importance to the English Catholic Church now that the Tractarian Movement had led to other conversions as a further possible cause of Pierce’s dissatisfaction with Catholicism (509). In any event, Cornelia responded to Pierce’s attempts to control her management of the convent by refusing to allow visitation on his terms, and he responded by suing for restoration of conjugal rights. He won the initial case, but she appealed and he ultimately had to drop the suit on account of court costs (Paz Anti-Catholicism 13-14).

D.G. Paz notes that “the case hinged on the technical question of how the marriage laws of Pennsylvania, Rome and England affected the marriage, and of where the Connellys were domiciled when they separated, but the newspaper reports focused on the enormity of the Pope’s claim to dispense from the vows of matrimony” (Anti-Catholicism 14). In an early report of the trial, the London Times described the key issues this way:

Admitting such [rules regarding separation to pursue a religious vocation] to be the law by which the Roman Catholic subjects of Rome were governed, what was

an insightful analysis of the ways in which Cornelia’s story has been retold for different rhetorical purposes over the course of the twentieth century, see Judith Lancaster’s Cornelia Connelly and Her Interpreters, which uses the Connelly biographies as a case study in hagiography.) D.G. Paz’s The Priesthoods and Apostasies of Pierce Connelly is the only significant work to attempt to take up the Connelly story with an emphasis on Pierce’s life and work rather than Cornelia’s.
the effect of it as applicable to American subjects being Protestant at the time of their marriage, and afterwards abjuring that faith, and being admitted members of the Roman Catholic church, the husband taking orders in that church? In order to make that law binding in this country [England] it must be shown that it had been received here. . . . It was not sufficient, therefore, to say that the law of Rome had decided so and so; it must be shown that the law of Rome for that purpose was the law of this country. (“Connelly vs. Connelly” 6)

In order to recognize the separation between Pierce and Cornelia as valid, the court would have to recognize the law of the Roman Catholic Church (here identified as the foreign law of Rome) as binding in Great Britain. The court was not willing to do that, but according to a pamphlet published to gather money to pay the legal costs of the case, Pierce’s failure to get the desired result was read by an indignant public as a “witness to the world that the laws of Rome are, upon English soil, able to circumvent those of England” (Case of the Rev. Pierce Connelly 14). The case was thus at once implicated in issues related to domesticity as well as debates over the church and national sovereignty. According to the anonymous author of The Case of the Rev. Pierce Connelly, for instance, Pierce was “anxious, not only to obtain the release of his wife, and restore her to her children, but, if possible, to defeat the machinations of the Church of Rome; to vindicate the supremacy of the Law of England, and to uphold the personal liberty of the subject . . .” (12). Pierce himself highlighted this conjunction between nation, religion, and domesticity in the published version of his 1852 Petition to the House of Commons. By titling the pamphlet Domestic Emancipation from Roman Rule in England, Pierce could be understood to suggest either that England needed to preserve its domestic politics from the invasive control of a foreign nation, or that English domesticity needed to be emancipated from Roman Catholic tyranny, or both.
As would be expected, the “broken home” plot of Harris’ fictional conversion narrative (and the later novels) differs from the Connelly case in a number of ways. Some of the differences are no doubt factual discrepancies due to authorial ignorance of canon law, as in Harris’ case, but other differences are more telling. They reveal the artificiality of some mid-Victorian views of Catholicism, and highlight the anxieties associated with conversion. For instance, *From Oxford to Rome* and *Overdale* gloss over the need for consent from both parties before a husband could leave his wife to be ordained.²⁷ In reality, Cornelia Connelly was required to travel to Rome and give verbal consent to the separation, so as to avoid the possibility of duplicity or coercion. As previously noted, Harris claimed both that readers has misunderstood her on this point and that she had been misinformed, but the lack of consent on Margaret F.’s part is merely one aspect of a broader depiction of the abandoned wife as a protester against Catholicism in general and the break-up of the family in particular. Significantly, both Oliphant and Worboise would echo this construction of the wife of a convert as the protesting and Protestant defender of the family. In fact, Worboise magnifies the role of wife as protester of her husband’s conversion. In *From Oxford to Rome*, Margaret F. converts, albeit reluctantly, some time after her husband has already left her for the monastery; in *Overdale*, Agatha Aylmer refuses to convert to Catholicism at all.

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²⁷ The same can be said of the somewhat different “converting wife narrative” of *Trevor*, in which Mrs. Arden apparently does not need her husband’s permission to enter a convent. Margaret Oliphant, however, reportedly consulted a Roman Catholic authority in order to research the matter for *The Perpetual Curate*, and learned that a separation would not be allowed without the wife’s consent (Wolff 160).
In contrast to the fictional characters, Cornelia Connelly actually entered the church months before her husband did, which could suggest that she was more, not less, eager than her husband to become Catholic. *The Morning Chronicle* seems to hint at this, when in a June 17, 1851 article on the subject, it states that in 1835 “she and her husband had been disposed to become Roman Catholics . . .” emphasizing Cornelia’s conversion as an active desire on her part (“Connelly vs. Connelly” 411).\(^{28}\) Though conversion to Catholicism was often viewed negatively, the brief statement above is not condemnatory, but some vilification of Cornelia may be expressed in the opening paragraph of the article, which repeats Pierce’s claim that: “in September, 1847, the appellant, not having the fear of God before her eyes, and being unmindful of the conjugal vow, without any lawful reason, withdrew herself from bed, board, and mutual cohabitation with her husband . . .” (411). The language here may be that of the court rather than the reporter, but other aspects of the article highlight Cornelia’s active role in separating from Pierce. Whereas other descriptions of the case discussed the separation in terms of its effect on Pierce’s vocation, the *Morning Chronicle* states that the decree of separation was “necessary in order that he might take orders in the Roman Catholic Church, and that she might become a nun” (411). Thus, Cornelia’s entrance into a convent is presented not just as a necessary condition of Pierce’s ordination, but as a goal in and of itself.

Of the situation in June 1848, when Cornelia refused to allow Pierce to visit her until he returned her daughter to her custody, the *Morning Chronicle* says that “no

\(^{28}\)This article was reprinted in *Littel’s Living Age*, and the page numbers refer to this reprint.
preventative to an interview was interposed save by the appellant herself, who declined to see him, and communicated her wishes through the medium of Dr. Asperti . . .” (412). Such wording could cut two ways. On the one hand, Pierce claimed that Dr. Asperti had tried to corrupt Cornelia, and that Cornelia was being held captive, prevented from receiving visitors. The clear statement that only her own desire prevented her from receiving Pierce’s visit denies this claim that Cornelia was a convent prisoner. However, it also indicates the active role Cornelia took in rejecting Pierce’s attempt to maintain his authority as her husband.

In contrast, the June 28 *London Times* article on the Connelly case ascribed a much more passive role to Cornelia. In discussing Cornelia’s conversion, the *Times* relates that she desired conversion “through [Pierce’s] inducement, or with his perfect approval,” language that emphasizes that the desire for conversion originally came from Pierce. Cornelia’s own religious desires, while recognized, are downplayed (“Civil Actions” 7). Of her actual entrance into the Church, *The Times* states that it occurred “with the full sanction and approval of her husband, who was present on her reception and first communion.” For legal purposes, what was important was establishing that she entered the Church with the consent and encouragement of her husband. In fact, throughout this article, the actions involved in the couple’s separation are always attributed primarily to Pierce. Thus, the “Civil Actions” article relates that after their conversion to Catholicism but before their separation, “Mr Connelly proposed to his wife that they should live in constant and perfect chastity with a special view to his taking holy orders in the Roman Catholic Church, to which Mrs. Connelly acceded, and a verbal
agreement to that effect was entered into . . .” and later, it states that “Mr Connelly placed his wife in the convent of the Sacred Heart . . .” (7). Though a separation like theirs was supposed to be granted only if both husband and wife discerned a vocation to serve in a religious or ordained state, the Times account suggests that the call was all on Pierce’s side.

In The Times’ version of the case, Pierce is consistently described as the one suggesting to his wife the various steps which would allow his transformation from Episcopalian minister to Roman Catholic priest: conversion, the vow of chastity, entrance into a convent. Cornelia’s agreement is constructed as passive right up until the point at which she dissents. Of Cornelia’s refusal to restore conjugal rights to her husband, her legal advocates say: “In the present case the wife had taken a vow of perpetual chastity, with the consent of her husband, and if she was still a sincere believer in Roman Catholic tenets, she must view a return to cohabitation with her husband in perfect horror.” This newspaper account of the case is thus one of a wife who acts with the complete consent, if not command, of her husband, until he requests an action which would violate her conscience. Nowhere does the Times article suggest that Cornelia might have had reasons other than her conscience for desiring to retain a position as founder and abbess in a teaching order, rather than returning to the control of her husband. The only defense

29 In fact, Pierce explicitly denied that he had suggested the couple’s private vow of chastity, saying that “precisely the reverse is true. Mr. Connelly having long absolutely refused to accede to the desire [of taking a vow of chastity] artificially got up in his wife, and in spite even of visions and divine revelations supposed to have been vouchsafed to her” (Domestic Emancipation From Roman Rule 12). However, in Pierce’s writings, all deceptive claims coming from Cornelia’s legal defense are attributed not to her but to “the priests who now have Mrs. Connelly in charge” (14), a move which protects Cornelia’s character by denying her agency.
which could be given for her refusal to return to her husband’s domicile is that it would violate her vow of chastity.30

Arguably, this depiction of Cornelia as a woman who acted primarily in response to her husband’s authority was a way of defending Cornelia’s character as a wife. In appealing against Pierce’s suit, Cornelia’s legal counsel had to tread a fine line, showing both that she acted of her own free will in taking the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience and that she acted with Pierce’s consent, even at his urging. Because the Times report tended to emphasize her passivity and obedience to Pierce’s will, it rendered her more sympathetic in the eyes of the Victorian public than would a rendition of the case which depicted her as actively seeking her own religious calling and clinging stubbornly to her role of authority as founder of a religious order, rather than granting her husband authority over herself and her convent. Differing editorial tones and audiences may account for the different handling of the case in the two reports cited here, but what is significant for my argument is that The Times did not have to describe the Connelly case as it did. It constructed a specific depiction of Cornelia which in many ways coincided with From Oxford to Rome’s depiction of a convert’s wife as a woman who is obedient to her husband’s wishes until her conscience finally rebels, in the convent. The difference is that whereas Cornelia rebelled by rejecting her husband and a potential life as Victorian

30 The court rejected this defense on the grounds that all it was recommending was that Cornelia live with Pierce, not that she have sex with him. Apparently, for him to compel her to resume sexual relations would constitute cruelty, given her vow of celibacy, but it was not cruel for him to demand that she live with him.
housewife, Margaret F. and the other fictional wives reject Catholicism in favor of
domicity.

*From Oxford to Rome* contrasts a feminine sense of duty that privileges domestic
attachment with a masculine sense of duty that views the family as an encumbrance,
perhaps even an idol, which prevents whole-hearted devotion to God.\(^3\) In the journalistic
retellings of the Connelly case, the ultimate culprit is the Roman Catholic Church
(specifically either the Pope or its leaders in England), which has no legal right to
separate a husband and wife who are domiciled in England.\(^3\) In fictional depictions of
conversion and the broken home, however, the blame is frequently placed on husbands
who mistakenly place their desire to serve as priests above their matrimonial obligations
and responsibilities; in other cases, the spiritual directors or “confessors” who encouraged
the conversions are found to be most culpable. In *From Oxford to Rome* and its
successors, the wives of converts are depicted as figures who strive at all costs to protect
their families and to restore their husbands to their senses without being disobedient.
Whereas in the Connelly case, it was Pierce who appealed to “the sacredness of that law

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\(^3\) James Eli Adams’ discussion of an ascetic ideal of masculinity which “cannot be sustained
within domesticity, since the ideal is incomplete with ease,” may be relevant (10). In *Dandies and Desert
Saints*, Adams reads Tractarian asceticism as part of a larger attempt to construct a new ascetic and
intellectual form of masculinity to replace the vanished traditional model. Strikingly, the novels of Harris,
Oliphant, and Worboise all attempt to counter this model.

\(^3\) Some distinction may be needed here: the early newspaper accounts seem to pin the blame on
“Rome” or the Catholic Church, but in *The Case of the Rev. Pierce Connelly* (1853) and *Domestic
Emancipation from Roman Rule in England* (1853) Nicholas Cardinal Wiseman is singled out for blame.
The changing historical context gives some explanation for this shift. The case began in the late 1840s,
before the reestablishment of the Catholic Church in England, but as the Papal Aggression Crisis
developed, the Connelly case became an example not only of the general anti-domestic nature of the
Catholic Church—the concern of novels like *Trevor* and *From Oxford to Rome*—but also of the audacity
of the newly reinstated English Catholic hierarchy, headed by Cardinal Wiseman.
of domestic life” that was threatened by Cornelia’s residence in a convent, in *From Oxford to Rome*, women are implicitly assumed to be the advocates and champions of the domestic ideal (Connelly *Domestic Emancipation* 9). This includes even women who convert to Catholicism: though Eustace supports F.’s decision to abandon his family to follow Christ more fully, his sister Augusta welcomes F.’s conversion but does not understand his need to leave his family and seek ordination (131).

Harris does not defend marriage and the domestic ideal as explicitly as do the anonymous author of *Trevor* and some of the later novelists who wrote about Catholic conversion and family break up, but she does defend it implicitly through her description of Margaret’s family life prior to conversion. Margaret is the “gentlest, the wildest, the joyfullest of daughters of men” (127), and before her husband converts and abandons her, the narrator says, “A sweet home was theirs” where every night “the young happy spirit of the place [Margaret] went to her nursery, to see that all was safe with her two lovely children” (128). This domestic haven is shattered, of course, by F.’s conversion. F. takes their young son with him to the monastery, where he dies, and though Margaret returns her daughter to the protection of Anglican friends, she herself does not live to watch over what remains of her family, but can only hope that her husband will come to his senses.

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33 In *Trevor*, of course, the positions are reversed, but here Mrs. Arden converts only because she had originally failed in seeking domestic happiness. Because she married a man whom she did not love, she was open to the possibility of a sort of spiritual adultery with Rev. Malinsey, which culminated in her flight to the convent. She is restored to her senses when her future son-in-law points out that the rest of the respectable world will see her pseudo-elopement with Malinsey and assume that she is in love with him. The narrator suggests, but does not state, that in fact romantic love for Malinsey may have motivated her conversion, which in any event would not have happened if she had loved her husband properly. Thus, though a woman is at fault in this novel, feminine domesticity is still the antidote to Catholicism and all ends well once Mrs. Arden goes back to her housework and her husband.
leave the monastery, return to the fireside of his own home, and take back the care of his child (271).

In one regard, Harris’ depiction of domesticity is complicated by her High Church beliefs: unlike non-Tractarian authors, she does not use the depiction of Catholicism as destructive to the family as an argument against celibacy. However, Harris does link conversion to Catholicism with the adoption of celibacy, and she is not alone in doing so: in *Trevor*, for example, when Mrs. Arden flies to the convent, she does so intending to formally enter the Catholic Church once within the cloister. Abandoning her family, entering the convent, and entering the Catholic Church are all to be accomplished in one fell swoop. The examples of *From Oxford to Rome* and *Trevor* indicate that conversion was already associated with celibacy in the late 1840s. The accounts of the Connelly case in the 1850s would have reinforced this connection, since the newspapers clearly related that the Connellys resolved to live celibately a few years after their conversion, even before their official separation.34

The connection between conversion to Catholicism and the endorsement of celibacy gave non-Catholic or anti-Catholic writers further reason to hold such conversion in suspicion. Paz claims that “anti-Catholics assumed that celibacy, being

34 In this regard, it may be worth pointing out that although Pierce mentioned the possibility of ordination as a Greek priest in his *Domestic Emancipation* (5), having previously mentioned in the 1851 “Petition to the House of Commons” that the Greek priesthood did not require celibacy, this factor does not show up in newspaper accounts of the case, or in the fictional depictions of family break-up. Granted, the Greek Catholic Church had little impact in the English-speaking world (Paz 104-105), but it may be significant that popular depictions of Catholicism do not even indicate an awareness that not all Catholic priests were celibate, let alone suggesting the possibility that an Anglican convert could be ordained as in the Greek rite and remain married.
unnatural, was a front for lascivious behavior, and that the relationship between confessor and female penitent was charged with sexuality” (275). This was undoubtedly true of some earlier Gothic fiction, and of anti-Catholic works such as *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*, which described priests raping nuns and the slaughter of the resulting infants. However, not all novels dealing with Catholicism and celibacy resorted to such sensational plots. Evangelical authors in particular had other concerns about celibacy. As Elizabeth Jay explains, concern about celibacy was in part directly tied to a fear of Catholicism, because embracing celibacy could make it easier for a clergyman to join the Catholic Church. But celibacy was also seen as unfitting a clergyman for pastoral duties, because “clergyman saw their families as the spheres in which they must prove themselves faithful over little before ministering to the greater needs of the parish” (133). If religious duties began in the home, then rejecting marriage and the domestic sphere threatened one’s ability to act pastorally.

Further, as Patrick O’Malley notes, “evangelical controversialists often saw clerical celibacy in itself as a kind of perversion, whether or not it masked enacted debauchery . . .” (6). Celibacy, even genuinely chaste celibacy, was a cause for concern for some Protestants simply because it was seen as unnatural, going against God’s design. Grace Kennedy’s 1823 novel *Father Clement* demonstrates the way these concerns about clerical celibacy could play out in a nineteenth-century religious novel. *Father Clement*, though intended to prove the error of Catholic doctrine, is, on the whole, sympathetic to Catholics. With the exception of the local Jesuit supervisor, the Catholic priests in this novel are treated as good but misguided and mis-educated men who feel real affection for
the family with whom they are stationed. The novel uses this sympathetic depiction of the priests as affective individuals to argue that celibacy is harmful. When kind old Father Dennis is, at the order of the Jesuits, removed from the wealthy household in which he had served as chaplain, the novel’s Protestant characters use his sorrow over the separation as an occasion for discussing the unnaturalness of the Catholic religious orders:  

“Poor old man!” said Sir Herbert, compassionately. “How cruel to remove him from those young people whom he must feel for as if they were his own. What an iniquitous system that is which denies to the minister of God that relation to any creature which the Divine Being has marked out as so honourable, by constantly appropriating the character to himself—that of a father.” (77-78)

Significantly, Kennedy’s criticism is based not on a presumed need for sexual outlet that could be found legitimately only in marriage, but on the fact that celibacy denies a man the honorable state of fatherhood. Furthermore, the Catholic Church’s error in preventing Father Dennis from having children of his own is compounded by the way the Jesuit machinery removes him from the domestic setting which has become his surrogate home and the source of his affections. Thus, though it is a novel of ideas primarily concerned with doctrinal issues, Father Clement also subtly reinforces the view that the natural human state is in the home, so much so that even when a man is prevented from marrying

35 The comment of one Protestant character that Father Dennis was deeply moved “by the thoughts of so soon parting from a family who were too dear for a man who had taken the vows he had” neatly emphasizes both the depth of Fr. Dennis’ emotions and their presumed inappropriateness, given his role as a Catholic priest (76-77).
he will form quasi-familial ties with those around him. Arbitrarily breaking those ties is, in a way, as “unnatural” as the enforcement of celibacy.

In contrast to this evangelical criticism of clerical celibacy, *From Oxford to Rome* shares the Tractarian respect for celibacy, especially for clergy with large parishes, who, without wives and children to care for, might “live more vividly conscious of the Presence of God and angels, and be more instantly ready for service of the sternest kind, or calls of the suddenest occasions” (Harris 172). Like Charlotte Yonge, who depicts romance and companionate marriage as the proper fate and highest earthly joy of only some people, Harris participates in the Tractarian Movement’s argument that marriage is not the ideal vocation for everyone. In her view, the clergy might find it beneficial to substitute the spiritual company of “God and angels” for company of a wife and children. This endorsement of celibacy was in fact one of the most-ridiculed and most alarming elements of the Tractarian Movement.

There was, however, an aspect of the Tractarian Movement that was even more threatening to Victorian domesticity than was its endorsement of celibacy: its revival of monasticism. To Victorians, “the feat was astonishing and almost unique among the Protestant churches” (Chadwick 505). Monasteries had been forbidden during Elizabethan England, and the dissolution of the monasteries occupied a key role in English historical narrative. Dissolving the monasteries was depicted as a cleansing of the corruption of the middle ages. In one of his replies to the Tractarians, the Rev. Charles Bird refers to the English historical narrative of corruption in the monasteries when he
concludes his criticism of the Tractarian plan to recreate monastic life in England by saying:

There is another point also to be considered before we restore the system among ourselves. Are we likely to gain in morality? Was the practical working of the system a moral one? History must reply—and if ever it gave a clear response to a question, it is in this case. Never—as long as people judge of what monasteries and convents are likely to be, by what they have been—will they be rebuilt in England. (264-265)

Bird does not describe the immorality of the historical monasteries and convent, instead taking it for granted that his readers all know what he’s talking about. According to him, the immorality of monastic life is an accepted historic fact, and it can be assumed that modern-day monasteries would fair no better.36

Bird’s theological arguments are intended for a limited audience, but more popular examples share the same assumptions. Nineteenth-century Gothic fiction depicted convents and monasteries as the location of devious torture and imprisonment of young women against their will, and anti-Catholic literature picked up these themes. Many people did not take seriously such stories of sexual immorality, torture, and infant murder, but even English Protestants who did not read Gothic novels were faced with evidence that abuse in convents was a present day reality in foreign countries. In March 1, 1842, for instance, The London Times had reprinted a brief notice on “Convent

36 So ingrained was the English resistance to monastic life that the legality of monastic and conventual institutions would become a subject of legal inquiry at several points in the nineteenth century. Despite the best efforts of men like Pierce Connelly and Charles Newdegate, legal attempts to control or close English monasteries and convents were unsuccessful (Norman 202). Nevertheless, these attempts to interfere with or dissolve Catholic and Anglican convents indicate the degree to which the convent and the monastery were seen as threatening to English (and domestic) identity.
Discipline,” concerning a young French girl who broke her leg trying to escape a convent where she had been put on a bread-and-water diet after refusing to allow her hair to be cut. Such rhetoric depicting convents as prisons appeared in connection with the Connelly case, as well. The Case of the Rev. Pierce Connelly claimed that Cornelia was “ostensibly in a position of high dignity and nominal freedom . . . but, in truth and in fact, the bond-slave and thrall of those by whom she is surrounded and guarded” (9). Letters published in the Times in 1853 concerning the Connelly affair continued to debate whether or not Cornelia was free to come and go as she pleased, and whether or not her chastity was threatened by her confessor. Catholic convert George Bowyer claimed that:

It is untrue that Mrs. Connelly’s liberty is in any way interfered with, or that she is watched or controlled by any person whatever. She is the head of her community, and she visits, whenever she thinks proper, the houses of her order in London, Liverpool, and Preston; and she can at all times go wherever she pleases, and see whoever she pleases. (“The Case of the Rev. Pierce Connelly” 8)

Bowyer further denied that Cornelia had made any complaints against her confessor, who was in fact a friend of Pierce’s. His letters were, however, challenged by the anonymous pamphleteer who authored The Case of Rev. Pierce Connelly, and by Pierce himself, both of whom insisted that Cornelia’s liberty was being impaired, as was evidenced by the fact that Pierce could not visit her.  

To some extent, From Oxford to Rome participates in this negative portrayal of convent life. The celibacy Harris endorses is that of an Anglican parish priest living in the

37 In fact, according to Bowyer’s letter and Cornelia’s own letters, Pierce could not visit her because she did not want to see him. His respondents seem to overlook this possibility, preferring to argue that Cornelia was prevented from seeing her husband by an outside force.
world, not celibacy practiced in the retirement of the Catholic monastery. Though she
does not describe any physical punishment or starvation, Harris does describe the
isolation, shunning, and disrespect given to a nun who reverts to Protestantism while in
the convent. For the most part, however, Harris’ criticism of monasticism is more subtle.
She describes life in the monastery as monotonous and overly focused on the life of the
community, which replaces one’s individual development. This concern is demonstrated
by one of the many changes of opinion Eustace A. undergoes after conversion to
Catholicism. Formerly an advocate of the re-establishment of monasteries in England, he
rejects his plan after having spent a few years in a monastic setting.

As a result of the negative associations with monasticism, conversion to the
monastic life is constructed as doubly threatening:

Greatest of all is that risk, when the convert has at once committed himself into a
wholly retired Religious Life. Then, when this Shadow of Death of which we
have spoken comes over his spirit, the danger is, that tedium langour, induced by
forms novel to him, indeed, and Roman, but unsympathizing, will not have left
him strength to cast it off, and he will . . . go on his future years a living body with
a dead soul—for no rousing circumstances will reach him within those walls; no
thrilling voice of Providence will startle his accustomed ear. . . . What avails his
Lauds and Prime and Matins, and Tierce and Sept and Nones, and Vespers and
Complin, his genuflections and his face of sanctity, if all this body is without
spirit—dead? (Harris 197)

Note the paradox of this critique of monasticism: though some of the converts’
.dissatisfaction with the monastic life is couched in terms of a dislike of the collective
mind that the novel claims dominates the individual in a monastic setting, at the same
time the narrator faults the seclusion of the monastic setting, which prevents any
interaction with the outside world. Thus, communal religious life is criticized both for
allowing too much interpersonal interaction, and for allowing too little; perhaps it would be better to say that it is criticized for fostering both the wrong kind of seclusion and the wrong kind of community.

Harris depicts the monastery as a false, foreign home in contrast to Margaret F.’s happy English domesticity. For Harris, monastic life is paradoxically both like and unlike the domestic sphere: it is secluded from the world of commerce and politics even more so than is the “domestic hearth,” but this very seclusion means that no exciting events of the outside world will influence the inner state of its residents. Further, the communal life of the monastery is shared not with a few family members bound together by affection, but with a large number of people whose personalities may be dissimilar and mutually disagreeable. Early in his monastic life, Eustace claims that encouraging interactions with members of the community one particularly dislikes is a useful form of asceticism; later he cites the lack of like-minded companionship as one of the burdens of monasticism. In the communities described by Harris, close interaction between like-minded individuals is even discouraged because it may be a means of spreading heretical opinion.

Thus, although Harris does not attack Catholicism on the grounds of the unnaturalness of clerical celibacy, she does fault it both for threatening the unity of the family and for elevating the monastic life as the perfect Christian life, when in fact it may cause the death of those who cross from Oxford to Rome. Monasticism, while it might

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38 Again, Harris was not the only author of her time to focus on monotony and seclusion as flaws of convent life; according to the author of Trevor, “The mere monotony of the monastic life is a continual temptation in itself . . .” since “All the littleness of our nature, which in the hurry and bustle of the world has no time to show itself, is developed in the seclusion of the cloister, and becomes deep moral guilt . . .” (326).
share some similarities with the domestic sphere, is not an adequate home for the English converts of *From Oxford to Rome*. Newman, writing his own novel as a speedy rebuttal of Harris’ fictional conversion narrative, had to deal with this criticism. He does so in part through an alternative, positive view of Catholic religious life, but his primary challenge to the association of Catholicism with a threat to domesticity lies in his critique of Anglicanism’s endorsement of marriage and the domestic ideal. Therefore, in the next section I will focus on Newman’s critique of marriage, before examining how he constructs Catholicism as an alternative form of home in the final section.

1.2 Newman’s Critique of the Domestic Ideal

*From Oxford to Rome*’s depiction of the break-up of a family after conversion must have appeared devastating to readers in 1847, who may have feared that their own Tractarian friends or relatives would follow suit. If the Connelly suit drew attention to the “anti-domestic” nature of Catholic conversion, Harris’ novel would assist in calling attention to the issue among the novel-reading audience. Newman responded to this criticism by satirically defusing such fears, but he went on to do more. Rather than formulating his rebuttal merely as a defensive response against the assertion that Catholicism threatened the institution of marriage, he took an aggressive stance by critiquing both the married state and Protestant attitudes towards clerical celibacy.

*Loss and Gain*, essentially a religious *Bildungsroman*, traces Charles Reding’s education and intellectual development from the time he enters Oxford as a freshman to his entrance into the Catholic Church. Charles, the son of a sound Church of England
clergyman, takes a course in the Thirty-Nine Articles early in his university career and begins having doubts about them. Though he is amused rather than swayed by the aesthetic Anglo-Catholicism of some of his friends, he searches for a Church that is one, holy, universal (catholic) and apostolic. He engages in debates with his tutor and his friends about the nature of the Church, the role of private judgment, and various other theological matters. Meanwhile, when the Vice Principal of his college learns of Charles’ “difficulties” with regard to the Articles, he refuses to grant him lodgings for the two terms prior to his exams, essentially exiling him from Oxford to prevent him from corrupting his fellow students. Charles’ exile causes him to examine more closely his beliefs, and though he doesn’t feel that he will ever become a Roman Catholic, he begins to feel out of place in the Anglican Church. He passes his exams, but is unable to take his degree because he cannot subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles. After a long period of study, and attempts by friends and strangers alike to prevent his “perversion,” he enters the Roman Catholic Church.

At first glance, such a plot may have little to do with domesticity or domestic fiction, but precisely because the novel ends at the altar, even its basic structure parallels the classic marriage plot of the domestic novel, which typically ends with marriage and

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39 Baker’s claim that Newman “seems to pull up his conversion-story at certain intervals, as if to say, ‘Now I must stop the argument and describe the scenery or let the characters drink another cup of tea’” unfortunately seems justified (63). There is rather a lot of tea-drinking-punctuated-debate in the novel. Newman is at least original enough to insert a discussion about the morality of tea-drinking into one such scene, which might be taken as an example of a lighter sort of satire that his earlier critics seem not to have appreciated. More recently, Ian Ker has drawn well-deserved attention to Newman’s satirical gifts.
the movement of the protagonist to a new home. In this “boy meets church” story, the consummation of Charles’ courtship/conversion process is his reception of communion as a Catholic, described as a blissful and peaceful moment. His reception into the Catholic Church, like the wedding at the end of a Jane Austen novel, marks the beginning of a new life and the end of the novel. The parallel between conversion narrative and marriage plots is one indicator that Newman wants to posit conversion as a substitute for marriage.

Newman addresses the issue of marriages being broken up as a result of conversion, albeit briefly and satirically. When the Anglo-Catholics Willis and White discuss the longed-for future transformation of Oxford into a Catholic institution, their female counterparts, the Miss Boltons, say “the Heads of houses have got wives; how can they become monks?” to which White glibly responds, “Oh, the wives will go into convents . . . Willis and I have been making inquiries in the High Street, and they are most satisfactory. Some of the houses there were once university-halls and inns, and will easily turn back into convents: all that will be wanting is grating to the windows” (145). By introducing this comment in the context of an exchange of banter that not even the participants take seriously, Newman is able to dismiss Harris’ concerns about Catholic conversion’s potential to break apart marriages. In the context of this conversation, the possibility of mass conversions resulting in mass marital separations is just as absurd as White’s plan to resurrect the Knights of Malta. This is not to say that the novel is entirely unconcerned with the threat conversion poses to established family. Charles’ sister and

40 As George Levine puts it: “Nor is there much to complain of in the lack of love interest or the excitement of the popular novel. Loss and Gain, after all, is a novel of manners, though it relates not to the usual problem of how hero and heroine but of how hero and Church get together” (361).
confidante Mary is concerned that in separating himself from the Church of England, Charles is also separating himself from his literal home and family. Feeling that the relationship of trust she has shared with Charles, the “stay” of the family, is threatened by Charles’ Tractarian leanings and possible conversion, Mary fears she is “to be abandoned by her own brother! Oh, how terrible!” (258). Thus, though *Loss and Gain* does not focus on family break-up to the degree that *From Oxford to Rome* does, it still connects abandonment with conversion. More important, however, is the way Newman associates Catholic conversion with the rejection of marriage and the family by associating it with celibacy.

In substituting conversion for marriage, Newman also launches a criticism of English domesticity, arguing that celibacy is more religious than marriage. His linkage of Catholic conversion to celibacy is unsurprising, since, as I have shown, this was a common Victorian connection. What may be surprising is the causal relationship in *Loss and Gain*: celibacy is actually central to Charles’ conversion because one of the initial causes of his feeling of displacement in the Anglican Church is his certainty that marriage is not his vocation. The issue of celibacy arises first when Charles’ family teases him about the possibility of marriage, which they view to be his natural fate. His mother claims that “dear Charles will make a kind affectionate husband . . . when the time comes; —and come it will, though not just yet. Yes, my dear boy . . . you will not be able to escape your destiny, when it comes” (168). Charles protests that he does not deserve such teasing. What he does not tell his parents is that he does not believe that marriage is his destiny. He does not share their assumption that marriage and fatherhood are the only
natural outcome of the development of a “good son” (169). In a later discussion with his tutor, Carlton, Charles admits that he is drawn to celibacy. “It’s no new notion taken up,” he explains to Carlton, “... but I had it when a boy in school, and I have ever since fancied that I should never marry” (219). Though Charles’ conversion does ultimately lead to estrangement from his family, his rejection of marriage and domestic life through a preference for celibacy precedes his adoption of Tractarian theology, rather than following as a result of Tractarianism.

Introducing the topic of celibacy also allows Newman to undermine Harris’ endorsement of High Church Anglicanism. Newman and Harris agree on the benefits of clerical celibacy, but Newman dismisses Harris’ desire of encouraging celibacy for Anglican clergymen. Charles’ tutor dismisses the idea that clerical celibacy or monasticism could be incorporated into the Church of England, thus rejecting one of the Tractarian principles shared by those who hoped that High Church Anglicanism could serve as a substitute for Roman Catholicism: “In the Church of Rome great good, I see, comes of celibacy, but depend upon it, my dear Reding, you are making a great blunder, if you are for introducing celibacy into the Anglican church” (219).

Carlton’s response to Charles’ advocacy of celibacy also introduces the issue of prejudice against monasticism through the pairing of the monk and his community against the Protestant pastor and his wife. While celibacy threatened the domestic ideal through its rejection of marriage, monasticism was even more threatening because it went one step further and not only rejected the family but also offered a replacement for it. Carlton claims that
the whole genius, the whole structure of our Church goes the other way. For instance, we have no monasteries to relieve the poor; and if we had, I suspect, a parson’s wife would, in practical substantial usefulness, be infinitely superior to all the monks that were ever shaven. I declare, I think, that the Bishop of Ipswich is almost justified in giving out that none but married men have a chance of preferment from him. . . . (219)

The “shaven monks” of a monastery compete with “parson’s wives” in doing good to the poor, and the monks are decidedly the losers. A trace of the Gothic concern about the moral (and sometimes sexual) depravity of monastic life lurks behind Carlton’s criticism of “shaven monks.” In the Protestant view (as Newman depicts it), a wife is not just a more congenial companion than a collectivity of celibate men, but a more practical one. Though Carlton stresses the practicality of marriage, the replacement of heterosexual coupling with the homosocial bonding of a single-sex community was in itself disturbing to Victorians.41

Newman’s response to the privileging of marriage over monasticism is that marriage itself can be morally problematic for Christians. Charles’ views of celibacy go beyond those expressed by Harris’ Eustace A. in that he considers marriage to be not just an inconvenience for a clergyman, but a possible occasion of sin. In response to the charge that celibacy is unnatural, Charles replies that it is “Supernatural,” going not against nature but beyond it, as a higher ideal. Rejecting the comforts of domesticity as

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41 On the way in which monastic relationships were depicted as transgressions against heteronormativity within Gothic literature, see Patrick O’Malley (50-52). Adams, however, complicates such a reading. He suggests that much of the early Victorian fear of Tractarian brotherhoods was political rather than sexual, associated with fears of combination and secrets societies (17); according to Adams, only gradually did male secrecy become “identified narrowly and specifically with sexual transgression” (102).
impediments to the perfect spiritual life, Charles argues that “surely the idea of an Apostle, unmarried, pure, in fast and nakedness, and at length a martyr, is a higher idea than that of one of the old Israelites, sitting under his vine and fig-tree, full of temporal goods, and surrounded by sons and grandsons” (221). Even more significantly, he tells Carlton, “take the text, ‘in sin hath my mother conceived me.’ Do not these works shew that . . . there is (to say the least) great risk of marriage leading to sin in married people?” (222). Whereas anti-Catholic literature hinted at the corruption and sexual transgression lurking within convent life, Newman suggests that the hidden sexual sin is really to be found in marriage.

In response to this suggestion that married couples risk sin in having sex, Carlton exclaims that Charles is Gnostic. Many Victorian readers, from evangelicals to Broad Church proponents of marriage such as Charles Kingsley, would probably have agreed. As Rhodes notes, some critics of the Tractarians felt that “the revived cult of asceticism was merely a mask for morbid hatred of the body and life, destroying the family and the State” (20). In Hypatia (1853), Kingsley would challenge the Tractarians by exploring asceticism and the institution of monasticism at their source: the Early Church.

Though it is true that Newman, like other Tractarians, valued ascetic Christianity, believing asceticism to be a trait of authentic Patristic Christianity, something more complicated is also occurring in this figuring of marriage as overly luxurious. As Richard Dellamora notes in Friendship’s Bonds, other Victorians also condemned unnecessary luxuriousness, connecting it to “excessive consumption, especially in the upper classes; the mechanisms of finance capital; and sensual indulgence;” luxury was also associated
with sexual deviance, particularly with sodomy (114). As a result, the luxurious vestments and ornate churches of Anglo- and Roman Catholicism were further reason for Victorian Protestants to view all-male communities (such as Newman’s gathering of friends at Littlemore) with concern. Newman, however, reconstructs “luxury” as a sin connected not with the unmarried, dandified (and potentially deviant) male, but with marriage and the wealthy domestic life. Here, by indicting married couples for the affluent living, Newman seeks to transfer some of that suspicion from the “unnatural” condition of celibacy to the respected but, in his view, potentially corrupting institution of marriage.

Newman’s satiric use of White (a some-time advocate of celibacy) as a figure through which to criticize middle-class Anglican courtship and marriage more clearly demonstrates this association of luxury with marriage.42 Willis and White’s discussion with the Miss Boltons about reforming the Church of England abounds with more than mere dry theological speculation: when White tells Louisa Bolton that if monasticism is revived in English, he might become a Cistercian monk, she enthusiastically exclaims, “Oh the dear Cistercians! . . . St. Bernard, wasn’t it? —sweet heavenly man, and so young! I have seen his picture: such eyes!” (145) The narrator, wryly commenting on the would-be Cistercian’s eventual fate, observes that “White was a good-looking man. The nun and monk looked at each other very respectfully, and bowed . . . ” (145-146). The

42 Though the novel is tightly focused on Charles’ development, it also traces the course of a few minor characters whose differing fates illustrate what Newman saw as flaws in Anglo-Catholicism and rewards of conversion to Catholicism. Two of Charles’ college friends are particularly important in this regard: Willis, who converts to Catholicism some years before Charles’ own conversion, and White, who remains a High Church Anglican.
young couple’s talk of joining religious orders, the narrator implies, is actually flirtation disguised as devotion.⁴³

If Carlton’s opinion about clerical celibacy were correct, White should be a better pastor because he abandons his monastic ambitions and marries Louisa Bolton. The novel suggests that the opposite is the case: Newman depicts White as becoming more laughable because he tries to combine his Tractarian views with marriage and domestic life. Shortly before his own conversion to Catholicism, Charles encounters the happy couple in a bookstore in Bath. Charles sees

a young clergyman, with a very pretty girl on his arm, whom her dress pronounced to be a bride. Love was in their eyes, joy in their voice, and affluence in their gate and bearing. Charles had a faintish feeling come over him; somewhat such as might beset a man on hearing a call for pork-chops when he was sea-sick. He retreated behind a pile of ledgers and other stationery, but they could not save him from the low, thrilling tones which from time to time passed from one to another. (305)

An unromantic young man might be amused by the overly sentimental behavior of soppy newlyweds, but Charles’ reaction here—disgust carried to the point of physical illness—is extreme, highlighting the degree of his reaction against this version of domestic life. Given Charles’ previous censure of the married state and the affluence of Anglican clergy, this scene serves as a further criticism of marriage in general and the marriage of the clergy in particular. The material wealth and triviality of the married couple confirms

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⁴³ Thus, as Ian Ker notes, White and the Miss Boltons are subject to the charge of inconsistency, an important criticism since “for Newman, being consistent or inconsistent is tantamount to being real or unreal” and, in Ker’s view, a search for the “real” undergirds the novel (8, 15).
Charles’ belief that married Anglicans do not share the ascetic ideals he associates with Catholicism, while the newlyweds’ very affection for each other disgusts him.

The young newlyweds present the figure of a marriage of harmonious natures (the ideal held up by domestic fiction), but Newman depicts the couple’s shared interest in High Church matters as nauseatingly petty. They chatter about which books the bishop warned them against and which are sound, and whether a picture of St. John the Baptist looks like Miss Primrose, the bishop’s daughter. Charles, for his part, can breathe freely only once they are gone. From his perspective, his already overly-aesthetic friend has turned into the very model of the worldly, overly-luxurious Anglican clergyman. It is Newman’s most biting criticism of romantic love. Later, in *Callista* (1856), Newman would present virginal martyrdom as preferable to marriage for his fictional lovers,44 but in *Loss and Gain* he rejects romantic love entirely and offers the path taken by Willis as a superior alternative to White’s choice, the domestic ideal. When White is contrasted with fellow Tractarian Willis, it becomes even clearer that Newman is presenting Willis’ decision to convert to Catholicism and become ordained as a (celibate) Catholic priest as superior to White’s decision to marry and remain Anglo-Catholic. What I want to call attention to about this pairing of opposite paths is that for Newman, conversion to Roman Catholicism seems inevitably linked to celibacy, while marriage is depicted as Protestant and worldly. Roman Catholicism represents the better choice, according to Newman, but

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44As Baker puts it, *Callista* “ends not in a marriage but in death. All the emotional ecstasy that would ordinarily be lavished upon sexual love is devoted to the divine” (61).
he still presents the choice as one fundamentally opposed to marriage, family, and the
domestic ideal.

1.3 Beyond Home and Homeland

In *From Oxford to Rome*, Eustace A. and his companions supply theological
reasons for the disappointment of converts to Catholicism, but the primary cause of their
discontent is not doctrinal; rather, it is their sense of uprootedness or homesickness, a
result of abandoning England and the English Church. Newman also connects home and
church, but he turns the home/church construction around to work against Harris’
equation of conversion with loss of family and exile from the nation. He challenges
Harris’ construction of English identity as domestic, Protestant, and insular by describing
a new identity—one which is transnational rather than insular and communal rather than
familial—which he believed could only be found in the Roman Catholic Church.

*From Oxford to Rome* defines the home by conflating the English nation and the
English Church, setting them both against the foreignness of Catholicism.45 This can be
seen in the narrator’s discourse on the trials which plague converts:

Not in false forms or corrupted creeds, as we believe, lies the hazard to such a
one, but in the almost certain failure of the vitality within. When the roots of his
religion have been drawn from one soil and have not taken their hold up on the
other. If he passes through this time, he may yet do well—the transplanted tree
may flourish in its new place—but the risk is great. (197)

45 Thus, Alan Hill is right to point out that the homelessness of Harris’ fictional converts is
connected to their movement from a familiar religion to a foreign creed (26).
This metaphor of conversion as movement from one nation—one soil—to another is particularly apt in a novel in which all the converts leave not just the English church but England itself. As Eustace is dying, the former Anglicans in his monastery repeat the words of Psalm 137, “By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept; when we remembered Thee, Oh Zion,” which they recite “in the version of the English Prayer-book” (166-167). Psalm 137 is, of course, a prayer of exiles in a foreign land longing for their homeland. For Eustace and his companions, “Zion” is primarily the Anglican Church, but given that they are literally speaking the words of the English liturgy in a strange land, Zion also stands for England itself. The converts long for their native country as well as their native church.

Whereas the male converts’ losses are couched primarily in terms of a longing for their homeland and their home church, Margaret’s loss is described more relationally, in terms of home and family. This becomes particularly clear when she leaves the convent to stay with Protestant friends. As she nears death, Margaret asks the local Anglican pastor “whether she would be justified in making her last communion in the Church of her heart and youth,” to which he responds in the affirmative (270-271). She receives the sacrament from an Anglican minister “among the assembled household of her friends” who are “deeply affected with the touching ceremony” (271). Her reception of Anglican

46 Although the male converts are placed in an Italian monastery, which is explicitly opposed to the English Church, the national situation with regard to Margaret and Augusta is not so clear-cut. Their convent is in Ireland, and when Margaret leaves the convent, she stays with friends in Scotland, not England. She is visited by an Anglican minister, not a Presbyterian one, and the novel endorses the Anglican Church but condemns the “ultra-Protestantism” of Presbyterian churches. Still, Protestant Scotland appears to be safer and more familiar territory than Catholic Ireland.
last rites rather than Roman Catholic ones connects Margaret to her past and to the friends currently surrounding her, though it separates her from her sister and from her husband, who she hopes will eventually follow her back to the Anglican Church. The Anglican sacrament represents a Protestant homecoming for Margaret.

Whereas Harris’ protagonist sees her return to Anglicanism as the return to the religion of her youth and heart, in the *Apologia* Newman says of *Loss and Gain* that “its drift is to show how little there is in Anglicanism to satisfy and retain a young and earnest heart” (456). Given that *Loss and Gain* is much more theologically driven than is *From Oxford to Rome*, it is telling that Newman felt that the novel demonstrated Anglicanism’s inability to satisfy a heart rather than a mind. Rather than focusing only on the intellectual problems of Anglican theology, Newman attributes to his protagonist an experience of foreignness and homelessness while in the church of his youth which is resolved only by his entrance into the Church of Rome. In short, Newman responds to Harris’ description of conversion as a loss of home and homeland by suggesting that conversion to Catholicism results in a new and better “home,” one which transcends both the domestic sphere and the national homeland.

First, Newman argues that a young man with Catholic sensibilities would feel out of place in Anglicanism. That Charles does not belong in the Anglican Church is first demonstrated by the Vice Principal of his college, who recognizes even before Charles does that, with his religious leanings, Charles does not belong at Oxford. When he has been sent home, Charles shares some of his uneasiness with his sister Mary. Charles reveals that his conversation about celibacy with Carlton disturbed him, because he has
come to see that Carlton is right that clerical celibacy is out of place in the Anglican Church, and this, Charles fears, means that the Anglican Church is not in keeping with the asceticism of early Christianity. More to the point, this means that his own personality and vocation are not suited to the Anglican Church. Though he assures Mary that he doesn’t think he will ever become a Roman Catholic, Charles says that “many things have happened to me, in various ways, to shew that I have not a place, a position, a home, that I am not made for, that I am a stranger in, the Church of England” (253). His problem “is this, and no more, that I feel out of place.” The sense in which “Church” functions as a home—a spiritualized form of the domestic—is strengthened in this conversation by the familial connection between Charles and Mary; it is after this conversation that Mary begins to fear that Charles’ beliefs will cause a loss of his identity and a separation from his family (257-258). What Mary is beginning to suspect is that Charles will be forced to choose between his home of origin and the home provided by the Roman Catholic Church.

Newman responds to Harris’ portrayal of Catholic converts as homeless and out of place in the Catholic Church by suggesting that the real spiritual homeless are those in the Anglican Church who have Catholic sensibilities. The basic argument of Loss and Gain is that such “homeless” Anglicans will find rest and peace in the Roman Catholic Church. After Charles at least enters the Roman Catholic Church, the novel leaves him in the care of Willis’ religious order, the Passionists. After receiving communion, the narrator describes Charles
in the possession of a deep peace and serenity of mind, which he had not thought possible on earth. . . . It was such to throw him back in memory on his earliest years, as if he were really beginning life again. But there was more than the happiness of childhood in his heart: he seemed to feel a rock under his feet. . . . He went on kneeling, as if he were already in Heaven, with the throne of God before him, and Angels around. . . . (351)

This conclusion to Charles Reding’s spiritual journey is particularly significant when read in conjunction with Margaret’s deathbed scene in *From Oxford to Rome*. Margaret’s choice of Anglican communion on her deathbed linked her to her youth. Here Charles is also reminded of his childhood when he receives communion, but he finds a greater happiness in the Roman Catholic Church. For Harris, a return to youth is a return to home and homeland. For Newman, returning to youth means moving beyond the nuclear family and England. Satisfaction, Newman argues, does not come from union with the church of one’s home and country, but from union with the church which he believes to be theologically correct.47

As previously mentioned, the novel ends with Charles’ conversion, not resolving the details of his future life. However, though Newman does not show Charles’ life as a Catholic, he does use Willis as a contrast to the despondent converts of *From Oxford to Rome*.48 Willis’ story parallels the conversion of Eustace A. in a few key ways: Willis,

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47 Viswanathan sees additional implications in the connection to childhood, claiming that “Newman’s romantic individualism links the child with true belief; hence conversion to Catholicism is virtually the recovery of a lost childhood” (64). She sees this depiction of childhood as “an attempt to understand childhood as a prototype for the imaginative life of a nation” but I would argue that this return to childhood is placed in opposition to the life of the nation. At this point in his writing, Newman’s view of the universality of Catholicism seems to be opposed to, rather than supportive of, English identity.

48 George Eliot drew this connection as well, noting in “Religious Stories” that “The title [*Loss and Gain*] might lead us to expect an answer to Miss Harris in the detail of an opposite experience on the
like Eustace A., is converted while abroad, and like Eustace, he joins a religious order and leaves England. After his conversion, rumors that he is dissatisfied and will return to the Anglican Church begin to circulate about Oxford. Here, however, the similarities between the two characters end, as the rumors of Willis’ possible reversion turn out to be incorrect. When he returns to Oxford for a visit, Willis initially appears to have changed both for good and for bad. Having been silent in public in the past, he now speaks “freely and easily” (276). But physically, “he had lost his bloom and youthfulness; his expression was sweeter indeed than before, and very placid, but there was a thin line on each side of his mouth; his cheek was wanting in fullness, and he had the air of a man of thirty” (276). Though not the wasted and dying figure of Eustace A. or Margaret F., Willis still shows physical signs of the stress of his changed life.

Unlike Eustace A. or Margaret, however, Willis ultimately proves to be a sounder man. His conversion has matured rather than broken him. The positive results of Willis’ conversion are demonstrated when Charles’ friend Bateman, who has brought Charles and Willis together for the purpose of persuading Willis to return to Anglicanism, provokes Willis on the nature of the Catholic Mass. Willis bursts into a joyful defense of it that covers its subjective, emotional effects as well as its theological attributes: “to me nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overcoming as the Mass, said as it is among us” (292). When Bateman asks point blank if it is not true that Willis has been journey From Oxford to Rome. This is not, indeed, given in the history of the hero. . . . But an answer does seem to be intended in the case of his friend Willis . . .” (165).
regretting his conversion to Catholicism, the narrator describes his physical expression as a contradiction of the rumors: “Willis’s face still glowed, and he looked as youthful and radiant has he had been two years before. There was nothing ungentle in his impetuosity; a smile, almost a laugh, was on his face, as if he was half ashamed of his own warmth.” (294). Willis replies verbally to Bateman by quoting St. Paul’s defense of his Christianity: “I would to God, that not only thou, but also all who hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds” (294). Later, he tells Charles that he has nothing to regret about his conversion except his recklessness in rushing into things he did not understand (351).

Just as he offers a celibate ideal as an alternative to English domesticity, Newman offers a transnational or universal ideal to contrast with the Tractarian emphasis on English religious history, English liturgical customs, and English ecclesiastical architecture. Whereas Harris’ converts suffered from the loss of their companions, Willis describes the Mass as a new sort of fellowship, more truly catholic in its inclusiveness, and superior to that offered by High Church Anglicanism because it is not a forced liturgy unfamiliar to the people, but an organic whole. The people pray:

not painfully and hopelessly following a hard form of prayer from beginning to end, but like a concert of musical instruments, each different, but concurring in a

49 Viswanathan sees a related project being carried out in A Grammar of Assent, which allows Newman to “posit Catholicism as a transreligious, transnational force. From this transnational perspective, Newman is able also to critique the very concept of the nation state, even as he simultaneously recovers a Catholicism of the popular masses that is truly national” (48). Viswanathan further argues that, “Far from being separatist or sectarian, this view of Catholicism appears to Newman to perfect the idea of the English nation” which may be true of Newman’s later writing, but does not seem to me to be at work in the same way in Loss and Gain.
sweet harmony, we take our part with God’s priest, supporting him, yet guided by him. There are little children there, and old men, and simple labourers, and students in seminaries, priests preparing for Mass, priests making their thanksgiving; there are innocent maidens, and there are penitents; but out of these many minds rises one eucharistic hymn, and the great Action is the measure and the scope of it. (293)

This description of a diverse community drawn together by liturgy is one aspect of Newman’s vision of the universality of Catholicism; as Viswanathan notes, for Newman, Catholicism is associated with a sort of reactionary populism (54, 56). Willis, in finding his true community in this heterogeneous gathering of worshippers, indicates his embrace of a version of Catholicity which purports to connect differing social classes into one body.

The transnational character of Catholicism is also reinforced though Newman’s replacement of the English (and Anglican) Oxford with the Catholic Passionist monastery, the true religious community of the novel. The cosmopolitanism of this religious ideal is indicated by the narrator’s taking pains to point out that the Passionist order is Italian, not English, in origin, though it is connected, through its project to convert England, with a Catholic revision of the English historical narrative (346-347). By situating the climax of Charles’ conversion in the Passionist monastery—founded by

50 Thus, I want to complicate Alan Hill’s assertion that Newman challenged Harris’ depiction of Oxford converts by showing that the converts were “more truly ‘English’ than their opponents and with better credentials to speak as Oxford men” (26). In fact, Newman depicts the Catholic intellectuals (Reding and Willis) as opposed to the Oxford ideal, which has become a materialistic ideal. This is illustrated by Willis and White’s comic fantasies of a Catholic Oxford: the level of catholicizing they imagine is improbable, if not impossible, because it goes against the materialistic spirit of England and the English Church. It may be that in Newman’s thinking there is an implicit connection between true Christianity and England, and between Oxford as it should be and Catholicism, but this does not seem to be the concern of the novel.

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Italians but located in England—Newman offers an attempted correction to Harris’ negative depiction of monastic life in Italy. After his post-communion meditation and a conversation with Willis, Reding seeks “his temporary cell, so happy in the present that he had not thoughts either for the Past or for the Future” (352). Reding has begun to embody Newman’s version of Catholicity: unlike Harris’ too-English converts, he is capable of being at home in a foreign monastery. Moreover, his happiness suggests that communal life need not prevent an individual from awareness of the mystical presence of God.

*Loss and Gain*’s implications with regard to national character can be seen most clearly in Willis’s transformation from an excitable young man to a well-informed Passionist priest. Conversion and ordination have not just matured Willis; they have made him more cosmopolitan: as Father Aloysius, he moves about from country to country as his order needs him, at home with the climate and cuisine of other lands. Though he still prefers the Gothic architecture of England, he is not bound to England as his homeland in the way that characterizes Harris’ homeless converts. In later works, such as the *Apologia*, Newman would argue that his own Catholicism did not pose a threat to his position as an English gentleman, but for Willis and Charles Reding, “home” is not found by the domestic fireside of an English home or in the English Church, but in a Passionist monastery, in communion with the Catholic Church.

*Loss and Gain*—centered on male characters, vehement in its rejection of marriage as a universally ideal state of life, and concluding with a religious experience in a monastery rather than with a wedding—no doubt seems the opposite of a domestic
novel. Yet, the novel’s structure parallels the marriage plot, translating the traditional tale of leaving and cleaving into new terms of spiritual and ecclesial communion. Newman makes use of conversion’s capacity for dissent to work against the English domestic ideal, but rather than simply rejecting the domestic sphere, he offers a new, more cosmopolitan (and more catholic) form of home. Further, though Newman’s work was written to counter *From Oxford to Rome* (a novel deeply concerned with the concept of conversion as a force that tears apart families), by creating a protagonist who rejects marriage, Newman participated in the construction of Catholicism as a force somehow opposed to the English home. Thus, although his intention was to answer the claims of anti-Catholics and dissatisfied converts, he ultimately reinforced one of the basic structures of Victorian anti-Catholicism. These associations would be employed again by novels with quite different agendas. Nearly two decades later, best-selling author Margaret Oliphant took up the narrative of conversion and family division within the context of a marriage-driven novel, *The Perpetual Curate*. In arguing that family unit and happiness is more important than minor liturgical details, Oliphant was not so much contradicting Newman’s line of thought as turning it back around to focus on the literal, rather than spiritual, home.
In 1864, nearly twenty years after his conversion to Catholicism, John Henry Newman caught the attention of the British public once again when a series of publicized disputes with Broad Churchman Charles Kingsley led to the publication of Newman’s intellectual autobiography, Apologia Pro Vita Sua. The work was a defense against charges of duplicity in Newman’s life and work as an Oxford don. Newman sought to prove that when he had served as a tutor at Oxford, he had not been (either in heart or in fact) a secret member of the Roman Catholic church, and that he had not deliberately posed as an Anglican for the purpose of corrupting young, vulnerable Oxonians. Similar accusations regarding the encouragement or condoning of lying, living a duplicitious life (most clearly seen in the figure of the secret Catholic), and the fear that such secret Catholics would corrupt others through education, were longstanding elements of anti-Catholic rhetoric which would reappear in fiction concerned with the rise of Ritualism from the 1860s to the 1880s, as well as in Kingsley’s attack on Newman.  

51 The fear of treasonous duplicity, and the ways in which Catholics and Anglo-Catholics made use of the secret society motif, has been examined by Pionke and Adams in the context of the Tractarian movement and (in Pionke’s case) the Papal Aggression crisis. However, this line of rhetoric did not end...
were frequently employed by overtly anti-Catholic authors, but precisely because such works bound this rhetoric to a defense of the English Church and English Protestantism, the same rhetoric was employed, alluded to, and parodied by writers who sought to complicate English national and religious identities.

In this chapter, I read one such text, Margaret Oliphant’s *The Perpetual Curate*, in the context of the Newman-Kingsley debate and the emerging discourse of Ritualism.\(^{52}\) As one of the nineteenth century’s most prominent converts, Newman served as a focal point for Victorian fears about Catholic duplicity as a threat to the education of young Britons. Kingsley’s continued insistence on Newman’s duplicity—and the seriousness when the Papal Aggression Crisis died down. It continued to be flare up around other crisis points, such as the Vatican I council and the passing of the Uniform Worship Act. Neither Pionke nor Adams deal specifically with the charge of duplicity in the context of rising Ritualism and the Newman-Kingsley debate.

\(^{52}\) Perhaps surprisingly, recent works on Roman and Anglo-Catholicism in Victorian literature (such as those by Griffin, O’Malley, and Diane Peschier) have tended not to discuss the Carlingford Chronicles. Susan Griffin does discuss the depiction of Ritualism as an assault on marriage and the middle class British family, but as her focus is specifically on anti-Catholic fiction, she does not look at more moderate authors such as Oliphant. This is a shame, because Oliphant was an accomplished novelist, and *The Perpetual Curate*, one of her most popular novels at its time of publication, is still considered by many Oliphant critics to be one of her best works. Aesthetically speaking, the novel is both more enjoyable and in some ways more complicated than most of the explicitly polemical fictions dealing with Catholic conversion; it thus deserves a closer look. Birgit Kämper’s survey of Oliphant’s work, with its emphasis on reading the Carlingford Chronicles against journal articles appearing at the same time as the serialized installments of the novels, does situate *The Perpetual Curate* in the context of the rising Ritualist controversy and lingering concern over Roman Catholic conversion. Kämper also briefly notes (but does not discuss the implications of) the coincidence of *The Perpetual Curate* with Newman’s *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (45). In recent years there have been a few articles on *The Perpetual Curate* which also explore its religious context. For example, Oliver Lovesy reads *The Perpetual Curate* in the context of the Tractarian revival of sisterhoods. Finally, I should mention that although *The Perpetual Curate* is in some ways comparable to Trollope’s *Barchester Towers* in terms of its depictions of ecclesiastical infighting (see for instance Wolff 155), I agree with Joseph O’Mealy’s claim that “Oliphant depicts a spiritual life” that Trollope excludes (254). This can be seen in the greater attention Oliphant gives to the actual daily and weekly work of a clergyman, as opposed to the politics of churchmanship. Thus, I also side with Lovesy in thinking that Oliphant, though clearly not writing Sunday school books intended only for a religious audience, had a greater engagement in religion than some readings have recognized (21).
with which such charges were taken by the reading public—reminds us that in the mid-1860s charges of Catholic duplicity were a topic of serious consideration, not just a staple of sensation fiction. In *The Perpetual Curate*, published while this debate raged, Margaret Oliphant makes use of the rhetoric of Catholic duplicity to define a new version of English identity. In an era when High Churchmen were susceptible to accusations of secret Catholicism, Oliphant positions her High Church hero, Frank Wentworth, against both a stuffy Anglican rector (Mr. Morgan) and Frank’s Catholic convert brother Gerald, offering Frank’s High Church Anglicanism not as a threat but as a new, expanded version of English identity: one which is single-minded and ardently driven towards both aesthetics and social action. Frank Wentworth’s Catholicity makes him a more effective clergyman, while ultimately also enabling him to sympathize with both his Roman Catholic brother and his evangelical aunts, even as he defines himself against their positions.

Domesticity is central to the construction of this identity, because the central plot of *The Perpetual Curate* (overlaid by religious, criminal, and sensational subplots though it may be) is a marriage plot. The novel concludes with a wedding: Frank’s marriage to Lucy Wodehouse, the female protagonist. As in many social problem novels, the marriage of these central protagonists enables them to better serve the poor of Carlingford. Though they are at various times tempted either to abandon their life’s work

53 Indeed, the final number of *The Perpetual Curate* appeared in *Blackwood’s* September 1864 issue, along with an article by G.R. Gleig on “Rev. Charles Kingsley and Dr. Newman” which essentially proclaimed Newman the victor of the debate, and exonerated his actions from the charge of being “marks of duplicity” (307).
for the possibility of marrying or to sacrifice domestic happiness in order to remain in Carlingford, Frank and Lucy are, in the end, able to retain their work even after their marriage. Creating a home together in Carlingford is linked to Frank and Lucy’s work in Carlingford’s slum district, and that work is, in turn, supported by the couple’s shared commitment to Ritualist Anglicanism, associated as it was with urban ministry.54 The ideal Oliphant offers is one which is domestic and thoroughly English, providing a “middle way” of formulating a national identity that is rooted in the home but effectively reaches beyond it.

In Oliphant’s conception of English character, honesty and straightforwardness join domesticity as traits opposed to the foreignness of Roman Catholicism. I begin, therefore, by tracing out Charles Kingsley’s construction of Roman Catholicism as false and duplicitous, noting the way his anxiety centered particularly on the perceived betrayal of conversion. I then turn to The Perpetual Curate and Gerald Wentworth’s proposed abandonment of his family, demonstrating that Oliphant takes up the rhetoric of duplicity in her construction of Gerald as a man caught between his old English identity

54 Oliphant uses a number of labels for Frank Wentworth’s theology and practice, including “Tractarian,” “Puseyite,” “ritualist,” “High Church,” and sometimes simply “Anglican.” It is worth noting, however, that the narrator tends more often to use the term “High Church” to describe Frank, whereas “Tractarian” “Puseyite” and “ritualist” are terms primarily applied to him by his critics. Although it would be fair to call Frank “Tractarian,” I have preferred to use the term “Ritualist” instead, because the publication date of the book, the references to surplices and candlesticks, and even Frank’s zealous work in the slums all seem to place him in the specific context of the Ritualist movement, rather than more generally within Tractarianism. In this chapter I have, admittedly, been guilty of sometimes using “High Church” as if it were a synonym for “Ritualist” (which is certainly not a safe assumption in general) but that is because it seemed to be Oliphant’s preferred way of describing Frank’s party position, and it seemed wisest to use her terminology when possible. Likewise, although “Anglo-Catholic” was a term commonly applied to Ritualists in the mid-1860s, I have for the most part avoided the term, because Oliphant does not use it.
and his new Roman Catholic identity. In Section Three I explore Oliphant’s interaction with anti-Jesuit novels of the period, demonstrating the importance of Oliphant’s sometimes-playful references to anti-Catholic literature for the work of the conversion subplot. Finally, I turn from Gerald Wentworth to his contrasting brother Frank, first situating Frank’s High Church Anglicanism within the developing rhetoric of the Ritualist phase of the Tractarian Movement, then, in the final section, arguing that Frank’s Ritualist zeal uniquely enables him to embody Oliphant’s version of Englishness.

2.1 Narrative, Conversion, and Betrayal in Kingsley’s “Review of The History of England”

The Newman-Kingsley debates began with Kingsley’s review of the seventh and eighth volumes of his James Anthony Froude’s History of England. Whatever Froude (Kingsley’s brother-in-law) intended in writing his history, Kingsley took the publication of these volumes as an opportunity to promote a view of English history and English identity opposed to both historical and nineteenth-century Catholicism. In describing proper English historiography, Kingsley constructs a form of English identity as characteristically honest and objective, in that it is unswayed by emotion in the stories it tells, but is firmly attached to the interests of the English nation. Above all, this identity is

55 In Westward Ho! (1855) Kingsley himself composed a fictionalized version of English Protestant history. In this adventure story, weak, villainous, and sometimes effeminate Jesuits scheme to bring about the downfall of Elizabeth I, but they are defeated by a company of manly and courageous Englishmen. I have chosen not to discuss this novel (in part because it is a historical tale rather than a contemporary novel of domestic realism), but it should be borne in mind that Kingsley actively contributed to anti-Catholic and anti-Jesuit rhetoric through historical narratives of his own, not merely through critique of others’ work.
Protestant, and thus is threatened by pro-Catholic historiography and by Catholic conversion.

As Linda Colley argues in *Britons*, the Protestant historical narrative was one of the forces shaping the concept of British identity. Thus, for Kingsley, rejecting the Protestant version of English history means rejecting English identity, and those who present alternative histories are “failing in justice to their native land.” Dissenters from the Protestant version of events, Kingsley says, express “dissatisfaction with the whole course of English history since the Conquest, and of Scotch history since the days of the great John Knox, for what, thank Heaven, it is—a perpetual rebellion against ultramontane tyranny” (“Review” 224). Such dissatisfaction expresses itself through excessive sympathy towards Catholic historical figures such as Mary Queen of Scots, whose case becomes a litmus test for historical orthodoxy. Recent versions of her history, Kingsley claims, “have been overlaid with misstatements, caused, probably by mere sentimentality, but just as dangerous as if they had been spread about by Father Parsons and the Jesuits themselves, for the express purpose of putting an entirely false view of the case” (223). Both sentimentality and propaganda represent failures in historical objectivity. Neither, therefore, represents the “good English history” that Kingsley believes the Protestant public hungers for (211).

Just as Kingsley assumes that pro-Catholic histories are false, his version of Protestant history is a story about the falsity of Catholicism. Renaissance Rome is, according to Kingsley, the location of lying: “the falsest spot on Earth, as well as the foulest” (“Review” 217). Roman Catholicism is further implicated in duplicity through
the use of dispensations, which Kingsley considers to be “the dogma that the Pope had the power of creating right and wrong.” This power poses a threat to English objectivity because it introduces a kind of moral relativism dependent on the whim of a foreign monarch. In Kingsley’s reading, it is no wonder that the England of Henry VIII and Elizabeth’s day was dishonest, for it was still recovering from the papacy, and “[w]hat rule of morality, what eternal law of right and wrong, could remain in the hearts of men born and bred under the shadow of so hideous a deception?” If escaping the corrupt papacy was essential to the formation of honest, objective English national identity, properly telling the story of the English Reformation is crucial in maintaining that identity (or rather, recreating what Kingsley imagined that identity to be). Thus, Kingsley sees in the success of Froude’s *History of England* “comfort” for “those who watch, not without anxiety, the national taste” in literature (211). For all the bad literature circulating at present, “the public will now welcome anything like good English History” such as Froude’s work (212). For the public is “intensely Protestant—as all who are not such will discover to the end . . .” and this Protestant public will welcome honest history, which is to say history that is pro-English and pro-Protestant (215). In this imagined readership which will welcome Froude’s work, we see Kingsley’s vision of the proper English identity: Protestant, honest, and attached to the English homeland.

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56 The corruption of dispensations is further significant in Kingsley’s project because Henry VIII’s actions become, in this reading, a refusal to accept that the Pope could determine the morality or immorality of Henry’s divorce and remarriage. Dislike or distrust of the Pope’s dispensing power did not die with Henry VIII, however; it cropped up again in the Connelly case in the form of questions about the legitimacy of the Connelly’s separation. In *The Perpetual Curate*, as I will show, dispensations are figured as characteristically un-English, not straightforward, and dishonest.
This identity, closely bound to Protestant historiography as it was, seemed to Kingsley to be threatened by recent High Church histories, and by the work of Catholic converts. False (pro-Catholic) histories were a manifestation of “the deep denationalization of mind now prevalent—not in the loyal, hereditary Catholics of these realms—but in those who have lately joined, or are inclined to join, the Church of Rome,” (224). 57 I read this “denationalization” as allied with the “suspect” forms of detachment described by Amanda Anderson in *The Powers of Distance*. Anderson lists “the dandy, the Jew, and the fallen woman” as figures of “rootlessness, and heightened exile,” but as my reading of *From Oxford to Rome* has shown, the Catholic convert was also a figure of rootlessness and exile (4). Kingsley’s “Review” shows another way in which the convert could be the focus of concerns about detachment; he depicts the Catholic convert as simultaneously non-objective and inappropriately detached from the interests of England and the English Church. Newman’s brand of Catholic cosmopolitanism threatens Kingsley’s version of English nationalism.

This is precisely why it is Newman, rather than a traditional authority in Catholic moral theology such as Alphonus Ligouri, whom Kingsley singles out as a proponent of duplicity, claiming that “[t]ruth, for its own sake, had never been a virtue with the Roman

57 The phrase “those who are about to join” may provoke questions as to why Kingsley chose to attack conversion to Catholicism now, at this particular junction. The main wave of conversions to Catholicism had, in fact, occurred twenty years earlier, when Newman entered the Catholic Church. There had been a second, smaller group of conversions in the wake of the Gorham decision of 1850 (Henry Manning was one of the converts from this period) but conversions were sporadic after this. There was, in other words, no sudden wave of conversion during the mid 1860s to explain Kingsley’s critique of conversion, but there was increased attention to Ritualism in the English press. Though Ritualism did not lead to the wave of conversions which had occurred earlier in the century, it brought about renewed anxiety over the possibility of conversion. Thus, I read Kingsley’s slur on Newman as an early response to the growth of Ritualism.
clergy. Father Newman informs us that it need not, and on the whole ought not to be . . .” (217). Newman is Kingsley’s nemesis in his struggle to define and safeguard English identity because Newman is an archetypal figure who stands in for all other English converts to Catholicism (an “arch-convert,” if you will). In his pamphlet *What, Then, Does Dr. Newman Mean?* Kingsley further claims that he is not alone in singling out converts as particularly threatening. Rather, this view of converts is shared by the English people, since “if there is (as there is) a strong distrust of certain Catholics [in England], it is restricted to the proselytizing priests among them; and especially to those who, like Dr. Newman, have turned round upon their mother-Church (I had almost said their mother-country) with contumely and slander” (386). There are two things about this statement that I want to highlight. One is that the figure of turning round on one’s mother-Church may most obviously indicate Newman’s criticism of the Anglican Church, but it also stands in for the act of conversion itself. “Conversion” literally means a turning.⁵⁸ Kingsley focuses on Newman and his fellow Tractarians because he sees their conversion to Catholicism and their subsequent work as apologists for their new church as a betrayal of their original church.

What is even more extraordinary, however, is the parenthetical comment, for it indicates that conversion is as much a betrayal of England itself as it is of the English Church. Newman, in Kingsley’s view, is a traitor to his country. Read this way, Newman’s apparent endorsement of “cunning” and dishonesty become the tools of

⁵⁸ Thus, the OED gives the first meaning of the word as “Turning in position, direction, destination.”
subterfuge, while his influence on the young men of Oxford becomes treasonous plotting against the English nation. Newman, therefore, is linked with the rhetoric of duplicity and espionage associated with the Jesuits. If the arch-convert of Victorian England is inherently a traitor and possibly a spy, all figures of conversion in novels, tracts, or newspaper articles also serve as at least potential figures of duplicity and false identity. Catholic converts become ideal figures against which to construct a vision of honesty as a trait making up English national character. Margaret Oliphant does just that in *The Perpetual Curate*.

2.2 The Convert as Dualist: The Case of Gerald Wentworth

The Catholic conversion subplot of *The Perpetual Curate* is merely one of several narrative threads concerning a clergyman who experiences or has experienced conflicts between work and home life. Each of these subplots centers on a concept of the relationship between vocation and domesticity that protagonist Frank Wentworth must avoid. In the novel’s Catholic subplot, focused on convert Gerald Wentworth, Oliphant constructs a foreign, convert identity that conflicts with English identity, such that conversion to Roman Catholicism entails rejection of Englishness. Through the main marriage plot, in contrast, Oliphant presents Frank Wentworth as a model of an expanded English identity which is neither quite the Protestantism of Kingsley’s ideal (though it shares Kingsley’s emphasis on honesty in contrast to duplicity) nor the foreign Catholicism of Gerald (though Frank shares Gerald’s strong sense of vocation), but something uniquely in between: the via media of Anglican identity.
Oliphant establishes the foreign nature of Roman Catholicism early in the novel through the bluff and pragmatic Squire Wentworth, who represents an older, conservative model of Englishness. When Gerald announces his intention to enter the Roman Catholic Church, Squire Wentworth colorfully refers to Roman Catholicism as a “dead Frenchified system” opposed to English freedom of thought (174). Squire Wentworth is not the most reliable judge, but the anti-English nature of Roman Catholicism is more subtly reinforced by Gerald Wentworth’s behavior and aspect after his conversion. Once a Roman Catholic, Gerald gets “into a new atmosphere—a different world” and he has “no longer the unity of an Englishman trained to do one thing at a time, and to do it with his might” (364). Roman Catholicism is not just a different religion, but an entirely different mental world. This movement into another world, in which Gerald leaves (some of) his particularly English characteristics behind, is similar to Kingsley’s denationalization of mind: it is a mental detachment from an English worldview. Once again, conversion is constructed as a movement from one place to another: whereas Elizabeth Harris and John Henry Newman both associated Roman Catholicism with travel to the continent, Kingsley and Oliphant more subtly describe a psychological or spiritual foreign state (in both sense of the word!) into which converts enter.

Oliphant describes Gerald’s new mental place—his new state of mind—as “dualism,” and it is clearly given a foreign inflection: as the narrator says, “Rome had established her dualism in his mind” (364). Here “dualism” primarily refers to the split

59 As Kämper points out, “The Squire is the mouthpiece of widespread ignorance and prejudice concerning the Roman Catholic Church” (Kämper 47), offering sentiments such as “As for the Church of Rome, it’s the Anti-Christ—why, every child in the village school could tell you that . . .” (Oliphant 159).
between inner self and outward appearance. Though supposedly paying a social visit, Gerald sits “in a kind of languor, carrying on within him a thread of thought, to which his external occupation gave no clue; yet at the same time suffering no indication to escape him of the real condition of his mind” (364-365). This split between inward thought and outward behavior was a trait associated throughout the nineteenth century specifically with the Jesuit order, as I will show in the next section. Here, my emphasis is on the way this mind/ expression dualism is figured as un-English. Not only is it the product of Rome’s influence, one opposed to English unity, but it also puts Gerald out of place in middle-class society, as it prevents him from participating fully in social interactions. His encounter with the former rector of Carlingford is (despite that worthy’s best intentions) a strained one.

As a married convert, Gerald’s position is itself uniquely dualistic, for his conversion leaves him stuck between two different modes of life (married Anglican clergyman and celibate Catholic priest), unable to act properly in either his role as husband and provider or his role as pastor. On the one hand, his conversion prevents Gerald from properly providing for his family. Prior to his conversion, his wife Louisa worries that if Gerald converts, the family “will not even have enough to live upon” (142), a prediction which is at least partially borne out by the narrator’s later explanation that Gerald’s family must now survive on the small inheritance he has from his deceased mother (519). At the same time, however, Gerald is also debarred from carrying out the work he had hoped to do as a priest. He is a man who “by a wonderful force of human sympathy and purity of soul” seems somehow to be innately destined to be a priest (437,
160), yet is forced instead to “stand aside in irksome leisure” (258). In a novel so concerned with vocation, ministry, and social outreach, the “irksome leisure” is clearly a burden and a shame; a man of Gerald’s talents ought to have something to do. He should not have to choose between his marital duties and his pastoral ones: he should be able to combine them, as Frank finally does.

In his identity as both English and Roman Catholic, Gerald is caught in a tension that cannot be resolved, because he is too English to be fully Roman Catholic and too Catholic to be fully English. Gerald’s initial plan is to separate from his wife in order to be ordained, but of this plan Frank says “he can no more give up his duty to Louisa than he can give up his own life. It is going on a false idea altogether; but falsehood in anything except in argument could never be named or dreamed of in connection with Gerald . . .” (161). As we have seen in Kingsley, falsehood is often associated with Roman Catholicism, as honesty is, of course, one of the virtues most valued by earnest Victorians.  

In describing Gerald as fundamentally opposed to falsehood, then, Frank is claiming him as English. This remaining English truthfulness prevents Gerald from making the ultimate mistake of abandoning his family to become a priest.

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60 See Langford’s *Englishness Identified* for a discussion of the religious, commercial, and legal implications of English honesty (122-128). Interestingly, Langford claims that although the honesty of English character was generally accepted even by non-English writers, continental Europe had a rather different take on the related trait of consistency in religion (127). After the Reformation “fickleness in religion remained a recurrent Catholic charge against the English,” because it was believed that English tolerance was really “cynical time-serving” and that “English sects changed their divinity . . . whenever misfortune shook their flimsy faith” (128). Thus, ironically, the English were sometimes compared to the Jesuits!

61 Oliphant’s linkage between domesticity and honesty is worth a closer look, as one might have expected words like “cruel,” or “inhumane” to be used of a man who abandons his family, rather than
Gerald’s dualistic state—halfway between England and Rome—manifests itself in a more politically charged way with regard to the dispensation which would have been necessary for him to separate from his wife and be ordained. Though this mention of dispensations occurs only in passing and may seem unimportant, it possess political implications that should not be overlooked. Papal power was particularly frightening to the English in light of *Regnans in Excelsis*, the papal bull denying the authority of Elizabeth I, which licensed English Catholics to commit treason or attempt assassination of Elizabeth. This seemed, to Kingsley and others, to be license to sin for the sake of the Church. Victorian Protestants reasoned that if the Pope could continue to dispense Catholics from otherwise prohibited actions even in the nineteenth century (as in allowing a married man to serve as a priest), he might dispense them from the sin of treason against their country. Fears of a Catholic uprising in nineteenth-century Britain may seem laughable, but as Albert Pionke has demonstrated in *Plots of Opportunity*, such fears were an active force behind opposition to the Catholic Emancipation Act (54-56). Similar concerns arose with new force in the 1870s, surrounding the declaration of Papal Infallibility. Of greatest significance was the publication of the encyclical *Quanta Cura* and the attached “Syllabus of Errors,” which condemned both religious freedom and the separation of Church and State. The publication of these documents in December of 1864 meant that concerns over the Pope’s power to command English Catholics were current.

“false.” However, “false” also carries the implication of marital infidelity. For Gerald to embrace the Catholic priesthood at the expense of his family, then, would be a form of adultery.
just as *The Perpetual Curate* was being read and reviewed. The December 30 issue of *The London Times* contained a review which found fault with the depiction of Gerald (“Novels”).

On the previous page, the paper printed two articles critical of the Papal Encyclical, one of which declared that the document was a revival of the forms of “long past ages” (“Pope’s Encyclical Letter” 7; see also “French Press”). The historic oppression of the papacy was, it seemed to the British press, alive and well in the 1860s. Though encyclicals and bulls are not the same as dispensations, all such manifestations of the supposed papal power to turn evil into good were deeply suspect to Victorian Britons.

Gerald’s very English reaction to the possibility of seeking a dispensation is what actually prevents him from becoming a Catholic priest. “Gerald had been studying Canon law, but his English intelligence did not make very much of it; and the bare idea of a dispensation making that right which in itself was wrong, touched the high-minded gentleman to the quick, and brought him to a sudden standstill” in his plan to be ordained in the Roman Catholic Church (258). While Gerald’s English intelligence prevents him from “making much” of the foreign canon law of Rome, it would seem it is his remaining integrity as a gentleman that prevents him from acting on what he does understand. His

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62 The reviewer, commenting on Gerald’s crisis of conscience, notes that “The trouble and perplexity of his mind is admirably set forth, and the one-sided logic on which he, and such as he, act made very apparent,” but thinks that Oliphant fails to make Gerald seem worthy because “she is unable to believe much in the good of unmanly characters . . .” (8). The gendering of this description of the character is worth noting.

63 Elsewhere, the narrator seems to undercut Gerald’s agency in deciding to stay with his family, saying “Too wary and politic to maintain in a critical age and country the old licence of the age of Faith, even his wife’s consent, could he have obtained it, would not have opened to the convert the way to the priesthood” (411). It is unclear whether it is Gerald or his new church which is too politic for such a separation. Wolff notes that Oliphant had consulted a Roman Catholic cardinal about canon law on the matter, learning that such a separation required the consent of the wife (160).
dual identity as both English (and therefore domestic) and Catholic (therefore, seemingly called to be celibate in order to serve his new Church) prevents him from acting as properly English or fully Catholic. While this vestigial Englishness undoubtedly benefits his wife and children, in that it prevents Gerald from abandoning them, it hinders him from exercising the priestly role to which he is drawn (258).

In describing Gerald’s dualistic position in relation to marriage and celibacy, Englishness and Roman Catholicism, and inward and outward behavior, Oliphant uses rhetoric associated with anti-Catholic literature. The idea of Catholic duplicity is seen most clearly in literature concerning the Jesuit order, for the Jesuit was seen as the ultimate double-minded figure. Understanding how Oliphant interacts with the anti-Jesuit literature of her time is crucial to understand how she depicts Gerald’s Roman Catholicism in opposition to Frank’s Anglicanism.

2.3 Duplicity and Disguise: Jesuits in Carlingford?

Oliphant introduces the figure of the Jesuit through Frank and Gerald’s aunt, Leonora Wentworth, who sarcastically asks her younger sister: “How can I tell that you are not a Jesuit in disguise? One has read of such a thing. [. . .] there’s Gerald on the point of perversion, and Frank—I tell you, Dora, it must be your fault” (52). There were, indeed, a number of opportunities for one to read of such things; in novels of the 1850s and 1860s the conjunction between duplicity and Catholicism manifests itself most clearly in the anti-Jesuit literature of the period. The most famous anti-Jesuit novel was Frances Trollope’s *Father Eustace*, which appeared in 1847, during the first wave of
concern over Tractarian influence in the English Church. Trollope’s work was followed by Catherine Sinclair’s even more vitriolic *Beatrice: Or the Unknown Relatives* (1852) and later, Emma Worboise’s *Father Fabian* (1875). Even Wilkie Collins, already an established writer of sensation novels, wrote an anti-Jesuit novel in which the male protagonist leaves his wife to become a Jesuit priest: *The Black Robe*, published in 1881. Jesuit stories remained popular until the end of the century.

The Jesuits’ presumed doctrine of “the ends justifying the means” was seen as another way in which Roman Catholicism allowed authority to “absolve” or dispense individual priests of the sin of a given action, so long as the action was committed for the welfare of the Jesuit order or the Roman Catholic Church. When Edward Stormont, the eponymous hero of *Father Eustace*, trustingly tells his superior Fr. Edgar that he has fallen in love with Juliana, and she with him, Fr. Edgar explains that that was the plan all along: Edward was to woo Juliana, then break her heart by revealing his identity as a Catholic priest so that, in her sorrow, she would flee to the convent and hand over her property to the Catholic Church. Thus, Edgar tells Stormont, “this evil [Juliana’s misguided love] shall be converted into good, even by the means of its own sin and folly—you understand me, Brother Eustace. You are, and will be absolved of sin this matter” (3: 257-257). Because of Jesuit trickery, what should have been a perfect love-match between a pair of gifted, artistically sensitive individuals becomes a tragedy. The prominence of the doctrine of ends justifying the means throughout the anti-Jesuit

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64 Coincidentally, one of the villains of Kingsley’s *Westward Ho!* is a Jesuit-in-training named Eustace Leigh. Presumably, his first name indicates the influence of Trollope’s *Father Eustace.*
literature suggests that Victorian Protestants feared that Jesuits really did believe and teach that “It is good to tell lies to heretics”—that is, to Protestants (Worboise Father Fabian 296).

The anti-Jesuit novels relied on the trope of a more specific form of duplicity: disguise. The Jesuits in Father Eustace and Beatrice have double identities. Their real identity as priests or nuns is hidden by assumed identities as schoolteachers, Protestant pastors, or gentlemen of good fortune. Thus, young Edward Stormont pretends to be merely a wealthy young gentleman, and inadvertently wins the heart of the heiress whom he is supposed to convert, while Fr. Edgar masquerades as a nature-loving man with a taste for country life, and Amelia (in reality a Sacred Heart nun about whom there is some hint of illicit interest on Fr. Edgar’s part) pretends to be Edgar’s sister. In other novels, the Jesuits make mistakes that lead to the discovery of their true identity, but the Jesuits of Father Eustace are so good at their disguises that it is only Stormont’s refusal to delude Juliana further which results in the revelation of the Jesuits’ identities. Such successful disguise involves complete disguise of emotions: Frances Trollope claimed that the Jesuit mind had such “sovereign sway and masterdom over itself and the body it belongs to, that none may guess from any outward sign what either mind or body feels” (152-153). This self-control is said to be the result of the order’s training in discipline, but Oliphant applies it to Gerald as an apparently immediate effect of his conversion.

Leonora Wentworth’s claim that Dora must be a Jesuit is a reference to the figure of the “female Jesuit” or “Jesuitess.” Trollope introduced the villainous Mrs. Lorraine as a female Jesuit, but the idea was spread further by an 1851 novel, The Female Jesuit; Or,
*the Spy in the Family* (the author is identified only as “Mrs. S. Luke”), which was frequently reprinted in both England and America. There was some limited truth to these rumors: though the Society of Jesus did not have a female branch, many female religious orders did make use of Jesuit confessors, and some orders (such as Cornelia Connelly’s Society of the Child Jesus), resembling the Jesuits in a shared investment in the project of education, also made use of Ignatius Loyola’s writing in drafting their constitutions and shaping their spirituality. From these shared goals and resources, writers like “Mrs. S. Luke,” Frances Trollope and Emma Worboise constructed an elaborate connection, whereby the Jesuits employed sisters of various auxiliary orders as their spies and agents. Thus, Mrs. Luke claims, “there are many Jesuitesses in England, especially among the French Governesses,” including not just nuns of the Order of the Sacred Heart, but “the Sisters of ‘the Infant Jesus,” and the “faithful companions of Jesus. . . . Unhappily, when I hear the blessed name of Jesus given as a title to any Roman Catholic institution, I am assured that it is a Jesuit work” (184).

Even the claim on the Jesuits’ part that they do not allow women to work in their order is an example of duplicity. The narrator of *The Sequel to the Female Jesuit* explains that “[t]he Jesuits, with the art they possess of working secretly, manage to conceal the connection they have with institutions of sisters, and therefore deny that the many institutions found by them, have anything to do with their Order” (182). As Pionke points out, this is precisely what made the figure of the Jesuit such a useful rhetorical tool for combating Catholicism, since “saying of the Jesuits that ‘by their outward man you cannot tell them’ allowed Protestant opponents of Catholic emancipation to use the very
lack of recent evidence of a Jesuit conspiracy to prove that such a conspiracy must exist” (61). In anti-Jesuit fiction, female Jesuits are even more duplicitous than their male counterparts, because, while the existence of the male branch of the order was public knowledge, the female Jesuits concealed the very existence of their order.

Female Jesuits were considered no less dangerous than their male counterparts; indeed, they were often believed to be more dangerous. They shared the same discipline, reserve, and (sometimes) the same crafty intelligence of their male counterparts; thus, Trollope’s narrator likens Sister Agatha’s mind to a lake “whose surface was smooth, but its depth dangerous,” concealing all manner of manipulative schemes (2: 329). As the narrator of *The Female Jesuit* explains, such plotting was all the more disturbing for occurring within the home:

> It must be obvious to all, that women introduced into families for Jesuit objects would be far more efficient than any out-agents could be; and that feminine tact, combined with Jesuit cunning, could scarcely miss the attainment of any desired object. “If,” remarks a popular French writer, “there is anything more dangerous than a Jesuit, it is a Jesuitess.” How many governesses, or household servants . . . may now be aiding the purposes of the Jesuits in this country, is well worth the inquiry. (352) 65

The subtitle of this novel, “The Spy in the Family,” indicates concisely the danger female Jesuits were thought to pose. As women, they could infiltrate a family more easily than

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65 The popular French writer is Michelet, whose *Priests, Women, and Families* (essentially an anti-Jesuit history) was translated into English and published by Longmans in 1845. English novelists tended to borrow Michelet’s description of the methods and characteristics of the Jesuit order, while incorporating them into a specifically English narrative of infiltration and betrayal.
men, and the common female role of governess or nursemaid put female Jesuits in the
dangerous position of caring for and teaching small children.66

In mid-century Victorian fiction, the possibility of secret Jesuits was conceived as
a danger that might appear at any level of education. In the fifties and sixties, the
emphasis on secret Catholicism seems to have shifted somewhat from a fear of open
revolution to a fear of propaganda spread through the educational system, no doubt
because the Tractarian Movement created associations between suspect forms of High
Church Anglicanism and the university system. Beatrice is full of educators—a tutor, a
governess, and a schoolteacher—who pretend to be Protestant, but turn out to be
Catholics disguised for the purpose of converting Protestant youth. Of special interest is
Mr. Talbot, who is introduced to a Protestant family as “the most Protestant of Protestant
tutors, recommended by several Protestant families of distinction, and by more than one
Protestant clergyman at Oxford” (1: 126). Mr. Talbot is actually none other than Fr.
Ambrose, young Allan McAlpine’s Irish-Catholic uncle who had been trained at a Jesuit
college. His disguise as a Protestant tutor has allowed him to form an influential bond
with Allan which eventually leads to Allan’s conversion to Catholicism.

Lurking beneath the charge of Jesuits masquerading as Protestant educators is a
related suspicion that the very word “Protestant” is being redefined to include High
Church Anglicanism, feared to be merely a vehicle for introducing Roman Catholicism
into the English Church. Thus, Catholic-minded tutors or clergymen might equivocate

66 The connection between French governesses and Jesuitism appears outside the realm of anti-
Catholic literature, too. See, for example, Justice Hare’s casual condemnation of “French Jesuits of
governesses” who might turn a family into “papists” in Mrs. Henry Wood’s 1861 East Lynne (431).
and say that they were Protestant, when in fact they were Roman Catholic in all but name. This suspicion, though seldom openly addressed, was at the heart of Kingsley’s criticism of Newman. Nowhere in *What, Then, Does Dr. Newman Mean?* does Kingsley go so far as to openly aver that Newman was a secret Catholic during his Oxford years, but the accusation is implicit in his criticism of Newman for preaching “a Romish sermon” while still “as far as could be now discovered” holding the position of Anglican priest (378, 387). Newman was open to the charge of duplicity on account of the suspicion that he was actually a secret Roman Catholic, either officially or in spirit, and this charge of duplicity was associated with his role as an educator. Kingsley charged Newman with misleading “fanatic and hot-blooded young men, who hung over his every word,” forcing Newman to prove that he had not been a Roman Catholic in disguise when serving in a position of influence over upper-class Protestant youth (384).

This fear of Catholic influence in the university system is an undercurrent in *The Perpetual Curate*. Leonora Wentworth, the ardent evangelical of the novel, appeals to the anti-Jesuit rhetoric that would have been common in her evangelical Protestant circles as a way of blaming Dora for being too tolerant of Frank’s Ritualism. Aunt Dora, dismayed by Gerald’s “bad attack of Romishness,” seeks a different explanation, suggesting that Gerald may have been “led away. . . owing to the bad advisors young men meet with at the universities; and how can it be otherwise as long as tutors and professors are chosen just for their learning, without any regard to their principles?” (31). Dora thinks that bad influences at Oxford are also to blame for Frank’s unfortunate theology: “Oh Frank, it is Gerald’s example that has led you away. I am sure, before you went to Oxford you were
never at all a ritualist—even Leonora thought you such a pious boy” (37). Though these two explanations for Frank’s High Churchmanship (Gerald’s influence, Oxford) may seem contradictory, Dora’s suggestion here is not entirely unreasonable. Frank and Gerald have, up until Gerald’s conversion, been partners in Ritualism, so to speak. It is no great jump to assume that the back story behind their Ritualism is their mutual experience in the High Church set at Oxford.67

Whatever influence Gerald may or may not have had on Frank’s Ritualism, their courses diverge. Whereas Gerald’s Ritualism does lead him to Rome and places him in a national-religious limbo, where he can be neither fully English nor completely Catholic, Frank’s Ritualism, in contrast, allows him to be not less than English, but more. Whereas Gerald is forced to give up his work as a clergyman in order to remain with his family, Frank’s ardent Ritualism gives him scope for the “great work” he plans to do among Carlingford’s poor, without preventing him from obtaining the companionate marriage held up as an ideal in domestic fiction.

2.4 Sisterhoods, Surplices, and “The Great Work”

The subplot concerning Gerald Wentworth allows Oliphant to interact with the standard conversion plot of anti-Catholic literature, while Jack Wentworth’s play-acting as the prodigal son parodies another popular figure of conversion, that of the reformed

67 Whatever its Catholic or Protestant tendencies, Oxford—and All-Souls’ College in particular—clearly has a stultifying effect on poor old-maidenly Mr. Proctor, retarding his development as a clergyman. Thus, even if Dora’s concern about Oxford is not to be taken seriously, Oliphant does suggest that the university has real power to shape Englishmen.
reprobate. But there is, arguably, a third conversion plot within *The Perpetual Curate*, for there is another sense in which Frank undergoes a conversion of his own as he becomes better able to distinguish between what is central and what is peripheral to his work as an Anglican. The version of Catholicity which develops over the course of the novel is one which makes room for minor religious difference in order to further a shared purpose. Frank’s premonition on Easter Sunday “that the loftiest High-Churchism of all might have been consistent enough with [the evangelicalism of] Skelmersdale had he but gone into the heart of the matter” ends up being correct (35). Nevertheless, though Oliphant argues that theological differences pale in significance in the light of the primary goal of Christianity, Frank Wentworth’s Ritualism remains important because it establishes him within a tradition of urban ministry.

Leonora’s secret hope of being able to “win him over to her own ‘views,’” which causes her to linger in Carlingford long after Frank’s declaration of his Tractarian theology, is, of course, never realized: Frank shows not the slightest sign of abandoning Oxford theology for that of Exeter Hall (73). Nor does Frank initially respond well to Dora’s petition: “Oh, Frank, if you could only modify your views a little! . . . . If the heart is right, what does it matter about the altar?” (38). Frank insists that he cannot take Dora’s advice to tell Leonora that he has made a mistake in his advocacy of Tractarianism. Nevertheless, the narrator tells us, Dora’s argument actually mirrors the temptation Frank experienced on Easter Sunday when his aunts come to his chapel to observe his preaching. Though “he [goes] to church with a half-conscious, youthful sense of martyrdom,” knowing that his liturgical choices and sermon topic will alienate his
aunts, once he is there “it suddenly flashe[s] over him that, after all, a wreath of spring flowers or a chorister’s surplice [is] scarcely worth suffering martyrdom for” (33). Frank squashes the thought, rejecting it as a temptation, and continues with the planned sermon. By the end of the novel, however, the narrator observes that “the Perpetual Curate was less interested than he had once been” in the “white surplices” of the choristers (531). Most tellingly, Frank directly admits to Aunt Leonora that “we parsons are sometimes apt to exaggerate trifles into importance . . .” (537). Though he does not give up his High Church theology, Frank comes to believe the external trappings are not necessarily worth alienating family members. 68

At bottom, Frank’s understanding of the purpose of religion is quite similar to Leonora’s. Leonora tells Morgan, the current rector of Carlingford, that “the Church is a missionary institution” such that “unless you are really bringing in the perishing and saving souls, what is the good?” (44). Frank, for his part, dismisses Morgan’s complaints about his infringement on the rector’s territory by stating that “the question is, whether a whole lot of people, fathers and children, shall be left to live like beasts, without reverence for God or man, or shall be brought within the pale of the Church, and taught their duty?” (60). Both Frank and Leonora agree that the central work of the Church is “bringing in” marginal members of society. Their disagreements are not about goals, but

68 Lovesy claims that Frank’s “position changes and he becomes the middle way between the extremes of his brother’s Romanism and his aunt’s evangelicalism” (23). Though there is some truth to this, I think this is oversimplifying the matter. Frank does become more tolerant and less focused on externals, but it is unclear that he has significantly modified his High Church theology. It seems more accurate to say that he has found a core agreement between his position and the extremes, which is not quite the same as a middle way.
about means (73). Far from merely “diffusing the rubric and propagating Tractarianism” as Leonora initially assumes, Frank’s work in the slum of Wharfside includes simple and direct preaching, practical help to the sick, and teaching the local bargemen in his improvised schoolroom (41, 60, 526). And although he comes to admit that some of his liturgical preferences are “trifles,” he insists that even if he had been willing to compromise on his High Church principles, “as things have turned out, I could not have left Carlingford . . .” in order to take up the position at Skelmersdale (537). Taking the living as Skelmersdale would have meant abandoning the “great work” in Wharfside; and both the Evangelical and the Ritualist are in agreement about the importance of that work.

There is, however, a way in which Frank’s Ritualism is integral to his missionary work in Wharfside. As John Shelton Reed demonstrates in Glorious Battle, some of the earliest Tractarian Churches were built in London slums, starting in the 1840s. Many of these “slum churches” became involved in later controversy, including no-papery rioting in 1850 (152, 168). As result of this early and continued involvement among the urban poor, “a popular conception of slum ritualism emerged” which became accepted even by the enemies of Ritualism (149). James Craigie Robertson seems to suggest, in an 1867 Quarterly Review essay on “Ultra-Ritualism,” that Ritualists themselves cited this class

69 O’Mealy’s reading of the relationship between Frank’s Ritualism and his mission to Wharfside is rather different from my own. He suggests that the “congregation in a ‘tin’ church muffles [Frank’s] egotism and compensates for some of the perfunctory ritualism of his High Church services at St. Roque’s. Wharfside puts into proper perspective Frank’s reputed Romishness” (257). There is some validity to this view, in as much as Oliphant clearly privileges Frank’s work in Wharfside, while critiquing some of the Ritualist excesses of St. Roqué’s, but this reading overlooks the way in Ritualism presented itself as a missionary movement.
outreach as part of the definition of their party or movement” (164). Robertson refers to Ritualists’ claim that “whereas ‘Tractarianism’ in its earlier phases was only ‘a religion for gentleman’” now, in its Ritualist phase, the Movement has “taken a shape which will enable it to wrest the middle classes from dissent” and “to civilize and Christianize those poorer classes which have hitherto been neglected altogether, or approached in a manner which had no effect on them” (164). Ritualists were clearly more concerned with liturgy than some of the early Tractarians, but they also understood themselves to be more missional than their predecessors.

In fact, for Ritualists such as Frederick Littledale, work among the lower classes was central to the movement because it was part of what made the movement truly Catholic. In his essay on “The Missionary Aspect of the Ritualism,” published in an 1866 collection entitled The Church and the World, Littledale claimed that “the true idea of an effective Church, that idea which is formulated in the word Catholic, is, that it should not merely be fully capable of adaptation to the habits of all climates and nations, but that in each nation it should meet the wants of all classes of society and types of mind” (32). Ritualists believed that their movement alone, out of the major parties in the Anglican Church, successfully embodied this class-based conception of Catholicity.

Evangelicalism, Littledale claimed, reached only “the lower-middle classes,” failing to meet the needs of the upper or lower classes (33). The Broad Church as a movement supposedly appealed to a narrow group of educated gentlemen, and Littledale considered it of little use in dealing with human crises brought about by illness, despair, or sin. As for the High and Dry party, “any influence it may have had with the poor is due solely to
the natural weight of feodal [sic] pressure exerted by the squirarchy (its main strength) in rural districts; and in towns it has not had even this to show” (33). I dwell on Littledale’s comments not because I believe them to be accurate, but because such thinking seems to have influenced the Carlingford Chronicles. Thus, in Salem Chapel, Congregationalist minister Arthur Vincent discovers that the poor tend to be members of the Anglican Church, not adherents of the Dissenting chapel, which attracts prosperous shopkeepers and artisans rather than impoverished laborers (13). In The Rector (1863), Mr. Proctor finds that his academic learning avails him little when it comes to the practical work of comforting a dying woman, Wentworth’s administration of the Prayer Book rite for visitation of the sick being more consoling than Proctor’s feeble assurance that she’ll probably get better (37). And as we will see in the next section, in The Perpetual Curate Mr. Morgan is forced to retreat to a country parish—a position he receives thanks to the patronage of the local nobility—because he has failed in his work in Carlingford. One does not have to try to fit each of these failed clergymen precisely into Littledale’s categories in order to see that Oliphant, writing in advance of the publication of The Church and the World, nevertheless located similar problems within English Christianity.

In creating Frank Wentworth as a High Church clergyman, Oliphant not only taps into a developing discussion about the value or dangers of Ritualism, but also connects

70 In fact, Reed suggests that although the urban lower classes may have appreciated the practical aid offered by the slum priests and sisterhoods, they did not really care for Ritualistic worship and rarely became active members of Ritualist congregations (149).
her protagonists to a growing movement known for its commitment to social work.\footnote{A spate of publications on the subject of Ritualism broke out in 1866, but there were works on the subject published previously. Though most of the books listed in Robertson’s essay are from 1865 or 1866, he also cites works on ritual published as early as 1857.}

Frank Wentworth is not, of course, actually an East London slum priest, and Carlingford, though a large town with an expanding industrial sector, hardly qualifies as a metropolis. Nevertheless, as a High Church clergyman devoted to working in an impoverished sector of town which had been ignored by the most recent Carlingford rectors, he reflects the popular conception of Ritualists as ministers dedicated to serving the previously neglected urban poor. His counterpart, Lucy Wodehouse, reflects a second model of urban ministry: that found in the early Anglican sisterhoods, many of which had been expressly founded to minister to the urban poor.\footnote{References to Lucy Wodehouse as “the merciful Sister” may in part function as a jest not far removed from the flirtation between White and Louisa Bolton in \textit{Loss and Gain}, though Oliphant’s is a gentler irony (39). On the other hand, the constant presence of “the grey cloak that was the mark of her district” for Lucy also offers a symbolic reminder of her commitment to the “great work” in Carlingford (529). That commitment is as real for Lucy as it is for Frank, even if Oliphant suggests that idea that Lucy’s ministry is part of a “sisterhood” is a sort of play-acting.} Even anti-Ritualists recognized the connection between monastic institutions and Ritualism; thus, in \textit{Ritualism in the English Church}, Robert Vaughan notes that Ritualists “claim to be in advance of all other religious bodies in their sympathy with the poor, and in the sacrifices they make to extend comforts to them, and to bring them under spiritual influences. Have they not given existence to many Sisterhoods and many Brotherhoods for this purpose?” (49). Vaughan believed that this enthusiasm for the poor was merely a passing stage, and that even if it lasted, it would lead to “pauperism” and dependence rather than self-reliance on the part
of the lower classes, but he did not deny that the “sisterhoods and brotherhoods” formed by the Ritualists were intended as a means of aiding the impoverished lower classes (50).  

As a badge of her involvement in a quasi-conventual organization, Lucy’s “grey cloak” also comes burdened with more ominous connotations. As I have shown in Chapter One, many of the most vehement negative reactions to the Tractarian Movement and Roman Catholic conversion were aimed at the anti-domestic spaces of monasteries and convents. Lucy’s grey cloak associates her with this anti-convent rhetoric as well. Here, as is often the case, Oliphant invokes anti-Catholicism through the means of a comical character. Dora Wentworth approves of Lucy Wodehouse, but she worries about “the meaning of that grey cloak” exclaiming “Oh, Frank, I hope you don’t approve of nunneries and that sort of thing” (39). Gothic tales of torture or seduction within the nunnery are as out of place in Carlingford as are female Jesuits. Nevertheless, the celibacy associated with the “Sister of Mercy” poses a problem for Oliphant’s construction of English identity. In the final section, I will show how the novel works to reconstruct Frank and Lucy’s Ritualism as domestic, rather than celibate, enabling Oliphant to reaffirm the importance of domesticity, as well as honesty and singleness of purpose, as part of English character.

73 The charge that the Ritualist model of assistance to the poor led to “pauperism” appears to have been a popular one; it is also a theme of Eliza Lynn Linton’s 1879 novel Under Which Lord? Linton, an atheist and anti-feminist, is more famous as a critic of the New Woman, but she also saw in Ritualism a threat to patriarchy and established gender roles.
2.5 Frank by Name and Nature

Frank Wentworth, “not only a fervent Anglican, but also a young Englishman sans reproche,” embodies English straightforwardness, honesty, and unity of action (33-34). The fact that Oliphant actually changed his name from “Cecil Wentworth” (The Rector) to “Frank Cecil Wentworth” suggests that she wished to draw attention to his forthright honesty and openness. Frank’s principles are both stated outright by the narrator and revealed by his actions. He refuses to alter his beliefs to suit his wealthy aunt’s taste, and he refuses to stop the “great work” he is doing in Carlingford’s Wharfside slum, even though his “interference” outside of his own chapel annoys the new rector, the Rev. Mr. Morgan, whose arrival in Carlingford sets the events of the novel in motion.

Though Morgan serves as a parallel to Frank in some ways, their relationship is openly adversarial. The novel establishes at the very beginning that the two men will be jostling for dominance, the narrator explaining that “it seemed, on the whole, a highly doubtful business whether [Morgan] and Wentworth would find Carlingford big enough to hold them both” (3). Indeed, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan resolve “to bring to his senses” this “intruder” with “such a disregard of all constituted authority” (9, 4). As a result, Morgan clashes with Frank over the kidnapping of Rosa Elsworthy, and fails miserably, Frank’s innocence being proven beyond a doubt. In the end the Morgans retreat to the country parsonage once occupied by Morgan’s father. “A good country living is a very good

74 As Kämper points out, Frank is also a more manly name than “Cecil,” which has important implications because of the gender issues associated with both Roman and Anglo-Catholicism.
position,’ said the Rector; ‘it is not nearly so troublesome as a town like Carlingford. There is no Dissent that I know of, and no . . . disturbing influences’” (490). The “disturbing influence,” of course, is Frank Wentworth, who has won the field.

Frank’s High Churchmanship, as much as his youth and energy, have defeated Morgan’s stodgy, rule-bound Anglicanism. Morgan’s middle-of-the-road position might be seen in the way he juggles High Church tendencies with High-and-Dry stances. His insistence on Church authority and his architectural taste—he is a man “of high culture and aesthetic tastes” (8)—are signs commonly associated with Tractarianism. However, Morgan is opposed to sisterhoods, and his reaction to Frank’s baptism of the Burrows children (“six little heathens brought into the Christian fold in his own parish without the permission of the Rector! It was indeed enough to try any clergyman’s temper”) suggests that he is far from endorsing Frank’s missional view of the Church (47). Mrs. Morgan, on the other hand, was apparently once involved in a sisterhood; she tells the Wentworth aunts that she tends not to mind “a little too much of the rubric” and that she likes “a proper solemnity in the services of the Church” (6, 44). Mrs. Morgan’s now hidden High Church tendencies may account for some of her sympathy towards Frank and Lucy, but more importantly, the fact that the Morgans differ on their liturgical views is another indication that, as a couple, they are inferior to Frank and Lucy, who are united in their Ritualism.

The kidnapping subplot (in which Frank is accused of, and then informally tried by Morgan for, seducing a shopkeeper’s daughter merely because he is seen talking to her) has sometimes been treated as a mere device to keep readers waiting for the next
number, but it is integral to the novel’s main plot. It serves to define Frank in opposition to both his older brother Jack and Lucy’s long-lost brother Tom. Jack, the Wentworth heir, is a decadent criminal, a self-described reprobate who wastes his father’s money and aids fellow black-sheep Tom Wodehouse in forging a check in order to steal Mr. Wodehouse’s money. Jack’s connection with Tom Wodehouse also makes him seem guilty (by association) of aiding the kidnapping of young Rosa Elsworthy, a crime of which Frank is accused on no greater evidence than that he had shown concern for her well-being.

Through the kidnapping plot, the novel suggests that it is possible for a proper Englishmen to be High Church without being guilty of the kinds of sexually deviant behavior associated with Catholicism and Anglo-Catholicism. “While Roman Catholic celibacy was viewed as license to fornicate with women,” notes D.G. Paz, “Anglo-Catholic celibacy was viewed as same-sex love” (*Popular Anti-Catholicism* 278). Paz sees these alternative forms of deviancy as denominationally related, but it may be more accurate to see them as complicated and conflicting images grouped around both Anglo- and Roman Catholic figures. After all, as Peschier points out, Frances Trollope’s Father Eustace is an example of “a Protestant perception of Catholic priests, who were renowned for being talented, attractive, rather feminized men, softly spoken and gently persuasive;” Father Eustace’s ardent love for Juliana serves as evidence that effeminacy in the priestly

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75 Merryn Williams’ reference to it as “a rather ridiculous subplot about the disappearance of a young girl” is exemplary of the negative reaction critics have had to this part of the story (78). Williams claims that whenever Oliphant incorporated sensational or melodramatic elements into the Carlingford Chronicles, “it fell flat” (53).
figure did not preclude heterosexual passion (“Vulnerable Women” 288). In *The Perpetual Curate*, both the town’s suspicion of his sexual misconduct and Frank’s infatuation with Lucy mitigate any effeminacy which his predilection for flowers and surplices might otherwise have suggested. His masculinity is established in that he is man enough to be accused of sexual misconduct with a pretty girl. Though the image of Frank as hyper-sexual turns out to be false, he certainly is romantically drawn to pretty Lucy Wodehouse. At the same time, when Frank’s innocence is discovered, he is cleared of the kinds of charges of sexual misconduct with young women with which Catholic priests were accused.

Given the deviancy associated with celibacy, Frank may be a “safe” High Churchman precisely because he desires marriage and English domesticity. If to be English is to be domestic, then Frank is able to be English precisely because his Ritualism does not entail rejecting the prospect of “such delights” as marriage and a home with Lucy (458). Frank does not threaten English domesticity because, unlike Gerald (or *Loss and Gain*’s Charles Reding), he has no desire for celibacy. His love of Lucy even drives him to consider a potentially imprudent early marriage and love in a cottage. This is, in fact, another way in which Frank undergoes something of a conversion, as he comes to see the importance of romantic love and married life. When he urges Lucy not to wait to marry him, he tells her “I have got tired of ascetic principles. I don’t see why it must be best to deny myself and postpone myself to other things and other people” (511). In his staunch convictions Frank resists the temptation to feign evangelicalism in order to gain a living (thus resisting the temptation to be duplicitous),
but he nevertheless turns his back on the asceticism associated with High Churchmanship in order to recognize the legitimacy of marrying “for the comfort of being together.” This willingness to privilege domestic comfort above asceticism is part of what allows Frank’s Catholicity to be genuinely Anglican rather than foreign.

In this rejection of asceticism in favor of marriage, Frank is differentiated from Gerald, just as his upright behavior with regard to Rosa differentiates him from Jack Wentworth and Tom Wodehouse. Whereas Gerald toys with the idea of abandoning his family in order to serve his new church as a priest, Frank is tempted by the possibility of renouncing his Ritualism and adopting an evangelical attitude in order to obtain a living, which would allow him to marry (33-34). Though he rejects this temptation, he comes out of his trial resolved to marry Lucy whatever may happen. Though the couple has kept their understanding silent in the past, there is to be no doubt about where his real romantic interest lies now (509-511). Oliphant ultimately rewards both Frank’s willingness to stand by his convictions and his desire to establish a home with the woman he loves by providing a conclusion which allows him both to marry immediately and to stay in Carlingford and run the town parish as he pleases.

In the end, then, Frank is able to forge an identity in which his vocation as a priest is not opposed to domesticity, but supported by it. This harmony between marriage and vocation represents a key part of the English identity, as can be seen in the way it contrasts with Gerald’s Roman Catholicism. While Gerald’s self-absorbed examination of doctrine nearly leads him to reject his family, Frank is the Englishman who does one thing with his might. Not only does Frank’s active and effective labor in the slums of
Wharfside contrast positively with the “langour” and “idleness” Gerald experiences as a result of his conversion-induced denationalization (258), but Frank is able to combine his courtship with his labor. Marriage to Lucy, rather than preventing him from serving as a clergyman, enables him to better carry out his ministry, for “to remain in Carlingford, to work at ‘the district,’ to carry out all the ancient intentions of well-doing which had been the first bond between them was, after all, the life of lives” (459) to the happy young couple. Such an ending, in which the male and female protagonist are united not just in marriage but in their goals for social improvement, is not at all uncommon among nineteenth-century novels (compare with Margaret Hale’s marriage to Thornton in *North and South*, or Esther Summerson’s marriage to Alan Woodcourt in *Bleak House*).

However, *The Perpetual Curate* stands out because of the degree to which this unity of purpose is emphasized, and because of the pro-Anglican purpose to which it is put.

Frank and Lucy, partners in Ritualist outreach, are a contrast to Gerald and Louisa, who do not understand each other’s problems or beliefs, and to Mr. and Mrs.

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76 I should also make it clear, though, that Oliphant treats the young couple’s world-improving plans with her characteristic touch of irony. After their love and their determination to remain in Carlingford have been declared, the narrator adds:

> And the two went on under the influence of these combined sentiments, taking comfort out of the very hardness of the world around them, in which their ministrations were so much needed, and feeling an exaltation in the “duty,” which was not for one, but for both, and a belief in the possibility of mending matters, in which their love for each other bore a large share; for it was not in human nature thus to begin the ideal existence, without believing in its universal extension, and in the amelioration of life and world. (522)

This paragraph might stand as an ironic commentary against other nineteenth century social problem novels which posit too-easy answers in the form of a marriage between protagonists.
Morgan, who are likewise unable to sympathize with each other’s concerns. The Morgans represent a failure in two additional ways. First, they waited too long to marry, and their ten-year engagement has caused them to develop irritating habits which prevent them from having the happy marriage they might have had. Mrs. Morgan, particularly, has had her personality warped from “this wasting of her years” in waiting for Morgan to receive a living (273). The narrator explains that “the patience of an unmarried woman wearing out her youth in the harassments of a long engagement, is something very different from the hard and many-sided experience of life,” and it would have been altogether better, in the narrator’s opinion, had the Morgans not had a ten-year engagement to delay their assumption of mature responsibilities (495). This criticism of prudence in waiting to marry adds greater urgency to Frank’s desire not to wait to marry Lucy, but it also contrasts the Morgans unfavorably with Frank and Lucy, who have chosen the better solution.

Oliphant links the Morgans’ (im)prudence in waiting so long to marry to their failure in Carlingford. Unlike Frank and Lucy, whose mission among the poor seems to thrive, the Morgans have not fulfilled what they intended to do in Carlingford at all. They arrive in town “two fresh, new, active clergymanly intellects, entirely open to the affairs of the town, and intent upon general reformation and sound management” but are forced to leave in defeat (3). Mrs. Morgan, though a sympathetic character, is clearly shown as inferior to Lucy in the duties belonging to clergyman’s wife. She discovers that she is disadvantaged in her proper role of assisting the poor, and though she blames this on the size of the town, the narrator suggests it has something to do with her age, her
unattractiveness, and her lack of common ground with the poor (493, 272-273). Young, pretty, Lucy, who already knows the people in question, fares much better. The moral of the Morgans’ story seems to be that for both marriage and vocation, it is better to get an early start in life.

Oddly enough, Frank and Lucy’s romance is also paralleled by the courtship between Morley Proctor and Mary Wodehouse, which serves to cement the connection between domesticity and pastoral mission. The courtship of this older couple may be seen as a comic parallel to the “serious” central marriage plot, but it does important work in reinforcing the novel’s claim that domestic union and the pastoral vocation are deeply connected: good priests need wives to help them. This serves as a correction to the Roman Catholic endorsement of clerical celibacy. While Oliphant does not pair wives and monks as opposites in the obvious way that Newman does, she does so more subtly through the rumor that Frank is to be the head of an Anglican brotherhood (520). As previously mentioned, female religious orders are gently satirized throughout the novel by Oliphant’s flippant references to Lucy as a “Sister of Mercy.” More strikingly, Proctor’s decision to marry after all entails the rejection of his place among his “brethren” in the “cloisters” of “that ancient paradise of All Soul’s” (Rector 52, 41). Proctor’s lingering in Academia is described in monastic terms that, given the reaction against monasticism, must be suspect. Life in All Soul’s College is also clearly designated as incomplete or faulty, as even Proctor realizes by the end of The Rector,
which hints that he may be “self-expelled from that uneasy paradise” in order to marry
Mary Wodehouse and work as a clergyman after all.\(^7\)

Ultimately, Proctor and Mary Wodehouse have been affected by the same force
which renders the Morgans ineffective: conventionality. Middle-class conventions
persuaded the Morgans that waiting to marry would be prudent, while academic
conventions forbade Morgan to marry while still retaining his fellowship. Proctor and
Mary are, initially, similarly bound. In *The Rector*, Mary explains her inability to minister
to the poor the way Lucy does by saying that it “It did not use to be so when you and I
were young . . .” (38), implying that she is confined by the customs which shaped her.
Proctor, on his part, has been stifled by the ultimately irrelevant pursuits of scholarship:
“His treatise on the Greek verb, and his new edition of Sophocles, were highly creditable
to the Fellow of All-Souls; but how about the Rector of Carlingford?” (39)

What makes Proctor and Mary different from the Morgans is that they are willing
to move out of their comfort zones in order to work effectively in “that little world of
human creatures who were dying, being born, perishing, suffering, falling into misfortune
and anguish, and all manner of human vicissitudes, every day” (*The Rector* 39). Mary’s
insistence on marrying Proctor in order to have a home of her own, even in the face of
Lucy’s attempt to persuade her to remain in their home in Carlingford, may not seem a
drastic or dramatic move, but it represents a pivotal choice to act on the part of a

\(^7\) Proctor’s reappearance in *The Perpetual Curate* is of course a way of finishing the story about
delayed vocation which Oliphant began in *The Rector*, but by setting “the late Rector’s” story into a
broader narrative centered around three other sets of clerical couples, Oliphant makes it do double duty as a
reinforcement of the Frank Wentworth narrative.
character usually depicted as passive. Finding a true home means a willingness to venture forth to seek what work there is to be done; thus, Morgan’s retreat to the country parish in which he was raised can be seen as a failure all the more clearly when contrasted with Proctor and Mary’s decisions to leave their places of refuge in order to work.

The Proctor subplot indicates that Oliphant’s concern with celibacy is not limited to Roman Catholic or Tractarian celibacy. All-male brotherhoods are to be rejected even if they are an accepted part of English society rather than the foreign imposition of a religious order.\footnote{This suggests that \textit{The Perpetual Curate} is ultimately a novel not about Anglicanism, or Catholicism, or even the clerical vocation in general, but about the need to connect domesticity and vocation in a way which Oliphant proposes as characteristically English. The two goals must not be separated, either by tardiness in leaving the academic nest, as in Proctor’s case; in the desire to wait for financial stability as in Morgan’s case; nor in the desire to serve one’s Church as a priest, as in Gerald’s case. Far from advocating a doctrine of domesticity as separate from the economic sphere, Oliphant was in fact arguing that work and love ought not be two separate realms or separate goals, but one single goal pursued “with all [one’s] might.”}

At the same time, Oliphant makes it clear that religious and national identity have the potential to either assist or prevent fulfillment of vocation; thus, religion is vitally important. Gerald’s Roman Catholic doubleness prevents him from acting as he ought,\footnote{It is just within the realm of possibility that the Fellows of are more directly implicated in the Oxford Movement, given Frank’s explanation to Lucy that one of the most influential fellows “is a great friend of Gerald’s” (530). As we have already seen, Gerald and Oxford are together associated with Ritualism.}
but Frank’s domestic High Church Anglicanism enables him to perform pastoral functions more effectively than the more conventional Morgan. Whereas Morgan is bound by a desire to adhere to accepted rules and procedures, and Proctor and Mary Wodehouse are initially prevented from acting by middle-class and academic conventions, Frank and Lucy’s Ritualist zeal drives them to care for the poor of Carlingford. Frank and Lucy’s adherence to an older, more universal (that is, more “catholic”) standard of belief and practice thus allows them to transcend social conventions which might have confined them. Lucy is willing to brave the mean streets of Wharfside when garbed in a High Church habit; Frank is willing to brave the disapproval of the Rector of Carlingford to continue his “great work.”

In being Ritualists, Frank and Lucy are simultaneously English and more than English; their identity is expanded through an embrace of Catholicity. This domesticated version of Catholicity is Oliphant’s answer to concerns about denationalization represented by Gerald and to the too-narrow English identity represented by Squire Wentworth, the Morgans, and in a different way, the evangelical Misses Wentworth. Catholicity gives her hero and heroine distance from which to act more objectively, but it allows them to remain grounded in a version of English identity which still includes the benefits of English domesticity.

Just as safeguarding domesticity is a key element of Frank’s truly English version of Catholicity, so is establishing a proper home central to Frank and Lucy’s mission among their poor. Their “great work” is in Carlingford, and their unwillingness to leave Carlingford signals that this is their proper place. The narrative structure of the novel
reinforces the broader social importance of Frank and Lucy’s move into the Rectory. Disturbances begin in Carlingford when the idealistic but too-limited “clergymanly” couple, the Morgans, arrive. Peace returns to the town when the contested site of the Rectory is abandoned by the Morgans and occupied by its rightful residents: Frank, who “knew more about Carlingford than any other man in the place,” and Lucy, who personally knows the residents of Wharfside well enough to stand in as godmother for the Barrows children (539). Frank and Lucy’s marriage and movement to their new home have implications for the entire town.

Nor is the marriage plot separate from the novel’s work in constructing a High Church version of English identity, for Oliphant presents domesticity and national integrity as mutually reinforcing. Gerald’s continuing domestic duties prevent him from becoming a danger to his country, in as much as they prevent him from having as active a role in the Roman Catholic Church as might otherwise have been possible, while his remaining English sensibilities prevent him from seeking the dispensation that would have allowed him to reject his family. The same domesticity that allows Frank to remain English while also to some degree transcending a narrow view of English identity is what, in the end, limits the dangers of Gerald’s denationalized doubleness. Thus, the domestic does not just signify English national identity: it protects it, even as it is protected by national character in return.
CHAPTER 3:
BUILDING CHURCHES, BUILDING EMPIRE: YONGE’S TRACTARIAN DOMESTIC

Earlier chapters of this dissertation have examined the connections between constructions of English national identity, differing versions of a domestic ideal, and Roman or Anglo-Catholic religious identity, used either as a structure against which English identity might be defined, or as a means of reconstructing national identity to make it more “universal” or transnational in scope. Perhaps nowhere can this three-sided construction be traced out more fully than in the mid-century novels of Charlotte Mary Yonge. Yonge’s literary work was deeply invested in the task of constructing a Tractarian version of the English Church and English life which did not yet exist for most of her readers. In this chapter, I will read four novels of the 1850s (The Heir of Redclyffe [1853], The Castle Builders [1854], Heartsease [1854], and The Daisy Chain [1856]), in connection with the Papal Aggression Crisis, the Tractarian movement, and British imperialist expansion.\(^79\) I argue that Yonge created a unique form of “Tractarian domestic

\(^{79}\) These dates refer to the works’ publication in book form, and are somewhat deceptive, since some of the works appeared serially in The Monthly Packet prior to being printed as books. The Heir of Redclyffe and Part One of The Daisy Chain were circulated serially in 1851.
fiction” in which church, family, and nation were not merely connected, but at times conflated, all bound together in a civilizing mission that sought to bring marginal peoples “in” to English life and the Anglican Church.  

In this Tractarian form of domestic fiction, the boundaries between home and parish overlap or even blur together: being in the right home has as much to do with being in right relation to the local church authority as it has to living in the right way with one’s family. Further, Yonge’s novels suggest a mutually reinforcing theological connection between the earthly home—where the family bonds are ultimately also the bonds between members of the Church—and Heaven as the ultimate home. As I will demonstrate, both the church and the family home serve as symbols of the ultimate home of Heaven, and are bound together in a mutually reinforcing construction that allows Yonge to use the human family as a training ground and preparation for work in the church and, ultimately, eternal life. In doing so, she taps into a rhetoric that was shared by

80 Previous Yonge critics have tended to focus on one or the other of these three categories. While such selectivity is understandable, these readings do not take into account the way in which the domestic, national and religious communities are bound together in mutually-supporting structures in Yonge’s corpus. In *Heaven and Home*, June Sturrock reads Yonge as an antifeminist whose domestic fiction nevertheless reacts in interesting ways to the three stages of the nineteenth century women’s movement (28). Sturrock’s focus is on gender roles, and her interest in Yonge’s Tractarianism is largely limited to the way Tractarian reserve and privacy connect to domesticity. Although she argues, as do I, that Yonge’s Tractarianism offered a means of challenging the domestic ideal, she does not deal with the connections between the domestic sphere and the larger communities of either the Church or the Nation. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Barbara Dennis, focusing on Yonge as a theological novelist, argues that Yonge’s fiction embodied the principles of the Tractarian movement without innovation of her own. This, I believe, may overlook the way in which Yonge’s employed domesticity in part as an apologetic for Tractarianism. Recently, critics begun to look at Yonge’s work as part of an imperial project. The danger here is that the admitted frustration with Yonge’s religiosity on the part of critics such as Talia Schaffer may lead them to underestimate the national and transnational roles played by Yonge’s conception of the Catholic Church. Finally, Yonge critics have tended not to read Yonge’s work in connection with mid-century anti-Catholic rhetoric, or indeed with the rhetoric of Catholic conversion at all. Instead, Yonge’s novels tend to be read only in connection with Tractarianism. Thus, much of the significance of Yonge’s employment of domesticity and national identity has been lost.
both evangelicals and Tractarians: the rhetoric of domestic duty as preparation for life both here and hereafter. What distinguishes Yonge’s construction is the churchliness of it. Being a good Christian means a right relationship to a visible body (the Church), not just a right relationship to a spiritual entity (God). Yonge’s protagonists learn to be dutiful daughters or wives (most of her protagonists are, indeed, female) while also learning to look beyond their roles in the family to roles in the work of the church. If at times one’s familial role might conflict with one’s duty as members of the church, most of the time the two roles are united, so that development within one role spills out into the other, and rightly fulfilling the duty of being an obedient child of human parents enables a protagonist to be a better child of the Church.

This mutually reinforcing relationship between church and home has consequences extending beyond the spiritual realm. In addition to reaching up, towards Heaven, Yonge’s parish/family synthesis reaches outward, towards local, national, and global communities. The Tractarian penchant for church-building, as expressed in The Daisy Chain, becomes both the means of and a metaphor for social transformation. The community (on multiple levels) is supported at once by both the church and the home, which maintain their mutually supportive connections with each other, while still reaching “upward” as symbols of Heaven.

The significance of Yonge’s work for present-day literary criticism, I argue, lies in these patterns of influence among church, home, and nation. I will begin with Heartsease and The Castle Builders, describing how Yonge’s conception of the Catholic Church stood in tension with both evangelical and Roman Catholic rhetoric. Next, I
demonstrate that the modified domestic sphere Yonge offered as the antidote to Roman Catholic conversion was a distinctly Tractarian form of the domestic. I go on to explore Yonge’s further development of this Tractarian domestic in *The Daisy Chain*, showing how romantic love was sublimated into the project of church growth and community development. In the next section, I position the church building project of *The Daisy Chain* within larger national and imperial projects. Finally, I turn to Yonge’s most famous novel, *The Heir of Redclyffe*, and argue that Yonge’s version of Catholicity, although rooted in English national identity, had the potential to gesture beyond nationalism through affiliation with a larger church understood to include Christians throughout the world.

3.1 “The Holy Catholic Church”

Though the degree to which Yonge focused on the church as an organizational body was one of the marks that distinguished her work from other religious fiction, Yonge shared with other authors a concern with identifying the “Holy Catholic Church” of the Apostles’ Creed. The definition or re-definition of the word “Catholic” was at the heart of a debate about the identity of the Church, with all parties striving to claim at least a share in Catholicity, while often denying such a share to their theological opponents.  

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81 The resulting plurality of meanings for the word “Catholic” could result in considerable confusion, and even in humor, as Yonge herself demonstrated in a later novel, *The Pillars of the House* (1876). When smug Ritualist-in-the-making Clement Underwood is asked whether his idolized teacher is “a Catholic,” one of his siblings irritably complains that “of course Clement looked very wise, and greatly pleased, and said ‘Yes, he was’” resulting in a shocked questioning of whether said teacher had “‘really gone over’” to Rome (142). Clement’s joke plays upon two alternate meanings of the word Catholic. His
As I will demonstrate in later sections, the Church as a local, national, and international community played a central role in Yonge’s constructions of English identity. Therefore, it is important to first establish how Yonge viewed the Church and to situate Yonge’s understanding of the English Church in the context of Roman Catholic and evangelical authors of her time.

On the one hand, the Roman Catholic Church continued to deny that the Anglican Church was part of the Catholic Church. For example, Newman, who had once endorsed a “three branch” theory of the Catholic (in which the Anglican Church was an equal branch with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches) denied this theory in his 1850 work, *Lectures on Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans In Submitting to the Catholic Church*: “We see in the English Church, I will not merely say no descent from the first ages, and no relationship to the Church in other lands, but we see no body politic of any kind; we see nothing more or less than an Establishment, a department of Government, or a function or operation of the State . . .” (5). In denying that the English Church demonstrated descent from the patristic era, Newman rejected its claim to be the “apostolic church” of the Nicene Creed. In denying that it had any connection “to the Church in other lands,” he similarly rejected its claim to be Catholic. A church confined to one nation, unconnected to the churches of other lands, could not properly claim to be universal in the way Newman understood religious universality. Some English Catholics interlocutor used the term to refer to Roman Catholicism, while Clement’s own understanding defined the Catholic Church to include the Church of England, such that maintaining Mr. Fulmort’s Catholicism merely meant maintaining his adherence to the Anglican church.
were more optimistic than Newman, seeing in the Tractarian movement the possibility that the Anglican Church might reunite with the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless, in the Roman Catholic view, the Anglican Church was not at present truly part of the Catholic Church.

To evangelical authors, on the other hand, the Catholic Church included all true Christians; thus, depending on the strictness of the particular author, it might or might not include Roman Catholics. When, as in the extreme branches of evangelicalism, Roman Catholicism was understood to be a form of idolatry rather than Christianity, Roman Catholics were not considered genuinely Catholic at all. Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna demonstrates this reclamation of the term “Catholic” in her 1841 tale *Falsehood and Truth*, in which the staunchly Protestant Roberts family steadfastly refer to Roman Catholics as “Romanists” or “Papists,” with even the children maintaining that it is not right to call Roman Catholics “Catholic” (56). One child’s casual reference to “the great Catholic nobleman, the Earl of Shrewsbury” provokes a rebuke from her brother: “‘Catholic!’ repeated Frederick; ‘I don’t like to hear you use that word so, Jane; for when I profess in the creed, to believe in the Holy Catholic Church, I certainly don’t mean the Pope’s Church’” (76-76). Frederick and his parents not only refuse to grant Catholics

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82 Catholics are also identified as idolaters in Mrs. Sherwood’s 1818 book *The Fairchild Family*, considered by some to be the original family chronicle and thus a generic forerunner to works like *The Daisy Chain*.

83 At the beginning of the story, Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, though devout Protestants, are guilty of avoiding “controversy” over Catholic matters. Essentially, the book describes their gradual realization that the Roman Catholic threat is real, and that their children need to be armed against it with solid Biblical arguments for Protestantism.
exclusive use of the word “Catholic,” but also argue that the Catholic Church was actually a false church, ultimately Christian in name only. Nor was Tonna’s criticism of modern-day idolatry limited to “the Pope’s Church;” she believed that idolatry could be found among Tractarian-minded Anglicans as well. The dedication of Falsehood and Truth bewails the liturgical changes beginning to creep into Protestant churches: “in the very sanctuary where [English Protestants] worship, and where their fathers for generations past have enjoyed the blessings of a purely Protestant ritual, danger now frequently lurks; a heterodox pulpit giving the lie to the orthodox desk; and the modest communion table lapsing back into an altar fitted for idolatrous service” (vii). For Tonna, paradoxical as it may seem, the Holy Catholic Church must necessarily be a Protestant church, and though Falsehood and Truth does not name the Tractarian movement, Tonna clearly saw it as a threat. If an increasing presence of Roman Catholics in England was a “blustering storm above,” the gradual Catholicizing within the Church of England was an “insidious flood stealing on us from beneath” which must be resisted by works such as her own, intended to help prepare children for Catholic-Protestant controversy (vii).

Adherents to the Tractarian Movement offered a third alternative: that the Church of England was truly Catholic, not Protestant. For Charlotte Yonge, as a High Church Anglican, the “Church” meant several things at once. First, it was a mystical body of believers, both living and deceased, all sharing in the communion of saints. The Church as communion of saints was, of course, universal (catholic), including Christians around the world and in different denominations, including the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. At the same time, “the Church” meant a hierarchical, institutional
body, one with visible authority structures that could trace their succession back to the
days of the Apostles. In this sense, the Catholic Church could be found in the Roman
Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and in the English Church, all of
which, as Yonge explains in an apologetic tract entitled *Reasons Why I am a Catholic
and Not a Roman Catholic* (1901), were branches of the visible Church (2-3, 6). In
Yonge’s view, the English Church represented the purest branch of the visible Church,
offering the purest form of Catholicism (*Reasons* 10, 15). Further, since Yonge
understood the English Church to be the means by which the Catholic Church was to be
embodied in England, at times she uses the word “Church” to mean the Anglican Church
and its hierarchy, not the whole three-part visible Church. Finally, at times the word
“Church” (capital letter included) refers also to the local, physical church building itself.
“The Church” as Yonge describes it might thus be graphed as a series of concentric
circles, with the local church at the center and the communion of saints as the largest
circle.84

Like Tonna, Yonge wanted to reclaim the word “Catholic” for the Church of
England. Unlike Tonna, Sherwood, and Sinclair, she did not simply equate true
Christianity with Protestantism. On the contrary, she believed that many of the Protestant
characteristics found in the Anglican Church of her day stemmed from the influence of
Calvinism, and were not properly part of the theology of the “Catholic Church.” Nor did

84 When characters in Yonge’s novels speak of “the Church,” they are sometimes referring to
multiple meanings at once. Determining what Yonge means by the word “Church” in a given context can
be difficult because of these layers of meaning, but this multivalent construction provides the means for
revising communities on multiple levels.
Yonge believe that Roman Catholicism constituted idolatry, though she disagreed with some aspects of Catholic practice in regard to relics and the saints. As a result, Yonge’s ecclesiology, unlike Tonna’s, granted the Roman Catholic Church the status of being a branch of the true Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, Yonge saw the Roman branch of the Church as having been corrupted, and in the 1850s, she positioned her fiction in opposition to Roman Catholicism as well as evangelicalism. There might be good in Roman Catholicism, and much that could be shared by Tractarians, but what is bad in Roman Catholicism, her novels hint, must be opposed to the true Catholic spirit. Thus, in *The Castle Builders*, Emmeline visits St. Bonaventura’s, a popular “RC chapel” that uses famous preachers and fine music to lure in Londoners craving entertainment. Lurking beneath the tasteful furnishings, Yonge implies, is a corrupt system. The chapel is:

> one of the places in which Romanism is displayed with the greatest attractions to educated and imaginative minds, keeping back as much as possible all that is offensive to a truly Catholic principle, and putting foremost what is really true and beautiful, what it possesses as being a Church, and hiding much of what belongs to Romanism, as such. (270)

The phrase “keeping back” is significant, as it suggests a manipulative form of reserve. Yonge is not opposed to reserve as a religious principle, when used rightly, but her language here subtly implies an intention to beguile or deceive. Roman Catholicism, in eschewing straightforward honestly, is marked as un-English and potentially immoral. The true “Catholic spirit,” which can be found in Tractarian Anglicanism, is opposed to such duplicity (*Heartsease* 478).
Just as Yonge’s view of the Anglican Church as Catholic was in tension with both Roman Catholic and Evangelical conceptions of Catholicity, her fiction situated itself in opposition both to pro-Catholic propaganda and evangelical literature. In particular, Yonge’s work provided a Tractarian alternative to “all the little Sunday books” of her childhood, the works of Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Mrs. Sherwood, and Mrs. Cameron (Life and Letters 96). Yonge suggested in her brief autobiographical sketch that even good High Church parents might little guess “how much Calvinism one could suck out of [Sunday school books], even while diligently reading the story and avoiding the lesson.” Yonge’s family chronicles, intended to reach a young, mostly middle-class, largely female readership, shared a potential audience with the works of Tonna and Sherwood. They also shared common concerns about the nature of the true church, the connection between theology and daily life, the relationship between religious forms and rituals and inwards states of mind, and the relationship between religious identity and national identity. Yonge’s protagonists may ask questions similar to those raised in the works of Tonna and Sherwood; however, the answers are often significantly different. As I will demonstrate in the following section, Yonge’s version of domesticity, in particular, was uniquely Tractarian, mediating between forms of monastic life associated with Roman Catholicism and the privileging of marriage and child-rearing associated with evangelical versions of the domestic ideal.

Yonge’s emphasis on the Catholicity of the Anglican Church is not only important with regard to the religious agenda of her work; it is also crucial to her construction of English national identity. The English identity she promulgates is one
rooted in a historical narrative that is primarily Catholic rather than Protestant. References to ecclesiastical architecture, for example, serve to connect the Church to England’s pre-Reformation past. Likewise, her protagonists frequently model their lives on images drawn from a romanticized conception of medieval chivalry. Even the incorporation of Gothic settings (such as former abbeys turned into ruins or dwelling houses) is given an unusual Yongian twist; Yonge’s characters want to redeem these settings, not precisely restoring them to the Catholic past, but transforming them into new Tractarian religious spaces. Tractarian identity serves as the bridge between the Catholic past and England’s imperial future. In multiple ways, Yonge’s version of Tractarian identity serves as a means of transcending narrow conceptions of Anglicanism. It allows the creation of a new domestic sphere oriented towards service to the church and the community; it provides the zeal and discipline necessary for missionary work both within England and in the colonies; and in its recognition of Catholicity, it claims a spiritual bond not just with the Christians of England’s Catholic past, but also with Roman Catholic Christians on the continent. Precisely because this Tractarian identity is figured in Yonge’s work as the force behind the building of communities both within England and beyond, Yonge’s view of the Church is ultimately foundational to her view of the nation.

3.2 Constructing the Tractarian Domestic

The primary distinguishing feature of Yonge’s redefined domestic sphere is that it is oriented towards the service of the Church, primarily on the local level but also at the
level of the national Church and the communion of saints. As such, it offers a departure from traditional English domestic life centered on a married couple: not only does the family not necessarily center on a heterosexual couple, but the boundaries of the family extend into the parish. At the same time, this version of domesticity is still clearly marked as Anglican rather than Roman Catholic and (more subtly) English rather than European. Though Tractarian domesticity might seem to offer a new way of life, Yonge connects it to England’s pre-Reformation past, thereby granting it a historical validity and establishing a connection with English identity. Significantly, the understanding of home found by Yonge’s protagonists provides them with an identity that is more flexible than that offered by either Newman or Oliphant. It neither entails a rejection of marriage nor demands marriage as a requirement for service. Instead, it sublimates both marriage and celibacy into the life of the Church.

In arguing for a new “Tractarian domestic” at a moment when attempts to revive monastic organizations were seen as particularly suspect, Yonge had to take great care to differentiate her proposed state of life from convent life. As we have seen, anti-Catholic rhetoric frequently focused on the “unnatural” state of life in monasteries and convents. The issue of nuns and nunneries was a particularly heated one in the early 1850s, and 1853 and 1854 saw attempts on the part of various members of Parliament to pass a bill requiring the governmental inspection of convents (Paz 17). For Yonge, the issue was rendered more complicated because, following Tractarian leader Edward Pusey (but

85 For a more thorough analysis of the convent inspection bill and anti-Catholic legislation in general, see Walter Arnstein’s Protestant versus Catholic in Mid-Victorian England: Mr. Newdegate and the Nuns.
unlike many other writers dealing with Roman Catholicism), she supported the formation of Anglican sisterhoods.\textsuperscript{86} She even considered joining the new community at Wantage. Her most extended discussions of life in sisterhoods appear in later novels, but Yonge indicated support of such projects in her fiction as early as \textit{The Heir of Redclyffe} (1853), in which Sir Guy de Morville donates money to found a sisterhood. Early in \textit{Heartsease} (1854), heroine Violet Martindale is delighted by a visit to the charitable hospital of St. Cross, in Winchester.\textsuperscript{87} Her brother-in-law, seeing her interest, responds that she “should see the mountain convents in Albania” if the work of St. Cross interests her (24). Thus, the Anglican (and English) establishment of St. Cross is set up as a parallel to the Roman Catholic convents in Eastern Europe. St. Cross is further connected to a monastic past when Violet, visiting the ruins of a Priory at Rickworth, Emma Brandon’s estate, compares it to St. Cross, suggesting that the nineteenth-century charitable institution is the equivalent of a medieval monastery. Emma’s only objection to the comparison is that “St. Cross is alive, not a ruin,” and she reveals her secret plan of restoring the priory ruins “to bring Sundays back” to the estate (76).

Emma Brandon’s plan of restoring a medieval property to a religious use, connected as it is to the monastic past of the property, may seem to be an endorsement of

\textsuperscript{86} Pusey was one of the most prominent of the first-generation Tractarians who remained Anglican; John Keble, Yonge’s spiritual mentor, was another.

\textsuperscript{87} It may be worth noting that the hospital at St. Cross had been involved in a Chancery suit regarding the money going to the Earl of Guildford, who was master of St. Cross. According to Chadwick, the case lasted from 1845-1853 and was one of the most famous cases of hospital reform at the time (513). It was also the inspiration for Trollope’s \textit{The Warden}. In praising the work at St. Cross and holding it up as a model, Yonge may be attempting a response to the lawsuit.
the revival of monasticism in nineteenth-century England. In fact, however, the subplot about Emma’s restoration of the priory serves as a warning against the danger of fostering a romanticized view of convent life. Emma’s original plan is for “a sort of almshouse, with old people and children” where she and her mother “could look after [the residents] ourselves” (76). Under the influence of High Church enthusiast Theresa Marstone, however, the plan changes. Theresa teaches Emma not to trust Lady Elizabeth’s judgment, and encourages Emma to speak openly of plans that her family think ought to be kept secret. When Emma falls in love with Mark Gardner and abandons her intention of living singly, Theresa dreams of becoming Mother Superior of a female order and spiritual advisor to the soon-to-be happy couple (404, 411). Ironically, the limits of this Anglican Priory scheme ultimately push Theresa Marstone into leaving the Anglican Church. Mark Gardner, Emma’s supposedly High Church fiancé, who claims to want to aid Emma in the restoration scheme, is eventually revealed to be interested only in her money. Both High Church devotees are disappointed: Emma, because her heart is broken, Theresa, because she has lost her model penitent. Rather than blaming Mark Gardner for his deception, Theresa becomes convinced that the fault is in the Anglican Church, which “does not know how to treat penitents” (467). She in turn convinces Emma that Mark Gardner’s backsliding was due to “want of a monastery to receive him.” The two girls’ “tendency to romance about conventual institutions,” deriving additional force from Emma’s broken heart, leads them to investigate a Roman Catholic convent (479). Theresa’s investigations eventually cause her to convert, while Emma escapes this fate only at the cost of losing her “hope and joy” (545).
The solution to Emma Brandon’s discontent and her romantic view of convent life lies in a return to the original plan for the Priory to serve as a quasi-familial religious community, rather than as a convent styled after those belonging to Roman Catholic orders. The result is a community which is connected to the monastic past: Emma succeeds in bringing Sundays back to Rickworth, as she restores the chapel and searches for a resident curate (545). At the same time, this new High Church community is marked as domestic rather than conventual. Her project, which under Theresa’s influence had been described as a sisterhood, becomes a small orphanage. Thus, rather than being a religious community with “Mother Theresa” at the head, as the girls once planned, the orphanage is a household affair (411). The institutional nature of the community is masked, since the children are cared for by an elderly woman who serves “as a ‘granny’ to the little girls, giving the whole quite a family air . . .” (545). The orphans even share the Brandon household space in the parish church until the community grows large enough for its own chapel.

While this charitable ideal is protected from anti-monastic rhetoric by its connection to the domestic sphere, it nevertheless represents a reconstructed version of the domestic sphere, implying a reconstructed form of English identity. This family space is uniquely connected with the church, and Emma’s life remains distinct from those of other girls. After the failed engagement, Emma apparently returns to her original intention of not marrying, even though such a move seems to affirm Theresa Marstone’s anti-domestic views. Under Theresa’s influence, Emma had come to rebel against her mother’s command that she wait until the age of twenty-five before beginning the process.
of restoration. When Violet Martindale insists that Emma ought to honor her mother’s authority, Emma protests that she would

[i]f it were for any good reason; but I know it is only because it would suit mamma’s old English notions to see me go and marry in an ordinary way, like any commonplace woman, as Theresa says. Ah! you would like it too, Violet. It is of no use talking to you! As Theresa says, the English domestic mind has but one type of goodness. (258)

Emma’s repeated “As Theresa says” may call into question the validity of this critique of “old English notions” that demand that all women seek happiness and holiness through marriage. However, Emma’s fate as the founder and manager of an orphanage instead suggests that there is indeed more than the “one type of goodness” that Theresa believes to be all that English identity could offer. Emma comes to embody a new model of “goodness” as a single woman and founder of a religious institution. The Tractarian version of English identity is more accommodating than the narrow ideal Emma initially sees, and its very ability to accommodate is part of what enables Emma Brandon to find a permanent home in Anglicanism, instead of following her friend into Roman Catholicism.

At the same time, the Tractarian concern for right authority manifests itself in a glorification of parental authority. The problem with the Priory scheme as it develops under Theresa’s influence is not that it is an alternative to marriage, or that it is a rejection of fashionable life, but that Emma attempts to undertake the project with the help of a girl as fallible and naïve as herself, rather than under the proper authority. Whereas her original proposal was a homely plan for an orphanage or hospital run by
herself and her mother, problems arise when she replaces her mother’s authority with that of Theresa Marstone. According to Emma’s longtime friend Theodora Martindale, Emma’s broken-hearted desires for the spiritual discipline found in convent life, likewise, are faulty not because it is wrong to want “discipline,” but because they involve the rejection of the authority Emma has already been given—her mother (479). Theodora encourages Emma to let her mother take her back to “the safe old nest where all [her] duties and schemes lie” even if it means the humiliation of returning home having been jilted, for that would mean “submitting, not to a self-made rule” of a religious order, “but to Heaven’s own appointment” in the form of the duties of her state of life (481). Returning home does not, however, mean abandoning her original visions of serving God and the Church. When Emma submits to the discipline of her mother rather than that of the convent, mother and daughter are once again able “to work at everything good together” and her plan to restore the ruins at Rickworth can come to fruition (480).

For Emma Brandon, finding her proper state in life involves a return to her home “nest” and a resumption of former plans, but *The Castle Builders* (also published in 1854) makes clear that domestic peace may not be found for everyone in the same way. Kate and Emmeline Berners find peace of mind and spiritual rest when they receive the sacrament of confirmation, a step enabled by their sister Constance and her husband Lord Herbert Somerville, who provide a proper atmosphere for their religious growth. Before she can adapt to the new life and new work, Emmeline must abandon some of her idealism, including her romantic ideals about life in a sisterhood. Emmeline’s problem, Constance explains, is that she “can believe in [devoted service to the poor] in a convent,
or a sister of charity” but she can’t “understand it in a modern Clergyman in a cloth coat, and a little common-place house” (310). Present duties take precedence over castles-in-the-air, and, Yonge suggests, the way for young women to determine their duty is to act according to their present state of life, rather than seeking thrills outside of the home. Constance’s advice to Emmeline is similar to Theodora’s advice to Emma Brandon: “Indeed, you know we must take things as we find them, and not sit still and amuse ourselves, though we do happen to be born in the nineteenth century. Things were common-place to those old people that are romance to us, you may be sure” (Castle Builders 310).

Nevertheless, The Castle Builders also makes it clear that parental authority and Church authority are not guaranteed to agree. In such cases, the Church’s authority takes priority. The right course of action for Emmeline and Kate, as young women on the verge of adulthood, is to be confirmed according to Church ordinances, even though this entails separation from their mother, step-father, and half-siblings. Emmeline and Kate, having been sent from India to school in England, have been influenced most strongly by their elder sister Constance and, more recently, by Constance’s clerical husband Lord Herbert Somerville. The Somervilles are a “serious” family with strong Tractarian views. As Emmeline and Kate discover to their misfortune, their own mother and stepfather treat religion as a matter of social convention, regarding the adoption of Tractarian practices such as attendance at daily services as “perverseness” (161). The girls, having grown up essentially without their parents, are unprepared for their lax attitude towards religion. Emmeline tellingly says that, in coming to know what Lady Willoughby is really like, “it
is rather as if I had lost rather than found my mother!” (139). The relationship is truly lost when Emmeline and Kate decide not to travel to Paris with their parents, believing that they must stay in England in order to be confirmed.

Giving the Berners sisters religiously negligent parents allows Yonge to create an alternative to the parental home where the young women may obey the Church and their consciences under the care of a reconstructed familial authority. In the “common-place little house” in Dearport, Lord Herbert acts as both spiritual authority and elder brother to the imaginatively wayward sisters. Lord Herbert and Constance, working together, provide both a physical home and access to a spiritual one. As the novel leaves the sisters kneeling at the altar to receive communion for the first time, the narrator explains that they are “in the safest and holiest place on earth,” moralistically expressing a wish for a similar fate for the novels’ readers: “So might earthly visions rest in the sure homes and peaceable habitations, which are but the portals to the mansions above” (351). This statement suggests that the way to avoid being led astray by romantic ideals and a strong imagination is for such ideals to be rooted in the (Anglican) Church, under the authority of a right-minded pastor, and fortified by the reception of sacraments.

This sacramental resolution may resemble the conclusion of Newman’s Loss and Gain, but unlike Charles Reding, who must leave his family to find his true home through conversion to Roman Catholicism, Emmeline and Kate make their entrance into adult membership in their church together, as sisters, under the care of their brother-in-law. Yonge, unlike Newman, constructs the family home and the church as parallel and mutually reinforcing institutions. As in Heartsease, religious action is posited as a
familial event, and the boundaries between Lord Herbert’s parish and his household bleed together, since the entire family (including Emmeline and Kate) are involved in the care of the poor parishioners. Because they have a brother-in-law who meets the Tractarians standards for a clergyman, resolution for the Berners sisters is largely a matter of passively finding their proper place, in a sisterly role already waiting for them. When such an authority is not present, and such “sure homes and peaceable habitations”—the physical church buildings, which stand in for the divine home of Heaven—are not available, a different course of action is required. In *The Daisy Chain*, Yonge takes the synthesis between parish and family in a different direction, connecting the slow process of character building with the much-loved work of church building, and arguing that both are essential to the construction of a more vigorous national identity.

3.3 “Home and Cocksmoor”

By the time Yonge composed the second half of *The Daisy Chain* (1856), fears that the Roman Catholic Church might be invading England through the re-establishment of its hierarchy had died down. Thus, she was not under the same pressure to distinguish her Anglican version of Catholicity from the Roman Catholic brand. Instead, *The Daisy Chain* offers a vision of the Tractarian domestic that is largely constructed positively, through example, rather than negatively, in contrast to false forms of the domestic. Though Flora May does offer a model of flawed domesticity (because her worldly ambitions are given priority over her religious and domestic life), Margaret, Ethel, and Norman May all serve as Anglican role models.
*The Daisy Chain* is a family chronicle, and as such it traces out the courses of several of the elder May children as they grow up, following a tragic accident that takes the life of their mother and ruins the eldest sister’s health. The development of the young Mays is paralleled by the development of Ethel’s “Cocksmoor scheme” in such a way that the work of personal moral, spiritual and educational development is mapped onto a story of community development. Cocksmoor is a small village a few miles from Stoneborough, the Mays’ home town. At the novel’s beginning, Cockmoor is described as “a colony of roughly built huts,” and “a bad place to live” (22). Ethel’s solution is that they—the eleven May children in general, and in particular Ethel and her favorite brother, Norman—should make it their aim to build a church for Cocksmoor (23). The project will eventually provide work not merely for Ethel, but also for her brother Richard, as well as her father’s long-time friend Dr. Spencer, for whom the church project becomes a consuming interest.

In the case of Alan Ernescliffe and Margaret May, the Cocksmoor scheme is literally consuming, as it becomes a means of transforming their romantic love into a spiritual bond. Margaret and Alan are prevented from marrying by two separate tragedies: Margaret’s spinal injury and Alan’s tragic death after a shipwreck. In different ways and to different degrees, their love ends up expressing itself physically through their gifts to the project of church building. Alan Ernescliffe’s will endows the church at

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As Barbara Dennis notes, the family chronicle was an ideal vehicle for Yonge’s Tractariansim, because through it “she might extend the work of the church through a depiction of the effects of its teachings in society” (56). Thus, what Valerie Sanders notes as an emphasis on practical details may actually be a means of inculcating Tractarian principles (105,107).
Cocksmoor with 20,000 pounds, and the church is built to resemble a ship, per his deathbed instructions. After Alan’s death, Margaret pours most of her remaining time and energy into following (from a distance) the progress of building the church. Though she cannot be physically present at the consecration of the church, she hears the bells ringing in celebration, and cries out: “Alan! . . . It is enough! I am ready!” (541) While it is striking that Margaret expresses her willingness to die not to her Heavenly Father but to her deceased fiancé, the fact that Margaret’s words are a response to the ringing of the church bells is even more important, as it indicates the way in which Alan has become physically re-embodied by the church building project. Alan’s voice is translated into the musical bells of St. Andrew’s, just as Alan and Margaret’s love is sublimated into the work of the church.

While Alan’s gift to Cockmoor is part of the unexpected fortune that under happier circumstances might have enabled him to marry, Margaret’s gift is an even more personal and more explicitly romantic one. After Alan’s death, Margaret gives up her pearl engagement ring, to be set in a ring around the stem of the chalice which will be used to hold communion wine at St. Andrew’s. Ethel, Margaret’s younger sister, moralizes upon the gift: “the ‘relic of a frail love lost’ was become the ‘token of endless love begun.’ There was more true union in this than in clinging to the mere tangible emblem—for broken and weak is all affection that is not knit together above in the One Infinite Love” (513). Much is revealed here about Yonge’s conception of human and divine relationships. Human love is subordinate to the love of God, but romantic love (like familial love) also finds its fulfillment in the Communion of saints. Margaret and
Alan, though never united in marriage, are, by the end of the novel, united in Heaven. This construction may be read two ways. On the one hand, it is a means of coping with human mortality: if romantic love finds its fulfillment beyond the grave, then death is no obstacle. However, the privileging of Alan and Margaret over the other romantic couplings in the novel suggests that Yonge is elevating their doomed, spiritualized love above relationships that are physically consummated in marriage.

Margaret and Alan are tragically prevented from marrying, but Ethel May voluntarily chooses her life of spinsterhood, rejecting a possible marriage in favor of service both to her family of origin and the Cocksmoor project. Her name provides a key to her role as celibate church builder. Throughout *The Daisy Chain*, awkward, ungainly Ethel May is dubbed “Etheldred the Unready” or “King Etheldred.” At the novel’s conclusion, however, a conversation about the windows of St. Andrew’s church includes a passing reference to “St. Etheldreda,” whom Dr. May had jokingly proposed as the subject of a stained glass window (533). Though the window ends up being dedicated to St. Margaret, the reference to St. Etheldreda is telling, for it reveals an unexpected historical mode for Ethel May: St. Etheldreda, (or Aethelthryth, as the *Liber Elienses* called her), was a seventh-century virgin queen and abbess who built a monastery at Ely (Bede 194-197). The original buildings founded by St. Etheldreda were destroyed, but Ely Cathedral stands on the same ground today. The *Liber Eliensis* records that in

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89 Yonge, with her knowledge of classical languages and medieval history, could have had access to either of these texts. There was a Latin edition of the *Liber Eliensis* published in London in 1848, and there were several version of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History* published in England in the first half of the nineteenth century, including some English translations.
addition to the monastery at Ely, Etheldreda built a number of churches, including, most significantly, “a house for the Lord in honor of the blessed Apostle Andrew” (26). St. Andrew is the saint to whom the church at Cocksmoor is dedicated, and the stained glass window Ethel May endows (purchased with money she has hoarded for years) is a depiction of St. Andrew bringing the loaves and fishes to Christ (532). Thus Ethel’s work in building the church at Cocksmoor is subtly linked to the church-building associated with her historic namesake.

Ethel May is like her patron saint in more than her desire to found churches, however, since what St. Etheldreda was chiefly known for was her chastity. The Venerable Bede composed a hymn in her praise, depicting her as part of the “virgin-choir” surrounding Mary in Heaven (Bede 195). According to the Liber Eliensis, Etheldreda tried to avoid the marriage arranged by her parents, “as she wished with all her desire to live her whole life out in virginity. But the authority of her parents was victorious” and she was married not once, but twice, first to an earl, then to a king (17). According to Bede and the anonymous author of the Liber Eliensis, however, neither marriage was consummated. Though she lived with her second husband for twelve years, her virginity was said to have been preserved through a series of miracles. Eventually she separated from her second husband, becoming Abbess of the community she founded at Ely (Liber Eliensis 34).

In Ethel May, Charlotte Yonge created a character who, though neither the daughter of the king nor an Abbess, does choose to embrace virginal celibacy. Ethel blithely predicts that she will never be courted because she is so ugly. More importantly,
she claims that “There can never be anybody in all the world that I shall like half as well as papa, and I am glad no one is ever likely to make me care less for him and Cocksmoor” (269). When Ethel’s prediction that she will never have a lover is challenged by her encounter with her cousin, Norman Ogilvie (a man whose tastes and interests are similar to hers) she, like her namesake saint, voluntarily embraces celibacy instead of romantic/erotic love (357). As she considers the possibility of marriage, “the misty brilliant future of mutual joy dazzled her!” only to be spoiled by the thought of what her family of origin might suffer without her. Ethel imagines herself abandoning her motherless family, and thinks “Ah! That resolve had seemed easy enough when it was made, when . . . I fancied no one could care for me! . . . Now is the time to test it! I must go home to papa” (370). As a result of this decision, she cuts short her visit to Oxford, deliberately curtailing her potential courtship before it can really begin.

While there may be something troublingly Oedipal about the fact that Ethel’s devotion to her father precludes the possibility of romantic attachment, the mention of Cocksmoor in her original resolution not to marry indicates that the ties that prevent Ethel from marrying are not merely familial, but also religious and social. At the end of the novel, when Ethel learns that her could-have-been-lover Norman Ogilvie has married someone else, she reflects that “Home and Cocksmoor had been her choice . . .” instead of marriage to Ogilvie (563). As in Heartsease, Yonge constructs an alternative to the marriage plot which combines duty to one’s parents with duty to Church and Society, manifested in Ethel’s mission to a local community of quarry laborers.
Not only is Ethel’s resolution against marrying connected to Cocksmoor as much as it is to her need to care for her father and siblings, but the two goals of substitute motherhood and church building have been bound together since the very inception of the Cocksmoor plan. The church building project is, oddly enough, rendered possible only through a dramatic alteration in the structure of the May family. Ethel makes her great resolution to build the church at Cocksmoor on the very day of a carriage accident that causes Mrs. May’s death. The same accident causes an injury to Dr. May’s arm that makes him somewhat dependent on assistance from others (though he can, apparently, still function as a physician), as well as Margaret’s debilitating spinal injury (49). Although the accident permanently changes life in the May family, Ethel’s plans for Cocksmoor are “not effaced, but rather burnt in, by all that had subsequently happened” (49).  

Somehow, the accident that alters the structure of the family reinforces or solidifies Ethel’s desire to reform the village. In Ethel’s case, literal motherlessness is apparently the prerequisite for becoming a metaphorical mother to a new church.

Home and church are not just parallel projects; rather, both symbolize what to Yonge is the ultimate home: Heaven. In The Castle Builders, Yonge sets up the church building as an earthly symbol of the Heavenly mansion. Thus, as previously mentioned, when the conclusion of Castle Builders leaves protagonists Kate and Emmeline kneeling at the altar of their local parish, having received Communion for the first time in their

90 The loss of Mrs. May forces first Ethel’s older sisters, Margaret and Flora, then Ethel herself, into taking on the domestic duties normally belonging to a wife and mother. Ethel eventually comes to serve as teacher and guardian for her many younger siblings (there are eleven children in the May family, and Ethel is only the fifth). She also becomes the default companion and counselor to Dr. May (269).
lives, the narrator concludes: “So might earthly visions rest in the sure homes and peaceable habitations, which are but the portals to the mansions above” (351). The “sure homes and peaceable habitations” referred to here are the church buildings themselves. In Yonge’s theology, the church building, as a place for sacramental reception and instruction, is indeed a “portal” to Heavenly mansions.

Heaven as a true home may be far superior to an earthly home, but the domestic comforts of an earthly home are nevertheless significant in that they prefigure the comfort of Heaven. The contrasts and parallels between heaven and home are further illustrated in The Heir of Redclyffe, when young widow Amabel Morville visits the estate that would have been her home had her husband not died on their honeymoon.91 “Perhaps that was the hardest time of all her trial,” explains the narrator, “and she felt as if, without his child in her arms, she could never have held up under the sense of desolation that came over her, left behind, while he was in his true home” (502). Immediately after this, however, Amy makes tea for her brother Charlie and her convalescent cousin Philip, and the narrator notes that “[t]hat stately house had probably never, since its foundation, seen anything so home-like as Amabel making tea and waiting on her two companions . . .” (502). Heaven, not Redclyffe, may be Guy’s true home, and Amabel may look anxiously ahead to the day when she can join him there, but in the meantime, through her skill at

91 Amy, unlike Margaret or Ethel, does have a few months of wedded bliss, during which time she becomes pregnant. Guy’s death, however, sends her back to her family of origin, where she devotes her life to raising her daughter and caring for her crippled brother Charlie. Thus, what initially appears to be a traditional marriage plot (Guy and Amy fall in love; troubles ensue which cause a temporary end to their engagement; misunderstandings are cleared up and they are able to marry) actually concludes not with happily-ever-after marital bliss, but with a domestic situation at least as odd as that in any of Yonge’s other novels.
teapot, Amy is still able to transform desolate, haunted Redclyffe into something “home-like.” The historic enmity between the Redclyffe Morvilles from whom Guy is descended and the Broadstone Morvilles represented by Philip is finally resolved not through Guy’s sacrificial death abroad but by Amy’s decision to visit Philip when he is taken ill at Redclyffe. The house had been prepared for Amy’s bridal entrance as the new lady of the manor, but even though Guy’s death and the family entail shut her out of what should have been her new home, her presence turns the doomed space into a domestic haven. In making peace on earth through her domestic skills, Amy mirrors the rest and peace of Heaven.

While The Heir of Redclyffe merely hints at a connection between domesticity and the model of Heaven as true home, in The Daisy Chain, the family of origin is clearly offered as type of Heaven. As Ethel muses over her choice of “Home and Cocksmoor,” the narrator explains her altered understanding of home. Yes, she has chosen to serve as a mother figure in the May home, “but her eyes ha[ve] been opened to see that earthly homes may not endure, nor fill the heart” (563). She realizes that her siblings will continue to move on and forge new attachments which replace her in importance. Her family members may even die, as has already happened with Margaret. Despite the probability of future losses, Ethel consoles herself by thinking: “I don’t know that I shall be alone, and I shall have the memory—the Communion with them, if not their presence” (564). Thus, Ethel’s birth family is connected to the church in the sense of the mystical communion of saints, in that Ethel believes her family bond will be maintained through the communion of saints even when she is separated by distance or death from her
siblings. As shown above, the church prefigures the home of Heaven. At the same time, Ethel sees her family home itself as a foreshadowing or type of the true home of Heaven. If, therefore, the biological family is collapsed into the church, both church and family are also both collapsed into Heaven.

3.4 “The Church Must Come to Them”

The mutually reinforcing relationship between church and home described in the previous section has consequences that go beyond the theological/spiritual realm. In addition to reaching up, towards Heaven, Yonge’s parish/family synthesis reaches outward, towards the local community, the nation, and beyond. This, too, is indicated in Ethel’s musings on her vocation in *The Daisy Chain* when she assuages her concerns about future loneliness with the thought: “Someone there must be to be loved and helped, and the poor for certain. Only I must have my treasures above . . .” (564). Ethel’s two-part vocation is “home and Cocksmoor,” with the work at Cocksmoor serving almost as a substitute for marriage, in that it fills the empty spaces in her emotional life. This work at Cocksmoor, though primarily religious in nature, is understood by Yonge to have important social consequences as well. The mission to the poor is intended to meet their material as well as spiritual needs.

The church building project at Cocksmoor is also a project to bring marginalized laborers into the fold of English society. Richard May, Ethel’s eldest brother, succinctly describes the social and religious isolation of Cocksmoor: “I don’t know what help there is for the people. There’s no one to do anything for them, and it is of no use to tell them
to come to Church when it so far off and there is so little room for them” (49). Cocksmoor and Stoneborough are distant not merely geographically, but socially; residents of Stoneborough are, in general, far more affluent, and the community as a whole is healthier than that of Cocksmoor. The perpetual Victorian conflict between new and old is also at work here, demonstrated by the very different histories of the two communities. Stoneborough is an old and well-established town, and some of its institutions date back to medieval times. (Though some of the Mays’ significance in Stoneborough society lies in their relative affluence, much of their prestige is also due to their having lived in the town for generations.) Cocksmoor, on the other hand, is new and unplanned, the chance outgrowth of the recent opening of a quarry. It is further burdened with a neglectful landowner, and as it is merely a settlement of workers rather than a real town, it has no government agencies.

In Yonge’s conservative, Tractarian view, the Anglican Church is privileged as the agency most capable of reaching and “civilizing” marginal populations within England. It might take more than erecting a church building to completely eradicate the stone quarrymen’s poverty, but drawing the people into the church draws the village together into a cohesive social unit. If Cocksmoor’s heathenish residents cannot be brought into the church at Stoneborough, then “the Church must come to them,” according to wise Tractarian clergyman, Mr. Wilmot, who appoints Richard as curate to Cocksmoor (432). The result of Ethel’s scheme of education and pastorship is a marked
improvement in village life, though it begins gradually. Once the church is built, Cocksmoor is no longer “a desolate sight as in old times, for the fair edifice, rising on the slope, gave an air of protection to the cottages, which seemed now to have a centre of unity, instead of lying forlorn and scattered. . . . though there was an air of poverty, there was no longer an appearance of restless destitution and hopeless neglect” (534). The presence of the Anglican Church stands at the heart of community life at the local level.

The spread of Anglicanism is also a vital component of the work of empire. In *The Daisy Chain*, missionary activity is bound up together with imperial and commercial ventures. Thus, Norman May becomes fired up by missionary zeal in part because of Harry May’s account of the newly-converted island chief who helped care for the dying Alan Ernescliffe. Harry and Alan are neither missionaries nor clergymen, but sailors in the British navy. Nevertheless, Alan’s grave on a tropical island is “one of the many sailors’ graves scattered from the tropics to the poles, and which might be the first seed in a ‘God’s acre’ to that island, becoming what the graves of holy men of yore are to us” (454). Sailors, in dying far from home, somehow become martyrs whose bodies hallow the lands they explore. The image is a striking one, the more so because Yonge is not here talking about those engaged explicitly in missions, but about those whose lives are given up to Britain’s military and commercial success. Why do sailors automatically become saints? The easy answer is that Yonge has simply conflated imperial expansion with the expansion of the Church. This may be true, but it needs to be complicated. A

92 By pastorship, of course, I do not mean that Ethel literally occupies a pastoral role in her church: that would not have been allowed. I mean pastorship rather in the sense Lauren Goodlad uses it in *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State*, as a model of social outreach.
Tractarian belief in consecration—the idea that places and objects could be made holy by being set apart for religious purposes—is uniquely at work here. It is not by coincidence that Alan is buried in a place where the young chief “hopes to have a Church one of these days” (453). The presence of a baptized Christian, whose burial is accompanied with prayer and Scripture taken from the Book of Common Prayer, literally begins the work of building a holy space.93 The space being constructed may be a churchyard, rather than a church, but since Christian churches were traditionally built near or over the graves of saints, the presence of a “God’s acre” may carry an implicit promise of an increased presence of Christianity. Early Christians claimed that “the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians” and Yonge here seems to expand this concept to include those who, like Alan, die in the line of duty after striving to live a devout, moral life.

The connection between missionary work and the spread of empire is one which might be expected, as the fact that missionary activity functioned as part of an imperial project has been well documented.94 Yonge, however, brings the project of mission back to England. Global expansion of the Church is repeatedly connected to the project of church building at Cocksmoor. This is done most explicitly through Alan Ernescliffe’s

93 Harry does not have a Prayer Book or Bible with him on the island, but he recites the 90th psalm from memory (453). That is one of the psalms used in the burial services of the nineteenth-century. The “Glory” (Gloria Patri) and Lord’s Prayer Harry mentions are also part of the burial service.

94 Anna Johnston, for example, maintains in Missionary Writing and Empire that missions were central to the work of colonization. See, however, Andrew Porter, who argues in Religion versus Empire? that missionaries usually saw themselves as anti-imperialistic and sought to distance their work from the work of empire. Taken together, this criticism suggests that though there was a relationship between missionary outreach and British colonization, it was not a straightforward or simple relationship. Yonge’s fiction, which provides a clear example of the way the theme of missions might be taken up in conjunction with pro-empire sentiment, also suggests something of the complications which could ensue when the two rhetorics were united in one project.
founding of St. Andrew’s Church, the very structure of which reflects Alan’s role as a sailor. While dying of a fever on a South Pacific Island, Alan babbles about a church he has seen “built by a sailor’s vow; the roof was like the timbers of a ship—that was right. Mind, it was so. That is the ship that bears through the waves; there is the anchor that weighs within the veil” (452-453). The church at Cocks Moor, dedicated to Andrew the apostle, is built according to this deathbed direction, with roof timbers shaped “like the ribs of a ship” (532). St. Andrew’s church embodies the ancient Christian metaphor of the church as a ship tossed on the stormy sea of life. The only memorial to Alan in the Church is one likewise connected both to his life as a sailor and to the metaphor of the church as a ship: it is a stained glass window depicting “the ship of the Apostle, and the calming of the storm” (533).

The roof timbers of St. Andrew’s also connect the little mission at Cocks Moor to one of England’s most famous medieval churches, Ely Cathedral. As has already been demonstrated, Etheldred May is linked, through her name, to St. Etheldreda, who founded the monastery that eventually became Ely Cathedral. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the nave of Ely Cathedral was roofed in such a way that, looking up, a visitor saw not the usual stone vaulting, but “nothing but a set of rafters” appearing similar to those of a “dwelling house” (Winkle 55). In his work on Cathedral Churches, Benjamin Winkle admits that some “persons . . . have been found to admire this timber

95 For example, Hippolytus: “The sea is the world, in which the church is set. She [the church] is like a ship tossed in the deep, but not destroyed” (qtd. in Bercot 149).

96 See Matthew 8:23-27 for the Biblical account of the calming of the sea.
roof, for its lightness and ingenious construction” but he argued that it was “totally out of place here.” Yonge places Winkle’s objection in the mouth of Cocksmoor parish clerk John Taylor, who “could not understand [the roof] being open; he said, when he saw the timbers, that a man and his family might live among them” (532). To the May family, however, the timbered roofs, in resembling a ship, call to mind both Ernescliffe’s sacrifice and the theology of the Church as a ship. And, indeed, Ely Cathedral itself had a nautical connection. Today locals dub it “the ship of the Fens,” and in the nineteenth century, the watery fens surrounding it were compared to the sea (Kingsley Hereward 9, 10), while the Cathedral itself was said to loom “up on the horizon as a great solitary ship looms up on the sea” (Van Rennselaer 31). In similar fashion, the “fair edifice” of Cocksmoor rises up on a slope above the moors.

To say that the Cocksmoor scheme of local evangelization and Norman’s involvement in global missionary activity are parallel projects is only to begin to describe the relationship: the two are in fact intertwined and mutually supportive. By the end of the novel, the connection between missions abroad and the building of a local church is so tight that merely thinking about “where Norman might be looking at the sun dipping

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97 Apparently, the nineteenth-century restorers of Ely Cathedral agreed, for by 1858, the roof timbers were covered with a painted ceiling.

98 The resemblance between Cocksmoor’s church and Ely Cathedral is all the more significant because for the Victorians, Ely was connected with a number of historical narratives about both the shaping of the English church and the formation of the English nation. Ely was the scene of a pivotal battle between William the Conquerer and the Anglo-Saxons, which was memorialized in Kingsley’s Hereward the Wake: Last of the English (1866). In the early nineteenth-century, the Cathedral was also known as the site where Cromwell “rebuked the formalism of a high church clergyman” (Kimball 160). Ely Cathedral is thus linked to the evangelization of England, the Norman Conquest, and the Puritan co-opting of the Anglican church. St. Andrew’s nods to this history, even as it reaches forward to the spread of the British empire through a series of linkages.
into the Western sea” causes Ethel to remember “the visions of her girlhood, when she had first dreamt of a Church on Cocksmoor . . .” (563). Throughout the novel, the two projects are linked together by various other characters. Harry says of David, the young island chief, that the “notion of his heart—like Cocksmoor to Ethel—is to get a real English mission, and have all his people be Christians” (453). At Dr. Spencer’s suggestion, laying the foundation stone for Cocksmoor becomes the occasion for a demonstration and benefit on behalf of foreign missions, during which Dr. Spencer shares stories of his work founding churches in India (496). Margaret explicitly connects this dual-purpose public event to Alan’s martyr-like death in the tropics: “I can’t help liking the notion of sending out the Church to the island whence the Church came home to us” (501). The relationship between missions to the South Seas and the mission to Cocksmoor is, therefore, a reciprocal one. Just as Alan’s grave creates a seed for a possible future church on the South Sea island, his will provides the foundation for the church at Cocksmoor, which in turn gives back to the missions, both through the money raised at the foundation stone ceremony and through Norman May’s decision to serve as a missionary.

Cocksmoor and the South Sea missions are bound together, ultimately, because they both demonstrate what Yonge understood to be the most important work of the church: bringing people simultaneously into the body of Christ and into English

99 Spencer, recently returned from an adventurous life of humanitarian work abroad, uses the knowledge he has gained from church building in the colonies to help design St. Andrew’s church. Indeed, it might be said that a large part of his function in the novel is to connect missions abroad with the mission to Cocksmoor.
This missionary outreach, however, is made possible only through a commitment to Tractarian domesticity. Norman May’s vocation combines service to the Church and marriage, precisely because he has chosen a bride who secretly longs to do something great with her life. Meta Rivers, whose position in life seems to set her up to be a stereotypical spoiled heiress, longs to leave it all behind, saying “of course, I should be better satisfied if I lived harder, and had work to do” (509). Through her marriage to Norman, she fulfills her desire to be useful, rather than being a “toy” or “china shepherdess” (508). When Norman’s work is desperately wanted in New Zealand, his approaching wedding to Meta is hurried up to allow her to go with him. Though theirs has been a long-standing romance, their wedding is couched not in romantic terms, but in religious ones:

So Norman and Meta settled their [wedding] plans as they walked home together from evening service, after listening to the prophecies of the blessings to be spread into the waste and desolate places, which should yet become the heritage of the Chosen, and with the evening star shining on them, like a faint reflex of the Star of the East, Who came to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles. (556-557)

This missionary romance, in which human love is put at the service of God, Church, and humanity, is precisely what was missing from both Margaret and Alan’s doomed engagement and from Flora’s worldly marriage. Flora learned her lesson (too late) through the death of her child, while Margaret and Alan had to give up their lives to give themselves to the Church.

That the civilization being brought to the South Pacific is English rather than merely European is made clear by David’s desire for an “English mission,” not merely a
Christian one, nor even a European one. Yonge’s works argue that Anglican Christianity is superior to both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, and she makes clear in *The Daisy Chain* that Anglican Christianity is the tool that will bring marginalized people (whether they are English laborers or Pacific islanders) into civilization. Ultimately, Yonge would no doubt argue that being drawn into the Church was more important than being drawn into the British empire, but the two types of colonization remain part of the same project. This was possible because, though Yonge saw the Church of England as a truly Catholic Church, she did not reject its role as a national church. Whereas Newman argued that the Church of England could not be Catholic because it was a function of the government, Yonge tried to construct a vision of the church as both English and Catholic. As a result, there remains in Yonge’s work a tension between the concept of the Anglican Church as a national church, involved in the formation of national character and invested in the formation of empire, and the Tractarian vision of their church as one branch of a spiritually united Catholic Church. In the final section of this chapter, I will explore this tension, discussing the ways in which Yonge’s Anglican ideal both was and was not a merely English ideal.

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100 The name of the church built with Alan’s inheritance may be a nod to a broader British history. St. Andrew was a fisherman (and thus, implicitly, a sailor), but he is also the patron saint of Scotland. However, the Church of Scotland is a Presbyterian church which does not share the theology of the Church of England, making the question of British identity, as distinct from English identity, a very complicated one for Tractarian authors like Yonge and Sewell.
3.5 “I believe in the Communion of Saints”

In the previous section, I have shown that the model of the Church Yonge was most concerned with was a specifically English Church, with its own history, its own saints (such as Etheldreda), its own liturgy and traditions, even its own style of religious communities. All of these Anglican characteristics are also English characteristics, which might as easily be invoked in support of English national identity as in English religious identity. Nevertheless, behind the hierarchical, organizational structure of the Church, there always remained a strong concept of the Communion of Saints as a body that connected members of the Church across distance, time, life and death. Ultimately, for Yonge, the home-church-nation construction always points in one direction: upward. If local parish churches are merely gateways to the homes of Heaven, and homes of origin are ultimately foreshadowings of the “true home” of Heaven, then the national-imperial-religious community of the Anglican Church is only the gateway to a larger, more lasting spiritual community. Moreover, Yonge’s commitment to the ideal of Catholicity meant that there was also a transnational component to the Church. Even if the tension between the Anglican Church as a national structure and the Anglican Church as a mere part of a transcendent body may not be coherently resolved in Yonge’s work, the resulting tension was a fruitful one, providing an identity which was both English and, if only in a small way, transnational.

Given that Yonge was, like her evangelical contemporaries, invested in the construction of an English religious ideal, it should be not be surprising that she also participated in their conception of travel to the continent as spiritually and morally
dangerous. During the Papal Aggression crisis, much of the emphasis was on the invasion of England by the “foreign” religion, but traveling, living, or studying abroad also carried a threat of conversion.\textsuperscript{101} As might be expected, Yonge’s concern for the dangers of continental travel shows up most strongly in \textit{Hearstease} and \textit{The Castle Builders}, the novels explicitly concerned with Roman Catholic conversion. When the religiously apathetic, gambling officer Arthur Martindale considers moving to Boulogne, his devout wife despairs over a possible future life abroad in which her children would be “led astray by evil influences of a foreign soil” and she herself would be left “far from every friend, every support, without security of church ordinances . . .” (427). Such a future would, in her mind, be “utterly wretched,” and indeed, France turns out to be the scene of financial ruin and physical collapse which bring Arthur near death. Though Violet’s fears about life on the continent are not all connected to the presence of Roman Catholicism and the absence of the Anglican Church, the difficulty of maintaining her religious affiliation with the Anglican Church figures as a significant part of the danger of life abroad.

\textit{The Castle Builders} focuses more particularly on the problem of attending church services abroad through Emmeline’s assumption that the privilege of attending Catholic worship services must have been one of the pleasures Lord Herbert and Lady Constance enjoyed while abroad. On the contrary, Lady Constance explains, they never attended Catholic services while in Rome, because “we had a feeling against treating it as a sight”

\textsuperscript{101} For example, Eustace A. of \textit{From Oxford to Rome} decides to convert after a tour of the continent.
and that they did not, in any event, like to stay in places which did not have “an English congregation” (282). Though Lady Constance does not want to say that attending services in Europe would have been wrong, her example indicates that it ought to be avoided, both because it turns sacred events into spectacle and because it may interfere with attendance at an Anglican church. While it may seem ironic for the Somervilles to choose to travel to only those parts of Europe which provided access to an “English congregation,” any such irony seems lost. Yonge’s travelers take their preference for their own national church with them when they roam, seeking out Anglican or Episcopalian ministers whether they travel to Italy, Australia, or Indiana.

This is not, however, the whole story. Though Tractarian writers set their English Church off as purer than European Roman Catholicism, the Tractarian argument for the Catholicity of the Anglican Church meant that High Church Anglicans also recognized their religious connection to the Catholicism of the continent. The Tractarian idea of the Anglican Church as a national branch of a larger visible Church body entailed the recognition that Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Eastern Orthodox Christians were, collectively, members of a trans-denominational spiritual fellowship. This commitment to a transnational Church manifests itself in Yonge’s fiction as a spiritual connection between the Anglican subject and the Continental Catholic Other, who, in the end, is a spiritual brother. *The Daisy Chain* hints at the international possibilities inherent in Catholicity through the incorporation of “all the beautiful carved fittings of a Chapel in France,” into the interior of St. Andrew’s church (533). Significantly, the carvings were originally purchased for the secular purpose of decorating a library. Using the carvings in
St. Andrews means setting them “all to rights,” in their properly sacred sphere. These are presumably carvings from a Roman Catholic chapel, yet they function equally well in an Anglican religious space. Their incorporation subtly signals the liturgical connections which existed between Roman and Anglican versions of Catholicism. This brief reference also tells against the iconoclasm and sanctuary destruction associated with the English Reformation: the correct response to Roman Catholic artwork is to restore it to sacred use, not to destroy it.¹⁰²

Nevertheless, the universalism of the Church as communion of saints remains in tension with the national nature of the English branch of the Church. This is most clearly expressed in *The Heir of Redclyffe*, when the issue of Guy’s burial in Italy challenges the separation between the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. Newlyweds Guy and Amy have promised to return to Redclyffe by Michaelmas, when they will hold a feast for the peasantry. Instead, Guy dies in Italy as a result of a fever contracted while tending his cousin. “Home by Michaelmas!” exclaims Amy, reflecting on the fact that her husband is to be buried early in the morning, “before the village began to keep the feast of St. Michael” (420, 418). In England, Michaelmas was so significant a feast that it marked the beginning of a new quarter. The fact that Italian peasants celebrate the same feast day serves as a reminder that the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches shared a calendar (the “Christian Year” of Keble’s famous poetic collection) in common.

¹⁰² If this seems too much of a stretch, it should be born in mind that some of the earliest Tractarian fictions were explicitly concerned with Puritan iconoclasm and the resulting destruction to English churches. For Francis Edward Paget, for example, church renovation meant an explicit rejection of Puritan/Protestant alterations of medieval church buildings (see *Milford Malvoisin*).
Distinctions between the two communions remain, of course. In his death, as in life, Guy is still partially separated from the Roman Catholic believers. Though the local Roman Catholic priest allows for an Anglican funeral in the churchyard, Guy is buried “in the stranger’s corner of the graveyard, for of course the church did not open to a member of another communion of the visible church . . .” (421). But note that even in setting up Guy’s Anglicanism as other to the Roman Catholicism of the Italian peasants, Yonge explicitly repeats the Tractarian belief that the Anglican and Roman bodies are not, in fact, entirely separate communities, but merely branches of one visible Catholic Church. Even when she reasserts Guy’s English identity, Yonge does so in a way that quietly underscores his commonality with those around him. The narrator says of his funeral that “the precious English burial service . . . rendered [the earth of the cemetery] a home by those words of his Mother Church—the mother who had guided each of his steps in his orphaned life. It was a distant grave, far from his home and kindred, but in a hallowed spot . . .” (421). Much can be said about these few words. For one thing, they explicitly cast the English Church in a familial role. They also clearly indicate that it is the church which makes a home, in multiple ways: as Guy is led home to Heaven by his spiritual mother, so the physical resting place of his body is made a home through the prayers of the English liturgy. Both of these points support my argument about the mutually supporting nature of Yonge’s construction of home, church, and nation. What I want to emphasize here, though, is that although the foreign soil becomes a home through

103 In fact, the Protestant burying grounds in Roman Catholic countries were usually separate from the Roman Catholic cemeteries, though in the case of Venice, Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant cemeteries were all squeezed onto the one island, St. Michele.
the blessing of the English Church, the hallowed ground seems to be ground which Guy shares with Christians not of his own communion.

Guy’s burial in an Italian cemetery, though it marks him as characteristically English, also marks him as a member of a larger community which transcends national and denominational lines. The epitaph on his grave is taken from the Apostle’s Creed: “I believe in the communion of saints” (429). In case readers could not figure out that the “communion of saints” refers to a transnational body, Yonge spells this out through Amy’s request to have the statement in Latin: “I think it should be in Latin, as it is in a foreign country” (429). Latin once served as the universal European language, and Amy’s request may mean nothing more than that foreigners will more likely be able to read the inscription if it is in Latin than in English. However, Latin was also the official language of the Roman Catholic Church, and in the nineteenth-century the use of Latin in the liturgy would have been a hallmark of Roman Catholicism as opposed to Protestant churches which had used the vernacular since the Reformation. Amy’s decision to translate the English creed with which she is familiar into the Latin version which would have been associated with Roman Catholicism is thus a marker of sympathy with and connection to this other “branch of the visible church.”

Interestingly, the epitaph itself (leaving aside the issue of its translation into a “universal” language) reinforces the idea of commonality between two religious communities. “I think the kind people will respect it,” Amy says of Guy’s monument, which explicitly mentions that he died “[t]he Eve of St. Michael and All Angels” (429). What the “kind people” will respect is the common liturgical calendar and common creed
Guy shared with them. The grave of a Tractarian quasi-saint thus offers a teaching moment to the Other of Continental Catholicism: Amy would like “for these Italians to see the stranger has the same creed as themselves” (430). There is, of course, a trace of superiority in this desire, as Amy’s desire to teach “these Italians” implies ignorance on their part. Surprisingly, though, what is being taught is not the superiority of Anglicanism (even though Yonge herself did believe the English Church to be superior to the Roman Catholic Church), but the common bond between the English Church and the Roman Catholicism of the Italians. Not only do they all believe in the communion of saints, they all are part of the communion of saints, thus bound to a spiritual—yet, in Yonge’s view, visible—body which transcends nationality and sect.

If this ideal of Catholicity is quite different from Newman’s adoption of Roman Catholicism as a communion that transcends English identity, it is even farther removed from Elizabeth Harris’ depictions of English converts abroad as strangers suffering in a strange land. Charlotte Yonge offers Anglican Catholicity as a religious and national *via media*, a way of negotiating the tension between a Protestant version of English identity and the corrupt Catholicism of Europe, yet she explicitly grounds this view in an ecclesiology which views the two “Catholicisms” not primarily as adversaries, but as co-members of a larger body. The “visible Church” comprised of Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholicism, and Anglicanism remains, however, remarkably hard to pin down. It can be seen only in quick glimpses, heard only in brief hints. In the world of Yonge’s Tractarian fiction, however, this transcendent communion was understood to be very real: more real, in fact, because more permanent, than any other human community.
CHAPTER 4:
MAKING A HOME IN A FOREIGN LAND

Of all the novels concerned in this dissertation, *Villette* may be the one most concerned with the process of finding a true home. This quest for a home is both metaphorical and literal: Lucy Snowe leaves her native land in search of a place in which she can live and from which she can work. Paradoxically, her homelessness is what enables her to find a home in Labassecour with Paul Emanuel. This exile from England grants Brontë the means of redefining or reconstructing Lucy’s individual identity, while allowing her to critique various flawed religious, national, and cosmopolitan identities. Lucy’s identity as both English and yet cosmopolitan is defined in opposition to false forms of national identity and cosmopolitanism she encounters in *Villette*.¹⁰⁴ Lucy

¹⁰⁴ Like Cannon Schmitt, then, I see a need to avoid reading *Villette* as constructing only a simplistic binary between English/Continental. I agree with Schmitt’s claim that there is a crucial “third term” to Villette’s construction of nationalism and that Lucy “weaves all three [terms] into her narrative in order to construct a space for identity (91-92). In my reading, however, the third term is not “colony,” but “cosmopolitan.” The key three terms of national identity for my reading might be something like continental/English insularity/cosmopolitanism.

My reading of *Villette* is, however, considerably different from the reading offered by Amanda Anderson in *The Powers of Distance*. Anderson is interested in the cosmopolitan as a “practice of the self” encompassed under the broader category of detachment; Anderson’s cosmopolitanism is a means of obtaining some degree of objectivity (7). Her reading of *Villette* thus focuses on the models of cultivated distance offered in the text, with an emphasis on gender (36). I read *Villette* as mediating between the need to maintain some elements of national character and the desire for a “belonging together” which overcomes
explores alternative national and domestic identities by moving through a series of spaces until she finds her proper home. At the same time, the conversion subplot delimits the extent to which Lucy retains her English character and the degree to which she is capable of recognizing and celebrating transnational and trans-denominational values.  

*Villette* was written at a time when Catholicism in general and Catholic conversion in particular featured prominently in Victorian culture and in Brontë’s life. The Tractarian Movement, and its potential for leading to conversion, had been of interest to Brontë, who addressed it briefly in those novels set in England: *Shirley* begins with a reference to the follies of High Church curates, while Jane Eyre’s cousin Eliza Reed studies the Book of Common Prayer for the sake of the “rubric” and ultimately becomes a Catholic nun. At first glance, *Villette* might seem to represent a return to older national and religious differences. When I apply the word “cosmopolitan” to *Villette*, then, it should be understood that I refer to a tool through an identity which involves cultivating detachment from national communities in order to enable affiliation with communities which transcend nationalism. In this regard, my reading is more like Anderson’s reading of *Little Dorrit*.

As the expression “trans-denominational” suggests, I am as interested in Brontë’s depiction of inter-religious relations—namely, Catholic and Protestant—as I am with her construction of national and cosmopolitan identities. Rosemary Clark-Beattie’s “Fables of Rebellion” and Gayla McGlamery’s “This Unlicked Wolf-Cub”: Anti-Catholicism in Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette* were both ground-breaking in regard to Brontë’s treatment of Roman Catholicism. Clark-Beattie reads *Villette* with an interest in the relationship of individual and society, arguing that “Catholicism supplies her with an antagonist” against which to rebel, but that this antagonism is ultimately a fiction, a stand-in for the real forces that oppress her (828, 843-844). McGlamery situates *Villette* against anti-Catholic literature of the time to argue that Brontë’s representations of Catholicism were really relatively mild. Later readings have tended to follow in Clark-Beattie’s steps, suggesting that the novel uses anti-Catholicism as a means of critiquing something else entirely. Diane Peschier argues that anti-Catholic elements “are more stylistic and thematic than rhetorical—the result of a cultural perception of that particular religion, not an overt criticism of it” (138). Peschier sees *Villette* as using contemporary perceptions of Catholicism as a means of addressing “concepts such as isolation and surveillance.” Likewise, in her brief treatment of *Villette*, Susan Griffin reads the book as doing the same nationalistic work as novels such as *Westward Ho!* and *Beatrice*, but suggests that “Brontë’s depiction of Catholicism” is actually “an implicit critique of Protestantism” (151).
modes of discussing Catholicism, focusing neither on a clergyman nor on a young
woman whose flirtation with High Church Anglicanism leads her from the family home,
but instead on a traveler abroad in danger of the seduction of the Roman Catholic
Church.106 Recent readings of the novel, however, have restored *Villette* to the context of
the 1850 Papal Aggression crisis, suggesting that Bronte’s depictions of Catholicism and
Catholic characters were influenced not merely by the formative time spent in Catholic
Belgium, but also by later encounters with English Catholicism. Critics frequently single
out for attention Brontë’s 1851 observations about Nicholas Cardinal Wiseman, a central
figure in the Papal Aggression crisis.107 Brontë made a number of references to Wiseman
in her letters, and it is clear that the potential threat to English national identity posed by
the reinstatement of the Catholic hierarchy was on her mind during the writing of *Villette*,
though, as McGlamery points out, she seems not to have taken it very seriously (61-62).
According to Elizabeth Gaskell, Wiseman was not the only prominent English Catholic
Brontë encountered: she may also have had the opportunity to hear John Henry Newman
lecture on the subject of “Anglican Difficulties.”108 If this is the case, it is quite

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106 See Jeremy Black for a description of eighteenth-century interactions between British travelers and continental Roman Catholics, including proselytism attempts (245-246).

107 Janet Butler, for example, suggests that the “Apple of Discord” chapter might really be about the Papal Aggression crisis, arguing that even the location of the building where Paul houses Madame Walravens and Père Silas—Rue des Mages—is a play on words. The “wise men” behind the conspiracy to separate Paul and Lucy stand in for Wiseman, the man plotting to take over England (23). Brontë’s “placing the power of Catholicism at the sinister Place des Mages was her artistic response to the threat posed by Cardinal Wiseman” (25).

108 Curiously, Brontë never mentions having attended the lectures. Instead, the subject comes up in one of Gaskell’s own letters to Catherine Winkworth, dated 25 August 1850, which reports that Brontë “told [Gaskell] about Father Newman’s lectures in a very quiet concise graphic way” (*Letters* 447). As Margaret Smith notes, the lectures in question were delivered at the London Oratory between May 9 and
interesting, because this series of lectures is deeply interested in the tensions between the national and the universal. Intended to solve the “difficulties” or reservations of Tractarians who were already considering conversion to the Roman Catholic Church, these lectures frequently repeat Newman’s belief that an “Established” or “National” Church is, by its very nature as a national establishment, incapable of being a true branch of the Catholic (in the sense of universal) Church.

Whatever the precise nature of Brontë’s encounters with English Catholicism, it is clear that artistically revisiting Belgium provided her with an opportunity for exploring the relationship between national identity and religious affiliation. At the same time, as I will show, both of these issues were interwoven with a focus on domesticity. I will begin by demonstrating the too insular model of English identity offered by the Brettons, who, instead of exploring the possibilities offered by continental life, “colonize” the Labassecourien space of La Terrasse, turning it into a replica of their stately home in the “ancient town” of Bretton. Then I will turn to the opposite problem, the superficial or affected forms of cosmopolitanism maintained by Ginevra Fanshawe and Count de Bassompierre. In contrast to both of these positions, Lucy comes to appreciate some aspects of continental domesticity just as she comes to appreciate the character of Paul Emanuel. Nevertheless, if her ideal home is not to be found in La Terrasse, it is also not to be found in the too Catholic space of the Pensionnat on the Rue Fossette. Lucy is

July 4, 1850, thus partially coinciding with Brontë’s visit to London from May 30 to June 25 of that year (449). As this is the only indication we have that Brontë attended any of Newman’s lectures, it is well not to put too much stress on the lectures as an influence in Brontë’s thinking about Roman Catholicism.
offered an actual life in a convent and a quasi-convivial life as a teacher in Madame Beck’s school. Her rejection of both possibilities is determined by her strong attachment to two foundational characteristics of English national identity: Protestantism and domesticity. Her manifestation of these two markers of national identity is precisely what allows her to navigate her way through foreign spaces without being “corrupted” by foreign influence. Lucy’s rejection of Père Silas’ attempt to convert her to Roman Catholicism constitutes a defense of English Protestantism, while her intended marriage to Monsieur Paul—which promises to free both of them from the specter of celibacy—reaffirms the value of marriage and domestic life. In the little house in Faubourg Clotilde, Brontë offers a reconstructed domestic space, one which is tolerant of national and religious differences and oriented towards active work rather than indolent leisure. Finally, by reading Villette as a novel of Catholic-Protestant intermarriage in the tradition of Elizabeth Inchbald’s A Simple Story (1791) and Lady Georgiana Fullerton’s Grantley Manor (1847), I suggest that the tragic ending of the novel indicates Brontë’s ultimate inability to imagine a long-term means of accommodating religious and national differences. In the end, the house divided by differing creeds does not stand, despite Paul and Lucy’s love.

4.1 Trading Spaces, Brontë-Style

John Graham and Mrs. Bretton represent a refusal to leave behind their English identity when they travel. In her depiction of La Terrasse, Brontë employs a literal transplacing of domestic furnishings to indicate an overly insular stance on the part of the
transplanted Bretton family. Whether or not John Graham Bretton is in fact the “true young English gentleman” or the personification of English character that Lucy seems at times to claim him to be (128, cf. 331), his home is undoubtedly an oasis of English culture. Thus, Lucy, upon first waking in La Terrasse after her nervous illness, asks: “Where was I? Not only in what spot of the world, but in what year of our Lord? For all these objects were of past days, of a distant country” (230-237). The likeness this continental household bears to its English predecessor is so strong that Lucy wonders if she has been physically transported across to the channel to “a hearth of Old England” (237). But Lucy has not been brought to England: rather, England has been brought to her. Her godmother’s belongings have been displaced from the ancient town of Bretton to a house on the outskirts of Villette. The Labassecourien house, having been furnished primarily with these familiar English belongings, simulates a space from both Lucy’s past and her homeland.

Within this Anglicized space, the Brettons and their guests are free to perform Englishness. They even seem, at times, to take with them their own climate: the European winter (the result of a “sharp breathing from the Russian wastes”) is excluded from La Terrasse, the domain of a woman whom Lucy describes as “a summer day in her own person” (346). In fact, the external storm itself becomes domesticated, cosified; its presence serves only to make the visit more festive—and more English. In the face of the Yule-like weather, Graham proposes that “to secure for us inward as well as outward

\[109\] Paul Langford suggests that this was seen as a characteristically English action, for “[t]he English travelled, it was said, like snails, carrying their home along with them” (119).
warmth, let us have a Christmas wassail-cup, and toast Old England here, on the hearth” (352). Even the marmalade served at breakfast the next morning is figured as somehow doubly British: Paulina claims that it is “just the same sort of marmalade we used to have at Bretton, and which you [Mr. Home] said was as good as if it had been conserved in Scotland—” (355). It is not, then, merely the furnishings in the house that are English: the domestic life of the household, from breakfast to after tea time, is a model of British life (c.f. 362-363). The “Russian” storm outside, far from disturbing this pattern of daily activity, further insulates the household, keeping (continental or international) business outside and (English) domesticity inside.

The colonization via interior decoration described above is merely the most tangible evidence that the chief characteristic of the Brettons’ approach to international travel and life abroad is that they carry an inordinate amount of their English domesticity with them. It is significant, too, that they live in a villa on the outskirts of town: the location of La Terrasse serves as a reminder that Graham and his mother have chosen to live on the margins of Labassecurien society, unlike Monsieur Home de Bassompierre or even unlike Lucy, who lives very near the center of Villette.\footnote{In \textit{The Foreign Vision of Charlotte Brontë}, Enid Duthie suggests that this location also works to help create La Terrasse as an English space, in that it “recalls an English country house with its turfed walk in front and its avenue of beeches” (94)} Living on the outskirts of the city does not, by itself, entail an inadequate engagement with the cultural life of the city. Indeed, Graham is familiar with the city through his work and as a source of recreation. His unwillingness to make his home there, however, suggests further ways in
which the domestic space of La Terrasse is constructed as an alternative to Labassecourien domestic spaces.

Seen in this light, Graham’s refusal to seriously consider courting and marrying a Labassecourien woman is another indicator of his refusal to integrate himself into continental life. Mrs. Bretton’s joking responses to the suggestion indicate that her domestic space is precisely what is under attack: “You will bring no goddess to La Terrasse: that little chateau will not contain two mistresses; especially if the second be of the height, bulk, and circumference of that mighty doll in wood and wax, and kid and satin” (281). The “height, bulk, and circumference” of the woman in question are indicators of her foreignness. According to Lucy, the Labassecourien women seen at the royal concert offer “models of a peculiar style of beauty; a style, I think, never seen in England: a solid, firm-set, sculptural style” (280). This style of beauty is unwelcome in La Terrasse, despite Graham’s claim that such a wife “would fill [Mrs. Bretton’s] blue chair so admirably!” (281). The blue chair is one of the objects Mrs. Bretton brought from England; Lucy describes it as “familiar” in her wakening in the blue parlor (236). Mrs. Bretton’s exclamation of dismay at Graham’s suggestion immediately reinforces the fact that this chair is a symbol not merely of domestic space, but of English space: “Fill my chair! I defy the foreign usurper! a rueful chair should it be for her . . .” (282). Strictly speaking, in Labassecour, the Brettons themselves are foreigners, and the “mighty doll” a native. In La Terrasse, however, the situation is reversed.

Nevertheless, the transformation of La Terrasse into an English home is not a complete one: just as Monsieur de Bassompierre’s hotel is graced with the touch of an
English fireplace, continental elements intrude into the Anglicized spaces of La Terrasse. The wassail drinking described above, along with Paulina’s “Scotch” dancing, takes place not in the blue parlor (transported from Bretton), but in the La Terrasse kitchen, “a large Dutch kitchen, picturesque and pleasant” (351). While Paulina performs her “Scotch reel,” Graham stands “leaning against the Dutch dresser” laughing and arguing with his mother (352). In this case, the “picturesque” continental style seems to add to, rather than detract from, the comfort of the space. This is possible in part because of the way in which Dutch still life paintings were associated with domestic scenes.

Intriguingly, mid-century authors sometimes described English domesticity in terms of its relationship to Dutch art, as in a passage from an 1850 *Fraser’s Magazine* article, which describes “the generous simplicity of the bright and cheerful kitchen” of a lake-district inn: “Behold on one side of the ample room, a large oaken dresser extending from floor to ceiling, black with age and bright with labour. . . . Mugs and tankards of bright pewter stand out against the dark background clearly as in a Dutch picture, and they flash and grow dull again as the wood-fire leapt and glowed on the merry hearth” (Wynter 217). The scene being described is characteristically English, down to the wood fire and the hams and onions hanging from the ceiling, yet the dresser with its pewter tankards is likened to a scene from a Dutch painting. In describing the kitchen and dresser at La Terrasse as Dutch (rather than, say, French), then, Brontë invokes scenes of picturesque domesticity that would already be familiar to her readers. The Dutch kitchen, which serves as the setting for an enactment of English festivity, is one indicator that the Bretton
household can accommodate some cultural difference, provided that it is “picturesque,” “pleasant” and domestic.

Nevertheless, the house also contains more unsettling, unheimlich intrusions of the continental into the English. The bed and bedcurtains in the green guest room are particularly worthy of note. When she awakens in the room at La Terrasse, still uncertain where she is, Lucy initially takes these furnishings as evidence that she must be in the school dormitory. She felt “sure by the chill, the whiteness, the solitude, amidst which [she] lay” that she must be back in the Pensionnat after all, clarifying that she says “whiteness—for the dimity curtains, dropped before a French bed, bounded [her] view” (238). The connection between the white dimity curtains and the dormitory is not a propitious one, the white dormitory beds being associated with a moment of delusion when “[t]he solitude and the stillness of the long dormitory could not be borne any longer; the ghastly white beds were turning into spectres—the coronal of each became a death’s head, huge and sun-bleached . . .” (229). The “whiteness” of the bed in the guest room at La Terrasse hints at something starkly inhospitable even in the midst of familiarity and comfort, and its juxtaposition with the familiar setting of the room alarms

111 Regarding the expression “French bed,” Peter Thornton notes that in the early-mid Victorian period, it was used “in the sense of a class of bed rather than merely one from France;” the style was so called because it became popular in eighteenth-century France (226). References to French beds in mid-century periodicals suggest that, though they had become a fixture in English households, they retained at least an imaginary association either with French culture specifically or, sometimes more generically, with travel on the continent, as in the case of Elizabeth Eastlake’s mention of French beds infested with vermin that might be encountered “in Naples, Archangel, Madrid or London” (4). This connection can be seen perhaps most amusingly in a vignette from The Mirror in which would-be “flâneur” Percival Jenks falls in love with a “beautiful danseuse” and pictures her “hovering about his French bed, and dancing a _pas seul_ upon the wash-hand-stand, until he went to sleep. . . .” (Albert 203-204). Percival Jenks is really just a London clerk, but his “French bed” is in keeping with his aspirations towards European culture.
Lucy (239). At the same time, however, the “simple and somewhat pretty sleeping-closet” may work to neutralize the whiteness of the curtains, detaching them from their association with the Pensionnat, a space at once institutional and Gothic.

This ambiguity is symptomatic of a broader tension with regard to the Anglicization of domestic spaces practiced by the Brettons. Residual indicators of continental life and culture in La Terrasse (found, for example, in the “pistolets” served for breakfast with marmalade, as well as in the very name of the house) could suggest that the household offers a happy form of material cosmopolitanism, and a successful adoption of the “picturesque” elements of Labassecour into an essentially English space. However, they primarily function as reminders that La Terrasse is not really an English space, but is rather “built somewhat in the old style of the Basse-Ville”—that is, the “grim” “old town” in which dwells Madame Walravens (252, 459). No wonder, then, that Lucy should be alarmed at her first sight of the green guest room, in which objects from her childhood are placed in conjunction with others reminiscent of the setting which, but a few days earlier, had reminded her of skulls. The comfortable English furniture merely overlays the bones of the pre-modern continental manor. Yet, no one except Lucy seems to notice this effect. While the Brettons chatter about toasting Old England, and Home de Bassompierre jokes that his daughter is like a highland fairy, Lucy (in her narration) is the only one to comment on the presence of the Dutch dresser. It signals the irruption of the continental into the otherwise very English domestic scene, but Lucy is the only one sufficiently attuned to the presence of “foreign” elements in her surrounding to notice.
Although the comfort and familiarity of La Terrasse provides Lucy with a place in which to recover from her breakdown during the long vacation, it is not a place in which she can remain, because it does not represent an adequate engagement with the Labassecourien surroundings. In their insularity, the Brettons offer one model of the English traveler against which Lucy is defined. They are not, however, the only English exiles in the novel. Though Ginevra Fanshawe and M. de Bassompierre offer opposing ways of negotiating cultural difference, their methods, too, are rejected as inadequate.

4.2 Performing Cosmopolitanism

In her travels abroad, Lucy Snowe encounters British travelers who offer models of cosmopolitanism: most notably, Ginevra Fanshawe, whose personal character has been shaped by her life abroad, and her uncle, Monsieur Home de Bassompierre, who at various times figures as a European nobleman, a simple Scotsman, or an English traveler. Lucy’s narrative suggests that these identities, the result of superficial interactions with continental life, ultimately lack depth. In Ginevra’s case, her problem is that she has adopted all the flaws of a European worldview, while de Bassompierre treats his identities as acts, or even costumes, which may be put on or taken off at will. Though these pseudo-cosmopolitanisms represent a reaction antithetical to the insularity found in the Bretton household, the result is the same: neither identity allows for meaningful encounters with Labassourien people or serious engagement in Labassecourien culture. Lucy’s own stance in relationship to the continent and Labassecour is constructed as an
alternative to the versions of cosmopolitanism represented in Ginevra Fanshawe and her noble uncle.

Ginevra Fanshawe presents herself to Lucy as an experienced world-traveler, but Lucy’s description of her suggests that her education abroad has resulted in a character marked by vain frivolity and indifference. Ginevra has spent so much of her life abroad that she has lost both her interest in new environments—she is quite “blasée” about travel (118)—and her affiliation with England. Far more troubling, in the context of a novel deeply concerned with questions of religious belief and religious communities, is that Ginevra’s indifference extends to her religious affiliations:

Into the bargain I have quite forgotten my religion; they call me Protestant, you know, but really I am not sure whether I am one or not: I don’t well know the difference between Romanism and Protestantism. However, I don’t in the least care for that. I was a Lutheran once at Bonn—dear Bonn! Charming Bonn!—where there were so many handsome students. I was excessively happy at Bonn. (119)

Ginevra, in her frivolity, cares only for the external aspects of continental culture. Her engagement with her surrounding culture is superficial at best, being limited to dressing well, attending festivities, and attracting beaux. She was happy at Bonn only because the environment provides greater opportunity for flirtation.

Frivolousness and vanity are regularly condemned in domestic fiction of the nineteenth century in general terms, but in Villette they are specifically marked as foreign, and become associated with a faulty appropriation of non-English character. Lucy claims that attention to dress is characteristic of the French, for example (410). It is no coincidence that the man Ginevra favors in place of the English Dr. John is a “little
dandy,” “pretty and smooth, and as trim as a doll: so nicely dressed, so nicely curled, so booted and gloved and cravated . . .” (215). In his attention to appearance, the nobleman resembles Ginevra; indeed, he resembles her far too much, according to Lucy: “I observed, too, with deep rapture of approbation, that the colonel’s hands were scarce larger than Miss Fanshawe’s own, and suggested that this circumstance might be convenient, as he could wear her gloves at a pinch” (215). With his small size, excessive femininity and his love of dress, de Hamal as a model of European aristocracy contrasts sharply with that “cool young Briton,” John Graham Bretton, who embodies stolid middle-class British identity (331). Though Bretton himself represents a problematic form of English identity, Ginevra’s preference of the comte is taken by Lucy as a sign of her shallowness.

Flirtatiousness—or more ominous manifestations of sexual impropriety—is also marked as a national trait. Both Rosine the portress and Zelie St Pierre the Parisian teacher are models of problematic female sexuality, and their behavior is repeatedly cast in terms of national identity. 112 Thus, Rosine is “an unprincipled though pretty little French grisette, airy, fickle, dressy, vain, and mercenary” (169). Zelie St. Pierre, said to be “externally refined—at heart, corrupt—without a creed, without a principle, without and affection” is introduced first not by name but by citizenship, as “The Parisienne” (193). 113 She is “prodigal and profligate” and “always in debt, her salary being

112 Zelie St. Pierre’s surname—literally St. Peter—may allude to her religious identity as well.

113 Indeed, when, in the course of preparing for the play commemorating Madame Beck’s fete, St. Pierre’s “cold, snaky manner” and her impropriety clashes with Lucy’s modesty, Monsieur Paul claims that the dispute between the two women is “only the old quarrel of France and England” (208).
anticipated; not only in dress, but in perfumes, cosmetics, confectionery, and condiments” (193, 194). Ginevra allies herself with these continental models of femininity when she takes as a compliment Lucy’s claim that she is “but a vain coquette” (153). Her tastes for sweets and her habit of dressing beyond her means further align her with these two French characters.

This is precisely the problem with the way in which Ginevra has become acclimated to life abroad: to the extent that she has something in common with “foreigners,” she shares their faults. The affair she conducts in the Pensionnat in the Rue Fossuet is marked as Gothic, and Catholic, “the romantic idea of the spectral disguise” being de Hamal’s, born from the Gothic story of the nun (547). In contrast, Ginevra’s virtues, such as they are, are all English. Thus, Lucy says of her that her “directness . . . was her best point,” giving “an honest plainness to her very fibs when she told them” and was “in short, the salt, the sole preservative ingredient of a character not otherwise formed to keep” (380). Such honesty is consistently associated by Lucy with Englishness (and, more particularly, with the Protestantism associated with Englishness). The “salt” in Ginevra’s personality is a dash of English character.

Pseudo-cosmopolitan identities are also problematic when they appear to be mere affectation, as is the case with Count de Bassompierre. M. Home de Bassompierre claims alliances to multiple national communities, sporting a continental title and a Scottish accent. In fact, he claims (perhaps facetiously) that it is the vestige of his Scottish accent “which enables me to speak French so well: a gude Scots tongue always succeeds well at the French” (372). Paulina, too, insists on their dual identities, claiming that they are
“Scotch . . . partly. We are Home and de Bassompierre, Caledonian and Gallie” (352). On the surface of things, then, de Bassompierre, with his double name, double heritage, and his ability to communicate in multiple languages, is the most cosmopolitan character in the book. Even Lucy’s original assessment of his appearance (“He was at once proud-looking and homely-looking”) suggests the way in which he somehow embodies multiple identities (79).

Nevertheless, there are hints that both his Scottish and French identities are, to some extent, poses which Mr. Home/Monsieur de Bassompierre puts on and takes off as circumstances demand. The performative nature of Home de Bassompierre’s identity can be seen in the way in which he adapts his vocabulary to different situations. Thus, for instance, Lucy describes him speaking with Mrs. Bretton, “engaged in what Mr. Home called ‘a two-handed crack:’ what the Count would have interpreted as a tête à tête” (386). When speaking with an old friend from England, Mr. Home uses a Scottish idiom; were he performing in the role of European nobleman, Lucy claims, he would describe his actions in French. Rather than having a stable identity of his own, he simply adapts to different social situations, but he does so in such a way as to suggest his awareness that each role (count, savant, humble Scotsman, British traveler) is merely that: a role. At times, his Scottish background is elided into a more general British—or even English—identity. It seems significant, for example, that when de Bassompierre and John Graham Bretton first encounter each other in Villette, de Bassompierre is referred to as English, and he identifies himself as Bretton’s “countryman” (333). As for his European name, Ginevra’s explanation of the matter is most telling: “The man is English enough,
goodness knows; and had an English name till three or four years ago; but his mother was a foreigner, a de Bassompierre, and some of her family are dead and have left him estates, a title, and this name: he is quite a great man now” (340). Ginevra’s words underscore the fact that De Bassompierre’s identity as a wealthy European nobleman is a recent acquisition. Her evaluation that he is “quite a great man now,” whether taken straight (as Ginevra’s envy of his status) or sarcastically (as a reminder that he was not so great a handful of years ago) likewise implies that his “greatness” is a pretentious affectation.

Just as material indicators of nationality are used to indicate the Brettons’ refusal to adequately engage with Labassecourien life, de Bassompierre surrounds himself with material indicators of his mixed heritage. He lives in a set of rooms in “an hotel in the foreign sense: a collection of dwelling houses, not an inn—a vast, lofty pile” with a “prince Russe” living in the apartment below, suggesting a desire to take his place among his new peers (334). However, he welcomes his English guests in “a drawing room whose hearth glowed with an English fire, and whose walls gleamed with foreign mirrors.” Continental and insular forms coincide in de Bassompiere’s dwelling, just as they do in his person, and with similar contradictions. While the English fire may comfort his visitors, the foreign luxury of the apartment is intended to awe. In both cases, however, his surroundings are staged, set up to declare both de Bassompierre’s newfound greatness and his more homely beginnings.

Lucy navigates continental spaces in a way that sets her apart from both the Brettons and de Bassompierre. She performs neither Englishness or cosmopolitanism the
way the other exiles do, instead remaining secure in what Brontë suggests are more important aspects of English character: honesty, purity, domesticity, and Protestantism. At the same time, Lucy’s English integrity allows her to interact productively with her environment, because clinging to supposedly foundational English traits frees her to accommodate superficial cultural differences.

4.3 At Home in Labassecour?

As I have shown in previous chapters, narratives of Catholic conversion utilized homelessness as a description for the spiritually-out-of-place. Thus, Elizabeth Harris’ unfortunate converts to Catholicism pine away, longing for England as much as for the English Church. In this context, one of the most striking things about Villette is Lucy’s claim that she is so profoundly homeless that she cannot even be homesick (436). At times, Lucy expresses this homelessness as loss, but it is clear that it is also liberation. When she first plans to go abroad, she finds that her very lack of a home frees her from fear of consequences of her actions: “If I died far away from—home, I was going to say, but I had no home—from England, who would weep?” (113). There is no family who will mourn Lucy if her venture fails; and though England itself is the closest thing she has to a home, her attachment to the land is not strong enough to bind her to that country. Indeed, England itself is figured as foreign: London is “a Babylon and a wilderness” notable for its “vastness and the strangeness” (109). Lucy’s homelessness is what enables her to travel with openness to other places, spaces, and people.
It is because she does not have a home that Lucy is free to go in search of one. That this is, in fact, her goal is clear, for just before telling Monsieur Paul that she cannot be homesick, Lucy describes to her readers the limitations of her plan to establish a school:

Venture not to complain that such an object is too selfish, too limited, and lacks interest; be content to labour for independence until you have proved, by winning that prize, your right to look higher. But afterwards, is there nothing more for me in this life—no true home—nothing to be dearer to me than myself, and by its paramount preciousness, to draw from me better things than I care to culture for myself only? (434)

“Home” here means marital domesticity: Lucy is asking whether she will ever marry, as opposed to remaining a celibate teacher. Her plan to establish her own school is not a means to obtaining a “true home,” but an alternative to it, a plan that arose when Lucy recognized the futility of a developing relationship with John Graham. The plan was set aside due to Paul’s increased attention to her, but it reemerges whenever Paul’s affection is withdrawn, as Lucy indicates when she explains that “this train of reflection, though not lately pursued, had never been by me wholly abandoned; and whenever a certain eye was averted from me, and a certain countenance grew dark with unkindness and injustice, into that track of speculation did I at once strike” (433). Concern about the tenuous nature of her friendship with Paul Emanuel prompts Lucy’s musings about what to do with her life.

This focus on Paul Emanuel represents a shift away from her early object of romantic interest, John Graham Bretton, but it also suggests a shift in Lucy’s perception of English and continental identities. Immediately after Lucy narrates both the plan to
achieve financial independence and her fear that such work will not be emotionally satisfying, she leans against the tree beneath which her letters from John Graham have been buried, and reconsiders that relationship as well, asking whether she had been “too hasty” in burying her feelings for her countryman. She concludes her musings with a farewell: “Good night, Dr. John; you are good, you are beautiful; but you are not mine. Good night, and God bless you!” (435). Given that Lucy has already buried the letters (and, by metonymy, the relationship itself), this verbalized farewell might seem curiously redundant. In fact, it is a crucial transition point in the novel, because Lucy has said the “Good night” out loud, and she receives a response—“Good night, mademoiselle, or rather, good evening—the sun is scarce set; I hope you slept well”—from none other than Paul Emanuel, who turns her farewell (“Good night”) into a greeting (“Good evening”). From this point onward, Paul, not John, will be Lucy’s primary emotional focus. It is with Paul Emanuel, not with John Graham Bretton, that Lucy hopes to make a home. She has traded the “cool young Briton” for a temperamental hybrid, described sometimes as French, sometimes as Spanish. Since her hope for a “home” is bound together with romantic interest, a change in romantic interest also suggests changes to the shape of her imagined future home, entailing a revised conception of domesticity.

Nevertheless, for English Lucy to find a home in Labassacour requires a process of adjustment. Though Lucy does not come to the country burdened with material markers of Englishness the way the Brettons did, she brings with her an insular attitude and nationalistic prejudices that complicate her travel through continental spaces. Lucy claims that her “constitutional reserve of manner” protects her from the too-familiar
assaults of a “blunt German” or “a riotous Labassecurienne” (305, 306). Here, Lucy suggests that her reserve is a character trait specific to herself; later, it becomes clear that her reserve is a national characteristic, shared by Paulina (374-375). In both instances, reserve is used in relation to a foreigner, not a fellow English traveler. And, in fact, after describing how her reserve protects her from the students, Lucy acknowledges that she makes one exception: “I had now no familiar demonstration to dread or endure, save from one quarter; and as that was English I could bear it” (306). The “one quarter” is of course Ginevra Fanshawe, who has made herself Lucy’s companion. Lucy herself says that she doesn’t know why she prefers to share her food and drink with Ginevra rather than with the other students, but “so it was, however, and she knew it; and, therefore, while we wrangled daily, we were never alienated” (304). Though other things may bond Ginevra and Lucy together, it is clear that at least some of Lucy’s partiality towards Ginevra is due to her nationality.

In showing partiality towards Ginevra because she is English, Lucy is merely following Ginevra’s lead in preferring the society of Villette’s English residents over that of the locals. In Ginevra’s initial description of Villette—when she is trying to convince Lucy to come work for Madame Beck—she advertises it with qualified praise, saying that “[t]he natives, you know, are intensely stupid and vulgar; but there are some nice English families” (119). In other words, what Ginevra likes about Villette is the English colony there. Further, as we later learn, Ginevra’s negative judgment is not limited to the “natives” of Labassacour, but to all of the people around the Pensionnat, whom “she held to be despicable, because they were foreigners” (151). In this behavior, Ginevra merely
models the arrogant insularity associated with English tourists. Lucy, too, participates in the same attitude of disdain. She nerves herself up to perform in the pantomime by telling herself that, being “[f]oreigners and strangers, the crowd were nothing to me,” with the notable exception of M. Paul (209). Elsewhere, Lucy damns the “natives” with faint praise, describing their appearance, manners, and abilities in remarkably dismissive terms. There may be implicit condemnation in Lucy’s description of Ginevra’s narrow-minded bigotry (after all, she smiles at Ginevra’s description of Villette), but it rings rather hollow given her own Anglocentrism.

However, whatever Lucy’s ultimate assessment of Labassecourien ethnic characteristics, there is a marked difference between Ginevra’s and Lucy’s responses to Labassecourien culture and domestic life. As Lucy relates, Ginevra’s dislike for the “natives” extends beyond the Labassecourien national character to other aspects of the culture: “She teased me with a thousand vapid complaints about school-quarrels and household economy: the cookery was not to her taste. . . . I bore with her abuse of the Friday’s salt-fish and hard eggs—with her invective against the soup, the bread, the coffee . . .” (151). Despite her adoption of French terminology in place of English words, and despite her preference for Count de Hamal over English John Graham (the Anglicism of whose name grates on her ears) Ginevra is unwilling to adapt to daily life in

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114 Thus, the anonymous author of “The Age of Veneer” (1851) claims that “on the continent, the word English is often associated with much that is vulgar, arrogant, mean, and coarse . . .” (474). More pertinently, the author claims that “Insolence, self-display, a love of purchased homage” are “keenly remarked and severely commented upon” by the residents of European countries who observe English tourists abroad, and that the English themselves have a hypocritical disdain for “all foreigners,” believing them to be morally inferior (475).
Lucy’s irritated reaction to Ginevra’s complaining (“at last, wearied by iteration, I turned crusty and put her to rights”) distances her from some of Ginevra’s anti-Labassacour prejudices.

Lucy handles the transition from her old life in England to a new life in Labassecour through a process of discovering similarities and learning to accommodate—in some cases, even to appreciate—differences. This process makes Lucy’s version of cosmopolitanism unique in the novel: her adaptation is neither an affectation nor a corruption. At the most basic level, the key to Lucy’s adaptation is her recognition that some things have not changed despite her move across the English Channel. For example, the moon that shines over the Pensionnat functions as a connection to Lucy’s homeland, because both the moon “and the stars, visible here, were no strangers where all else was strange: my childhood knew them. I had seen that golden sign . . . beside an old thorn at the top of an old field, in Old England, in long past days, just as it now leaned back against a stately spire in this continental capital” (175). The moon is not merely present everywhere, it is beautiful everywhere, as Lucy later comes to realize. When John Graham points out the view of the moon at La Terrasse, Lucy rhetorically asks herself: “Where, indeed, does the moon not look well? What is the scene, confined or expansive, which her orb does not hallow?” (252). Whereas he wants her to admire the particularity of the view, she moves beyond the specific nightscape at hand to think of the night sky in abstract. These universal natural phenomena function to connect Lucy to previous states of mind as well as previous locations: “The air of the night was very still, but dim with a peculiar mist, which changed the moonlight into a
luminous haze. In this air, or this mist, there was some quality—electrical, perhaps—which acted in a strange sort upon me. I felt then as I had felt a year ago in England—on a night when the aurora borealis was streaming and sweeping round heaven . . . ” (368).

For a state of mind to follow one from country to country is hardly surprising, but given that Lucy frequently connects her mental states to weather conditions, the similarity in environment is also important. By attributing her mental condition to a condition of the “air” or “mist,” Lucy suggests that she can experience emotive states similar to those in her past because she continues to encounter material conditions similar to those of her past.

And yet, the emergence of the ghostly “NUN” into this atmosphere indicates that this setting is not England (nor entirely like England) and that Lucy is not the same person she was a year ago. As Lucy ponders with “renewed strength” her course of action, she sees a change: “the moon, so dim hitherto, seemed to shine out somewhat brighter: a ray even gleamed white before me, and a shadow became distinct and marked. . . . whiter and blacker it grew on my eye; it took shape with instantaneous transformation. I stood about three yards from a tall, sable-robed, snowy-veiled woman” (368). The nun itself is a gothic, continental figure, yet its presence is preceded by a state of mind and a state of climate comparable to an experience in England. When this scene is read against an earlier incident in the “Forbidden Alley,” it indicates something of the degree to which Lucy is changing. The evening when Lucy likens the moon to that seen over “Old England” is also the night when the billet-doux falls into the alley—and Dr. John goes into the alley to get it. “There I met him, like some ghost, I suppose” Lucy puts
it (179). At this point, Lucy can joke about being a ghost, the tale of the ghostly nun being nothing but “romantic rubbish” (172). By the time she buries Dr. John’s letters, however, the subject of haunting will be no laughing matter. Prior to the Long Vacation, Lucy was untroubled by a belief in the spectral nun (203). Now, however, she has seen it, and, without knowing what it is, refuses to deny the experience.

The natural world is not the only source of similarity between England and Labassecours, however. Throughout Villette, food functions a marker of national identity, a sign of individual personality, and a slice of domesticity. Lucy, unlike Ginevra, is able to adapt to many different types of food, from the “messes” served to the invalid Miss Marchmont, to the strange meal served to her by Goton on her first night in the Pensionnat, to the simple meal of bread, fruit, and drinking chocolate she shares with Paul the day he proposes. Just as Monsieur de Bassompierre’s continued taste for marmalade is a sign that, name-change aside, he is still the Scottish Mr. Home, so also Ginevra’s dislike of the cookery in the Pensionnat is an indicator that her years of European education have signally failed not just in teaching her foreign languages, but also in teaching her to appreciate everyday life in another land. (At the same time, recall that Ginevra’s taste for sweets also links her to the “profligate” Parisienne, suggesting once again that Ginevra prefers the wrong aspects of European culture. She might like continental luxuries, but not Goton’s simple everyday cooking.) Lucy wearies of Ginevra’s Anglocentric complaints on the matter of cookery because this is an area which, in her opinion, should lead to an appreciative engagement with local culture.
Likewise, Lucy adapts to continental domestic spaces both by seeing in them a likeness to English domestic spaces and by coming to accept the differences. This is clear in Lucy’s treatment of that staple of English domesticity, the fireplace and hearth. Its absence signals a foreign space; its presence frequently suggests an Anglicization of foreign spaces. Thus, upon her entry into the Pensionnat, Lucy describes being “led through a long, narrow passage into a foreign kitchen, very clean but very strange. It seemed to contain no means of cooking—neither fireplace nor oven; I did not understand that the great black furnace which filled one corner, was an efficient substitute for these” (132). The narrating Lucy understands now that the kitchen did contain the equivalent of a fireplace, but she could not recognize the similarity at first. She demonstrates her changed opinion upon her return to the Pensionnat after the vacation spent in La Terrase, observing that “the black stoves [used to heat the rooms] pleased me little when I first came; but now I began to associate them with a sense of comfort, and liked them, as in England, we like a fireside” (301). Initially, Lucy finds the various domestic details of life in Labassecour to be disorienting, perhaps threatening. Eventually, they come to be familiar; even, as in the case of the black stoves, comforting.

This change in Lucy’s attitude towards the foreign objects around her is paralleled by a change in attitude towards at least one resident of Villette as well: Paul Emanuel.

115 The mention of these little stoves as a substitute for fireplaces also adds a touch of specificity to the fictional land of Labassecour, as the stoves were employed differently in various parts of Europe. According to Thornton, these stoves of iron or earthenware were used in all sorts of rooms, even “grand” ones, “in Germany, and throughout Scandinavia and central Europe,” whereas in France, where wood-burning fireplaces were more common, the use of stoves for heat was restricted to “antechambers and lesser rooms” (153).
Lucy’s initial response to Paul taking a seat beside her at the long study table is “to clear space for his book” and withdraw herself “to make room for his person; not, however, leaving more than a yard of interval, just what any reasonable man would have regarded as a convenient, respectful allowance of bench” (401-402). She herself contrasts this with her response later. This time, when Paul takes a seat near Lucy, she explains, “I took good care not to make too much room for him. . . . I was losing the early impulse to recoil from M. Paul. Habituated to the paletôt and bonnet-grec, the neighborhood of these garments seemed no longer uncomfortable or very formidable” (420). There may be several rhetorical reasons why Lucy describes herself as having become habituated to Paul’s garments rather than to specific physical features. What seems relevant here is that the garments are clearly marked as foreign and are always referred to with French names, rather than English ones. Becoming “habituated” to them, then, involves adjusting to Paul’s specifically foreign attributes. Lucy claims that Paul himself does not become “a changed character” (420). Nevertheless, as their relationship progresses and Lucy comes to know more about his character, there is even a hint that some of his apparent ethnic traits vanish as new aspects of his personality are revealed. When Lucy first addresses him as “my friend,” a rather startling transformation occurs, and she witnesses the unexpected effect a “smile of pleasure, or content, or kindness” has on Paul’s face. “It changed it as from a mask to a face: the deep lines left his features; the very complexion seemed clearer and fresher; that swart, sallow, southern darkness which spoke his Spanish blood, became displaced by a lighter hue” (393). It is as if even Paul’s decidedly
foreign background is somehow also merely a mood, capable of being shed under the right circumstances—which presumably include a reciprocation of affection.

A change of opinion on the part of a novel’s heroine with regard to a romantic interest is, by itself, nothing unusual. The idea that characters might need to develop before being able to declare their love for each other and marry is a staple of the marriage plot, from *Pride and Prejudice* to *North and South*. What seems unique about *Villette* is the degree to which Lucy must come to understand and appreciate not merely M. Paul, but his surroundings as well. She could not be at home with John Graham in the Anglicized space of La Terrasse, but she could be at home with Paul Emanuel in the European space of the little house in Faubourg Clotilde. Paul Emanuel may refer to the little building which houses Lucy’s school as “Lucy’s cot,” but, despite the Wordworthian appellation, the cottage is not a particularly English space (559). The ornaments include a French clock and French windows, and, more tellingly, some of the furnishings—chiffonnière, guéridon—are described with French rather than English names (557). Likewise, Lucy notes that the parlor has a waxed hardwood floor, and that “a square of brilliant carpet covered its center” (Brontë 557). Even that scrap of carpet carries nationalist implications. According to *Chamber’s Edinburgh Journal*, carpets were a distinctively Anglo phenomenon, for “the only two countries in which [the use of carpets] is now general are . . . Britain and the United States. To no other people do they appear so indispensable. Our continental neighbours content themselves with covering a portion of their apartments when the thing is at all attempted . . .” (“Furniture” 397). The hardwood floor, covered with only a small rug, marks the cottage as a continental space.
If, as Duthie suggests, the fact that La Terrasse is furnished with carpeted floors rather than polished ones is one of the indicators that the house is modeled after “the English ideal of comfort,” then Lucy’s parlor, with its waxed floor, represents a deliberate contrast to this model of comfort (94). The purpose of the “square of carpet” is more to add a touch of brilliant color rather than to contribute to the physical comfort of the room.

There are small touches about the house that may suggest an English influence, but their effect as signs of English national identity is qualified by the overall effect of continental charm. The mention of a hearth in the parlor, for example, may be a nod to English domesticity, but the mirror above the hearth calls to mind the foreign mirrors in M. de Bassompierre’s hotel (Brontë 557). Even more striking than the presence or absence of such touches of English domesticity, though, is the fact that Lucy mentions no attempts on her part to Anglicize her new home. Rather, she accepts the space which Paul constructs for her; even when given the opportunity to expand, she chooses to remain in the same house because it is the house Paul chose for her (565). As for the few changes she does make, they are made with reference to Paul’s taste, not her own: “I have made him a little library, filled its shelves with the books he left in my care: I have cultivated out of love for him (I was naturally no florist) the plants he preferred, and some of them are yet in bloom” (567). These words indicate the depth of Lucy’s devotion to her

116 Susan Griffin describes Lucy’s externat as a “modest, neat, English-style school” (151). In as much as Lucy’s style of teaching is English rather than Labassecourien, this is accurate, but in terms of physical structure, Lucy’s school, though modest and neat, is not really “English-style.” In fact, Lucy’s schoolroom is described as “a miniature classe” (558). With its rows of benches, its tableau and estrade, it is clearly modeled after Madame Beck’s classrooms, as was foreshadowed by Lucy’s first announcement of her plan to form a school (433-434).
betrothed, but they also indicate that the space she lives in, though it was arranged for her, was nevertheless arranged primarily according to Paul’s continental tastes.

The house in Faubourg Clotilde, though decidedly European, is nevertheless clearly a domestic space. Even the school is domestic rather than institutional. At the Rue Fossette, most of Lucy’s time was spent the public space of the school, and even those spaces that seemed private (the forbidden alley, for example, or the attic) were subject to invasion by others. As Lucy’s complaint about the “bare boards, black benches, desks, and stoves” suggests, the furnishings at Madame Beck’s Pensionnat fail in comfort as much because they are utilitarian, unornamented, and colorless as because they are foreign (346). While the bedrooms, salon, and kitchen of La Terrasse present a stark contrast to the “bare” rooms of the Pensionnat, so too does “Lucy’s cot” in Faubourg Clotilde. Instead of the dormitories full of white beds, Lucy’s house has “two pretty cabinets of sleeping rooms” (558). The rooms are “freshly and tastefully painted,” and decorated with “ornaments in biscuit china” and houseplants (557). Even the classroom, “though bare, compared with” the other rooms, is embellished with window boxes containing “a few hardy plants” (558). The cumulative effect is one of comfort, albeit on a small scale.

This Labassecourien home provides a space amenable to Lucy’s English character because it allows for the expression of domesticity, a key element of English national identity. The domestic nature of the space is also what makes it “safe” for the construction of a more nuanced version of cosmopolitanism, albeit one made possible only by retaining a loose connection to national identity. The domesticity of the “cot”
safeguards Lucy’s English identity by retaining a key characteristic of Englishness. With her own English character securely established, she is free to discard more trivial markers of English identity, such as the marmalade and carpets of La Terrasse. Nor is the continental character of the cottage an affectation à la Bassompierre: the house has been decorated by the obviously non-English Paul Emanuel, and thus comes by its European character quite legitimately. The proposed international marriage between Lucy and Paul is thus a condition for the development of a genuinely cosmopolitan space, though it may not be their romantic union itself which enables the construction of the space so much as it is the specific mode of accommodating national, religious, and personal differences which their union symbolizes.

4.4 “Land of Convents and Confessionals”

National differences are not the only factors that must be overcome before Lucy can find a home in Labassecour. From the beginning of the novel, it is clear that part of Lucy’s isolation in Villette is due to her opposition to the surrounding Catholic culture: she is repelled by “the subtle essence of Romanism” that “pervaded every arrangement” of Madame Beck’s school (194). But the (sometimes quite vehement) anti-Catholicism Lucy expresses cannot be isolated from the construction of domestic and nationalistic spaces. In this “land of convents and confessionals,” spaces are demarcated as Catholic or Protestant as well as English or continental, domestic or institutional, and these categories coincide in sometimes supportive, sometimes conflicting ways (166). Thus, the construction of the cottage at Faubourg Clotilde as neutral or tolerant ground is part of
the way Lucy is able to embrace some aspects of Labassecourien life while retaining her English character.

Madame Beck’s Pensionnat represents a space which is not merely Catholic, but also specifically conventual, with its “series of the queerest little dormitories” that, Lucy learns, “had once been nun’s cells,” and its “oratory—a long, low, gloomy room, where a crucifix hung, pale, against the wall, and two tapers kept dim vigil” (133). Lucy the newcomer does not know about the building’s former use as a convent, but the legend of the ghostly nun—and, later, the appearance of the “NUN”—may be the most visible connection to the school’s convent past. Occasionally, Lucy directly likens the space to a convent, as when she describes how, during the time usually devoted to the lecture pieuse, the literature Paul occasionally reads aloud appears to Lucy as a light in what she calls “conventual darkness,” as students and teachers alike sit “silent as nuns in a retreat” during the evening hour of study (400). This “conventual” space is dark in multiple ways (including a literal sense, given that each work table in the refectory is lit only by one lamp, which provides adequate reading light only for those just below it) but primarily the “darkness” is an intellectual one imposed by the selections from legends of the saints normally read aloud each night by one of the students. Lucy quips that the lecture pieuse is “mainly designed as a wholesome mortification of the Intellect” and “useful humiliation of the Reason” (183). In listening to these “monkish extravagances,” the teachers and pupils themselves become monastic.

Living and teaching in the Rue Fossette places Lucy herself in a position dangerously close to that of a Roman Catholic religieuse. Speaking of the seven weeks
after the theater fire, during which Lucy is out of touch with John Graham and Mrs. Bretton, Lucy refers to herself as one of those “who live in retirement, whose lives have fallen amid the seclusion of schools or of other walled-in and guarded dwelling” such as prisons, convents, and monasteries (337). The allusion to monastic seclusion is expanded upon in the following paragraphs through references to the metaphorical “hermit” who remains “stagnant in his cell” while life goes on for his friends outside the monastery. Lucy resists the lecture pieuse, and occasionally refrains from partaking in the evening prayers of the household, but she nevertheless accepts the seclusion of the school, advising that: “The hermit—if he be a sensible hermit—will swallow his own thoughts, and lock up his emotions during these weeks of inward winter” (337). Indeed, her refusal to participate in some of the Catholic devotions makes her doubly a hermit. In fleeing the refectory when the book is brought out, Lucy says, she vanishes “into darkness” for “the teacher who forsook the rectory had only the unlit hall, school-room, or bed-room a refuge,” and even these spaces do not provide protection from the Jesuitical surveillance of Madame Beck (184). Paul’s occasional intrusions into the hour of study, armed with selections from the literature of the day, literally preserve Lucy from darkness. By removing the need for her flight, his visits also enable Lucy to remain within the communal setting.

This description of Paul’s welcome intrusion into the unenlightened time of quiet work and religious reading points to the way in which the school is constructed as conventual on account of its gendering: with only a few exceptions, it is off-limit to men. Thus, Madame Beck risks incurring scandal by allowing the visits of “so young a man”
as Dr. John, since “in this land of convents and confessionals, such a presence as his was not to be suffered with impunity in a ‘Pensionnat de demoiselles’” (166). The very presence of young men at Madame Beck’s fête is presented by Lucy as a masterly stroke of strategy, for no other directress in Villette “would have dared to admit a ‘jeune homme’ within her walls” though “a great point” could be gained by the act (212). Dr. John’s presence in the Pensionnat is excused on account of his professional position as a doctor, but even he is forbidden to dance at the ball (213). Monsieur Paul is “the sole creature of his sex permitted to lead out a pupil to the dance” in part because “he was the soul of honour, and might be trusted with a regiment of the fairest and purest,” though Lucy claims that many of the school girls were in reality far from being pure (211). In fact, as Bernstein points out in *Confessional Subjects*, even the way in which the school is figured as a space ostensibly pure and free of sexuality, but which actually conceals illicit meetings, flirtations, and unbridled sexuality, parallels mid-century anti-Catholic rhetoric about convents (64-65). This becomes most clear when de Hamal penetrates the supposedly chaste space of the school in the Gothic guise of “the NUN” (Bernstein 65).

This construction of the school as a convent-like space involves Lucy’s suitor in a complicated figuration as pseudo-cleric, seemingly celibate, but secretly passionate. Paul, like Dr. John, can enter the school because of his professional status (in his case, that of an educator), but he is also protected by the way in which both he himself and his acquaintances construct him as a sort of lay priest. Passion—sexual love—is “alien to [his] being,” having been buried in his past; he tells Lucy that he is not a marrying man, and warns her that he has a “cold, hard, monkish heart” (418, 437, 479). His friends go
further in describing Paul’s state. Père Silas informs Lucy that Paul’s devotion to his dead betrothed’s family so eats away at his income that the expense “has rendered it impossible to himself ever to marry: he has given himself to God and to his angel-bride as much as if he were a priest, like me” (466). The comparison may be a surprising one: a celibate priest would be presumed to give himself to the Church, not to an actual woman. Indeed, Justine Marie’s status as a nun, combined with Paul’s persona as a “lay Jesuit,” raises echoes of the scandalous stories told about relations between priests and nuns. But Justine Marie’s death, in transforming her from a living (if boring) woman to a romanticized “angel-bride,” spiritualizes any passions Paul might have had, so that “his life was considered consecrated,” his affections not free to be given away except in a fraternal relationship (479).

On the surface, the Pensionnat appears to be an ideal place for a celibate “lay Jesuit” like Paul. When Lucy startles at Paul’s use of the word “passion,” he reminds her that “there is such a thing—though not within these walls, thank Heaven!” (418). The Pensionnat is duplicitous in this regard: as suggested above, the “passion” that Paul denies breaches those conventual walls through de Hamals’ visits in the guise of the ghostly nun. The appearance of the nun raises fears in Paul’s mind, indicated by his questions to Lucy about the relationship between his nun (Justine Marie) and the nun-figure he and Lucy have seen: “You did not, nor will you fancy . . . that a saint in Heaven perturbs herself with rivalries of earth? Protestants are rarely superstitious; these morbid fancies will not beset you?” (481) Lucy insists that the apparition must be natural, but Paul finds his assurance in the innocence of their relationship: “no good living woman—
much less a pure, happy spirit—would trouble amity like ours . . .” (481). The nun frightens Paul into attempting (at least temporarily) to keep his relationship with Lucy platonic/fraternal, so that Justine Marie’s ghost need not be troubled by earthly “rivalries.”

The Catholic space of the school works to keep Paul and Lucy apart in other, sometimes more subtle, ways. Take, for example, Paul’s attempt to discuss his future (including his plans to travel) in more detail with Lucy. Lucy, startled by something in his appearance, hides. The whole of the Pensionnat works to prevent them from meeting, particularly its religious spaces. Lucy describes her unreasonable flight from Paul, concluding:

Nor did I pause till I had taken sanctuary in the oratory, now empty. Listening there with beating pulses, and an unaccountable, undefined apprehension, I heard him pass through all the schoolrooms, clashing the doors impatiently as he went; I heard him invade the refectory which the “lecture pieuse” was now holding under hallowed constraint; I heard him pronounce these words—

“Où est Mademoiselle Lucie?”

And just as, summoning my courage, I was preparing to go down and do what, after all, I most wished to do in the world—viz., meet him—the wiry voice of St. Pierre replied glibly and falsely, “Elle est au lit” (457)

Three parts of the school are distinctively arrayed against Paul and Lucy: the oratory, the refectory, and the dormitory. The latter two are spaces distinctly inimical to Lucy, while the first of the two is a space explicitly connected with the school’s identity as both “foreign” and Romish.
The dormitory is figured as doubly threatening. First, it is the site of Lucy’s fevered delusions (229). In their institutional whiteness, the “angel beds” (to one of which St. Pierre claims Lucy has retired) represent the antithesis of proper domesticity, being opposed both to the English space of La Terrasse and the continental-style comfort of “Lucy’s cot” in Faubourg Clotilde. Later, the dormitory becomes the site of the conclusion of the gothic narrative thread concerning the ghostly nun. “Throughout the dormitory, throughout the house, there reigned at this hour the stillness of death” after Lucy’s return from the spectacle of the festival in the park, and on her own bed, which ought to have been empty she saw “the old phantom—the NUN” (543). The moment seems to be one of resolution and relief “from all sense of the spectral and unearthly” but it is also a moment of potential threat. The ghost turns out to be merely a costume, but it stands in simultaneously for Paul’s long-lost love, for Ginevra and de Hamal’s intrigue, and for the school’s past history as a convent, as well as its present construction as a convent-like institution. Further, the costume’s placement in Lucy’s bed signifies the possibility of her incorporation into the quasi-convivial life of the school. When the “nun of the attic bequeaths to Lucy Snowe her wardrobe,” with it is passed on all the spectral heritage of the Catholic space (544). In seeking to hide in the dormitory, Lucy appears to accept this heritage.

Lucy’s selection of the oratory as a hiding place from M. Paul, when he is determined to meet her, likewise suggests a voluntary complicity with the conventual life of the Pensionnat. This is one of the few times she describes herself as deliberately seeking out a Catholic worship space for any purpose. Fittingly enough, she calls the
oratory a “sanctuary” here, but a sanctuary from what? If her flight from Paul causes a delay in his declaration of romantic affection for her, then to hide in the oratory is to seek continued celibacy, if only temporarily. In this, it recalls her visit to the Catholic church during the Long Vacation. Her disclosure of her state of mind then led Père Silas to recommend conversion as the solution for her illness; and not just conversion to Catholicism, but the adoption of a religious life, since “a mind so tossed can find repose but in the bosom of retreat, and the punctual practice of piety” (231). This proposal might seem unlikely, given Lucy’s vehement anti-Catholicism, but in the confessional, in a moment of vulnerability, she does not treat it as absurd. Rather, “the probabilities are” that had Lucy visited the priest as directed, she “might just now, instead of writing this heretic narrative, be counting [her] beads in the cell of a certain Carmelite convent on the Boulevard of Crécy, in Villette” (232). In Villette, entering Catholic spaces can pose dangerous consequences.

Precisely for this reason, Paul’s attempt to seek Lucy in the Pensionnat offers a foretaste of the way in which he will remove her from the school altogether. He has the ability and the will to “invade the refectory which the ‘lecture pieuse’ was now holding under hallowed constraint” (457). Later, he demonstrates his awareness that these spaces are not appropriate for Lucy, because she would “feel desolate” and “grow sad” in the Rue Fossette, and because “. . . Catholic discipline in certain matters—though justifiable and expedient—might possibly, under peculiar circumstances, become liable to misapplication—perhaps abuse” thereby preventing Lucy from receiving his letters (556). Earlier in this chapter, I have pointed out that the cottage in Faubourg Clotilde seems
primarily designed by and for Paul’s taste. Here I want to qualify this reading by arguing that Paul’s recognition that the Rue Fossette is not an ideal space for Lucy signals how much he has come to understand her personality and tastes. Even though the plants that decorate Lucy’s cottage are Paul’s favorites, rather than Lucy’s, the overall atmosphere of domestic comfort meets Lucy’s needs. Without resorting to Anglicized décor, Paul has produced a “[p]retty, pretty place!” which pleases Lucy and offers an alternative to either the undomestic (because institutional and conventual) school on the Rue Fossette or the inappropriately nostalgic quasi-Englishness of La Terrasse (557).

Lucy’s cottage, though continental, is also free from anything that would mark it as Catholic. One of the first features Lucy notices about Madame Beck’s Pensionnat is the presence of the “gloomy” oratory, in which “the Catholic household” gathers nightly for evening prayer, “a rite, from attendance on which, I now and then, as a Protestant, exempted myself” (173). Lucy’s cottage has no oratory or chapel: there is no separate space set aside for prayer. This lack of an oratory may serve simply to distinguish Lucy’s school from Madame Beck’s Catholic school, pervaded as it is by the subtle essence of Romanism. Lucy’s school, in contrast, is an open space where both Lucy and Paul are free to practice their respective faiths without infringing on each other’s religious identities.

The cottage could be seen as a secular ground, accommodating religious difference by refusing to physically manifest religious identity at all. However, it would be wrong to assume that the cottage’s lack of a space specifically set aside (“consecrated,” as Lucy describes the refectory) for prayer implies that Lucy’s cottage is
a religion-free zone. Rather, the cottage embodies a model of religious devotion as something which is domestic, not public. When public worship appears in *Villette*, it is almost always Catholic worship; though Lucy mentions attending Protestant services, she does not describe them in any detail. Protestant worship or devotion, when it is depicted, takes place within the home. In Volume One, for example, when the child Paulina pays her visit to Bretton, she and the young Graham Bretton demonstrate a quintessentially Protestant form of Sunday devotion. On Sundays, according to Lucy, “some influence better and finer than that of every day, seemed to sooth Graham at such times into no ungentle mood,” leading him to spend time with Paulina. Paulina memorizes hymns and recites them to her companion as another child might recite hymns to a father or a mother; they then read stories from the Bible (93). The scene is clearly a familial one, though Paulina and Graham are only distant relations (72). As Graham himself observes after one such evening, “You like me almost as well as if you were my little sister, Polly” (94). Nothing could be more domestic, or more emblematic of evangelical views of religious devotion as a family practice, than the two figures seated “by the parlour fireside,” reciting psalms and reading Scripture (92).

Where the Brettons’ Anglican faith becomes more public, it also becomes imperialistic. Shortly before Paulina leaves the Bretton household to travel to Europe with her father, Lucy finds her reading a book given to her by Graham which “tells about distant countries, a long, long way from England” in which “wild men” live (94). Though these countries are geographically far from England, Englishness nevertheless exhibits an imperial presence through the Church, as Polly explains: “Here is a picture of thousands
gathered in a desolate place—a plain, spread with sand—round a man in black,—a good, 
good Englishman,—a missionary who is preaching to them under a palm-tree” (94-95).
This scene—a conversation about travel which occurs just before Paulina joins her father
among “his maternal kinsfolk on the Continent” since “England was become wholly
distasteful to him”—clearly establishes Paulina’s future life abroad (94). More
importantly, it also points, albeit briefly, towards a particularly Brettonish stance towards
religious and national identity in which a “good, good Englishman” is one who spreads
the Gospel in foreign lands. 117 When Gilbert and Gubart state (in passing) that John
Graham “is the bright-haired English missionary of Polly’s book,” they touch on an
important connection (412). The image of the missionary is characteristic of the Bretton
family’s general approach to living among non-English cultures; just as they carry with
them their furniture and their foods, they believe in importing their religious beliefs into
other countries as well. 118

But Protestant prayers are not the only ones constructed as domestic or private;
nor are all such private prayers of equal value. Prayer can cross denominational

117 As Mary Wilson Carpenter points out in Imperial Bibles, Domestic Bodies, this imperialistic
perspective which Paulina learns from Graham oppresses her, too: “Using that most imperial text [the
Bible] as a primer, Graham “partly taught” Polly how to read her culture and her own place as incipiently
orientalized woman within it—passive, domesticated, prematurely sexualized, and oblivious to her
subjection” (82). Whereas Carpenter is primarily interested in the way Paulina herself is the subject of male
authoritative teaching, my concern here is with the content Graham has been teaching Paulina with regard
to the colonized religious other.

118 Thus, though I think that Clark-Beattie is right to claim the presence of a “colonialist impulse”
in Villette, I locate this impulse primarily with John Graham and Mrs. Bretton rather than with Lucy (825).
Lucy, indeed, is defined against such colonization of the continent. This is not to deny that her critical
(even hateful) stance towards the continental Other at times partakes of such an impulse, but merely to
suggest that the identity being articulated for her does not correspond entirely with that of the colonizer. On
this point, see also Schmitt’s critique of Clark-Beattie’s reading (90-91).
boundaries. Thus, Paulina, suffering from homesickness when separated from her father, prays “like some Catholic or Methodist enthusiast—some precocious fanatic or untimely saint” (77). Here, the suggestion that Paulina’s prayer may be like the enthusiasm characteristic of non-Anglican churches is a problematic one, for Polly’s enthusiasm borders on a kind of illness. There may be dangers in such a “cosmopolitan devotion” if it is devoid of a foundation in English national identity. This is precisely the problem with Ginevra’s ignorance about her own religion. More importantly, however, both of these girls are without a home or (at the moment) family present to inculcate appropriate forms of devotion. Paulina prays like an enthusiast only because she is newly separated from her father and desperately lonely. Once she has been taken under Graham’s wing, her prayers lose their desperate enthusiasm. Ginevra’s failure to select a suitable husband, in contrast, bodes ill for her religious development.

Where national identity is respected, however, domestic or quasi-domestic prayer can transcend denominational or national differences. Such is the case when Lucy for the first time observes Paul in prayer at the picnic he provides for the schoolchildren. She smiles at Paul’s simplicity, devotion, and “child-like faith,” and he responds to her expression by giving her his hand and saying “I see we worship the same God, in the same spirit, though by different rites” (455). Paul, like Lucy, is able to see through difference to a fundamental likeness. There are real differences between Paul’s faith and Lucy’s, but there is a shared spiritual foundation: one God, one spirit. And, for this meal, they are united at one table, with Paul being forced into “the farmer’s great chair at the head of the long table” as if he were the head of an enormous family of schoolgirls (454).
It seems that the situation is one that agrees with him; Lucy remarks “With what a pleasant countenance he stood on the farm-kitchen hearth looking on!” In the Pensionnat, Paul’s intrusions into the school are described as dictatorial or, at best, chivalrous; in his Jesuit-like surveillance he might be likened to a priest appointed as spiritual guide to a religious order. But take the “tiger-Jesuit” away from the convent-like space of the school and plant him in front of a kitchen fire, and he becomes the jovial patriarch of an enormous family. This transformation from a professional/quasi-ecclesiastical role enables the brief moment of spiritual connection between Paul and Lucy.

The power of domesticated devotion to transcend religious and national boundaries can perhaps be seen most clearly in Lucy’s spiritual care of Madame Beck’s children during her time as their gouvernante. Every evening, Lucy explains, Madame Beck would return from her “plotting and counter-plotting, spying and receiving the reports of spies” and listen “while the children said their little prayers to me in English: the Lord’s Prayer, and the hymn beginning ‘Gentle Jesus,’ these little Catholics were permitted to repeat at my knees” (138). The hymn is by Charles Wesley, and therefore is connected to a tradition of English (dissenting) evangelicalism. The Lord’s Prayer, though a predictable choice for bed-time prayers, is perhaps more significant in that it is a prayer common to Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, being used both publicly and

119 “That tiger-Jesuit” is Ginevra’s description of Paul, but his actual connection to the Jesuits is referred to by other characters as well (547). Lucy herself is initially skeptical of the connection, saying that his spying and maneuvering are too clumsy to be the product of Jesuit education (373). In the end, she appears to conclude that something about his nature preserves him from the corrupting effects of his Jesuit upbringing and his continued allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church: “All Rome could not put into him bigotry, nor the Propaganda itself make him a real Jesuit. He was born honest, and not false—artless, and not cunning—a freeman, and not a slave” (567).
privately in both churches. Indeed, the potential of the Lord’s Prayer to serve as an ecumenical devotion had already been made explicit in an earlier novel of Catholic-Protestant intermarriage, Lady Georgiana Fullerton’s *Grantley Manor* (1847). In *Grantley Manor*, the Anglo-Italian Catholic Ginevra Leslie proposes to her troubled Anglican half-sister Margaret that they pray together. Margaret asks if there are “prayers that we may pray together?” and Ginevra responds: “‘The one that God himself made’ . . . and her soft low voice repeated the Lord’s Prayer, and as the Amen fell from Margaret’s lips a heavy sleep closed her eyes” (1: 244-245). Margaret and Ginevra Leslie spend their Sunday mornings apart, worshiping in separate churches, but they can still be spiritually united through a common devotion in the privacy of a divided Catholic-Protestant home. Likewise, the limited religious guidance Lucy is “permitted” to offer to Madame Beck’s children suggests that there is a minimum of Christian devotion that can bond together disparate residents in a household. Lucy is not comfortable with the *lecture pieuse* or with the evening prayers shared by the whole school, but she can pray in the more familial, more domestic setting of the children’s bedroom, with Madame Beck looking on as a mother rather than as the directress of a school.

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120 The presence of a character named “Ginevra” in both novels may suggest that Brontë was influenced by Fullerton, the more so as Fullerton’s Ginevra Leslie is a sort of hybrid—half-English, half-Italian—and in *Villette*, Brontë is clearly interested in hybrid national identities. Moreover, as I will show in the final section, there are some thematic similarities between *Grantley Manor* and *Villette*. However, Brontë does not mention Fullerton or her novels in her letters, and so far as I know, there is no indication that she had read *Grantley Manor*. It is, of course, possible that the use of the name “Ginevra” in two novels dealing with inter-religious and international marriages is merely a coincidence. Perhaps the best answer is that, regardless of any influence, the name “Ginevra” may have been chosen by these two very different authors because, for both of them, it suggested physical beauty while also sounding not quite English.
Lucy’s description of this prayer time shared with Madame Beck’s children also offers a more ecumenical—and cosmopolitan—analog to Graham’s Sunday evening instruction of Paulina. This is, in other words, Brontë’s version of Catholicity. Graham’s instruction inculcated a proselytizing version of English national and religious identity. Lucy, for all her often scornful dislike of Roman Catholicism, endorses an alternative approach. “I am not dangerous, as they tell you,” Lucy assures Paul when the “apple of discord” threatens their friendship; “I would not trouble your faith; you believe in God and Christ and the Bible, and so do I” (491). After Paul leaves, still praying for her conversion, Lucy comments that his desire is “strange!” for she “had no such feverish wish to turn him from the faith of his fathers” (492). Paul’s faith is something to be respected not just because he holds it “with an innocency of his heart that God must love” but because it is the faith of his fathers. Though Père Silas’ Catholic propaganda focuses largely on the role of the Church as a mighty corporate body capable of awing, supporting, or teaching its members, Lucy insists here that religion is a family matter.

Newman sees the Church as an alternative to a human family; Oliphant views it primarily as a potential field of joint labor in which a couple could find means of social outreach; and Yonge imagines the Church as the great heavenly family of which all earthly families were ultimately only symbols. Brontë, in contrast, constructs the family as an alternative to the Church, at least to the extent that it offers an alternative community with the power to transcend national barriers. Religious devotion—with its focus on one shared God—has the potential to aid in overcoming national difference, but only when religious devotion has been domesticated, incorporated into household space.
In *Villette*, Catholicity is intrinsically domestic. But because domesticity is so frequently a hallmark of English national identity, this move to domesticate religion is potentially problematic. If there is something peculiarly English about family devotions, then it would seem that Paul and Lucy are able to “meet,” religiously speaking, only in an English way. It may be the case that what the tolerant transnational space of the cottage in Faubourg Clotilde offers is, in the end, not really a way to transcend national or religious difference, but merely a means of domesticating them, making them “safe” for Lucy. It would seem, then, that English domesticity wins out, but, as I will show in the concluding section, the novel’s ending reflects uncertainty about whether marital-domestic love can really conquer all.

### 4.5 *Villette* as Novel of Intermarriage

In the preceding discussion, I read *Villette* in terms of Lucy’s travels through spaces variously configured as English, continental, Catholic, Protestant, or trans-denominational. I have argued that *Villette* is largely concerned with the construction of a space that is cosmopolitan, but retains a connection to English national identity through an embrace of domesticity. There is another important way in which Lucy Snowe retains her English identity, however, and that is her retention of a Protestant identity in the face of strong forces urging her conversion to Roman Catholicism. Just as Brontë offers a tolerant or neutral (but domestic) space as an alternative to the Catholic (and conventual) space of the school and the English (and Protestant) space of La Terrasse, she offers a Catholic-Protestant intermarriage—founded upon shared faith and mutual tolerance—as
an alternative to Catholic conversion. However, the ambiguously tragic ending of the novel suggests that Bronte was finally unable to resolve all of the tensions implicit in a marriage between an English Protestant and a European Catholic. In this regard, the conclusion of Villette repeats a pattern of tragic or ambiguous endings found in other British novels—from Elizabeth Inchbald’s A Simple Story (1791) to Mary Augusta Ward’s Helbeck of Bannisdale (1898)—concerned with Catholic-Protestant intermarriage. Lady Georgiana Fullerton’s Grantley Manor (1847) provides a particularly useful example of how Catholic-Protestant intermarriage could function in the mid-nineteenth century as a means of working through concerns about national identity, religious affiliation, and the need for tolerance. Though Grantley Manor and Villette are very different novels, their conclusions suggest shared doubts about whether a house divided by differing religious affiliations and national characters could really stand.

To begin with, then, I want to look at Villette as a “failed” conversion plot.121 The subject of conversion to Catholicism had evidently been on Brontë’s mind during her time in Brussels. “People talk of the dangers which protestants expose themselves in going to reside in Catholic countries—and thereby running the chance of changing their faith,” she wrote to her friend Ellen Nussey, in July of 1842. People had, indeed, been talking about conversion to Roman Catholicism as a potential danger of living abroad for some time: both Brontë’s letter and Villette tap into a long-standing discourse linking

121 Bernstein defines the conversion plot as one “chronicle[s] the seduction and abduction of young women by Catholic priests” (49). This is, in fact, rather too narrow a definition: many anti-Catholic novels depicted plots involving the conversion of men (who usually then became priests) as well as women (who then entered convents). The point Bernstein makes (following Clark-Beattie) about the way in which Villette mirrors a gendered narrative of conversion-as-seduction remains a valid one.
continental travel and conversion. During the eighteenth century, conversion to Catholicism was feared as a result of the Grand Tour. Daniel Defoe, in *The New Family Instructor*, claimed that a traveler “should be fully persuaded of the Truth of the Protestant Religion, and steadily resolv’d in the Faith of it, otherwise he ought never to venture himself Abroad . . .” since doing so without adequate study of religious controversy was like “going blindfolded into a Bear-garden” (33, 38). *The New Family Instructor* relates the story of a young man who ventures abroad ill-prepared for religious controversy, despite his father’s advice, and converts to Catholicism, perhaps even going so far as to be secretly ordained a priest (46).

By the mid-nineteenth century, the figure of the vulnerable traveler may have been changing. Defoe’s victim of Catholic subterfuge was a young graduate of the university system whose religious indifference or “coldness” opened him up to the possibility of conversion. In the 1840s, travel abroad was still constructed as a threat to the religious identity of young Englishmen, as can be seen in *From Oxford to Rome*, but young women were seen as being particularly vulnerable to proselytism. Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna warned of the danger of sending children “to a foreign clime, there to inhale an atmosphere impregnated with the insidious poison of Popery!” (vi), and Charlotte Yonge had suggested the dangers Paris might pose to an excitable girl such as Emmeline Berners. However, this idea of the vulnerable woman as the subject of conversion was also the subject of gentle ridicule. In *Pendennis* (1848-1850), Thackeray constructs travel in Catholic countries as a spiritual threat only in the imagination of
Helen Pendennis, whose “almost terror” in the face of “the strange pomps and ceremonials of Catholic worship” the narrator describes satirically:

Bare-footed friars in the streets, crowned images of Saints and Virgins in the churches before which people were bowing down and worshipping, in direct defiance, as [Helen] held, of the written law; priests in gorgeous robes, or lurking in dark confessionals . . . all these new sights and manners shocked and bewildered the simple country lady; and when the young men after their evening drive or walk returned to the widow and her adopted daughter, they found their books of devotion on the table, and at their entrance Laura would commonly cease reading some of the psalms or the sacred pages which, of all others, Helen loved. (716)

While the prayerful female members of the party seek to buttress themselves with Protestant spirituality (in a domestic setting, of course!) during their stay in Catholic lands, Pendennis and his friend Warrington blithely ignore the pomps of Catholicism, being (at least in Pen’s case) protected, rather than exposed, by skeptical indifference.

Judging from her letters, it would seem at first blush that Brontë, like Thackeray, treated the long-standing fear about continental travel leading to conversion as nonsense. In her letter to Nussey, Brontë goes on to discredit such fears: “my advice to all protestants who are tempted to do anything so besotted as turn Catholic—is to walk over the sea on to the continent—to attend mass sedulously for a time—to note well the mum[m]eries thereof . . . then if they are still disposed to consider Papistry in any other light than a most feeble childish piece of humbug let them turn papists at once that’s all . . .” (Letters 289-299). In other words, life abroad is likely to discourage conversion, not facilitate it, because the increased exposure to Roman Catholicism will reveal the fallacies of the religion, at least in the case of all but the foolish. Thus, in Jane Eyre, Eliza
Reed actually follows Brontë’s ironic “advice” to potential converts, in that she travels to Europe and explores the “mummeries” of Catholicism for a time before converting, but her conversion is treated more as a regrettable and foolish eccentricity than as a tragedy (241). More striking is a later correspondence from Belgium in which Brontë describes taking “a fancy to change [her]self into a Catholic and go and make a real confession to see what it was like” (Letters 329). Brontë asks Ellen Nussey to conceal the confession from her father, who “would not understand that it was only a freak, and will perhaps think I am going to turn Catholic” (330). This incident was, of course, the germ of the scene in which Lucy Snowe makes a confession to Père Silas. The ambiguity or contradiction evinced in Brontë’s attitudes and behaviors towards Roman Catholicism is amplified in Villette: on the one hand, Roman Catholicism is something childish and laughable; on the other hand, it represents a serious threat to Lucy’s identity and an obstacle to her happiness.

In Lucy Snowe, Brontë created a character uniquely situated to explore the relationship of Roman Catholic conversion to domesticity, vocation, and national affiliation. Living and working in the Catholic country of Labassecour, the orphaned Lucy is exposed to multiple pressures to convert. The threat first occurs during her confession during the Long Vacation. It recurs as a result of Madame Beck and Père Silas’ joint machinations; Père Silas mentions the possibility (in his opinion, the probability or necessity) of Lucy’s conversion when she visits the Rue des Mages. Finally, when her friendship with Monsieur Paul begins to turn more than friendly, both Paul and his spiritual director attempt to persuade Lucy to convert, presumably to make
her a more fitting bride for Paul. In all these situations, Lucy resists the pressure to convert, though her method of resistance changes.

The point at which Lucy seems to most seriously consider conversion as a possibility is not that at which conversion appears as a prerequisite for relationship, but during the Long Vacation, during Lucy’s mental-emotional crisis. Lucy’s greater vulnerability and emotional isolation during the vacation makes conversion seem, at least briefly, a genuine (and dangerous) possibility. At this point Lucy has no prospects even for occasional companionship, let alone for romantic relationship or finding a permanent home. During her confession Père Silas suggests not merely the possibility of conversion, but also the possibility of entering a religious order, believing that this is the only way in which Lucy’s restless—and homeless—soul might find repose (231). It is noteworthy that this possibility of entering a religious order seems not to have been suggested to Charlotte Brontë during her own confession, though the priest had allowed her to confess primarily “because it might be the first step towards returning to the true church” (Letters 330). Père Silas’ request for Lucy to visit him the next day was drawn from Brontë’s experience, as was the decision not to follow his request (“Of course . . . the adventure stops there, and I hope I shall never see the priest again” is how Brontë describes the aftermath of her confession), but Lucy’s admission of vulnerability towards proselytism and the possibility that, had she visited Père Silas, she might have ended up in a convent, is new.122 A convent may be a kind of home; a religious community may be figured as a

122 Such an automatic connection between conversion and monastic life is not at all unique, of course: recall the way most of the converts in From Oxford to Rome immediately enter monasteries and
kind of family. From Lucy’s perspective, of course, a convent is a false home, and a community of Labassecourien Catholics would be a poor substitute for a family, but to a homeless and friendless exile being driven to the verge of collapse by loneliness, life in a religious community might have seemed tempting.

Père Silas’ second attempt to convert Lucy is oddly positioned between Lucy’s two major encounters with Roman Catholicism, and is indicative of a shift in Lucy’s position in relation to Catholicism. After telling Lucy the story of Paul’s tragic love for Justine Marie (thus, just after he has done his best to convince her that Paul cannot marry for financial reasons, and would not want to marry even if he could because of his constancy towards his dead love), he reveals himself to be the priest who had heard her confession and who still longs for her conversion (467). His farewell is a prediction of her future conversion: “Daughter, you shall be what you shall be!” but Lucy dismisses it with a shrug, telling readers: “Few of us know what we are to come to certainly, but for all that had happened yet, I had good hopes of living and dying a sober-minded protestant . . .” (468). If this statement contains a hint of uncertainty about the future, it is nevertheless more confident than her reaction after making her confession. With Paul’s friendship to sustain her, Lucy is not nearly as vulnerable to Père Silas’ influence.

convents, or the way the peasant girl Bessy is lured into a convent in Sinclair’s Beatrice. And, of course, compare to the aforementioned Eliza Reed in Jane Eyre, who lives in a continental convent prior to converting, in order to “devote [her]self for a time to the examination of the Roman Catholic dogmas, and to a careful study of the workings of their system;” predicting to Jane that “if I find it to be, as I half suspect it is, the one best calculated to ensure the doing of all things decently and in order, I shall embrace the tenets of Rome and probably take the veil” (241).
While Lucy has grown in confidence since her visit to the confessional, Silas has not lost any proselytizing fervor: “Nor have I for a day lost sight of you, nor for an hour failed to take in you a rooted interest” he tells Lucy (467). His motives, however, are not entirely clear at this point. Most of his conversation with Lucy at the Rue des Mages is clearly intended to warn her away from Monsieur Paul, or to convince her that Paul is not able or willing to marry her. Is the brief mention of his desire to bring Lucy into the “discipline of Rome” part of Silas’ attempt to separate Paul and Lucy? This would make sense if his ultimate goal is still to turn Lucy into a nun; presumably, her taking the veil would render Paul safe from the danger of marrying her. This reading might be supported by Silas’ claim that, in imagining what Lucy would be like as a Catholic, “—I realized then what might be your spiritual rank, your practical value; and I envy Heresy her prey” (467). The convent might not be the only place in which Lucy would have both a high “spiritual rank” and great “practical value,” but this is the most likely meaning of Silas’ words. As a nun, Lucy would command greater respect than as a layperson, but would also be more directly at the service of the Church.\(^{123}\) On the other hand, the mention of the possibility of conversion for Lucy at the end of a conversation intended primarily to

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\(^{123}\) The Catholic figures in the novel want to use Lucy, just as they want to use Paul. This utilitarian and manipulative view of people is constructed as something negative: this may in fact be one of the reasons why it is so important for Lucy to resist conversion. It would be wrong for her to become nothing but a tool in the hands of the Church. One may even see her relationship with Paul as liberating him from such manipulation. On the other hand, Brontë also at times indicates that to be of use is inherently better than to be useless. Thus, for instance, Lucy refuses to be a nominal companion to Paulina Home, though she doesn’t mind working as a teacher for Madame Beck. Nor does Lucy protest when Paul sets up an externat in her name, even though one could argue that his doing so without her permission or knowledge is manipulative. It seems to me, then, that there is a tension in the novel between the need for useful work and the need to resist being used.
nip in the bud a developing romantic relationship with Paul may signal Silas’ awareness that Madame Beck’s maneuvers may fail, and Paul might marry Lucy after all.

Certainly, Père Silas’ final attempt to persuade Lucy seems intended for the purpose of making her a fitting companion for Paul Emanuel. It arises when Paul confesses his “covenant” with his new “adopted sister,” and Père Silas is appalled by the proposed “[f]raternal communion with a heretic!” (487). Lucy says that Silas’ attempt to become her spiritual director—and his most sustained attempt to persuade her to convert—is “stirred by I know not what mixture of motives” (493). This reference to unknown mixed motives may be part of Lucy’s coy refusal to indicate that she is already looking ahead to something more than friendship or fraternity with Paul Emanuel. For Père Silas, the possibility of romantic love and marriage between Paul and Lucy is something to be feared not just because it would threaten the materialistic designs the “junta” has for Paul’s property, but also because of the “danger” Lucy’s religion poses to Paul’s faith. Seeking Lucy’s conversion would not necessarily aid the junta’s financial goals, but it would solve the problem of such dangerous “communion with a heretic.”

Paul and Lucy’s developing relationship presents obstacles not found in most traditional marriage plots: national and religious differences. In the preceding sections, I have shown how Lucy adapts both to the foreign environment of Labassecour and to Paul Emanuel’s specifically foreign characteristics. I have also suggested that the possibility of their marriage requires the construction of a tolerant or neutral space in which they can live and work. Nevertheless, in its conclusion, *Villette* demonstrates some of the tensions unique to the novel of Catholic-Protestant intermarriage. Novels dealing with
intermarriage tend not to end well. The inevitability of Paul’s death is sometimes seen as a result of Lucy Snowe’s personality or outlook, but I want to suggest that it has at least as much to do with the difficulty of satisfactorily overcoming religious differences in a marriage plot involving partners opposed to conversion.\textsuperscript{124}

Numerous critics have connected the tragic shipwreck of \textit{Villette} with the conclusion of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s \textit{Paul et Virginie}, and with good reason, given that this is also the name of Paul’s ship (539).\textsuperscript{125} I suggest that this three-year journey abroad also invites comparison to the tragedy which takes place in the narrative gap between the second and third volumes of \textit{A Simple Story}. In \textit{A Simple Story}, Dorriforth/Lord Elmwood, a former priest who obtained permission to marry in order to preserve his family line, leaves his wife and young child “in order to save from the depredation of his steward, a very large estate in the West Indies. His voyage was tedious; his residence there, from various accidents, prolonged from time to time till nearly three years had passed away” (196). Dorriforth’s voyage occurs after his marriage

\textsuperscript{124} With regard to Lucy’s personality or “nature” as a factor which necessitates an unhappy ending, see Kate Lawson’s introduction to the Broadview \textit{Villette} (49-51). Lawson also suggests, however, that Paul’s death frees Lucy from the “orthodoxy” of married life and the marriage plot (53). Similarly optimistic readings of Paul’s death are, as Kathryn Stockton notes, not uncommon in feminist readings of \textit{Villette} (101). However, Gilbert and Gubar read the conclusion more ambivalently, as evidence of the conflict between Brontë’s “hope that women can obtain a full, integrated sense of themselves and economic independence and male affection” and her desire to avoid presenting “such a wish . . . falsely as an accomplished fact” (438). I agree with Lawson that one consequence of the alternative ending to what seems to be a courtship novel is that Lucy is by necessity forced to pursue an alternative form of domesticity. But \textit{Villette} as a narrative does not seem particularly interested in what happens to Lucy after Paul’s death: only the smallest of hints are dropped here and there about her fate afterwards, and it is even unclear whether she remains in Labassecour or returns to England. It seems to me that the “alternative domestic” Brontë is most interested in exploring is the one which the novel’s conclusion forecloses, not the one opened up by Paul’s death.

\textsuperscript{125} Duthie, for example, sees this borrowing as evidence of Brontë’s debt to French Romanticism (197-198).
rather than as a condition of it, but both the duration (three years) and the location (the New World) are similar to Paul’s journey to Guadalupe. The behavior of the women in the question, however, is quite different. Lucy, with her complete fidelity to and increased love for her fiancé, is a polar opposite of Lady Elmwood, Lord Elmwood’s Protestant wife. Lady Elmwood, though “at first being only unhappy” with her husband’s extended absence, lapses into sexual infidelity: “The dear object of her fondest, truest, affections was away; and . . . she flew from the present tedious solitude, to the dangerous society” of a former flame, Lord Frederick Lawnly (196). Different as Lady Elmwood’s adultery is from Lucy’s behavior, its effect is to turn her husband’s arrival from a “felicitous” event to one so “bitter,” that, according to the narrator, no word exists to describe Lady Elmwood’s suffering (197). As a result of this betrayal, Lord Elmwood becomes hardened and cruel, banishing from his presence not just his wife but also his six year old daughter; after several years of isolation, Lady Elmwood eventually dies of her grief and remorse (199). Since this tragedy is one brought about by human error rather than act of God, it suggests, perhaps more clearly than Villette, the instability of Catholic-Protestant marriages or of the national unions they might symbolize.126 Romantic love is revealed as inadequate to overcome religious and personality differences.

126 For a reading of A Simple Story as a “proto-national tale” negotiating British national identity in relation to the internal colonialism, see Michael Tomko. It may also be well to note that there is some evidence that an earlier draft of A Simple Story, perhaps intended to conclude with Miss Milner and Dorriforth’s marriage, was begun in 1777-1779, but that the work was substantially revised between 1780 and 1790 (Spencer x-xi). If this were the case, the second half of the novel would have been written after the 1780 Gordon Riots, perhaps reflecting increased pessimism about the relationship between the British Catholic minority and the Protestant majority.
Grantley Manor, explicit in its invocation of *A Simple Story*, complicates the problem of Catholic-Protestant intermarriage by addressing the issue of English, continental, and cosmopolitan identities.\(^\text{127}\) There are, in fact, several religiously-mixed marriages in *Grantley Manor*, and none of them are particularly successful. Widower Henry Leslie, traveling abroad as means of overcoming the grief of losing his first wife, meets and marries a beautiful Italian girl, Ginevra Ferrari. Though Protestant Henry Leslie and his Catholic wife are quite happy together, she dies after only two years of marriage, leaving him with a Catholic daughter, her mother’s namesake. Meanwhile, on the Neville estate in Northern Ireland, the gamekeeper secretly marries a Roman Catholic wife, who brings up their son as a Catholic. This son becomes young Edmund Neville’s companion, but, after a head injury renders him insane, he nearly kills Edmund, thus increasing Neville senior’s anti-Catholic sentiment (77-81). The primary example of intermarriage, however, is the secret marriage between Ginevra Leslie and Edmund Neville, contracted without the knowledge or consent of either parent, while Edmund was abroad. When Edmund’s father dies, it is revealed that his will forbids Edmund from inheriting if he marries a Catholic. Edmund therefore conceals his marriage, refusing to publicly acknowledge Ginevra as his wife unless she converts to Protestantism. This treatment drives Genevra to despair and nervous breakdown. Only when she is seemingly

\(^{127}\) *Grantley Manor* suggests its connection to *A Simple Story* through the device of featuring a French play, *Simple Historie*, based on Inchbald’s novel (2: 273). Ginevra plays Miss Milner in the play, opposite her own real-life suitor, Sir Charles Darcy, who of course does not know that she is already married. Her main motive for acting is to prevent her husband from playing Lord Frederic Lawnley opposite a wealthy widow interested in him (3: 7-14, 34). Bigamy, rather than merely adultery, is the threat in *Grantley Manor*: Ginevra fears that Edmund will contract an illegal second marriage.
near death is Edmund willing to reveal his clandestine marriage to his remaining relatives.

*Grantley Manor*, like *Villette*, explores the problem of a woman who refuses to change her religion in order to smooth out the bumps in a relationship with a man of different religion and nationality. Without claiming that Fullerton had any direct influence on Brontë, I want to highlight the way in which these two works share a concern with the issues of national identity, Catholic-Protestant intermarriage, and the need for tolerance.\(^{128}\) Both novels explore the fate of a young woman who has left her home country and lost her family.\(^{129}\) If anything, the loss of home Ginevra experiences is more wrenching than Lucy’s, because it seems to imply a more complete abandonment of her national homeland. England still stands as the closest thing to a home that Lucy has, despite the lack of family. For Ginevra, in contrast, since the death of one uncle and the departure of another for America, “the links that bound to me to my native land have

\(^{128}\) As previously mentioned, there is no evidence that Brontë did read *Grantley Manor*. It is possible that Brontë might have read gleaned plot details about the novel by reading reviews of Fullerton’s work. *Grantley Manor* was reviewed in a number of journals and in the *London Times*. Most of these reviews provide short extracts and plot summaries which focus on the Ginevra-Edmund intermarriage plot, rather than on the more conventional marriage plot between Margaret Leslie and one of her father’s friends. The most important criticism of Fullerton’s work may have occurred in a Fraser’s article on “Religious Stories,” attributed to George Eliot. The article includes a plot summary and mingled praise and criticism of *Grantley Manor*. (Most memorable, perhaps, is the fact that the section reviewing *Grantley Manor* immediately follows that reviewing Elizabeth Harris’ *Rest in the Church*—a novel which was, if possible, stranger and less successful than her earlier *From Oxford to Rome*—and begins “It is a relief to turn once more to Lady Georgiana Fullerton” [161]. Whether this is meant to be more indicative of the poverty of Harris’s writing or the quality of Fullerton’s is unclear. At any rate, of the three Catholic novelists—Harris, Fullerton, and Newman—reviewed in “Religious Stories,” Fullerton comes off the best.)

\(^{129}\) The parallels do not hold precisely, of course, particularly as Ginevra Leslie is a hybrid, both by background and upbringing. And unlike Lucy Snow, Ginevra has a living father and sister, though she hardly knows either of them.
been severed one by one . . . and Italy is nothing to me now, but a tale that is told—a
dream that has been dreamt—a prelude to a new life that is now beginning” (1: 258).

*Villette* and *Grantley Manor* differ considerably, however, when it comes to the
subject of religious affiliation. Fullerton, like Newman, constructs the Roman Catholic
Church as a community that transcends national identities through its presence in many
different lands, and through its performance of rituals—themselves essentially the same
from country to country—in a universal language. For Ginevra Leslie, as for
Newman’s converts in *Loss and Gain*, comfort and familiarity ultimately come from
participation in the liturgical life of the Roman Catholic Church. The narrator’s
description of Ginevra’s relief upon going into retreat at a convent in London, where she
can take part in daily services, highlights the perceived universality of Catholic worship:

> Who can describe what the language of the Church [Latin] is to a Catholic—the
type of its universality, the badge of its unity! That voice, reaching unto all lands,
and speaking to all hearts! . . . . At every altar, in every sanctuary, each sacred rite
and solemn hour claim the words of sacred import, which fall on the ear of the
stranger and the wanderer, at once as a whisper from his home, and a melody of
Heaven. (3: 137)

For Fullerton, heaven and home unite in liturgy, in a form supposedly accessible
everywhere. Ginevra thus has a source of comfort which travels with her: her affiliation

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130 This was a common trope of pre-Vatican II Catholic apologetics, but, for the record, it was a
fiction. Newman, for example, was well aware of the existence within the Catholic Church of other
liturgical traditions: the Greek, Maronite, etc. Even in the nineteenth-century, these churches did not use
Latin, but instead used Greek, Syriac, Coptic or other languages relevant to their history. The “universal
language” and “same rite” arguments worked only to the extent that one ignored the existence of these
“Uniate” churches, which, not coincidentally, mostly flourished in areas outside of Western Europe, such
as Armenia, India, Lebanon, or Egypt.
with an international religious body, which provides her with belonging even far from her home.

Brontë also offers a way to transcend differences through religion, but her version of Catholicity is achieved through individual belief “in God, and Christ, and the Bible” rather than through an institutionalized community (491). Lucy, despite her determination to remain Protestant, does not have a strong attachment to any particular denomination or specific local church. Instead, she goes “by turns, and indiscriminately, to the three Protestant Chapels of Villette—the French, German, and English—id est, the Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Episcopalian” (492). Père Silas fears that this indicates “profound indifference—who tolerates all, he reasoned, can be attached to none.” Lucy’s explanation of her behavior indicates that her seeming refusal to attach herself to a particular creed is based on the underlying likeness of “these three sects”—“the unity and identity of their vital doctrines.” Differences between the three churches are “minute and unimportant,” and she thus “respected them all” though thinking “that in each there were faults of form; incumbrances, and trivialities.” Yet in the end, she tells Paul, “my own last appeal, the guide to which I looked, and the teacher which I owned, must always be

131 Contrast this with the behavior of Lord and Lady Somerville, in Yonge’s Castle Builders, or compare (in a different vein) to Thackeray’s Pendennis. The elderly dandy Major Pendennis, who represents an out-of-date attempt at sophistication, insists that the proper thing to do when abroad is to visit the local English congregation, “and this pious man would as soon have thought of not calling upon the English ambassador in a Continental town, as of not showing himself at the national place of worship”—even if the presiding Anglican divine is a gambler and a drunkard who makes a living conducting services at English resorts (724, 729). Whereas Helen Pendennis’ latent anti-Catholicism functions as a laughable marker of provinciality, Major Pendennis’ preference for English worship is connected to an old-fashioned attachment to national identity.
the Bible itself, rather than any sect, of whatever name or nation.” While laying claim to a force which can transcend denomination and national boundaries, she does not share Paul’s need for affiliation to a specific institution.

Despite this difference, the core beliefs that Paul and Lucy do share open the way for a domestic community, built upon commonalities of personality and taste as well as religious belief. Paul’s awareness of a likeness between himself and Lucy leads him to suspect that Lucy, too, has seen the ghostly nun, since, he says: “I was conscious of a rapport between you and myself. You are patient, and I am choleric; you are quiet and pale, and I am tanned and fiery; you are a strict Protestant, and I am a sort of lay Jesuit: but we are alike—there is affinity” (440). This list, covering as it does psychological traits, physical differences with seemingly ethnic significance, and religious difference, sums up the wide range of cultural and psychological obstacles Paul and Lucy must work through in their developing relationship. In this respect, Villette may seem like a typical domestic novel focused on courtship and marriage: boy meets girl, boy and girl encounter difficulties, boy and girl overcome difficulties, boy and girl get married and, in so doing, may construct a new version of domesticity, or offer a new exemplar of middle-class marriage.

But Villette does not end with a wedding: it ends with a shipwreck and loss in a tragedy that has been foreshadowed throughout the novel. Famously, though, the conclusion leaves Paul’s fate up to the reader to decide. Brontë claims to want to “Trouble no quiet, kind heart; leave sunny imaginations hope. Let it be theirs to conceive the delight of joy born again fresh out of great terror, the rapture of rescue from peril, the
wondrous reprieve from dread, the fruition of return. Let them picture union and a happy succeeding life” (568). Implicit, of course, is the suggestion that if readers picture this, they are dreaming. Much has been said about this lack of closure, and much more could be said. What I want to point out is the way in which this curious gesture towards the readers bears some similarities to certain coy remarks of Fullerton’s at the conclusion of *Grantley Manor*. *Grantley Manor* seems to end happily: Ginevra recovers from her collapse; Edmund does not lose his fortune after all, thanks to a secret codicil to his father’s will; Margaret finally marries Walter Sydney, after many misunderstandings and a nearly fatal lost letter. But the final paragraphs suggest that all might not be rosy in the sisters’ future: “Fond hearts watch them—a deep love attends them. They are exemplary in their lives, and united in their affections. But life may, ere long, bring forth fresh storms: let us take leave of them, then, while smiles are on their lips, and joy is in their hearts” (3: 256-257). If the only gesture towards tragedy in *Grantley Manor* were this vague mention of future storms, this ending might be dismissed as merely a rhetorical acknowledgment of the conventions of novelist form, which contrast with the lack of ending in real life. However, the last chapter also suggests that Ginevra’s recovery is not complete, and that her regained health will not last long. Even after her recovery, Ginevra looks forward to soon joining her elderly uncle in the afterlife (3: 247). The narrator suggests that Edmund and Ginevra’s relationship remains haunted by the possibility of an early death:

[Ginevra] returned to life—to its duties and its blessings; no smile was sweeter than hers, no serenity deeper, and no tenderness more touching; but a seal had been set on her brow, which nothing could efface. Death had been near her, and
had left a message for her soul, and the melodies of earth could not overpower that whisper. This was Edmund Neville’s trial in the midst of happiness. He ever felt as if . . . she had only been restored to him for a while, to save him from despair and to teach him to repent. (3: 255)

These premonitions of an early death give added force to the hints of future “storms” found in the novel’s concluding paragraphs, suggesting that Ginevra and Edmund have only a short time left in which to live happily ever after.

These hints of future sorrow and death for Ginevra and Neville indicate Fullerton’s uneasiness with the conclusion of the novel, which leaves the couple stuck in a relationship that seems unworkable. Fullerton is unable to imagine a completely successful resolution to this marriage between a devout Catholic woman and a Protestant from Northern Ireland. This connection between Catholic-Protestant intermarriage and tragedy is supported by an earlier incident that explicitly connects the incipient tragedy of *Grantley Manor* to the tragedy of *A Simple Story*. The French play in which Ginevra performs concludes with Miss Milner’s marriage to Dorriforth; that is, it only includes the first two volumes of the novel. The play within *Grantley Manor* thus seems to sidestep the tragedy of *A Simple Story*, leaving open the possibility of a happy ending for Dorriforth and his Protestant wife. But Ginevra’s performance as Miss Milner alludes to the second half of the novel. At the play’s conclusion, as “the curtain prepares to fall; Ginevra glances at the ring which has been place on her finger, and shudders” (3: 41). Ginevra’s action—which the narrator suggests is not actually acting, but her own real reaction to the reminder of the wedding ring which her husband has forbidden her to wear—is taken by the audience as a reference to the conclusion of Volume II of
Inchbald’s novel, in which “on that joyful day” of her wedding, “after the sacred ceremony was over, Miss Milner . . . felt an excruciating shock; when, looking on the ring Lord Elmwood has put upon her finger, in haste, when he married her, she perceived it was a—MOURING RING” (Inchbald 193). Though the tragedy of separation and infidelity is not portrayed on stage within Grantley Manor, Miss Milner’s premonition of tragedy is transferred to Ginevra. Given the hints that Ginevra’s remaining life will be a short one, her reunion with her husband and her recovery only defer the fulfillment of the tragedy.

Read against this context, Villette’s conclusion suggests that Brontë, like Fullerton, is unable to completely resolve the tensions inherent in a marriage between a European Catholic and an English Protestant. Paul’s tragic death, coming as it does after he has already ensconced Lucy in a comfortable domestic environment and given her a means of making of a living, enables Brontë to provide for her protagonist without having to work through all the practical implications of Paul and Lucy’s proposed union. In the end, then, I read Villette as a novel which is pessimistic about the potential of romantic love to overcome national or religious differences. Paul and Lucy may be able to fall in love, but they cannot share a home together—at least not, as Brontë might qualify the issue, in this life.
CONCLUSION

Narratives of Catholic conversion can be found in many other texts besides the ones discussed in this dissertation. Religious novelists were not the only ones who dealt with the subject matter; quite popular mainstream authors also sometimes tried their hand at novels about Roman Catholicism or the Tractarian Movement and conversion. In this project, I have looked at mid-century examples of such works from Margaret Oliphant and Charlotte Brontë, but I might also have reached later into the century to include Wilkie Collins’ *The Black Robe* (1881) or Mary Augusta Ward’s *Helbeck of Bannisdale* (1898). Moreover, the possibility or threat of Catholic conversion lurks in the background of a variety of nineteenth-century texts. One such potential convert is Arabin, from Trollope’s *Barchester Towers*. Note, too, that Samuel Butler’s Ernest Pontifex’s flirtation with Anglo-Catholicism concludes with his arrest for making an improper advance towards an innocent young woman. Understanding the work such figures accomplish means understanding what was at stake in the rhetoric of Catholic conversion generally.

I have suggested that these texts demonstrate a close relationship between English national identity, religious affiliation, and domesticity. One might more simply say that narratives of Catholic conversion are usually about three things: the nation, the church, and the home. There are other terms in which one might analyze narratives of Catholic conversion, but the choice of these three is not arbitrary. Catholic conversion was
understood as a threat to English national identity because it seemed to mean a rejection of several traits of English character, including honesty, openness, and, most importantly, domesticity. In extreme cases conversion might be figured as a betrayal, in that converts placed their ultimate allegiance not to England but to a foreign power. Precisely because conversion involves a change in character, however, narratives of conversion provided useful ways of constructing new versions of domesticity and English identity.

Additionally, affiliation to a body larger than the nation—whether this was the Roman Catholic Church or a universal Church that encompassed specific denominations—opened up new transnational or cosmopolitan identities.

Although I have located the triad of church, nation, and home within a handful of texts, the various patterns of relationship I describe have far wider implications. Take, for example, the military Bagnets of Bleak House and their domestic arrangements. The Bagnets have travelled the world together, but always seem to be at home. The Bagnet family rituals seem, at first glance, to be secular: “the greatest holiday and reddest-letter day in Mr Bagnet’s calendar” is Mrs. Bagnet’s birthday, not, as in some of Dickens’ other literature, Christmas (604). But the expression “red letter day” is drawn from the liturgical calendar, referring to the red printing of certain saints’ days in the calendar found in the Book of Common Prayer. More tellingly, the narrator informs us that Woolwich’s most recent birthday was celebrated with an abbreviated examination in the catechism from that same book. Even when secularizing the concept of holiday, then, Dickens draws from a specifically Anglican heritage. The Bagnets’ birthday rituals may say more about a perceived need to support imperialism through a differently
domesticated form of English identity than it says about changes in religious identity. Whatever the case, in a single paragraph Dickens invokes a relationship between Anglicanism, English national identity, and domesticity which would have been apparent to his readers.¹³²

The rhetoric of Catholic conversion has implications for each of these three terms, taken individually or in conjunction with each other. For example, narratives of Catholic conversion provide a point of entry into the relationship between domesticity and English national identity. As critics continue to explore the nature of English (as opposed to British) identity in nineteenth-century literature and culture, images of the hearth and home may need to be examined in a new light. In addition to a number of questions that might be asked about the relationship between domesticity and Englishness, there may be even more to be said about domesticity, English national character, and Victorian transnationalism. However much the English loved their homes and their hearths, the fact remains that not all homes are English in character, and not all characters in English literature have a home. Still, given the close association between Englishness and domesticity in the Victorian novel, one might ask whether there can be such a thing as a transnational home, or if cosmopolitanism entails homelessness. As I have shown, *Loss and Gain*, *The Heir of Redcliffe* and *The Daisy Chain* offer religious answers to this question, positing the existence of a spiritual home that transcends nation, but of course

¹³² Of course, as other critics have noted, Mrs. Pardiggle’s missionary endeavors and district visiting are constructed as characteristically Tractarian. I am not aware, however, of any work which reads the Pardiggle Puseyism against the Bagnets’ far more domestic (if also more theologically fuzzy) take on Anglicanism.
this is only one answer. The existence of this spiritualized domestic does not preclude the possibility of other forms of the transnational domestic. *Villette* raises this possibility, but refuses to give a definitive answer to the question; it is unclear whether Lucy can be at home in Labassecour without Paul Emanuel. For those more optimistic than Brontë, the marriage plot held greater potential for the construction of a transnational home.

The rhetoric of Catholic conversion also has much to say about the way in which identities are constructed in relationship to multiple levels of community. This three-fold pattern of relationship between home, church, and nation is itself far from being universal, of course, but even a shift in terminology may rely on assumptions about the relationship of the terms. What happens, for instance, when a conception of universal brotherhood or humanity takes the place of the church—are there ways in which such universals are being underwritten by a prior conception of a “universal” Church? Or is there any way in which the complicated relationships between local, national, and universal Church (in, say, Charlotte Yonge’s fiction) suggest new models for belonging itself? One might also ask whether conversion as a religious process involving joining a social body has something to say more generally about affiliation as a secular process of relating to community.  

What about the connection between changing affiliation and

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133 In fact, the term “affiliation” sometimes has a specific meaning in relation to conversion. In Lewis Rambo’s foundational work on the sociology of conversion, “affiliation” refers to one kind of conversion: “the movement of an individual or group from no or minimal religious commitment to full involvement with an institution or community of faith” (13). Some of the conversions depicted by Charlotte Yonge, which involve deepening her protagonists’ relationship to the Anglican Church, would count as affiliation. Most of the other conversion narratives examined here are concerned not with affiliation in Rambo’s sense but with what he calls “institutional transfer,” that is, “the change of an individual or group from one community to another within a major tradition.” In this case, the tradition is Christianity. I have
changing identities—does a “conversion” in the sense of changing communities always imply a “conversion” in personal identity?

Some of these questions take us far from the subject of Catholic conversion and far from this dissertation, of course; and yet, they do not even touch the matter of form. I have chosen to approach the trope of Catholic conversion primarily through domestic fiction for a reason. I might, instead, have chosen to focus on the roman à thèse or, as O’Malley as done, on the Gothic. But precisely because narratives about the movement from one community to another speak to the more fundamental issue of how people relate to another (whether as individuals or in groups), it makes sense to look at how conversion narratives figure within a structure likewise focused on relationship: the marriage plot. I was originally drawn to these three terms because I wondered why it was that so many novels dealing with Catholic conversion depicted it as a force that tore apart the family. I have suggested reasons why this was the case, particularly within anti-Catholic fiction. Here I want to suggest that these novels also indicate a way in which nineteenth-century authors worked through a sense that changing one’s affiliation has the potential to affect all other relationships. Victorians believed that there are (to use terms that Newman popularized) losses as well as gains to any change from one community to another. The most important thing narratives of Catholic conversion have to offer nineteenth-century

chosen not to follow Rambo’s distinction, using “affiliation” instead to refer more generally to any new or developing attachment to a religious body.
studies may be this dramatization of the perceived tension between familial affiliation and affiliations to larger communities.
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