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## The Catholic Intellectual Tradition

Scholarship, Faith, and Higher Education

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### The Catholic Intellectual Tradition and British Literature in the Long Eighteenth Century

Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Canon

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[1] Like many of the contributors to this volume, I came of age intellectually during the so-called “canon wars” or “culture wars” of the 1980s, which witnessed a transformation of Vatican II scale in how literary culture was studied and taught. The addition of women authors and authors of color to the undergraduate curriculum was a natural by-product of the identity politics that took hold during the 1960s. The Civil Rights movement and the Women’s Rights movement contributed to a broadening of the collective understanding of literary value to include recognition for previously marginalized voices. These changes directly affected my own development as a scholar, as my research has focused on laboring-class writers. The expansion of the literary canon also affected the development of my sense

of vocation as a teacher. In my teaching and research, in my professional and personal commitments, I have been concerned with issues of literacy (both basic and more broadly cultural) as well as of access to education and culture.

[2] Fresh out of graduate school, however, I found myself teaching at a small and ultra conservative Southern Baptist School in Birmingham, Alabama. It was 1993, the only year that the job market was worse than it has been recently, and I was happy to be gainfully employed. I had a 4/4 teaching load, including a section of an interdisciplinary Western Civilization course. The standard syllabus barely acknowledged Virginia Woolf, let alone the Post-structuralist French feminist theorist I had just spent 6 years studying (but more on curricular issues shortly).

[3] In a place as strange-to me at least- as Birmingham I first really began to be aware of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and to think of myself, self-consciously, as a Catholic scholar. As a Catholic in the first place, I was a rare and exotic creature at the Baptist college. I was one of two Catholic faculty members; the other being a person whose beliefs ran a tad more toward Opus Dei. Needless to say, there was a lot of pressure suddenly put on me to explain and defend the faith. Growing up in upstate NY, going to school in Boston and Buffalo, I was used to being a religious majority, and now I had a lot of curious students (and colleagues) inquisitive about my practices of worshiping the Pope, dealing in indulgences, drinking baby's blood and whatever else it was they thought I did on Sundays.

[4] But it was precisely my personal and spiritual identity as Catholic that helped me appreciate the musty old curriculum I had inherited for the "Cornerstones of Western Civilization Course" even if it rankled against my intellectual identity as a eco-feminist, post-structuralist, neo-Marxist academic. Predictably, the reading list, even at this Southern Baptist institution, included important Catholic authors, such as St. Augustine and Dante (provocatively the *Purgatorio*, not the standard choice the *Inferno*, though admittedly this gave ample opportunity to underscore the peculiarities of Catholic theology). These were works that I knew well from my own college experience, and works that I had previously read and appreciated as "texts" and "discursive practices" that gave insight into such topics as the interpellation of identity, the social constructedness of gender and other post-modern agendas. I had not considered them, except by way of the broadest of historical contexts, as texts whose Catholicism mattered and which contributed to what we now call a Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

[5] But I had something of a transformational moment myself when I was teaching the famous conversion scene in *The Confessions*. We had come to the critical scene when Augustine hears the voice that urges him "tolle, lege" – pick up and read. As I moved the students through what I imagined was a clever linguistic deconstruction of Augustine's pivotal use of the trope of metonymy, a young man in class, Sam, who I knew was strongly fundamentalist in his beliefs, shot up his hand.

[6] "Dr. Keegan," he said, "I have a question. When Augustine converted, did he become a Catholic or a *Christian*?"

[7] I breathed in. No doubt he was egging me on, looking for an argument. Instead of calling Sam out for being so confrontational, I turned to that tried and true pedagogical trick, and questioned his question. “What do you mean “Catholic or Christian, Sam?””

[8] What came next floored me.

[9] “Well, when he converted, why didn’t he become a Methodist? Or a Baptist?”

[10] Was I glad I had held back the zinger I had previously wanted to unleash. What I had before me was an 18 year old, very sincere in his faith, who had absolutely no clue about Church history. I did my best to provide a quick overview in broad strokes. Some other students were nodding with interest. Apparently, Sam wasn’t the only one surprised to discover that in 397 AD one’s denominational choices were limited.

[11] Even as he took in this revelation, Sam’s brow was still knit. When I had gotten to the end of my mini-lecture, he looked me quizzically, and asked, “Okay, well, then if Augustine was Catholic, was he *saved*.”

[12] Although I am not in the habit in answering for the fate of someone else’s eternal soul, at this point I had only one answer. Yes. Class over. See you next time.

[13] My encounter with Sam was the first in a series of moments that allowed me to see that the rich intellectual heritage I myself had seemingly acquired as if by osmosis was not universal. And it also gave me a mirror into myself and how I read texts. My newfangled ways of reading might not be the best ways to teach these works. Perhaps turning to these texts to explore the historical context of the debate of faith and reason might not be the worst way to show students the value of literary ways of knowing. In fact, such a method might help them to gain insight into precisely the questions with which we want them to grapple – about the meaning and purpose of life, about their vocation and God’s plan for them. Reading *The Confessions* we can see that these issues are just as pressing 1500 years ago as today.

[14] After three years at Samford, I was able to find new job at Creighton. Spending the last thirteen years at a Jesuit university has provided me a wealth of opportunities as well as magnificent colleagues with whom to explore how my own work in scholarship and teaching emerges from and contributes to a Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Lest you assume my experiences in the South turned me into a reactionary, let me assert that the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, as I have come to understand it, comprises many dimensions. It is about access to and a celebration of the life of the mind, thus related to how Catholic universities, especially in America but also in Britain and elsewhere, gave Catholics and other disenfranchised groups the ability to pursue higher learning. As a scholar of laboring-class writing, I am committed to this facet, which might be seen as the “social justice” aspect of the tradition. But this is not the only dimension. As John O’Keefe has written, the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, in terms of its content emphasizes the dialogue of faith and reason, and how that dialogue occurs in what my post-structuralist self would call a “variety of discourses.” In other words, God’s truth can be found in all areas of inquiry – whether in physics, sociology, or sculpture. The quest for truth and beauty, whatever one’s methodology, whatever the expressions or products, is sacred.

[15] Thanks to my time at Creighton I have been working (and I hope succeeding) to reconcile that initial struggle I described, between my sense of identity as an ecofeminist, post-structuralist, neo-Marxist scholar, and an individual whose engagement with the Catholic Intellectual Tradition is committed and ongoing. As I mentioned, when I was coming out of grad school, especially back in 1993, the very word “tradition” to most people in literary studies was likely to evoke a shudder and images of all kinds of politically incorrect bogeymen like Allan Bloom or Dinesh D’Souza. Being a professor and scholar of literature for the past generation or so has meant challenging the tradition, opening up the canon to marginalized voices, and dethroning all those nefarious dead white men who have been hogging the pages of our teaching anthologies for far too long.

[16] Turning to my area of studies – British literature of “the long eighteenth century” (which comprises the Restoration period at one end and the Romantic period at the other) – with a view toward understanding how my field speaks to the development and sustenance of a Catholic Intellectual Tradition has allowed me to look at a few of those “DWM” a bit differently. In addition, I have come to understand how the Catholic Intellectual Tradition also supports the expansion of the literary canon to welcome women authors, authors of color, and laboring-class authors.

[17] Although Catholicism did not officially exist in England between about 1534 and 1829, this is not to say that we cannot find Catholic authors or subject matter in British literature. True, most of the time when Catholics or their creed were being *written about* it is in the kind of unflattering light that reaches its apogee (or should I say nadir) in the extremes of the late eighteenth-century Gothic, with its sinister and even incestuous monks and lascivious nuns. As I researched for this essay, for instance, I turned to what is still one of the most important studies on the subject, Hoxie Neale Fairchild’s 1939 *Religious Trends in English Poetry*. Examining the index, under the topic of Catholicism, a reader will find the following subtopics: “associated with bigotry, superstition, priestcraft, papal authority, etc” – numerous entries; “associated with political despotism” – several entries; and “sympathetic allusion to” only a precious few references.

[18] In British novels, we do sometimes encounter sympathetic portraits of Catholics, though typically these are Continental, and not English Catholics, as with the useful French Benedictine monk in Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, or the French Franciscan sympathetically portrayed in Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey*. English Catholics were typically given less favourable portraits, as is the case with Dr. Slop, the infamous “man midwife” in Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, who ruins Tristram’s nose with his newfangled forceps, or in the confrontation of Parson Adams and the impecunious priest in Henry Fielding’s classic picaresque comic novel *Joseph Andrews*.

[19] A discussion of the influence of Jacobitism and Anti-Jacobitism in English literature – which is inseparable from a discussion of Catholicism in the early part of the eighteenth century – would be the subject of an entirely separate essay, though I hope to touch on it in my discussion of Jane Barker in a moment. For such a topic one might look at a range of texts from Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel* to the laboring-class poet James Hogg’s 1819 collection, *Jacobite Relics of Scotland*, an anthology of popular songs and poems. Robert Burns contributed several and Sir Walter Scott provided further editorial assistance (though the

issues here were more nationalistic than religious). Similarly, the momentous events of the 1780 Gordon Riots, when Protestants rioted against granting Catholics the civil liberties they had been denied since Elizabethan times, continued to influence images of Catholics and Catholicism into the Victorian age, most famously in doorstep novels like Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* (1840-41).

[20] Not only did non-Catholic writers represent Catholics in canonical writing, but Catholics also represented themselves in the traditional "canon" of English literature. Writers who were at least for some time in their lives Catholic are among some of the "heavy hitters." These include England's first poet laureate, Ben Jonson; Restoration poet and satirist, John Dryden; and the defining voice of the Augustan age, Alexander Pope. Stephen Greenblatt's best-selling recent biography of Shakespeare, *Will in the World*, has reignited popular speculation about the Bard's relationship to the Church of Rome. While the idea that Shakespeare was a crypto-catholic is certainly tantalizing, it is safe to say that whether or not he or his father was Catholic, there is no denying that Catholic issues, themes, beliefs, and sacraments figure highly in his works, as we see in recent critical works such as Clare Asquith's *Shadownplay* and Greenblatt's *Hamlet in Purgatory*. However, many of the traditionally "canonical" Catholic male writers in the long eighteenth century famously did not write much about their Catholicism. Alexander Pope is the most maddening example of this, although given the negative political and financial implications likely to come upon professing one's faith so publically, it is perhaps understandable.

[21] While we have a slew of Catholic poets and dramatists among traditionally canonical male writers, we see few contributions to the emerging and central genre of the novel. In his 1942 *Catholicism and English Literature*, Edward Hutton surveys the history of the English novel, which he assumes begins with Defoe, and opines "Nothing can bring home to us more convincingly than such a survey the almost extirpation of the Catholic Faith in this island, the completely negligible thing it became in the life of the nation" (100). Thanks, however, to the past 20 years of revisionist scholarship, the canon of the English novel no longer looks like that unbroken line of male writers Defoe-Fielding-Scott-Dickens (including a tiny blip of Jane Austen for good measure), with no contribution from Catholics. Most literary historians now include the amatory fiction of late seventeenth-century female writers Aphra Behn and Delariviere Manley, among others, as essential to the evolutions of the novel.

[22] Aphra Behn is credited with being the first Englishwoman to earn a living with her pen, and was raised Catholic. Although her Catholic origins do not feature prominently in her published work, Behn does hold the distinction of being the first (and for a long time the only) European author to make an African the hero of a work of fiction in her groundbreaking novella, *Oronooko* (1688). *Oronooko* is the story of an African prince, taken into slavery and sent to South America, where he leads a slave revolt. Oronooko and his wife Imoinda are represented fully and sympathetically in what is unquestionably one of the most powerful works of anti-slavery literature to be composed in the early modern era. It was also immensely popular into the eighteenth century, although Behn's personal life, and her refusal to suppress her expression of female sexuality in her writing, meant that she was written out of literary history until the groundbreaking work of feminists scholars starting in the 1970s began to write her back in.

[23] Thanks to the ongoing work of canon-revision, which has restored Behn to her rightful place, we can indeed witness a tremendous widening of our understanding of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. In fact, when we consider women writers of the long eighteenth century we see that the contributions of Catholic writers – who were also writing on Catholic subjects – is much richer and deeper than previously understood by earlier scholars like Fairchild or Hutton. Perhaps women writers, whose access to publication and the public sphere was more limited than Dryden's or Pope's, were less concerned about the implications of writing their faith? I want to survey briefly these long-neglected tributaries to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and then talk in a little bit more depth about two critically important authors, one from the early part of the period and one from the latter part, namely Jane Barker and Elizabeth Inchbald.

[24] The list of British women writers who were, again at least at some point in their lives, practicing Catholics, is long enough to be compelling and the rediscovery of these writers has already led to interesting research with much more that still remains to be known about them. Martha Fowke Sansom (1689-1736) published several collections of verse and enjoyed literary friendships with several significant Augustan poets including Aaron Hill, John Dyer, and Richard Savage. Sansom's poems express her literary ambitions and her rejection of the confines of domesticity. Catharine Trotter (1674-1749) was a playwright and a philosopher. All five of her plays were performed to popular acclaim but it is for her engagement with her contemporary male philosophers that she is more celebrated today. Elizabeth Smart LeNoir (bap. 1754, d. 1841) was the daughter of the poet Christopher Smart and did not publish until she was 50 years of age. Editions of her poetry, mostly about rural life, each went through numerous editions, including one collection of meditations on the gospels.

[25] Appreciation for the contributions of all of these writers has been increasing, but Jane Barker and Elizabeth Inchbald are two authors whose importance has been recognized unquestionably by scholars. Barker converted to Catholicism early in her life and it is a defining feature of her work and her identity. Inchbald was a lifelong Catholic, whose most celebrated work today puts late eighteenth century Catholic culture and politics at the forefront of the plot. Although both of these writers have been celebrated by feminist scholarship, they should also be regarded as significant but largely neglected contributors to an expanded understanding of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Indeed, as I will argue, to the extent that these remarkable women writers are read only within the context of a feminist narrative of recovery, foregrounding their gender identity above all other reasons for celebrating the rediscovery of their work, we risk missing the form of identity that was likely the most central to the writers themselves: their religious identities. Like Kathryn King, in her literary biography of Barker, it is my aim "to readmit religion as a fundamental category of difference in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to restore its force as 'master code' by means of which women and men in Barker's era apprehended themselves" (21-2).

[26] Barker was born in 1652, into a Royalist family. Her family was not affluent but was comfortable enough to send her older brother to Oxford. She converted to Catholicism during the reign of James II (1685-88) and joined the community of Catholic exiles in France, at St. Germain-en-Laye in 1689, after the Glorious Revolution deposed James. For the remainder of her life she was doggedly dedicated to the Jacobite cause – even long after

all hope for it had vanished. The recent discovery of a letter in Barker's hand has led to speculation that she was a Jacobite spy, contributing to an intrigue to launch an invasion from France to reclaim the throne. Unfortunately, even with the work of dedicated scholars like Kathryn King, there is precious little documentary evidence beyond Barker's seemingly autobiographical writings, to give insight into much of Barker's life both in exile and then upon her return to England in 1704. Late in her life, Barker returned again to France, where she died in 1732. Barker never married, and celibacy was an essential feature of her two authorial avatars, Fidelia (the speaker of the St. Germain poetry) and Galesia, who appears in three of her novels and in some of the poetry.

[27] Barker wrote and published numerous works during her lifetime, while others remained unpublished until quite recently. Her first appearance in print occurred in 1687, with a volume entitled *Poetical Recreations*, and was the result of her verse exchanges with a group of young men at Cambridge University. The verse contributed by Barker to this miscellany was largely occasional, sociable verse exchanges with a male literary community. The collection lacks any overtly political or religious verse. Her poems from the period of exile, however, predominantly discuss Catholic interests and concerns and these remained, of necessity, unpublished during her lifetime. These poems would be incomprehensible without an appreciation of Barker's Catholic and Jacobite identity. Indeed, Kathryn King, Barker's biographer asserts that "Identification with Catholicism, an outlawed religion, was the defining fact of Barker's existence" (112). Her writing in this period is intensely political, but Barker's interest is not predominantly in gender politics. King observes that Barker "writes less 'as a woman'...than as a divine right monarchist and Roman Catholic of a particularly uncompromising sort" (131). Barker's conservative views resist the fantasies of most liberal minded feminist critics, but that should not undermine her importance in literary history.

[28] Her poem "The Miseries of St. Germain" provides a powerful historical witness to the life and suffering of the exiled Catholics in France. Due to plague and famine, during the years 1694-5 it has become "Hell in epitomy." All suffer, even the members of the court and the nobility. Indeed, the King and Queen suffer more because they also bear the weight of their peoples' suffering. Again, while this might be seen as patronage seeking compliment, the excruciating detail of what the royals have led their people to suffer might suggest that Barker had other intentions besides flattery. The suffering of the exiled Catholics is depicted in all the best Biblical and classical trappings. Much as we see in early African American literature, scripture stories of captivity, exile, and the eventual working out of providence are bought to bear to help make sense of the misery. But Barker doesn't limit herself to the Christian tradition for her imagery and precedents. She draws upon the Classical as well – demonstrating erudition unlikely for most women of her age, and erudition that she nurtured early in her life through her platonic association with several young scholars at Cambridge University.

[29] Yet even with its stylistic flourishes, the purpose of the poetry is primarily ideological. The poems were meant not for wider publication but to be shared among the community of exiles, serving to console and encourage as well as articulating a shared sense of indignation. Their purpose to articulate a hard-line Catholic argument for full restoration of the Stuart line resonates through the majority of the verse produced at this time. Her religion, while personal, is always political. The poem "Fidelia alone lamenting her parents lately dead, and

her relations gone into the west against Monmouth” has Barker situating the question of her conversion within national and international politics. She begins the poem by reflecting on her many losses, including the deaths of her male relatives defending the Jacobite cause: “I see a cousin wounded, brother dy; / I hear my aged Uncles dying groans, / And see by’s side, his grandson’s shattered bones” (King 1998: ll. 8-10). Barker then sets these sacrifices in their causal content in the following fiery lines (the bolded lines are in the manuscript):

And this it seems is for Religion’s cause,  
That thus **Religion** breaks **Religion’s** laws.  
**Religion**, still **Religion’s** all their cry,  
With which they run down truth, morality,  
In courts of justice set up\* perjury,  
They make the Bible patromise their pride,  
Thence wrest a text to preach up patricide (16-22).

Barker annotates line 20 so that we are aware she is “referring to Oates’s perjures” (Titus Oates was the instigator of the so-called “Popish Plot” to assassinate Charles II) and line 21, clarifying that “a bible being said to be carryd before Monmouth to exite the Mobb.” (28) – Monmouth being James Scott, first duke of Monmouth and the illegitimate protestant son of Charles II. He attempted to depose his uncle James II in 1685, leading the so-called Monmouth rebellion, for which he was executed. In contrast to her Catholic contemporary, John Dryden, Barker did not turn to biblical allegory as Dryden does in *Absalom and Achitophel*. Instead, her circumstances lead her to contemplate the dramatic decision of conversion: “Sure never times were like to these our times, / In which **Religion** authorises crimes; / If this be the effect of holy cant, / I am ashamed that I’m a Protestant” (ll. 25-8). The personal impact of these political questions lead Barker to vow, near the conclusion of the poem “And I will search, with all the power I can, / The surest way to thy bles’d son **God man**; / No shame nor punishment shall me dismay, / I’ll seek which church shews us the surest way” (ll. 40-3). That church, for Barker after 1685, was the Church of Rome.

[30] Barker’s writing is significant in terms of its contribution to our understanding of Catholic culture in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, but her work is not simply valuable as mere artefact. Her poetry and her later novels demonstrate a writer who, while seeming to subscribe to deeply conservative political values, is also equally committed to her literary craft and experimenting with modes of feminine expression within conventional poetic forms. For example, as King has examined, Barker is able to productively play with the image of the convent, rewriting female retirement as profoundly liberating – over 200 years before Virginia Woolf suggested the importance of a room of one’s own – and a rejection of the demands of domesticity - to female creativity.

[31] Although Barker’s political poetry remained in manuscript, she actively published a series of novels in the early eighteenth century, making her also an important contributor to the early novel and the transformation from one of its sources of origin in French romances. *Amours of Bosvil and Galesia* was published in 1713, followed in 1714 by *Exilius; or the Banished Roman*. These two novels were republished together in 1719 as *The Entertaining Novels of Mrs. Jane Barker*. Her last two novels, which also featured the (much older) heroine/narrator Galesia, are *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* (1723) and *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen*

(1725). While the latter two works, in particular, have intrigued modern scholars for their contribution to a gendered history of the genre of the novel, as King has recently demonstrated, the novels are more than intriguing explorations of female identity. Again, the author's Catholicism is key. Galesia's resistance to married life has been read (again, perhaps anachronistically) as an effort to propose an alternative narrative for creative and intellectual women beyond domesticity and motherhood. However, the novels are also coded with allusions that would have been strongly evident to Catholic and Jacobite readers of the early eighteenth century. As the titles suggest, these novels are patched together from inset stories told to the narrator Galesia. The women (and some men) who share their stories frequently tell of marriages foiled or failed, with the separation of lovers signalling more than simply the usual stuff of romance. Marriage can be seen as figuring instead the relationship between rightful sovereign and his people, and in this light, as King asserts in her biography of Barker, "Once their Jacobite underpinnings are recognized, elements of *Patch-Work Screen* that seem incomprehensible or even inept begin to take on meaning" (163).

[32] Barker's heroines in her Galesia trilogy are independent and show an ambition for art as well as love according to their own terms. They have political agency even if that agency must be encrypted. In that sense, Barker bookends a particular thread in the history of women novelists that extends forward to Elizabeth Inchbald at the end of the eighteenth century. For many years Inchbald's greatest claim to fame was as the author of the supposedly salacious play "Lover's Vows" which the young people in Austen's *Mansfield Park* plan to stage. However a new appreciation of Inchbald's critical – and financial – success as a playwright, and her innovations as a novelist, are witnessed by the scores of critical essays and books about her published in the last 20 years. She wrote 20 plays, 2 novels, and toward the end of her career edited several multi-volume collections of British drama and wrote criticism as well.

[33] I recently contributed to the scholarly conversation with an article that was just published and that I wrote in conjunction with my participation in the inaugural "Faculty Mission and Identity" group started at Creighton several years ago to offer faculty a way to learn about the Jesuit, Catholic Intellectual Tradition and how it relates to our work as teachers and scholars. Prior to the seminar I had taught Inchbald's novel as one that commented on the limited opportunities for intelligent women under patriarchy. Reading the novel as a specifically Catholic novel led to some new insights. In brief, Inchbald's novel is the story of the young and beautiful Miss Milner, the product of a Catholic-Protestant mixed marriage. She takes the faith of her mother, a Protestant (a common practice in "mixed marriages" of the time). Upon the death of her father she is placed under the guardianship of the dark and mysterious Jesuit priest, Dorriforth, with whom she falls in love. About to reconcile herself to the unrequited and forbidden nature of her attraction, Miss Milner is given new hope when she learns that the Pope has released Dorriforth from his vows so that he can claim the title and estate of his deceased cousin, Lord Elmwood. Apparently the Holy Father felt it important enough to keep Catholic estates in Catholic families that he wanted Dorriforth to be able to marry and procreate. After a tumultuous courtship, he and Miss Milner are married, and become the new Lord and Lady Elmwood. The story does not end there, however. Lord Elmwood travels to Jamaica where he has colonial investments and leaves Lady Elmwood for three years, during which time she commits an indiscretion with a

former suitor. Upon his return, Lord Elmwood kills his rival in a duel and banishes his wife and their daughter to a remote estate, refusing to see them or hear them spoken of again.

[34] Lady Elmwood dies shortly thereafter in shame, pleading with her Jesuit confessor to care for Matilda, her daughter, and to allow Matilda to return to her father. In strains of high gothic, Matilda is permitted into her father's home, but only if, again, he never sees her or hears her spoken of. Matilda, on the other hand, exhibits excessive filial piety, worshipping her father's portrait and engaging in conduct that strikes the modern post-Freudian reader as more than mildly unhealthy. Matilda is as docile a devotee of patriarchy as her mother was a rebel against it. An accidental encounter on a stairway between father and daughter leads to Matilda's banishment, and she is promptly abducted by the sinister Lord Margrave who intends to rape her. Happily, in a change of heart as sudden as it was unpredicted, Elmwood heroically rescues his daughter and the two are reunited in the fulfillment of a father daughter romance.

[35] This thumbnail sketch of the complicated plot leaves out many important details, not the least of which is how the text draws upon key issues during this crucial period in the process of the Catholic Emancipation that was eventually to come in 1829, a period that witnessed the Gordon Riots in 1780 and other outpourings of Anti-Catholic sentiment. Rereading the novel in a Catholic and Jesuit context allowed me to understand that many aspects of the story that had previously seemed odd, inexplicable or downright evil, actually made sense when analyzed in light of key Ignatian charisms such as indifference. Dorriforth/Lord Elmwood was not a neo-Gothic villain; instead, features of Inchbald's development of his character led me to understand that he was struggling with issues of excessive attachment to his wife and daughter. While much less explicitly than Barker, the novel also takes up the last gasps of the Jacobite cause and the question of Protestant succession. The seemingly strange plot twist of Dorriforth being released by the Pope to marry may relate to the rumors circulating at the time of the novel's composition regarding Henry Benedict Stuart, the last of the legitimate Stuart line, and also a Catholic priest known popularly as "Cardinal York" (as he had claims to the Dukedom of York). Upon the death of the Young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, Henry Benedict became, unofficially of course, King Henry IX. Although 63 at the time, and a priest, he was the last hope for the Jacobites. Hence the wishful rumors regarding a dispensation regarding his obligations to England as opposed to his obligations to the church.

[36] Inchbald cleverly plays into the stereotypes in particular surrounding Jesuits. Dorriforth's manipulative mentor Sandford, for example, takes it upon himself to tease and torment Miss Milner in a particularly sinister way. Yet as I argue, Inchbald also includes details that portray the order in a positive light. Sandford later becomes the fallen Lady Elmwood's champion, and the protector and intercessor for Matilda. In my essay, I speculate that the four volumes of the novel represent allegorically the four weeks of the Spiritual Exercises, with the primary plot elements corresponding to the spiritual goals of each of the weeks in the Exercises' process of prayer and discernment. Inchbald herself had a Jesuit confessor, thus it is very likely that she was acquainted with the Exercises. Unfortunately, it was that same Jesuit confessor who urged Inchbald to burn her journals, thus robbing us of more intimate insights into the interrelationship of her spiritual and her artistic life.

[37] By taking advantage of the expansion of the literary canon that has occurred in the last twenty to thirty years, we can enrich the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and ensure that it is a *living* tradition, one that recognizes the significant contributions of early modern Catholic women writers. Moreover, I would argue too that seeing even the “dead white men” of the older literary canon within the perspective of a Catholic Intellectual Tradition provides new and exciting ways of appreciating the work of Dryden and Pope as part of a Catholic canon, one that in the spirit of access, informs the history of Catholic education that is open to all voices, including those of women and the poor. The Catholic Intellectual Tradition enriches our knowledge of the canon of early modern British literature and a reconfiguration of that canon enriches how we can engage with the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

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