Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian Britian

Theory and Discipline

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Abstract

Anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian Britain has had numerous historians, but none have posited a theory of religious prejudice to help explain it. This article argues that anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian Britain can be interpreted as an example of prejudice rather than as a problem of differences over competing theologies on true religion. It suggests ways in which behavioral theory can help explain the nature of religious prejudice in an interdisciplinary framework, and posits a theory of religious prejudice in society. The chronological limits are 1850-53, a time of critical importance in Catholic/Protestant relations in Britain.

The Problem

[1] Anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian Britain has not been without its historians, but none have posited a theory of religious prejudice. In the 1960s, Geoffrey F. A. Best saw the problem as a Protestant form of anti-clericalism, which focused on the allegedly immoral and invasive nature of the Roman Catholic priesthood within the English family. The celibacy of the priesthood was imagined by Protestants invariably to lead to "morbid asceticism, cruelty, or mania," and the Confessional not only usurped a father's leadership role but might compromise the sexual purity of his wife and daughters when they went alone to visit the priest (1967: 127). E. R. Norman thought Victorian "No Popery" agitations were the last expressions of traditional British anti-Catholicism, based on a simple hatred of Catholic theology, and on dying theories of an exclusive British constitution (21). In the 1970s, D. G. Paz concluded a quantitative study of anti-Catholic public petitioning in 1850-51 with the idea that Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism played a decisive role in anti-Catholic prejudice (356). In the 1980s, Walter L. Arnstein thought anti-Catholicism was a latter day chapter in the ancient story of Catholic versus Protestant, and that the great paradox of mid-Victorian Britain was that the Protestant evangelical revival of the time coincided with immigration of Irish Catholics under the guidance of an energetic papacy (1982: 3). Robert J. Klaus also studied the influence of evangelicalism in Protestant militancy and found that anti-Catholicism was a psychotic form of prejudice (281). In his work on Liverpool, Frank Neal suggested that the root cause of Protestant/Catholic violence was a form of tribalism (253). In the 1990s, John Wolffe thought anti-Catholicism was the natural result of evangelical theology (316).

[2] More recently, Marjule Anne Drury found that the problem of anti-Catholicism was intimately connected with national cultural identity. She followed David Landes and Thomas Sowell who saw cultural difference as a cause of ethnic group receptivity to education, technology, and markets. Culture may either impede or encourage economic gain, expansion, or progress. Drury concluded that anti-Catholicism in Germany and Britain was bound up with nationalist propaganda designed to reinforce ethnic identity.

[3] Protestant Germans of the late nineteenth century, like British mid-Victorians before them, believed theirs was a religion of individual autonomy, education, progress, and nationalism. This contrasted with their view of Catholicism as ultramontane (loyal to a medieval king-pope who aspired to world dominion), under the control of a sinister and foreign priesthood, luring ignorant peasants into a religion focused on magic, plaster saints, rituals, and processions (Drury: 117). Johannes Forberger, in his *Moralstatistik und Konfession* wrote that the highest virtue of a Catholic was obedience and integration into the Church, not in personality development. Catholicism was derided among Protestant critics as emotionally hysterical, effeminate, and embraced only by "womanly peoples" (39). Bourgeois Protestant Germans were disgusted with apparently lower class adherence to Catholicism and the unmasculine placement of women at the head of convents. Convents and the confessional were castigated as unproductive and sinful (Drury: 120).

[4] German anti-Catholicism from the 1890s to 1914 paid careful attention to the socio-economic basis of Catholic retardation compared with Protestants. For Drury, "... it would be wrong to assume that anti-Catholic claims were entirely imaginary." (120). What was the relationship between culture and economic achievement? German Protestant writers concluded that economic backwardness among Catholics was due to their culture, and the ongoing debate spurred Max Weber to research his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), a debate that began when Catholics noted their under-representation in civil service jobs and demanded a quota system to redress this discrimination (Drury: 120). Protestant observers traced lack of Catholic motivation to *Weltflucht*, flight from the world, in which the afterlife and contemplation were more important than hard work in this world. Catholics seemed to be wasting time on pilgrimages and numerous holy days. Vows of poverty seemed to encourage begging (Drury: 124). Jesuit-led expulsions of Jews, Protestants, and Muslims from Iberia and France during the Counter-Reformation led to desertification of the former, and wealth to the enemies of the latter when they fled to Holland and England. It seemed like a symptom of willful retardation (Drury: 125).

[5] Critical in Drury's argument is the work of Hans Rost, who observed that Catholic culture tended to focus on the afterlife, whereas a worldly view resulted in greater business acumen among Protestants (129-30). Some Catholic intellectuals also recognized a strain of anti-intellectualism in their culture that was hindering economic potential (Drury 131). Prejudice against Catholic economic and cultural life was not an issue only in late nineteenth century Germany, but had a strong precursor in mid-Victorian Britain.

[6] Historians noted above use terminology from the social sciences such as "ethnocentrism," "mania," "psychosis," "tribalism," "personality development," "identity," and "scapegoat." However, the explanatory power of behavioral theories of prejudice has not been taken advantage of. This article argues that anti-Catholicism in mid -Victorian Britain is better viewed as an example of prejudice rather than as a problem of differing theological opinions on what is true religion. Theology can be seen as ideology, masking something more fundamental in human behavior. This article suggests ways in which behavioral theory can help explain the nature of religious prejudice in history, and recommends future research in an interdisciplinary framework. The chronological limits are 1850–1853, a time of critical importance in Catholic/Protestant relations in Britain.

Behavioral Theory and Religious Prejudice

[7] A theory can be a set of concepts or hypotheses used to order or classify a number of observable events. A theory may be as complex as the phenomena under study, or as simple and inclusive as postulates made in the natural sciences. For this study I define prejudice as an unfavorable attitude towards an outgroup, following suggestions set forth by Howard J. Ehrlich (3-8). Prejudice is judgment before knowledge, to pre-judge based on unfavorable stereotypes.

[8] A theory of anti-Catholicism can be stated: anti-Catholicism is a subset of religious prejudice caused at the individual level by an inner need for a scapegoat, exacerbated through the authoritarian personality, and at the mass social level by ingroup anxiety over perceived threats to ingroup status from an outgroup. This is a theory of religious prejudice based on interdisciplinary research in the fields of history, sociology, and psychology.

[9] Prejudice can be seen as a symptom of personality disorder, and psychodynamic theories of prejudice seek to explain the problem at the individual level. Frustration Aggression Displacement (scapegoat) theory accounts for prejudice as a response to frustration. That response is usually aggressive behavior displaced upon an easily available target rather than on a logical target. Displacement of prejudice may be projected at either individuals or groups. The latter may be a dominant outgroup (Catholics in southern Europe) or a minority outgroup (Catholics in England). It is more common for displaced aggression to be projected against minority outgroups. Projection is the tendency to attribute our own motives, traits, and behaviour to other people. The more the displacing person hates himself the more he hates the outgroup, but this does not relieve the frustration, because the displaced object of anger is not in reality related to the true source of frustration (Allport: 351). This can lead to the most horrible abuses.

[10] A refinement of Frustration Aggression Displacement theory suggests that if members of an ingroup (ultra-Protestants) perceive an outgroup (Catholics) as improperly arrogating to itself an illegitimate sense of superiority, then this will produce self-righteous hostility against the outgroup (Le Vine and Campbell: 131). It is important to note here that scholars such as Gordon Allport advised some years ago that psychodynamic theories might best be applied within a context of other determinants of prejudice, such as culture and parenting (391).

[11] Indeed, one psychodynamic theory does take into account the role of parenting and culture. The theory of the Authoritarian Personality was developed in the 1940s to help understand the inner dynamics of anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany. This theory explains individual prejudice as the result of a distinct "authoritarian" personality type. Persons with an authoritarian personality have an emotionally stifled childhood. Vital impulses are tainted with fear of punishment, and thought itself becomes inhibited (Forbes: 3, 47). The authoritarian personality has an affinity for irrational outlooks, especially on national, racial, and religious issues (see Adorno, et al.). Most social scientific literature on the authoritarian personality recognizes a close relationship between that personality type and the expression of prejudice (Forbes: 152).

[12] The authoritarian personality and right-wing authoritarianism have been positively linked with religious fundamentalism in several studies (Laythe, Finkel, and Kirkpatrick: 1, 6). Fundamentalism is a subset of Protestant evangelicalism that believes in biblical inerrancy and salvation through Christ alone, militantly prosecuted throughout society (Kellstedt and Smidt: 260). Behavioral science has noted their narrow-minded outlook and inability to consider points of view different from their own. They share these traits with right-wing authoritarians, along with belief in submission, aggression, and conventionalism. Unimaginative and close-minded,

the authoritarian and fundamentalist are often the same person (Laythe, Finkel, and Kirkpatrick: 2). Recent research suggests, "fundamentalism might be viewed as a religious manifestation of right wing authoritarianism" (Bruce Hunsberger cited in Laythe, Finkel, Bringle, and Kirkpatrick: 633).

[13] Following the work of Adorno, et al., eight characteristics of the authoritarian personality fit Victorian ultra-Protestant ingroup behavior: 1.) rigid adherence to middle class values, 2.) submissive and uncritical attitude to moral authority figures of the ingroup, 3.) tendency to reject, condemn, and punish anyone who violates conventional values, 4.) belief in mystical determinants of one's fate, and a disposition to think in rigid categories, 5.) exaggerated emphasis on strength and toughness, 6.) vilification of the human, 7.) belief that dangerous things are happening, 8.) exaggerated concern over sexual improprieties (228; see also Forbes: 33).

[14] No single behavioral theory can explain prejudice in all of its varieties (Allport: xvi). As a religious form of prejudice, anti-Catholicism operates on both the individual level and the mass level. As scapegoat theory is relevant for understanding the individual anti-Catholic, Real Conflict theory is important in comprehending mass movements aimed against Catholicism.[1] Prejudice may result from intergroup competition over scarce resources, according to Real Conflict theory. If an outgroup poses a real threat to the ingroup, then the result will be hostility towards the outgroup. Real threats promote ingroup solidarity and increase the likelihood of ethnocentrism (defined here as hostility towards an alien outgroup, and aggressive loyalty towards the ethnic ingroup). Of course, ethnocentrism can also result from a false perception of real threat (Stroebe and Insko: 14). It is reasonable to modify this theory and assume that intergroup conflicts may occur over social resources, and that these might include notions such as prestige and status (15). Both scapegoat theory and Real Conflict theory agree that the most likely target of aggression will be the closest outgroup (Levine and Campbell: 226, 217, 222). For British ultra-Protestants, Roman Catholics were the most proximate outgroup.

[15] When members of an ingroup act upon a prejudice, four results are possible: 1.) avoidance of the despised outgroup, 2.) hostile verbalization, 3.) discrimination, 4.) physical assault, 5.) extermination (Allport: 15). Victorian Catholics and Protestants would have been familiar with every one of these categories except the last. During the period 1850–1853, ultra-Protestants were especially assiduous in acting out their anti-Catholic prejudice.

Victorian Anti-Catholic Prejudice

[16] It must be noted that the ingroup of ultra-Protestants did not belong to one denomination in particular, but most often coalesced under the banner of evangelicalism (Sandeen: 17, 21, 39-41). Anglican, Methodist, and Free Church (Scotland) evangelicals, to name the primary communions, formed the anti-Catholic ingroup united in fervent opposition to "Popish" claims for expanded civil rights. The Papal Aggression affair of 1850–1851 sparked renewed interest amongst this anti-Catholic ingroup on how best to resist Rome and its "threat" to the status of an allegedly Protestant Britain.

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[1] Readable and informative introductions to Real Conflict theory are Levine and Campbell; Stroebe and Insko. It is worth noting that no theories of prejudice have been refuted empirically with evidence, but some have simply gone out of fashion (see Stroebe and Insko: 3).

[17] Briefly, the Papal Aggression affair began in 1850 when Pope Pius IX issued an order setting up an episcopal hierarchy for England, to replace vicars apostolic who had been in charge of Catholic ecclesiastical administration since the sixteenth century. Bishops and an archbishop were given titles based upon names of English towns and cities. Protestants expressed outrage after reading a pastoral letter inaugurating the hierarchy, issued by the new Cardinal Archbishop, Nicholas Wiseman. The archbishop wrote of the Church returning to England as rightful governor of the people, restoring the kingdom to its proper place in the papal orbit. This bold assertion only provoked abuse from the Protestant camp, aimed at Wiseman, the Pope, and Roman Catholicism in general. The perceived threat lay in the possible alteration in status of the Protestant denominations relative to Rome and its apparent bid for more power (see Paz; Klaus; Ralls).

[18] As they did so often and so enthusiastically at such times, ultra-Protestants formed organizations to resist the papal enemy, most notably the Scottish Reformation Society (S.R.S.) and the Protestant Alliance. The S.R.S. was established in December 1850 to watch the designs and movements of the papal aggressor and to alert Britain to the public threat of Roman Catholicism. It functioned as an outlet for ultra-Protestants to displace aggression and act out prejudice in an organized fashion. Verbalization of prejudice through the written and spoken word was the *raison d'etre* of the S.R.S. During the 1850s and 1860s it expanded operations throughout Britain and the empire. The S.R.S. sponsored lectures on aspects of the "Romish" question, and paid agents to perambulate from town to town in Scotland warning and encouraging the populace on the dangers of Romanism and how to defend against it. In Edinburgh, the S.R.S. supported courses given by the Rev. Dr. J. A. Wylie, and distributed cash prizes at annual contests for the best essay on the "Romish" controversy. Some of the essay questions included "Show how Popery is foretold in the Scriptures . . . Show how Popery subverts the vital doctrines of the Gospel . . . Show how Popery corrupts the Christian ministry." (*Bulwark* 7 [1857-58]: 283-88). The S.R.S. also published and distributed thousands of pamphlets and issues of the their principle mouthpiece, the *Bulwark*.

[19] Understandably, the S.R.S. kept a close watch on "Popery" both at home and abroad. Unless one can recognize the conspicuous characteristics of an outgroup (like Catholics), then it becomes difficult to form stereotypes about it. As Allport noted, it is vital for the prejudiced person to learn the cues whereby he may identify the enemy, and thus he becomes observant and suspicious. Extremely prejudiced persons have always had a heightened power of identifying members and traits of an outgroup. Perception of cues may include a wide variety of observable phenomena: names or titles, religious observances, rituals, dress, and manners (129, 133-35). Thus, every bill that came before parliament was methodically examined for signs of the "Popish" enemy, and any suspicious legislation (especially from Irish Catholic MPs) was loudly opposed. Every annual report of the S.R.S. featured an analysis of the state of "Popery," complete with a statistical profile of "Popish " MPs, peers, baronets, clergy, monks, nuns, chapels, convents, monasteries, colleges, and government subsidies to Roman Catholic education (*Bulwark* 12 [1862-63]: 218).

[20] S.R.S. watchfulness was not confined to Britain. Foreign and colonial operations were deemed vitally important to preserve a Protestant empire. Correspondence with Protestants abroad kept the S.R.S. informed of "Popish" threats to the security of Protestantism in Canada, New Zealand, the United States, Australia, Italy, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Tracts and copies of the *Bulwark* were dispatched to all of the English speaking colonies. Persecution of

Protestants in Spain and Italy were monitored and the victims assisted whenever possible (*Bulwark* 2 [1852-53]: 132-33; 12 [1862-63]: 218).

[21] The vigor with which ultra-Protestants verbalized their anti-Catholic prejudice can be seen on the pages of the *Bulwark*. Its editor was the Rev. James Begg, of the Free Church of Scotland. Perhaps better known as a Scottish nationalist, Begg penned volumes on his country's education system and on the need for electoral reform (Hanham: 154). He also wrote one of the standard textbooks on the "Romish " question, *A Handbook of Popery* (1852). He was proud to be known as one who never changed his opinions and hoped every true Protestant would become an educated hater of "Popery" (Wolffe 2004; Smith: 2:162-63, 175-76). The *Bulwark* (with a claimed circulation of 30,000) was designed to expose the conspiracies and falsehoods of the Roman Catholic Church. This was an undoubtedly valuable asset for ultra-Protestants, because from the first issue the journal warned its readers that the secular press in Britain was really under the control of Jesuits and blasphemous infidels and could not be trusted. The government could not be trusted either, and the *Bulwark* decried a number of unhappy trends that went along with creeping Romanism: conversions to Catholicism, liberalism, Jesuit control of education, and the immigration of too many Irish Papists (1 [1851-52]: 1, v, viii).

[22] The *Bulwark*'s use of terminology gives some insight into the importance of recognizing and naming the hated outgroup. The journal refused to use the words Catholic or Catholicism, because Rome had usurped these terms as symbols for the universal Church of Christ, unjustly excluding Protestants, who must nevertheless be subject to the Pope. To use the term Catholic was to accept the Catholic doctrine on the impossibility of Protestants ever gaining salvation outside of the Roman Church (1 [1851-52]: 22). Neither could they use the term Roman Catholic, because it would admit incorrectly that the Roman Church was a branch of the universal Church of Christ. The *Bulwark* was aware that Catholics objected to the use of "Papist" and "Romanist," but they claimed no intent to insult, because both terms implied "truths" that should be acceptable to Catholics themselves: "Papist" implied subjection to the Pope of Rome, while "Romanist" implied adherence to the doctrines of Roman Catholicism (1 [1851-52]: 24).

[23] Beyond naming and identifying the Catholic outgroup, the *Bulwark* was indefatigable in exposing the traits and activities of "Romanism." Beginning with the doctrines and theology of the Roman enemy, the *Bulwark* moved on to Catholic persecutions in foreign lands and in all epochs, and ended with stories of Catholic subversion at home (2 [1852-53]: 206-9, 54-55, 82-83, 133, 176; 4 [1854-55]: 270-71). Often, the journal would include illustrative woodcuts of scenes from the Inquisition or Reformation era. Some of these were quite graphic and violent, and the editors were cognizant that some readers might be appalled, but "Popery" could not be fully understood as the "Mystery of Iniquity" without seeing Catholic atrocities represented by artists. In the first volume of the *Bulwark* there was a woodcut of torture and interrogation during the Inquisition. The accompanying text pointed out that Rome tried to excuse its atrocities by pleading that times had changed. Yet, if Rome was infallible, then the cruelties of the Inquisition were justifiably charged against the Church no matter when they were committed. In that case, the papacy appeared to be more like a "synagogue of drunken demons than anything approaching to a Church of Jesus Christ" (1 [1851-52]: 155-56).

[24] Fifty years before German Protestant controversialists explored the theme of Catholic economic backwardness, the *Bulwark* deduced the causes. For the ultra-Protestant, any traveler crossing from a Protestant land to a Catholic land would perceive that he had entered a "strange domain," in which a "gloomy genius" presided. Signs of superstition abounded, and the mental,

moral, and social aspects of society were changed for the worse. In a "Romish" country, streets swarmed with clergy and militia, equally the parasites of a despotism that controlled liberty of thought. Priests and monks furnished a visible reminder that freedom of conscience was not allowed. Why did countries with fruitful soil and genial climate produce a "dwarfish type of human mind and civil prosperity?" asked the *Bulwark* (1 [1851-52]: 41-42). Editors noted the consequences of Catholic culture:

> Intellect has become dwarfish, enterprise languishes, trade fails, poverty and rags abound, the streets swarm with beggars, filth and meanness prevail, indolence and vice are depicted in the countenance, profligates flaunt about without any apparent sense of shame . . . Spain, Portugal, and other lands where Popery has been all-prevalent, would tell the same tale of moral and civil degradation (1 [1851-52]: 43).

Apparently, in every nation where Papal Rome had advanced, civilization and virtue retreated. In Italy, the Vatican had proved itself to be a reckless and scandalous trustee of its classical inheritance. The great temples of Rome had been turned into papal quarries, the marbles of Paros and Numidia burned for lime, and all the destruction wrought by the Goths was nothing compared with the dilapidation carried on by the popes (*Bulwark* 5 [1855-56]: 9-10).

[25] Articles in the *Bulwark* thus offer an excellent source for understanding the operation of stereotypes and prejudice. Of course, stereotypes can be so rigid and attributes assigned to an outgroup so invariable that all contradictory evidence is quickly dismissed, the better to maintain the stereotype. This often leads to a belief in "essence," that an outgroup has an inherent quality, e.g., passionate Italians, logical Frenchmen, etc. (Allport: 172-74). For ultra-Protestants, the essence of the Roman Catholic outgroup was lust for control. They were viewed as intolerant and persecuting (for centuries), driven to expand and conquer. The Papal Aggression affair confirmed their stereotypes and subsequent suspicions.

[26] The second ultra-Protestant organization to form in response to the Papal Aggression, the Protestant Alliance, convened itself in London on 25 June 1851 under the chairmanship of the seventh earl of Shaftesbury, one of the great philanthropists of the era. This organization served to vent frustrations and reinforce a set of stereotypes about Roman Catholicism and the ideal of a Protestant nation. Few historians have discussed Shaftesbury's participation in the Protestant Alliance, perhaps out of a sense of embarrassment. The noble earl addressed several meetings of the Alliance, denouncing the Pope as a dangerous and insidious foe while at the same time assuring his audience that their organization would eventually defeat the "Man of Sin" by means of preaching the Gospel, praying for victory, and defending Bible truth (Protestant Alliance: 1-2; Finlayson: 166-68, 373-78; Battiscombe: 45-46, 99-102, 180; Best 1964: 34, 60). For Shaftesbury, the King James edition of the Bible was the bedrock not only of the Protestant Reformation and its blessings, but was also the foundation of English civil and religious liberties. When asked what he would put in place of the Catholic Church, he replied, "Why the Bible to be sure (Cheers). You will not find in the Bible the adoration of saints, the invocation of the Virgin, transubstantiation, holy water, and all that trumpery" (*Times* 29 Nov 1851: 5). On 6 June 1852, Shaftesbury chaired a meeting of the Protestant Alliance in London which featured a guest list of ultra-Protestant luminaries. Some of the more notable were Sir Culling Eardley (chief of the Evangelical Alliance), Sir William Verner (Tory MP for Armagh and Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland), James Lord (chairman of the Protestant Association), and the earl of Roden (member of the Orange Lodge), the last of whom urged his audience to elect

more Christian MPs who could be counted on to pass Bible-based legislation. This meeting passed a resolution condemning the Pope, convents, and the granting of rank and precedence to Catholic bishops. It was a straightforward method of expressing ultra-Protestant frustration over what seemed to be galling attacks on Protestant prestige and status, symbolized dramatically by the publication of Pius IX's rescript (*Times* 7 June 1852: 6).

[27] The Papal Aggression affair was the primary locus of ingroup hostility, verbalization, and discrimination in late 1850 and early 1851, but once the symbolic and unenforced Ecclesiastical Titles Act had been passed in the summer of 1851 anti-Catholic prejudice focused on other issues: state funding for St. Patrick's Catholic seminary in Maynooth, Ireland, and convent inspection and regulation.

[28] The storm over Maynooth (as the British called St. Patrick's seminary) has been discussed elsewhere in greater detail, but a brief summary is in order here.[2] In the parliamentary session of 1852 ultra-Protestants made a concerted attack on the state subsidy for Maynooth, and they made themselves heard in the House of Commons through the medium of the public petition. Almost one thousand petitions were delivered to Westminster on the subject of Maynooth, and they give a unique insight into the working of stereotypes and prejudice among the ultra-Protestant ingroup. The Presbytery of Edinburgh recommended abolition of the subsidy, "from earnest zeal for Protestant ascendancy as the supremacy of truth over fatal error." Anglicans of St. Woollos, Monmouthshire, lamented that the state paid for training "popish priests," whose creed compelled them to be the secret enemy of Protestantism. The electors of Wick saw "Popery" as intolerant and persecuting, the chief cause of degradation and turbulence in Ireland, and the prime disturber of world peace. It was "suicidal infatuation" to continue the grant. The Liverpool Church of England Association believed the late increase in "Popery" was a source of anxiety and regret to all those who held dear the country's deliverance from "Romish" error during the Reformation. Tried by the test of expediency, the Maynooth grant had proved a failure, either as conciliation of the priesthood, or as pacification of the Irish. The inhabitants of Bath complained that the intolerant character of Rome, and its anti-Christian doctrines, rendered it unworthy of state support. The Protestants of Southwark found Roman Catholicism repugnant, and believed Maynooth instilled bigotry among the seminarians. The priests from Maynooth, claimed the Southwark Protestants, were the chief agents in training the Irish to hate the English: they taught and practiced divided loyalty between Pope and Queen (SCPP 1852: 118, 345, 15, 40, 229, 253, 344).

[29] The petitions revealed several stereotypes about not only Maynooth, but on Roman Catholicism as well. First, their faith was characterized as idolatrous and anti-Christian. Second, the seminary was accused of inculcating immoral, anti-social, and disloyal ideas: St. Patrick's was imagined to be a nest of sedition, the Pope as ringleader of an international conspiracy against the British empire. Third, the state subsidy had failed to quell Irish hostility to British rule. Lastly, the grant was deemed an insult to God. Ultra-Protestants convicted Maynooth on the grounds of Roman Catholicism. They had a more difficult time proving their case in parliament, where despite the best efforts of anti-Catholic Tory MPs such as Richard Spooner, the campaign to revoke the grant failed (barely) to overpower ministerial resistance. Conciliation of Ireland

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[2]Established with royal support in 1798 near Dublin, Maynooth seminary was intended to keep Irish Catholic youth from crossing to " infidel" revolutionary France for their sacerdotal education (see Norman: 25 ff., for an account of the great anti-Maynooth agitation of 1845).

was thought more important than satisfying the ultra-Protestants (*Hansard* 120 [1852]: 502-20, 537-42, 561-62, 580-81, 876-84, 1135, 1147-49; 122 [1852]: 226-29, 239- 41, 771-73).

[30] Note the use of words in the petitions: "ascendancy," "anxiety," "degradation," "suicidal," "bigotry," "pacification," "divided loyalty," "hatred." They appear to be projections of deep-seated fears and reveal more than stereotypes. They reflect ingroup status paranoia about a threatening outgroup, as one might expect from Real Conflict theory. The prejudiced person is likely to have an affinity for conservative politics and dislike minorities. He may see the nation as a projection of himself (Allport: 404-6). A conservative Anglican Tory politician like Spooner demonstrated this in his lifelong campaign against Maynooth.

[31] In the early 1850s, Spooner protested the teachings of Catholic professors at Maynooth and used their textbooks as proof of Catholic disloyalty, sedition, dishonesty, idolatry, and immorality. He accused Maynooth of teaching the Irish that they had no obligation to remain loyal to Queen Victoria because she was a heretic (*Hansard* 121 [1852]: 502-3). On the subject of oaths, Spooner based his explication on Ludovico Bailly's *Theologia Dogmatica et Moralis* (Paris, 1826), from which he described a passage (3:366) inferring that oaths may be altered for a just cause, or may be relaxed by means of a dispensation from a lawful superior. Spooner believed this implied that if England was invaded, then anyone who had sworn allegiance to the Queen would be released from their obligation (511-12). Referring to Reiffenstuel's *Jus Canonicum Universum* (Ingoldstadt, 1729), he found that an oath is not necessarily binding on the conscience and may be conditional only: the popes may dispense all vows and oaths if a just cause warranted doing so (2:2.495). He asked the Commons if anyone 's property, the institutions of the kingdom, or even the monarchy itself could be safe when Catholics believed this. Spooner believed Catholics were just waiting for the best opportunity to reveal their prejudice and exterminate Protestant heretics (*Hansard* 121 [1852]: 513-14). In this same 1852 peroration, Spooner alluded to the moral "filth" of Confession and the danger of penitents being enslaved by priests (*Hansard* 121 [1852]: 523).

[32] Again, in 1853 Spooner announced his shock at the increase in convents and cathedrals in England, and of sedition: "At this moment England is full of Romanist agents – full of men who are undermining the institutions of the country in the most Jesuitical manner possible" (*Hansard* 124 [1853]: 435). He appealed to the Protestant government of a Protestant country to maintain the Protestant constitution in the face of Papal tyranny. Spooner referenced several documents, including the papal bull *In Coena Domini* (1564), which he interpreted as absolving British subjects of allegiance to the Queen. He also cited Canon XXIII of Urban II (1088-99), which permitted Catholics to kill anyone who had been excommunicated, as long as the killing was done in the best interests of the Church (*Hansard* 124 [1853]: 426-29, 432, 434).

[33] The second *cause célèbre* for anti-Catholics in the early 1850s was what to do about convents. The petitions of 1852 and of 1852-53 show a significant involvement of women in anti-Catholic agitation, at least on the convent question. In 1852, seven hundred "Females of Fordoun, Kinkardineshire" judged convents inimical to liberty and the spirit of the Gospel. Nuns seemed to be placed under unnatural constraints against their will. The Fordoun women requested state regulation and inspection (SCPP 1852: 378). Edinburgh sent a petition with the signatures of 15,000 women, protesting that the blessings of civil and religious liberty enjoyed by Her Majesty's loyal subjects were denied to the "inmates " of nunneries. The conventual system itself was contrary to "our holy religion." They claimed young and inexperienced females

were immured in convents, stripped of their property, and then exposed to the designs of dangerous persons (i.e., priests) (SCPP 1852: 363).

[34] By 1853, the anti-convent campaign reached maximum zealotry, and women were in the vanguard of the petition drive. Twenty thousand women of Liverpool implored parliamentary action to protect "a class of Her Majesty's subjects who appear to Petitioners more especially to require it." They complained that the property of nuns became the property of Rome, and of course there was no escape for those who became dissatisfied with convent life (SCPP 1852-53: 29). The women of Dunse, Berwickshire, thought convents injurious to the female sex, and deplored the entrapment of young women who had to give up the protection that God ordained – staying at home with family (SCPP 1852-53: 49). A thousand women of Holborn, London, reminded parliament that convents had been banned from England during the Reformation, and experience indicated that these institutions were " black spots, unfit to bear the light of the intelligence of a free country" (SCPP 1852-53: 737). The Holborn petitioners denounced convents for several reasons: young novitiates were too inexperienced in life and were easy prey for scheming clergymen with immoral purposes in mind; nuns were decoyed from the bosom of their families, their property taken from them, and kept under oppressive conditions without hope of redress of grievances; and perhaps worst of all, nuns were separated from the public and private duties that nature mandated expressly for women, namely, motherhood (SCPP 1852-53: 737).

[35] Two attempts were made in parliament to proceed from verbalization of prejudice to outright discrimination. The Religious Houses Bill of 1851 would have allowed Justices of the Peace to make inquiries after any woman suspected of being held against her will in a convent. H. E. Lacy, MP for Bodmin, sponsored this private bill on the grounds that he failed to understand how several hundred women in England could possibly lead contented lives in convents. Lacy admitted his bill might inconvenience a few nuns, but that was a small price to pay for liberty. A system had to be set up to out-maneuver the confessional, in which every nun became a spy upon her sisters (*Hansard* 116 [1851]: 949, 959). Charles Newdegate, MP for Warwickshire, supported this bill and gave an indication of his future mission as defender of English womanhood. He suspected that a new convent in his native Warwick concealed a subterranean prison, and warned that no convent was beyond *habeas corpus*. He also believed convents were no different than lunatic asylums, fit for public inspection to protect the inmates (*Hansard* 116 [1851]: 962, 964). On its second reading, the bill went down, 123 to 91 (*Hansard* 116 [1851]: 988).

[36] Even more instructive was the Recovery of Personal Liberty Bill (1853). On 10 May, Thomas Chambers, MP for Hertford, brought in a measure which would have compelled the Home Secretary to send JPs and state inspectors to any convent suspected of coercion or false imprisonment, and if necessary sue out a writ of *habeas corpus*. Chambers thought there were nuns in England suffering under illegal detention, and he used petitions to buttress his argument that convents were anti-social because they were built like prisons. He assumed nuns were lost to their country as citizens, passing from the English constitution to something less appealing, shut off from friends and family, and deprived of any means of escape (*Hansard* 127 [1853]: 80-82, 88, 94; for a good account of the sentimental stereotype of the immured nun pining for freedom, see Casteras). Newdegate agreed, adding that Britain must not accept the establishment of " hells upon earth," which contravened English freedom (*Hansard* 127 [1853]: 104-5). Some MPs expressed concern over the control of property, and J. Whiteside, MP for Enniskillen, thought the

real question was how best to prevent Catholic clergy from procuring the alienation of nuns' property (*Hansard* 129 [1853]: 496). Henry Drummond, MP for West Surrey, accused the priesthood of exploiting convents for immoral and pecuniary purposes. Women in his own family had been "stolen into convents," and he felt it was "utterly impossible for the slaves of a priesthood to be sharers with Protestant freemen in conducting a constitutional government" (*Hansard* 129 [1853]: 503-5).

Application of Prejudice Theory to Anti-Catholicism

[37] Frustration Aggression Displacement theory and Real Conflict theory predict that the most frustrating or threatening outgroup will be the most hated (Levine and Campbell: 216). Grievances against convents (as noted in petitions and parliamentary debate) included reference to defenseless women at the mercy of clever priests, separation from family control (as well as the ingroup), "unnatural" vows and lifestyle (i.e., not motherhood and domesticity), and loss of property (or territory) to the Roman Catholic outgroup. The convent issue actually had little to do with theology, canon law, or loyalty to the Queen, as did the Maynooth issue. The convent question struck a different cord among the ultra-Protestants. They feared loss of control over their young women, and for anti-Catholic women this meant separation from hearth and home, family and relatives. For anti-Catholic men the property question was just as vital as the familial concern, if women were viewed as a special type of property. Men especially regarded the prospect of young Protestant women and their property falling into the hands of the Roman Catholic outgroup with anxiety and bitterness. It is no wonder that they verbalized their frustrations in the forms of petitioning, public debate, and attempted discriminatory legislation.

[38] Authoritarian personality traits discussed above are evident in Begg, Shaftesbury, and Spooner. One trait is the tendency to reject and punish anyone who violated conventional values (anxiety about disloyal celibate priests and nuns). A second trait is belief in the mystical determinants of one's fate (conviction that Britain could be prosperous only when obeying the Bible's prohibition of idolatry). A third trait is believing dangerous things are happening (anxiety over the spread of Catholic chapels and convents, and the designs of Jesuits and Maynooth professors). A fourth trait is an exaggerated concern over sexual improprieties (anxiety over confession and clerical celibacy).

[39] When we examine anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian Britain, social science theory can help us understand the relationship among a large variety of anti-Catholic stereotypes and the subsequent acting out of prejudice. This article has concentrated on the verbalization of anti-Catholic prejudice through the written word in the *Bulwark* and in the form of public petitions, and through the spoken word in the form of parliamentary debates and meetings of ultra-Protestant organizations such as the Protestant Alliance. Discrimination came in the form of attempted legislation against Catholic institutions. In the category of physical assault, a subject beyond the purview of this article, many historical studies have already been made of intercommunal violence between immigrant Catholic Irish and the host communities in England and Scotland (see Finnegan; Neal; Gilley 1970, 1971, 1973, 1978; Arnstein 1975; Gallagher; Millward).

[40] Not every Protestant in mid-Victorian Britain was an ultra-Protestant, and social science has examined the question of why religion can be a pacifying actor on prejudice. Jaak B. Billiet conducted research on 1,650 Flemish Catholics and found a moderating effect of church involvement on ethnic prejudice (230-33). Those with more education were less likely to favor

authoritarian ideas, partly because they were less politically powerless and, following the theory of Peer Scheepers, had less need for compensation (see Scheepers, Felling, and Peters). Belonging to the older generation significantly increased a negative attitude toward foreigners. Belonging to higher income groups had a moderating effect on anomie and utilitarian individualism (having little concern for others). Education, income, age, and church involvement influence the social environment. An environment in which people find it difficult to realize social identification and in which people feel powerless and socially isolated fosters contra-identification (defining of oneself in contrast to outsiders). Regular churchgoers were more concerned with the humanistic aspects of religion and more under the influence of teaching that emphasized humanistic values of "sociocultural Christianity," solidarity, charity, and social justice, which have been emphasized in Catholic organizations since the late 1960s (Eisinga: 70-71). This mode of Christianity prevents fundamentalism, a religious orientation that could encourage ethnocentrism (Billiet: 230-33). Thus, religious leaders can have a powerful impact on the attitudes of parishioners, as they did in a negative way among ultra-Protestants in Britain. Prejudice may be moderated or eliminated with knowledge and leadership. Such efforts may take decades, as the case of Northern Ireland shows.

[41] Continual education can lessen group prejudice. Cairns and Hewstone concluded from their research on Northern Irish communal prejudice that a significant result of community relations policies beginning in the 1980s was that people know how they ought to behave towards the outgroup, even if they do not actually do so. Yet, people may try to hide their prejudice to conform to newer liberal social norms, or the attitudes and discrimination may continue at an unconscious level (Niens: 164). In a study of implicit (hidden) prejudice among Northern Irish university students of both communities, "results indicated no significant differences between Catholics and Protestants in out-group bias," and none in gender differences. Previous studies indicated greater hostility to outgroups among males, but used explicit measures of prejudice (Niens: 173). Women were less likely to act out their implicit prejudice, suggesting greater receptiveness of social norms among females. The study contradicted previous research indicating Protestants were more biased than Catholics (Whyte: i-iv).

[42] Religious-based prejudice has been linked in research to fundamentalism and authoritarianism, but the influence of particular religious beliefs has been less well studied. Keith M. Wilson and Jennifer L. Huff studied the belief in an "active Satan" who opposes God's will and found such belief to strongly correlate to prejudice against homosexuals (293). These scholars found evidence to support Elaine Pagels' thesis that Christians who believe in an active Satan tend to be more intolerant of the "other." This is also in line with findings by Altemeyer and Hunsberger on religious fundamentalists. Again, the religious education of certain Christians comes into play on this issue: toleration of others, or damnation, based on any number of interpretations of scripture. The relevancy to anti-Catholicism is powerful. Human beings are taught religion, and their hatred of the religious outgroup is learned, whether today or five hundred years ago.

Conclusion

[43] The study of prejudice, stereotype, and discrimination in the past should incorporate not only the historical method, but make judicious use of behavioral theory and research. This is a recommendation of interdisciplinarity. A theory of anti-Catholic prejudice could not be posited without the critical insights of both behavioral and humanities disciplines. Anti-Catholicism in

mid-Victorian Britain, within such a research framework, is better viewed as an example of prejudice rather than as a problem of differing theologies on what is true religion. Theology can be seen as a form of ideology, suggestive of something more fundamental in human behavior. Therefore, behavioral theory can help explain the nature of religious prejudice in history.

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