Gregory's important book begins a long-overdue analysis of how English Catholics experienced nearly two decades of revolution and republican rule. The book should be required reading for advanced undergraduates and post-graduate students and will be very useful to specialists in the field. We can hope that other scholars will continue Gregory's analysis into the experience of Catholics during this significant period in British history.

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Jaime Goodrich, *Writing Habits: Historicism, Philosophy, and English Benedictine Convents, 1600 –1800*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2021, pp. 240, $59.95, ISBN: 978-0-8173-2103-1.

Jaime Goodrich's *Writing Habits: Historicism, Philosophy, and English Benedictine Convents, 1600 –1800* is an unusually—and refreshingly—ecumenical and multidisciplinary contribution to early modern studies. She deftly combines concepts from the writing of twentieth-century Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, specifically his paradigm of community or *gemeinschaft*, with her deep knowledge of early modern English Catholic convent texts and culture. Her analysis features the extant archives of the six English Benedictine houses founded on the continent between 1598 and 1665 following the dissolution of the monasteries in England.

Goodrich sets out to bridge a gap between historicist and philosophical approaches to early modern studies. Summarizing Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Mariotti's call for a 'turn to religion' she avers their work presented two approaches: one 'rooted in various historicist and materialist methodologies' and a second that draws on Continental philosophy, 'most notably Emmanuel Levinas's views on alterity, in order to contend that the New Historicist obsession with otherness is informed by the ethical encounter between the ego and the other (most notably the absolute Other of the Divine). From the moment the term "turn to religion" was coined, then, the field that it designated was bifurcated' (p. 3). Rather than Levinas, Goodrich advocates Buberian concepts of community to facilitate the scholarly turn to religion: 'community can only happen when people are brought into relation with one another through their connection with God [. . .] for Buber, community is essentially a religious phenomenon, as it must always start from the individual's personal relationship with God' (p. 7). This interplay of individuals' connections to God, and through God to one another to form community, is at the heart of *Writing Habits*.

Goodrich achieves her aim of bridging historicist and philosophical approaches by pursuing four modes of analysis in each chapter:

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'material', 'historical', 'philosophical', and 'bibliographical'. Chapter sections including these words in various combinations clearly signal this bridging approach throughout the book, enabling readers more familiar with one or the other to follow the strand we know best even as we encounter newer ideas. This reviewer is firmly in the historicist and materialist mold, but enjoyed the opportunity to approach familiar convent genres and authors through the lens of what Goodrich describes in her conclusion as feminist philosophy.

Chapter 1, 'Cloistered *Gemeinschaft*: Administrative Writing and Communal Formation' focuses on how the philosophical, bibliographical, and material aspects of convent statutes and prioresses' chapter speeches combined to create God-centered community, in the Buberian paradigm. Goodrich provides a careful study of the material context of administrative documents, arguing that changes to these works over time 'reveal[s] that the convent's ceremonies were not static customs observed by rote' (p. 23). Material evidence, such as numerous Abbess's handwriting, tipped in pages, use of marginal space, and other accretions reveal 'an ongoing process of communal formation that ended only with the closure of the convent itself' (p. 23). Goodrich reveals how 'the iterative nature of convent life' (p. 53) and convent textual production enables us to refine Buber's ideas of *gemeinschaft*.

One of the most significant findings of the 'bibliographical' analysis is that the Brussels statutes 'provided the basis for the constitutions produced at Cambrai and Paris, a fact that has not been previously recognized' (p. 36). This discovery demonstrates that there were even stronger links between Cambrai, Paris, and Brussels than previously thought, and that the role of the spiritual director Augustine Baker, and President of the English Benedictines, Rudesind Barlow, in the composition of the Cambrai and Paris governance literature needs to be reframed. A helpful table comparing the different chapter headings and order of the content in the Brussels Statues and Cambrai and Paris Constitutions reveal how 'each set of regulations developed its own vision of Benedictine *Gemeinschaft*, reflecting the multiplicity of ways that monasteries of any given order can live out the charism of their founder' (p. 37).

Chapter 2, 'Religious Communion: Spiritual Texts and Liturgical Rites' urges readers to approach convent literature through the evidence of women's engagement with liturgical practices and community life, rather than solely through the lens of political analysis: 'by focusing on its experiential aspects, we can better understand the ways that the collective framework of the congregation informed its individual members' spiritual lives and writings, thereby supplying a model for analyzing works of this era that emerged from other faiths' (p. 59).

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Goodrich analyses devotional texts produced by nuns, including devotional poetry, prayers, translations, extracts, and spiritual miscellanies.

Goodrich applies Buberian philosophical theories of the 'I-You dynamic between humanity and the divine' (p. 59) to reveal the close overlaps as well as the departures between Benedictism and Buberian thought. A significant departure lies in Buber's eschewal of Jewish ritual in favor of 'unmediated' encounters between God and individuals, which contrasts with the deep significance of Catholic ritual, particularly Mass and the Eucharist. To address this disjunction between Buberian philosophy and Benedictine practice Goodrich draws on the work of philosopher John Macmurray to elucidate 'the ways that liturgy can generate spiritual collectivity' (p. 61). Macmurray argues that communion and fellowship can only truly occur when people take part 'in acts with a larger metaphorical symbolism' (p. 61). Goodrich extends this analysis: 'Benedictine communion happens when monks and nuns gather as one to experience the sacred center of monastic life through liturgy' (p. 62). The remainder of the chapter explores how nuns wove liturgical elements into their personal spiritual miscellanies in order to further their individual connection with God, and how these connections simultaneously bound them closely to their community, and to the broader trans-historical Catholic Church, past and present. The ongoing use of convent literature by later nuns, as evidenced by bookmarks, inscriptions and markings, offers clear material evidence that religious communities cut across time and space.

Chapter 3, 'Monastic Imagined Communities: Histories, Life Writing, and the Divine Call' explores how the death notices for individual nuns, and communal histories that emphasize God's providential intervention in the fate of the community, 'facilitated [nuns'] participation in an overlapping set of religious imagined communities that transcended time and space' (p. 95). Goodrich argues that 'all [convent] history becomes a dialog between the divine You and the We of the convent, thereby offering a fresh twist on Buber's classic I-You formation' (p. 123). Goodrich's extension of Buberian thought could be read fruitfully alongside scholarship and editions of other early modern English foundations such as the Carmelites,[1] Conceptionists aka 'Blue Nuns',[2] Augustinians,[3] and the six-volume edition of convent writings edited by Caroline Bowden et al.[4]

[1] Nicky Hallett, *Lives of Spirit: English Carmelite Self-Writing of the Early Modern Period* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).
[2] Tonya J. Moutray, *Refugee Nuns, The French Revolution, and British Literature and Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).
[3] Victoria Van Hyning, *Convent Autobiography: Early Modern English Nuns in Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
[4] Caroline Bowden et al, eds. *English Convents in Exile, 1600–1800*, 6 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto 2012 –13).

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Buberian insights in Chapter 4, 'From the Convent to the Counterpublic: Controversial Works and Rival Spiritual Communities', provide a fresh take on some of the best-known materials in this volume: texts emerging from the controversies about spiritual practices and texts (those of Augustine Baker versus Jesuit authors and confessors), convent leadership and governance within and between the English Benedictine houses in the 1600s. Goodrich argues that 'Benedictine nuns responded to the breakdowns in monastic order by creating imagined communities that substituted a virtual communion with the English Catholic counterpublic for the spiritual fellowship of the cloister' (p. 129). She draws on the works of Nancy Fraser and Michael Warner to define English Catholics as a counterpublic, and uses extensive manuscript, print, and paratextual evidence to demonstrate how various nuns and their male spiritual advisors created polemical materials aimed at English Catholics beyond the convents. She avers that by appealing to an external counterpublic to arbitrate on convent matters 'the idealized We of religious community has irreversibly broken down' (p. 155). Goodrich's careful bibliographical, material, historical, and philosophical analyses bring home just how damaging these ructions were—not only reputationally, but spiritually.

In addition to a novel theoretical approach to convent literature and spirituality, *Writing Habits* includes tables and an appendix providing concise displays of archival information that Goodrich carefully amassed over more than a decade, and in more than a dozen archives. 'Table 2: Extant Chapter Speeches' provides an invaluable list of the number of surviving chapter speeches (Abbesses or Prioresses speeches to the nuns in their spiritual family) from Cambrai, Brussels, Ghent, and Paris, and the 'Provisional Bibliography of English Benedictine Writings' featuring 'selected works by male authors that incorporate nuns' texts and or eyewitness accounts' (pp. 167–75) supports her own analysis and provides a roadmap for future scholars.

Writing Habits concludes with a compelling invitation to apply philosophy—specifically feminist philosophy—to early modern authors beyond Shakespeare, and to 'approach early modern texts as [relevant] to the contemporary world[;] Think *with* early modern texts about philosophical ideas, rather than simply thinking *about* [them] as aesthetic, historical, and/or material objects[; and] Enter into a space of reciprocity with the early modern text, viewing its author as a philosophical equal who is engaged in exploring the existential nature of life' (p. 163). This volume is worthy of serious engagement from scholars across multiple disciplines, and time periods, and provides a wealth of approaches to help us expand the field. *Nota bene*.

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