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ARCHITECTURAL ANXIETIES: DICKENS'S *PICTURES FROM ITALY*

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Abstract

Like many other British Protestant travel writers, Dickens analysed and condemned Italian Roman Catholicism. This article focuses on the

discomfort, befuddlement, and indignation experienced by Protestant tourists when confronted with the paraphernalia of continental Catholicism. Deploying the idea of 'the attraction of repulsion', it examines how Dickens was simultaneously drawn to, and revolted by, Catholicism, attacking what he considered its superficial theatricality, empty formalism and unthinking superstition. Using theories associated with Freud, this essay considers how the attraction/repulsion of Catholicism instigated uncanny effects in British visitors, including feelings of uneasiness and bewilderment, frightening dreams, and hallucinatory reverie.

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