2014

WHITHERSOEVER THOU GOEST: THE DISCOURSES OF EXILE IN EARLY MODERN LITERATURE

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WHITHERSOEVER THOU GOEST:
THE DISCOURSES OF EXILE IN EARLY MODERN LITERATURE

DISSEPTION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences At the University of Kentucky

By

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

WHITERSOEVER THOU GOEST: THE DISCOURSES OF EXILE IN EARLY MODERN LITERATURE

Exile is, as Edward Said so eloquently put it, “the perilous territory of not-belonging.” Exiled peoples operate on the margins of their native culture: part of it, but excluded from it permanently or temporarily. Broadly speaking, my project explores the impact of exile on English literature of the late 15th and early 16th centuries. English exiles appear frequently in literary studies of the period, but little attention has thus far been focused on the effect of exile itself on late medieval and early modern authors. Historical studies on exile have been more prevalent and engaging. My project builds on this work and contributes new and groundbreaking investigations into the literary reflections of these important topics, mapping the influence of exile on trans-Reformation English literature.

My dissertation identifies and defines a new, critical lens focusing on later medieval and early modern literature. I call this lens the “mind of exile,” a cognitive phenomenon that influences textual structure, and metaphorical usage, as well as shapes individual and national identities. It contributes new theories regarding the development of polemic as a genre and their contribution to the development of the “nation-state” idea that occurred in the sixteenth century. It identifies a new genre I call polemic chronicle, which adopts and deploys the conventions of chronicle in order to declare a personal and/or national identity. Lastly, it contributes new scholarship to Spenser studies by building on established scholarship exploring the hybrid identity of Edmund Spenser. To these studies, I add fresh critical readings of A View of the State of Ireland and Colin Clouts Comes Home Againe. Both texts represent, I argue, proto-colonial literature influenced by Spenser’s mind of exile that explore England’s new position at the end of the sixteenth century as a burgeoning imperial power.

KEYWORDS: exile, polemic, reformation studies, Edmund Spenser, recusants
WHITERSOEVER THOU GOEST:
THE DISCOURSES OF EXILE IN EARLY MODERN LITERATURE

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For my wife:
She keeps me grounded in the present while I rummage around in the past.
This dissertation represents nearly six years of work in one form or another, and it would never have reached completion without the guidance and support of numerous individuals. First, I would like to thank Matthew Giancarlo, my dissertation chair and mentor, for his careful and continuing efforts to make me into a better scholar. I would also like to thank the remainder of my committee: Joyce MacDonald, Lisa Zunshine, and Jane Phillips. Each of these scholars, and now my friends, has left their stamp on this project and me as both have developed and matured.

I would like to acknowledge as well the Department of English and the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies at the University of Kentucky for their financial support. I extend my thanks to The Folger Shakespeare Library for access to their sixteenth century holdings and their permission to reproduce the image found in Chapter Two.

Finally, I want to thank my colleagues – Heather Chacón, Amy Anderson, Drew Heverin, and Mary Clai Jones – for reading so many drafts and offering their generous advice and support throughout the process.
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Chapter One: Introduction

We are all exiles. Or, at least we are all exiles according to the Judeo-Christian religious tradition inherited by the western world where exile has a long history as both a spiritual and physical punishment. During the middle ages excommunication was simultaneously a political and spiritual banishment from the religious community and a potentially eternal exclusion from the kingdom of God. As a secular punishment exile dates back well into the ancient world.¹ Throughout the complicated political and ecclesiastical upheavals of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, exile became a way of life for thousands of people: Protestant and Catholic, British and European. Tudor England in particular saw large numbers of exiles flowing into its borders from the Continent, which was followed by a comparatively small number of English faithful fleeing to Europe in the final years of King Henry VIII’s reign. Edward VI’s coronation brought many of these English exiles back home and drove a number of Catholics to Europe in their place. A similar phenomenon occurs with the coronations of both Mary and Elizabeth Tudor. The sixteenth century was a period of almost constant motion for the religious faithful.²

Then, as now, exile was a preferable alternative to political and religious persecution. It is no coincidence that many fifteenth and sixteenth century English exiles relocated to Continental cities where their beliefs would be recognized and tolerated. In these cities they usually established insular communities of worship instead of gradually merging with the local faithful. These groups were not making a new home; they were biding their time until a more favorable religious and political environment existed in their estranged homeland. Historical studies of this

¹ For a history of exile and literature in the ancient world, see especially Jo-Marie Claassen, Displaced Persons: The Literature of Exile from Cicero to Boethius (University of Wisconsin Press, 1999).
period offer compelling evidence that these exiles were both well organized and politically active. Protestant exiles in particular have been the subject of several noteworthy studies beginning in the 1930s. C.H. Garrett’s *The Marian Exiles* focuses on the titular group between 1553 and 1559. The *locus classicus* remains Fredrick Norwood’s two volume *Strangers and Exiles: A History of Religious Refugees*. He writes of the Marian exiles specifically,

> A plausible argument can be made to show that [their] movement was not a precipitate flight…but a prearranged and planned migration of select leaders and students who would constitute a nucleus for the Protestant church during the dark days of Catholic restoration.\(^3\)

This purposeful movement is echoed in the Catholic exilic tradition of the same period. Kathy Gibbons’ study of English Catholic exiles in sixteenth century Paris concludes,

> The many measures concerning Catholics overseas points to the authorities’ perception of them as a group to be overlooked at their peril…Catholic restoration was never achieved, [but] the prospect seemed all too possible prior to the Armada.\(^4\)

The scholarship of Garrett, Norwood, and Gibbons points to the significance of exiles as politically subversive groups capable of effecting significant change, and each study explains the importance of the exiles’ continued association with their home country. Each author, though, addresses to a much lesser extent how exile effects the literature of the sixteenth century, particularly the development of religious polemic, and how the religious exile was an essential player in the formation of an English national identity.

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\(^3\) Ibid., 339.

Writing and exile are closely linked in literary and historical studies. Mustapha Marrouchi notes that, “exile is at least in part a condition of the imagination, and that is the province of literature.”

George Tucker describes the association of writing, exile, and travel as

[An interpretative gesture, both spatial and intellectual, constituting an active reading and writing of the world as text (albeit not in isolation from the reading and writing of other forms of text), just as, conversely, the reading and writing of text is itself, necessarily, no less a form of spatial and intellectual displacement… Indeed, travel and writing (or reading) may in the end be understood interchangeably: either as a literal equivalence…or else, with the one serving as the supreme metaphor of the other; or even as Georges Van Den Abbeele has suggested, with travel operating as the “metaphor of metaphor itself.”

Such observations have led to recent literary studies interested in the effects of exile on particular texts. Mary C. Erler has examined William Peryn’s *Spirituall Exercyses* and traced the influence of exile as a transnational conduit of Continental spirituality (particularly Ignatian and the Low Country spirituality) on both Peryn’s text and its intended readership. She argues that Peryn’s text is an “opportunity to make such ideas available in English, for English nuns” and “the fruit of religious exile with its consequent exposure to Continental writing and thought.”

Erler’s focus on the ideological synthesis of *Spirituall Exercyses* hints at the transformative nature of exile on an English monastic spiritual ideology.

A body of scholarship defining the relationship between exile and national identity complements research into exile’s effect on literature. Exile at its root is a political tool closely linked with one’s homeland, one’s citizenship, and one’s physical location in relation to the homeland, but exile is also a mental experience. The twelfth century monk Osbert of Clare, for

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example, frequently refers to his life after banishment from Westminster as an “exile,” despite his remaining in England. Thomas Becon twice wrote from what Seymour Baker House calls “internal exile” during King Henry VIII’s reign. Becon fled from Cambridge to Kent in 1541 after drawing the ire of Bishop Edmund Bonner for preaching against elements of the Six Articles. Becon fled to Strasbourg in 1554 following Mary’s ascension.

Exiled individuals thus inhabit the liminal regions of their native culture either physically, mentally, or both simultaneously. From the margins exiles often develop an intense nationalism, perhaps even super-nationalism, an overcompensating desire to embody or idealize the culture from which they are excluded. They grow acutely conscious of geopolitical and ideological boundaries in what Edward Said calls “the perilous territory of not-belonging” precisely because they find themselves outside the national culture in which they desire participation. They occupy a geographical and rhetorical space from which they might define and idealize their nation and culture while exposing what they perceive to be problems in both.

This project arose from my interest in the complicated intersection of exile with literature, history, culture, and national identity. Central to my project are questions about the formation of subjectivity and nationalism in the minds of exiles, and the development of a type of exile previously unknown in the medieval world but intimately familiar to many in the modern one: exile from a “nation” in its modern sense. This project explores the literature of exile in order to highlight its effects on imaginative literature and polemic, and it examines the

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importance of physical and conceptual displacement in the formation of Early Modern English national identity. At the study’s center is a phenomenon I call a “mind of exile” present in the literature of the late fifteenth century that develops and expands in scope and complexity over the course of reformation in England. An “exile,” it should be clear from the beginning, is an individual whose exclusion from a community might be either real or imagined: “real” in the sense that he is physically displaced from his native country, “imagined” in the sense that he experiences displacement and exclusion while still dwelling on native soil. In either case these individuals conceive of themselves on the margins of a particular community and, equally important, they desire to return to their place of origin.

Of particular relevance is the early modern religious exiles’ belief that their banishment is temporary. They devote much of their time to activities specifically designed to facilitate their return: writing and publishing political tracts and religious polemics; establishing communities of exiled faithful, complete with their own religious governance separate from their host country’s; and creating and fostering transnational means of communication between groups. Each of these activities helps to explain why exilic literature is so dedicated to influencing religious and spiritual change. The English exiles in particular want to return home. Norwood writes,

> In many respects the English Protestant refugees were more like the English Catholic refugees [than they were Continental refugees]…Very few of the English even sought for citizenship in their lands of refuge – they did not intend to stay.\(^1\)

They are not a scattered people. They form interlinked ideological communities of religious dissidents and expatriates who conceive of themselves as preservers of a true faith that must be returned to their ancestral homeland in order to bring about a restoration of its former glory.

Their literature reflects this ideological perspective and gives it shape.

My exploration of the literature of exile in the sixteenth century identifies and defines a new, critical lens I call the “mind of exile,” a cognitive phenomenon that influences textual structure, and metaphorical usage, as well as shapes individual and national identities. The project focuses largely on what were then known as “Bookes of Encounter.” Today they are known as polemics, a name they acquired in the seventeenth century. My project contributes new theories to the history of polemic as a genre and its contribution to the development of the “nation-state” idea that occurred in the sixteenth century. Of particular significance is the exploration of a new genre that I call polemic chronicle. These texts adopt and deploy the conventions of chronicle in order to declare a personal and/or national identity predicated upon and supported by the authors’ self-identification as an exile. To my focus on polemic I also explore the mind of exile present in the imaginative literature of the late middle ages and the beginning of the early modern period. My focus on authors including Geoffrey Chaucer and Edmund Spenser demonstrates the presence of the mind of exile at the end of the middle ages and traces the development of ideas about marginality, power, nationalism, and citizenship during the trans-Reformation. My work contributes new scholarship to Spenser studies in particular by building on established scholarship exploring the hybrid identity of Edmund Spenser. To these studies, I add fresh critical readings of A View of the State of Ireland and Colin Clouts Come Home Againe. Both texts represent, I argue, proto-colonial literature influenced by Spenser’s mind of exile that explores England’s new position at the end of the sixteenth century as a burgeoning imperial power.

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I begin in Chapter One by defining a “mind of exile” evident in English literature of the later middle ages. Building on definitions of medieval exile posited by Laura Napron and Elizabeth van Houts, I argue that a mind of exile is at work in Chaucer’s *Man of Law’s Tale*. The Host’s comment in the tale’s endlink about “lollers in the wynd” reveals a culturally mimetic anxiety about Lollardy’s influence on orthodox religion triggered in part by the moving narrative of Custance’s experiences of exile, experiences that turn out to be culturally and religiously transformative for all of the characters in the story. Exile is the catalyst for deep transformation, both personal and social. A similar phenomenon fundamentally structures the Lollard narratives known as *The Testimony of William Thorpe* and *The Plowman’s Tale*. In the former, I show how William Thorpe’s narrative representation of a mind of exile transforms a story of disempowering interrogation into an ideologically affirming testimony. In the latter, I demonstrate that symbols and allusions to exile were present in Lollard texts very early in their production, and that, as the middle ages gave way to the early modern, those allusions grew more overt as Lollard texts were repurposed by sixteenth century reformers. These observations suggest that liminality and exile came to be understood by Lollardy (and later reformers) as a position of potential power for altering orthodox religious authority. The desire to write one’s self into the margins thus enabled religious dissenters, such as the Lollards, to reshape centers of power in their literature, like a Custance/Constance who is exiled from the center to the margins and who then travels back to the center of her spiritual and political world.

A similar desire manifests as well in the literature of sixteenth century Protestants, the ideological inheritors of the Lollard mind of exile. Chapter Two explores this manifestation of the mind of exile in the religious polemic of the sixteenth century when a number of Protestant reformers became exiles in actual experience as well as in spirit. Here I examine in detail the
polemics of William Turner including *The Huntyng and Fyndyng Out of the Romishe Fox* and *A New Booke of Spiritual Physik*. Turner’s polemics identify and limit political and religious centers of power through the concentration of authority in written texts and through metaphors of texts. These metaphors are a rhetorical means for disentangling sacred from secular authority and for declaring Turner’s own continued loyalty to the nation. Placing Turner’s polemics alongside those of his contemporaries reveals a “rhetoric of exile” that defines and explores an English national identity formed extra-nationally. It accomplishes this definition by forcing readers and authors to take sides and by creating an unambiguous ideological platform, codified in the authority of print, a self-fashioning declaration both spiritual and national.

Building on the importance of a mind of exile for religious polemic, Chapter Three examines in detail a similar rhetorical phenomenon in recusant Catholic polemics of the later sixteenth century. More specifically I focus on the polemics written by William Cardinal Allen, Robert Persons, and Thomas Stapleton in order to define a “rhetoric of recusancy” distinct from the rhetoric of exile but that nevertheless shares commonalities with it. Both are concerned with the boundaries between sacred and secular power and both claim allegiance to an English national identity. Recusant polemic, though, assumes the *a priori* existence of a transnational church or mystical body spiritual that supersedes and enables both secular authority and national integrity. The polemic culture represented by these recusants questions the relationship between exile and nation in a fundamentally textual debate concerned with writing national narratives or historical chronicles. Recusant polemicists seek to control narratives of the recent past, particularly the origin narratives of Protestantism and Queen Elizabeth. Exiled Protestant polemicists, on the other hand, more often revise narratives of England’s distant past, especially the narratives of England’s Christian conversion. The struggle over these foundational narratives
helps create a literary genre I call polemic chronicle, texts that repurpose and rewrite historical origin narratives in order to define and confess an English national identity influenced by the mind of exile.

The repurposing of an historical narrative by polemic chronicle becomes the primary focus in the first part of Chapter Four, where I engage the imaginative work of Edmund Spenser, a national poet deeply motivated by a kind of exile that was both mental and physical. Much of Spenser’s work engages with the concept of nationhood and England’s growing importance on a world stage. Spencer was born, educated, and thrived in an Elizabethan culture shaped in part by Catholic and Protestant exiles. I place Spenser in the context of exile discourse as it developed before him and as it influenced his own nationalist and imaginative writing. Here I shed some light on Spenser’s status as a nation-less exile – a man in-between lands and cultures – and the effect that this in-betweeness had on his later works, particularly *A View of the State of Ireland* and *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*. The former relies heavily on the rewriting of an Irish origin narrative in order to justify English colonization. Colonizers, though not exiles in a traditional sense, are nevertheless concerned with transforming their foreign “not-home” into their native soil. I argue that Colin represents a proto-colonial figure, a different kind of exile whose relation to the nation is central to his religious identity and to his moral and ethical ambiguity. The simple life he enjoys is challenged and upset by his encounter with a more complex and sophisticated culture. That culture, he notes, is both appealing and perilous because he is aware that being a part of it will result in a loss of something in himself. Both *A View* and *Colin Clout* open up questions about Spenser’s ideas surrounding England’s attempts to bring a Catholic Ireland completely under the English (and Protestant) crown. These questions were possible, I argue, only because of his unique position between cultures, an exile in both lands and
nations.

Broadly speaking then, my dissertation traces the movement of the mind of exile during the trans-Reformation period, roughly 1399 to 1700 CE. It provides a clearer understanding of exile as a significant catalyst in the development of a modern English national identity, and it demonstrates how the experience of exile, filtered through literary consciousness, influenced both the polemic and the imaginative literature of the Reformation. In that sense then, the project constitutes an interdisciplinary approach to the literature of exile, reading the polemics of the period as windows into the socio-political realities of reformation and nation building in the early modern period. Simultaneously, it opens up new avenues into the study of sixteenth century literature, suggesting that the mind of exile in late medieval works helped shape religious polemic in the seventeenth century. This continuity offers further evidence to the growing recognition of an early modern period deeply influenced by the middle ages, rather than being a clean break from the past. It shows, in other words, the influence on exile as it crosses into the early modern period and helps to shape the narratives of reformation and the development of the modern nation-state.

A Note on the Text

I have retained the early modern spellings of primary materials with the following exceptions. I silently expanded contractions, converted “u” to “v” when appropriate, and added modern punctuation when necessary for ease of reading. Parenthetical citations for primary materials refer to the early modern signatures. Again, for ease of reading, I have converted signatures with roman numerals to their Arabic equivalents.

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Chapter Two: “Myn inner man was altogidre þus departid:” Defining a Mind of Exile

Lollardy begins with an exile when, in 1382, Wyclif and his followers were formally declared heretics at the Blackfriars Council. Andrew Cole notes that in that same year “the academic disciples of Wyclif who were identified in these ecclesiastical publications either recanted or fled [Oxford University]. We might hazard a date of this exodus, some time after 13 July 1382, when a royal patent ordered [Robert] Rygge to expel Wycliffites from the university.”¹ The beginning of the Wycliffite transformation from an academic heresy into a popular one thus begins with a flight by the faithful from their home community. The Wycliffites’ exodus from Oxford represented only the latest in a long tradition of Christian communities finding it necessary to relocate to preserve their faith. These religious “exiles” could easily find kindred spirits in the earliest records of the Christian Church: the Bible records Mary and Joseph’s flight to Egypt with the infant Jesus; John the Evangelist speaks of believers remaining in the world, but not being part of it; and John the Revelator writes his Apocalypse while in exile on the Isle of Patmos.² The rhetoric of the New Testament abounds with references and allusions to exile.³ By the eleventh century, the Church had codified its status as an exiled community (e.g. in the lyrics of the Salve Regina).⁴ From their beginnings monasteries embraced their vocation as exiles from the world at large. In short, by the end of the middle ages “exile” was decidedly multivalent.

¹ Andrew Cole, Literature and Heresy in the Age of Chaucer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19.
² Matthew 2:13-23 recounts the flight to Egypt. Jesus teaches that those who follow him are not part of this world just as he is not, in John 17:14-15. The other John’s exile to Patmos occurred during the rule of Emperor Domitian (81-96 CE).
⁴ The faithful invoke the intercession of Mary on behalf of the “exsules filii Evæ.”
Laura Napran’s and Elizabeth van Houts’ *Exile in the Middle Ages* examines these multiplicities in a collection of essays that define four broad categories of exile beyond the comparatively narrow political meaning of the term in the modern world: forced or voluntary banishment for political reasons; pilgrimage or marriage abroad; the permanent spiritual exile of monasticism; and excommunication. Napran’s and van Houts’ collection brings to light one understanding of exile that has special significance to literary studies: exile as a mental state. Brian Briggs introduces the idea in his focus on the letters of the twelfth century Westminster prior Osbert of Clare, who fled Westminster but not England after drawing the ire of some of his monastic brothers. Yet as Briggs notes, Osbert’s letters frequently refer to his *exilium*: he calls himself *proscriptus*, and “a stranger and visitor in a foreign land.” Michael Staunton further supports exile as a mental state by demonstrating how exile authenticated and transformed St. Anselm of Canterbury’s flight from a persecution into “a pilgrimage and the act of the good shepherd rather than the mercenary.” He further shows how Thomas Becket’s return from exile “proved that the exile had not been a flight from duty but a journey towards martyrdom.” Briggs and Staunton thus define a type of exile that might be precipitated by physical flight, but whose effects occur primarily in the mind of the exile and in the popular imagination.

Briggs’ and Staunton’s assertion that exile occurs in the mind in addition to altering an individual’s physical location opens up a productive line of inquiry into the literature of the late Middle Ages. Robert Edwards has defined three distinct “modes of transformation” present in the literature of exile: the intersection of past and present in memory, the creation of an imagined

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social order distinct from the exiled person, and an imagined future constructed from the exile’s point of view. Such modes suggest that the literature of exile is, by definition, an imaginative and complicated matrix from which exiles engage with and create narratives of identity both personal and national. Exilic literature comes from a place that Victor Turner describes as “betwixt and between,” and “a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise.”

These observations suggest to me a fifth category of medieval religious exiles present in England who possess what I call “minds in the margins” or “minds of exile.” These individuals are exiles in the sense that they either choose or are forced to move into the margins of orthodox religious discourse. Their literary endeavors reflect Edwards’ modes of transformation and the present chapter draws heavily on these modes, particularly in its second half. To be clear, I do not mean “exile” here in the sense that it later comes to be understood, namely the forced or voluntary removal from a modern nation. Nor do I mean it to imply a removal from one’s patrimony, where a subsequent return restores the exile to property and patronage. These minds in the margins might experience a physical flight, or a loss of property, but the mind of exile is primarily a cognitive and literary phenomenon, not geographical or socio-political. The narratives crafted by these minds in the margins emerge from a place “betwixt and between” the dominant culture and they conceptualize marginality as a source of creative and transformative power. These narratives often utilize an “exiled” figure who eventually returns to an orthodox

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“center,” a movement that transforms either the exiled figure, or the text, or the orthodox center, or all three while authenticating both text and content in the mind of their author and audience.

Beginning with Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Man of Law’s Tale*, this chapter reveals the presence of a mind of exile in late medieval literature and demonstrates its ability to transform and authenticate a position of powerlessness into a position of moral and spiritual superiority. The discussion then turns to similar exilic themes in a short but notable Lollard sermon glossing Jesus’s commandment in the Gospel of Matthew to flee from one city to another to escape persecution. The mind of exile revealed here appears still more clearly in the early fifteenth century polemic, *The Testimony of William Thorpe*. Thorpe assumes a mind of exile in order to transform his text rhetorically and structurally. Lastly, I examine the apocryphal *Plowman’s Tale*, showing how a mind of exile shapes both the text and its reception by later generations, and demonstrating clear textual links between Lollardy and early modern reformation. *The Plowman’s Tale’s* textual history shows the mind of exile taking on greater significance as these medieval texts gave way to the religious polemics of the early modern period. Collectively these texts suggest that Lollard writers engaged with orthodoxy in part with a mind of exile, an engagement that would later shape the literature of reformation in the following century.

Lollard studies continue to be a fertile and contentious field in late medieval scholarship. Since Anne Hudson argued in 1988 that the Lollards represented a failed Protestant reformation, no small amount of ink has been spilt in response to her provocative thesis.¹⁰ Even the term

“Lollard” is not without controversy. Cole posits that “Lollard” cannot be uncritically substituted for “Wycliffite” and that there were many heterodox positions signified by the term “Lollard,” especially when that term appears in the writings of the medieval Church.¹¹ What has yet to be examined is how the Wycliffites embraced a type of mental exile. Recognizing Lollardy as a cognitive state as much as a religious ideology creates a new critical lens through which the rhetorical structure of Lollard literature, and its doctrinal boldness, becomes clearer. It also demonstrates one reason why reformers of the sixteenth century, many of whom became exiles themselves, so rapidly rediscovered, edited, and deployed Lollard texts in the earliest days of the English Reformation.

**Chaucer’s Exile: Custance and The Man of Law’s Tale**

The endlink of *The Man of Law’s Tale* famously contains a passing reference to the Lollards when Harry Bailey responds to criticism from the Parson with, “I smelle a Lollere in the wynd” (l. 1173).¹² It is one of only a few explicit references to Lollardy in Chaucer’s works. Speculation about what prompts this odd response is varied. Frances McCormack acknowledges that the Parson’s portrait resembles a Lollard Poor Priest, but concludes that most scholars “do not generally perceive Chaucer to be taking a pro- or anti-Lollard stance, but rather to be exploiting the discourse and ideology of the movement for aesthetic, didactic or literary

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¹¹ Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, 25–45. Though aware of Cole’s warning, I will use “Lollard” throughout this essay as synonymous with “Wycliffite” for the sake of convenience.

¹² All references to Chaucer are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).
The Parson himself is certainly a pious man according to the *General Prologue*, and his Tale seems on the surface entirely orthodox. Lollards, though, are on the Host’s mind at the conclusion of the Man of Law’s story: he calls the Parson “lollere” a second time just four lines later (l. 1177). Norman Harrington says of the endlink, “we glimpse faintly here the outlines of a great national debate which the pilgrims, together with Chaucer’s immediate audience, were obliged to face from day to day, form opinions upon, and cope with as best they could.” Yet the question remains, what precisely about the Tale puts that debate in the Host’s mind? Why mention Lollards here beyond the words of the Man of Law?

Looking back at the “Tale of Custance” suggests that a possible answer lies in its underlying exilic themes. Custance’s life is one of multiple exiles. Her initial marriage to the Sultan constitutes an “exile,” which she acknowledges prior to her departure: “Ne shal I nevere seen you moore with ye…[U]nto the Barbre nacion / I moste anoon” (ll. 280-81). The “thralldom” of her gender places her at the margins of a patriarchal society and makes her an exile of another sort. More obvious are the multiple exiles she endures at sea that embolden her spiritual life and highlight the “constancy” that her name suggests. David Raybin posits that her marginalization extends beyond historical time and continues even when she returns to the world: “She is exiled from the temporal world and thus unconstrained by time, bound to her faith and thus spiritually free, existing in an emblematic position largely outside human contact,

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14 The Parson, Lollardy, and a challenge to the orthodoxy of the Parson’s Tale are explored at length in Frances McCormack, *Chaucer and the Culture of Dissent* (Four Courts Press, 2007).
outside history.”¹⁶ He continues, “Wandering among the waves, Custance is exiled from human contact…When she rests, she reintegrates herself into the historical frame, often playing an important, if generally passive, role in the directing of human events.”¹⁷ Marginality signifies her faith, her constancy, and, significantly, her ability to transform the world to which she returns.

Custance’s effects on Northumberland, the home of the pagan Dame Hermengyld, best demonstrate the direction of human events that Raybin alludes to. These events occur just after the beginning of the Tale’s second part when the exile Custance comes ashore in the “orthodox” center of pagan rule in England’s north country. It is at this moment, when an exile comes to rest, that Chaucer chooses to remind the reader that “Alle Cristen folk been fled fro that contree…To Walys fledde the Cristyanytee / Of olde Britons dwellynge in this ile; / Ther was hir refut for the meene while” (ll. 540, 544-46). The narrator draws back from Custance’s tale to an historical narrative. He reminds the reader of Christianity’s complicated past in England and the eventual need for an exile of the faithful as a means of self-preservation. He is equally attentive to establishing the exile’s temporary nature. The narrator’s final qualifier, “for the meene while,” suggests that this exile will come to an end, as the reader soon learns, by Custance’s own return from exile and the reintegration of the Christian faith into the land. Indeed it is through her conversion of Hermengyld that Custance begins the transformation of the land back into the Christian nation into which the exiled Britons will return. This seemingly passing reference to exile demonstrates its transformative effect on an English “historical” narrative. The moment is chronicle-like in its form. Chaucer’s contemporaries are themselves the descendants of these restored exiles in so much as fourteenth century England was securely a Christian nation. At the

¹⁷ Ibid., 80.
same time, this exilic narrative serves to rewrite one of England’s foundational myths, which, as I will show, is of primary importance to the mind of exile.

After his brief historical aside, the narrator returns to Custance’s present, introducing several additional Christians who remain in Northumberland: a blind old man and his companions. These men represent a remnant of Christian faithful:

> But yet nere Cristene Britons so exiled  
> That ther nere somme that in hir privattee  
> Honoured Crist and hethen folk bigiled,  
> And ny the castle switche ther dwelten three.  
> That onn of hem was blynd and myghte nat see,  
> But it were with thilke eyen of his mynde  
> With whiche men seen, after they ben blynde (ll. 547-53).

Chaucer draws a distinction between the British exiles in Wales and these Christians who hold themselves apart, honoring the exiled faith despite the pagan faith controlling the land. These three are “exiles” in their own right. They dwell at the margins of the pagan community. Their faith sets them apart “ny the castel,” symbolically close to, but significantly removed from, the center of power. The exiled man meets the exiled Custance and the recently converted Hermengyld and calls on her to restore his sight. The old man’s call for a miracle is doubly significant. Ideologically the miracle authenticates Hermengyld’s new faith by manifesting the power of her new god and it authenticates Custance as the carrier of that faith. Simultaneously it transforms the old man by restoring his vision, and it authenticates his ability to see “with thilke eyen of his mynde,” hinting that a particular sight present in an exiled figure privileges him or her with the ability to “see” what others cannot. The old man’s inward sight, his mind of exile, adds to the authentication of Custance’s faith because it reveals to him what has not been made openly known. He “sees” the faith present in both Hermengyld and Custance despite their faith being internal. Hermengyld, after all, has yet to tell even her husband about her new faith.
Transformation, authentication, and exile thus become intimately related in the poem. The first two occur as the exiled figures, Custance and the old man, move from the margins to the center. Custance enters the “orthodox” pagan court and the old man approaches the converted Hermengyld, who still represents that pagan orthodoxy until Custance “made hir boold, and bad hire wirche / The wyl of Crist, as doghter of his chirche” (ll. 566-67). A similar transformative movement occurs when Custance, accused of Hermengyld’s death, is brought before King Alla, a scene that ends with the king’s conversion to Christianity and the authentication of Custance’s faith by both the wicked knight’s death and the disembodied declaration: “Thou hast desclaundred, gilteless, / The doghter of hooly chirche in heigh presence” (ll. 674-75). Exile and “orthodoxy” meet and the former transforms the latter, which in turn transforms much of the kingdom. A marriage follows this moment, marking the exile’s own transformation into a new orthodoxy as King Alla’s Christian queen. The Man of Law’s Tale might thus be read as an allegorical tale of an exiled faith being a constant and true faith carried internally, divested of the pomp and ceremony of orthodox religious practice.

There remains an additional transformative aspect of Custance’s exile: the textual transformation of the story from romance to hagiography. As Larry Benson has noted, Custance’s story is as much romance as it is saint’s life.18 Many of the Tale’s more supernatural elements, such as her miraculous survival for many years at sea, are directly related to exile. The text becomes hagiographic only in those moments when it reveals Custance as a saint, having the divine grace and favor of God and his Providence, moments predicated by her exile and authenticated by her return and the transformation she heralds. What opens with her exile concludes with Custance’s homecoming, a return once more to the “center” of Rome from the

margins of the empire. The text marks it as the return of an “hooly creature,” living out the remainder of her days in the empire she helped to transform (l. 1149).

_The Man of Law’s Tale_ thus becomes something of a case study for interaction between the margins and the center of religious ideology and reflects how a figure at the margins – male or female, hightorn or lowborn – originating from the center might radically alter structures of power. The poem links exile to a religious constancy that is personally and culturally capable of remaining hidden in plain sight. The exiled faithful, represented by Custance, the old man and his companions, demonstrate their devotion to the faith by retaining it at the margins of the dominant culture. Culturally they evidence the “constancy” of Christianity even in a pagan Britain. In other words these faithful who “hethen folk beguiled” practice their exiled faith while appearing outwardly to conform (l. 549). There are echoes here in Chaucer’s poem of the anxiety caused by the ability to hide in plain sight that recalls some of the anti-Lollard rhetoric of the late fourteenth century. John Gower, for instance, laments that the Wycliffites, “Vsurpando fidem vultum mentitur honestum, / Caucius vt fraudem palliet inde suam [In the act of usurping the faith, (the Wycliffite faith) feigns a virtuous appearance, more cautiously so as to disguise its own deceit.]”

Thus the old man and his fellow Christians living at the margins of the dominant culture share a similarity with the Lollards, the ability to hide in plain sight because the exile they endure is internal, not external. Gower’s words suggest recognition as well of the orthodox center’s awareness of the power of liminality to subvert the dominant religious narratives.

It is just after such a tale, where exile is so proximately featured, when Chaucer makes his only overt references to Lollardy in _The Canterbury Tales_. The Host has Lollards on his mind because as Chaucer writes _The Canterbury Tales_ England has begun to feel the influence of

Wycliffism on orthodox religion. Their influence will result in the passage of the *De Heretico Comburendo* in 1401 and its attempts to limit religious debate in academia as well as the suppression of religious texts by the 1408 *Constitutions of Oxford*. Bailey may be jesting when he calls the Parson a “lollere,” but the Shipman’s objection to the Parson telling the next tale hints at the intense anxiety that Lollardy caused among the orthodox faithful. In a culturally mimetic moment, the Shipman argues against the Parson’s preaching because “He wolde sowen som difficulte, / Or springen cokkel in our clene corn” (ll. 1182-83). He raises this objection just after affirming that the pilgrims “leven alle in the grete God” (l. 1181), conflating Lollard ideology with paganism, polytheism, or atheism. In other words, the Shipman fears that the Parson’s preaching will insert something transformative into the pilgrimage, something that just might alter the faith of the pilgrims. Whether the Parson is a Lollard or not matters little to the Shipman. He fears that the Parson *might* be, and hiding among the pilgrims in plain sight. Ironically a tale about religious constancy concludes with anxiety concerning religious change – change that comes from the margins and the exiled Custance.

**Cognitive Proximity and Ideological Distance: A Lollard Mind of Exile**

Links between Chaucer and Lollardy come as no surprise, especially given his patron John of Gaunt’s own sympathies towards the movement. After their academic “exile” in 1382, Wyclif’s followers demonstrate that a mind of exile informs the most persistent criticisms they leveled against the established Church: temporal wealth and the worldliness of the monastic orders. Ecclesiastical wealth was hardly a new target for critics of the Church, but from their earliest days the Wycliffites argued against the corrupting influence of wealth on all levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The 1395 *Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards* points to “Qwan þe chirche of Yngelond began to dote in temporalte” as the point when “hope and charite begunne
for to fle out of oure chirche” (24). Early in the fifteenth century William Taylor claims “aftir þe fall of þe clergie into þis wonderful wordlynesse, ben wrecchid christen men as we seen for to gete hem goodis constreyneyd for to grope aboute from dore to dore and crye and begge” (19). “Wrecchid” is etymologically significant. The Anglo-Saxon “wrecca” signifies, among other things, an exile. Taylor’s contemporary William Thorpe accuses parish priests of “wasten þese parichens goodis and spenden hem at her owne wille aftir þe world in her lustis” (70). The underlying argumentative thread in these criticisms is the idea that the church, particularly the clergy, exists as separate from the world – in it but not of it – and in all these cases those same priests have fundamentally failed because of their devotion to worldly goods and concerns.

Liminality, in other words, sets the true faithful apart from the secular world. The Lollard insistence on being separate from the world implies an understanding of true faith as based in part on one’s exclusion from the majority.

Given these convictions and their root in the idea of being held apart, it is little surprise that a mind of exile extends into the structure of some Lollard literature. Robert Edwards’ modes of transformation – the intersection of past and present in memory, an imagined social order, and an imagined future from the exile’s perspective – appear frequently in Lollard texts and account in part for what Anne Hudson has termed a “Lollard sect vocabulary.” The Lollard’s mind of

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exile finds reflection in allusions to marginality and exile in their writings. Their texts speak truth to power from the margins. Lollards are, as Frances McCormack posits, members of groups “exiled from the political realm and thus cannot participate in its operation. Their use of a distinctive and ordered language is an attempt to restore a sanctioned discourse-type in which they can maintain their political agenda.”

Lollard texts show a self-conscious positioning of their theology as set apart from the beliefs of the world, including the Roman Church. Lollard sermons, propaganda, and heretical poetry, as I will show, rely upon a mind of exile that grounds many of their arguments and insists that exile functions to both transform and authenticate.

Of the many possible etymologies for “Lollard,” one in particular hints at the fact that Wyclif’s followers, from the beginning, were perceived as people at the margins of the community. The Middle English noun “lollare” denotes a vagabond, an idler, or a beggar. This meaning perhaps results from the fact that many Lollard preachers took to the road as wandering evangelists teaching, among other things, the poverty of Christ and his Church. Cole argues that the C-text of William Langland’s Piers Plowman employs “lollare” as a noun synonymous with the gyrovagi or wandering religious without the negative connotations of heresy the Church later applies. Finally there is the Church’s use of “Wycliffite” (and “lollare”) as synonymous with “heretic” after 1382. “Heretic” always already implies exclusion from the community. Given this philological evidence, it is no long stretch to suggest that “lollare” carries with it a sense of exclusion. Recognizing this connotation helps explain why Wyclif’s followers rapidly embraced “Lollard” as a term of self-identification. They recognized themselves as a group of wanderers,

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25 McCormack, Chaucer and the Culture of Dissent, 53.
26 “Loller(e n.),” Middle English Dictionary (Ann Arbor: Regents of the University of Michigan, April 24, 2013), http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/mecdex?type=id&doc=MED25968.
27 Cole, Literature and Heresy, 27.
28 Ibid., 8–9.
temporary exiles from the kingdom of God, and a group set apart from the religious community represented by the orthodox church. Instead of accepting the name as a pejorative, the Wycliffites appropriated it as a means of underlining their separation from the Roman Church’s teaching and as a label that, to them, indicated the rightness of their beliefs.

Lollard sermons highlight this embrace of exclusion by frequently explicating Matthew 10:23, Jesus’ advice to his disciples concerning how to respond to persecution by fleeing from one city to another. One of these sermons, known today as “Plurimorum Martirum. Sermo 12,” begins with a simple gloss: “Crist byddep hise disciplis to fle fro þer enemyes; for vertewous pacience, and such maner cowardyse, ben armes to cristone men to overcome þer enemyes” (60).29 The sermon justifies exile from one city to another by arguing that exile carries a type of power and acts as a justification, a sign of God’s favor and election, just as it did with Custance. The sermon argues, in other words, that becoming an exile should not stigmatize the individual or encourage fear on account of being forced out.

Christ will reveal when to flee and where, as well as providing the words necessary if the time comes to stand before one’s enemies. Citing Christ’s words in Matthew, the preacher encourages those who must flee to “drede þe hem not” (i.e. those who would seek to destroy them) because “owre help is spiritual, hyd to þis world, and for þe toþur” (62-63). The preacher encourages the adoption of a mental state that is contrary to the worldly, orthodox community and from which one might come to a better understanding of Christ’s own flight from his enemies. The sermon’s content suggests a few possibilities concerning how this mental state, this mind of exile, actually functions. A mind of exile, like physical exile, serves as a sign of one’s

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election into the true Church because “Crist hymself [was] pursweyd, and þis forme kepte Crist
in fleyng and in answerynge; and it is ynow to [pe] disciple þat he be as his maystur, and to
servaunt þat he be as hyis lord,” and exile is also a protected position that “makeþ Christus men
hardye aȝenus þe feend and alle hise lymes” (63, Gradon’s italics). Both points rely on a mind of
exile that encourages a sense of self-justification and originates from a position at the margins of
orthodox discourse.

Beyond the theological and doctrinal arguments are structural moments in the narrative,
echoing those in The Man of Law’s Tale, where transformation and authentication occur as a
result of the exile’s return. A key message in the sermon covers what those who flee should do if
they eventually find themselves unable to flee any longer. The preacher concedes, “certis som
tyme men ben constreynde to come and to answere for Crist” (63). Symbolically these “exiles”
return to face (perhaps literal) persecution, but the conclusion of the sermon insists that their
witness will ultimately transform England when “þis lordschip schal be take fro prestis; and so
þe staf þat makeþ hem hardye aȝenys Crist and his lawe” (64). Though the preacher does not
explicitly say so, the sermon implies that this moment of transformation carries with it an
authentication of these exiles’ beliefs. The triumph over those who persecute them carries with it
the evidence of their righteousness. Just as Custance, the old man, and his companions emerge
from the margins to bring about cultural change, so will the true faithful who hear this sermon
come to understand themselves as potential agents for cultural change. By embracing their
marginality as a sign of their authentic faith, should they be called back from exile their return
will become part of a larger transformative narrative ending with the nation’s salvation.

Admittedly “Sermo 12” alone is insufficient evidence of a mind of exile. It is neither
particularly well known, nor is it clear just how widely it was heard. A Lollard work of much
greater significance and scholarly recognition is *The Testimony of William Thorpe*. Written in 1407, the text gives an account of the titular Lollard preacher’s arrest and trial before the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Arundel. Hudson notes in *Two Wycliffite Texts* that no evidence of Thorpe appears in Arundel’s surviving archiepiscopal records, but many of the historical events alluded to in the text and its presentation of Lollard ideology are consistent with an early fifteenth century composition. More recent scholarship (which I find convincing) finds definitive evidence in the Public Records Office of Thorpe’s existence and arrest in accordance with the details that he gives in *The Testimony*. Such evidence suggests that Thorpe may indeed have written the text as indicated in its prologue. Thorpe begins by recounting his arrest and the urging of compatriots to write of his experience in prison. What follows is a fascinating first person account of Thorpe’s trial. The archbishop begins by accusing Thorpe of preaching without license and “sowynde aboute fals doctryne” (29). Thorpe recoils at the suggestion that he was preaching falsehood and requests a chance to declare his beliefs, which are “with a few exceptions…entirely orthodox.” Arundel though, dissatisfied with Thorpe’s creed, calls for him to submit to the Church’s authority. When Thorpe refuses, Arundel turns to a relentless series of accusations regarding Thorpe’s beliefs about the Eucharist, clerical authority, and pilgrimages, among other topics. At each turn Thorpe responds to the accusations by claiming his own positions are representative of the Truth according to Scripture. The two exchange verbal blows until Arundel, frustrated and tired, orders Thorpe’s remission to Saltwood Castle. *The Testimony* ends with Thorpe being led back to prison.

Thorpe and his *Testimony* enjoy a healthy body of scholarship. Hudson argues that his arrest for preaching without license highlights the “obligation” of the early fifteenth century Lollards to preach despite knowing that orthodox condemnation will follow. Rita Copeland contends that *The Testimony* affords Thorpe the chance to conscript his “historicized identity as a paradigm for constructing a dissenting subject.” Thorpe constructs a version of himself that is seemingly “historical” but is, of course, literary. This “dissenting subject” is an exiled subject, both physically as a prisoner and, more importantly, mentally as a Lollard. Thorpe uses the metaphor of exile to create a “dissenter” who attempts a transformation of the orthodox center. *The Testimony* is notable for its candor and its characterization of Thorpe, who consistently if unsurprisingly comes across as the patiently suffering servant who nevertheless holds his own against the powerful Archbishop.

More remarkable is how *The Testimony* reflects Thorpe’s mind of exile on a structural and rhetorical level. His mind of exile is an essential part of the text’s rhetorical power and the *locus* from which Thorpe justifies his claim to a “true” understanding of Christian orthodoxy. The moment that Thorpe enters into a mind of exile occurs after a heated discussion in which he refuses to submit to Arundel’s authority. Thorpe claims submission would make him a traitor to God and to fellow believers. Arundel threatens Thorpe with imprisonment in Smithfield and the painful death by burning that threat implies. This briefly leaves the recalcitrant Thorpe with nothing to say in response and he “stood stille and spak not” for a time (35-36). Then something remarkable happens. Thorpe narrates an epiphany, recognizing that he functions outside the Archbishop’s power:

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And I lokinge biheeld inwardli þe Archebishop...And anoon herfore I was moved in alle my wittis for to holde þe Archebishop neiþir prelate ne preest of God; and, forþi þat *myn inner man was altogidre þus departid* from þe Archebishop, me þowȝte I scholde not have ony drede of him. (36, my emphasis)

The essential moment is Thorpe’s recognition of himself, a spiritual self found in “myn inner man,” as a person excluded from the archbishop’s authority. He projects onto Arundel an understanding of the archbishop’s mind and then consciously relocates his own mind to a liminal position. He is subject to the archbishop’s authority in so far as he is physically present with him and his physical body can be punished, but that proposition is of no concern for Thorpe because the more essential part of himself, his cognitive awareness of being an exile, simultaneously exists in a place apart that is not subject to Arundel’s threats in any meaningful way. This is a strange but provocative moment “out of body” made possible by the narrative.

Thorpe becomes in this moment one of those “exiled” persons who Sermo 12 insists “ben constreynede to come and to answere for Crist,” and the narrative that follows reveals how his idea of exile differs markedly from Arundel’s own. The archbishop’s first words to Thorpe in *The Testimony* alludes to the latter’s movements:

William, I knowe wel þat þou hast þis twenti wyntir and more traveiled aboute bisili in þe norþ lond and in oþir diverse contrees of Ynglond, sowynge aboute fals doctrine...for to enfecte and poysoune al þis lond if þou mȝtist wiþ þin untrwe techynge. (29)

His words point to an understanding of Thorpe’s travels as something akin to the *gyrovagi* in the same way that Custance was. As a wanderer, Thorpe has moved from place to place in order to preach. Arundel, from his point of view, has at last caught a rogue preacher and brought him back to the orthodox center where he might “sequestre þee from þin yvel purpos” (29). Arundel’s allusion to illness and poison emphasizes how Thorpe’s doctrine introduces contagion from “outside” the “healthy” body of England. Arundel’s understanding of liminality links exile with
falsehood. The exile must be called to account and isolated, if need be, in order to prevent the “infection” of Lollardy from spreading.

Thorpe’s subsequent assumption of his mind of exile, though, transforms him from a “lewd losel” into a man whom in “whatever þing þat I schuld speke…miȝte have þerto trewe authorite of scripture or open resoun” (36-37). This moment echoes an earlier one in The Testimony’s prologue when Thorpe addresses his reasons for writing at all as “for þe fervent desir and þe greet love þat þese men and wymmen [his fellow Lollards] han to stonden hemself in truþe and to witnessen it, þough þei ben sodeynli and unwarned brouȝt forþ to ben apposid of adversaries” (28, my emphasis). His words suggest that it is a legal confrontation as much as a polemical one. Being brought forth is precisely what Arundel has done to Thorpe, calling him from the margins of religious discourse to answer before, quite literally, the orthodox center. The exiled Thorpe writes to fellow exiles who might also face such an interrogation. As Thorpe ultimately shows, assuming a mind of exile in which his “inner man was altogidre þus departid” allows for the transformation of his interrogation into a testimony of belief and from a poisonous thought into reason and authority. Thorpe’s narrative thus rewrites exile’s meaning. It is no longer a place of falsehood, but one of grace.

Having assumed this mind of exile, Thorpe’s desire to remain silent evaporates and his engagement with Arundel’s accusations grows increasingly forceful and more clearly “heretical” from the orthodox creed he originally espoused. His assumption of a mind of exile becomes a privileged space from which Thorpe feels secure in voicing his dissenting theology while the text undergoes a notable shift in its language. Thorpe departs from careful conciliation to active dissent tinged with liminal allusions: “I purposide herfore to have laft [the Church’s] company” (37-39); “I repentide me ony tyme, turnynge aȝen into þe wei which þe bisien þou now to make
me forsake” (45). He learns “to hate and fleen al syclaundre” as his enemies have spoken of him, and he defends his position with specific mention of Christ being cast out of Nazareth for preaching (Thorpe 51). Thorpe defines the true church as a church of pilgrims, a point I will return to below. He advises a penitent man “to absente you fro al yvel companye,” and finally claims that “ȳis sect…hate and fleemy” the sinfulness of the orthodox faithful in hopes of eventually restoring peace within it (Thorpe 81, 86). Thorpe’s assertions demonstrate his sense of existing at the margins of the faithful, but as the text continues it also becomes clear that such marginality, as Sermo 12 also notes, serves to indicate the rightness of his beliefs.

His mind of exile sets Thorpe against Arundel both ideologically and spiritually. Thorpe transforms into a representative of true Christianity while Arundel becomes in turn the corrupted Church. With these associations in place, Thorpe then levels the playing field between them. Declaring Arundel “neipir prelate ne preest of God” transforms Thorpe from an interrogated prisoner into an intellectual equal engaging Arundel in a series of academic debates, a shift that finds reflection in the text itself. Just like the old man in The Man of Law’s Tale, the Thorpe character “sees” Arundel with an inner vision that strips away falsehood. His view from the margins reveals the “truth” of the center, and from that point of view the Thorpe character imagines a transformed body of faithful reflecting the original purity of the early Church. Edward’s “modes of transformation” – the meeting of past and present, a new social order, and an idealized future – play out after Thorpe’s mental “exile.”

This rhetorical and ideological shifting is also accompanied by a transformative textual shift as well. Elizabeth Schirmer defines the shift as a general thematic movement from accusation to narrative storytelling to academic debate. She argues that Thorpe consistently
recasts Arundel’s attempts to accuse him of heresy as an opportunity to engage in academic
debate by first telling a story that defuses the threat of the original accusation:

Stripping both exemplary genres – hagiography and exemplum – of the
miraculous and fictional elements most offensive to Lollard sensibilities, he
transforms them into vehicles of a Wycliffite vernacular theology grounded in the
principle of exemplarity.\textsuperscript{35}

Schirmer believes that the source of this transformation is a result of “persecution becom[ing] for
Thorpe a site for rethinking the nature of true theological discourse.”\textsuperscript{36} The persecution he
undergoes is remarkably mild. Contrary to the later image of Arundel manufactured by
Protestant historians, Thorpe’s account depicts Arundel as a rather long-suffering and patient
interrogator. But regardless of the severity of Thorpe’s persecution, the looming threat is stripped
of its power to dissuade the dissenting subject because the inward journey into a mental exile
precedes and mitigates the potential of physical torture or death. The textual transformation is
instigated not by persecution, but by the assumption of a mind of exile. It is only\textit{ after} the
moment when Thorpe’s “inner man was altogidre ðus departid” that Schrimer’s observations
about the text’s transformations begin in earnest. Thorpe’s becoming a mind at the margins
creates the rhetorical space in which this textual transformation becomes possible.

We see this transformation most clearly in a debate begun by Thorpe discussing the
members of the true Church. He consciously associates the true earthly church with a well-
known medieval character that is also a type of exile, the pilgrim. These faithful “pilgrymes of
Crist wanderynge towards hevene bi stable feip…pese hevenli pilgrims,” stand in accord with

\textsuperscript{35} Elizabeth Schirmer, “William Thorpe’s Narrative Theology,”\textit{ Studies in the Age of
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 298.
the second part of the Church already dwelling in Heaven as God’s saints (Thorpe 51).\textsuperscript{37} Just like those assured of God’s favor in Sermon 12, Thorpe’s pilgrim church locates its defining characteristics not in physical persecution, but in being situated at the margins of contemporary society. When the subject of physical pilgrimages arises, Thorpe again implies that a mind of exile constitutes the essence of true pilgrimage by calling attention to how many who go on pilgrimages do so “more for þe helpe of ther bodies þan for þe helpe of þeir soulis” (63). True pilgrimage, on the other hand, requires introspection and grace “þat [the pilgrim] ioien gretli to wiþdrawen her iȝen, her eeren and all her oþer wittis and membris fro al wordli delite and fro al fleischli solace” (Thorpe 66). It is truly an exile of the mind when the other senses are excluded from concern, and here too the world is excluded. Thus the moment is an exile of the whole self, mind and body, a radically altered theory of mind, a mind of exile to itself most of all.

The impact of the mind of exile on the conversation reaches its climax with Thorpe asking the Archbishop a series of doctrinal questions to which Arundel answers with a simple affirmation:

And [Thorpe] saide, ‘Sere, owen we to beleue þat al Cristis lyuynge and his teachyne was true in euery point…and þe teachyng of þe apostlis of Crist and of alle the prophetis ben trewe, whiche ben writun in þe bible for þe healþe and saluacioun of alle Goddis peple?…owip þe doctrine, þe heestis eiper þe counseil of ony liif to be to accept…no but þis doctrine…?’ …And þe Archebishop seide, ‘ȝhis.’ (86-87)

Thorpe forces Arundel, the symbol of the orthodox center, to admit the rightness of Thorpe’s beliefs. The ideological distance between Thorpe and Arundel grows substantially more distinct from the former’s initial, orthodox creed. The more Thorpe sets himself apart from the archbishop, the bolder the Lollard becomes in his responses. He explicitly acknowledges his

\textsuperscript{37} It is not clear whether Thorpe alludes here to Wyclif’s \textit{congregatio predestinatorum}, assured of heaven, or simply to those who believe themselves members of the elect.
admiration of Wyclif, calling him “þe grettist clerk þat [many men] knewen lyvynge upon erþe.
And…as I gesse worþili, a passing reuli man and an innocent in al his lyvynge” (Thorpe 40). At
another point Arundel challenges Thorpe’s dismissal of confession to a priest as necessary for
forgiveness. When Arundel exclaims that the Church does not approve of this teaching, Thorpe
responds, “Holi chirche, [of] whiche Crist is heede in hevene and in erþe, mote nedis appreve þis
sentence” (84). The boldness of such responses stands in stark contrast to the man who once
resolved to stand silent.

In the final pages of The Testimony, both Arundel and his clerks seem to recognize that
some of Thorpe’s boldness stems from his assumption of a mind of exile. This becomes clear
when one of Arundel’s clerks yells in frustration: “þe moore, sere, þat ȝe bisien for to drawe [him]
towards ȝou, þe more contumax [he] is maade and þe ferþer fro ȝou” (Thorpe 86). The
clerk’s statement emphasizes the physical and mental proximity of Arundel and Thorpe while
simultaneously highlighting their ideological distance. The closer Arundel approaches, the
further towards the margins Thorpe moves. This is followed by references to Arundel’s own
exile following the Lord’s Appellant Crisis. Arundel claims that Thorpe spoke out in approval of
the archbishop’s banishment by Richard II in 1397. Thorpe responds that no one can prove he
was glad of Arundel’s departure beyond the fact that the departure secured Thorpe’s release from
prison (91). Arundel, perhaps sensing a means of proving his own authority by an appeal to
exile, responds: “God, as I woot well, haþ clepid me aȝen and brouȝt me into þis londe, for to
distrie þe and þe false sect þat þou art of” (Thorpe 91). Arundel attempts to leverage his own
exile as both transformative and authenticating. The attempt is short-lived.

38 Why Thorpe was imprisoned is not made clear. According to Thorpe, the Bishop of
London released him after Arundel’s departure. Though the bishop is not named, the date
indicates this would have been Robert Braybrooke.
Thorpe’s implication that Arundel is a false prophet ends any chance of further discussion or reconciliation. Thorpe’s arguments grow increasingly “heretical” from Arundel’s point of view, and each answer Thorpe gives places him further outside the orthodox body. Structurally it is the moment when Thorpe assumes a mind of exile that the text shifts from a defensive to an offensive rhetoric and from interrogation to debate and back again. As each challenge from Arundel comes, Thorpe positions himself more and more in opposition to Arundel’s understanding of the Church until the latter quite literally casts Thorpe “for þe pens anoon” (94). The texts ends with Thorpe being led out from the Archbishop’s presence to the cell where he will write *The Testimony*, a text that will depart from that cell and make its way into the hands of men and women supportive of Thorpe’s position. Significantly, Thorpe acknowledges his leaving the Archbishop’s presence, both physically and spiritually, as a token of God’s special grace. “I gladid in þe Lord,” he closes *The Testimony*, “forþi through his grace he kepte me…amonge þe manassings of myn adversaries [bat] wiþouten hevynesse and agrigginge of my conscience I passed awei fro hem” (Thorpe 93, my emphasis). Thorpe’s exile is complete. His triumph is doctrinal, psychological, and textual. Doctrinally, Thorpe seemingly “wins” the academic debate. Psychologically, it is in the moment of closest cognitive proximity – when Thorpe is most inside Arundel’s head – that the two men are most ideologically distinct. Thorpe’s mind of exile repositions him from interrogated to interrogator, in a complete reversal of the initial proceedings of the trial; the text becomes testimonial and polemical.

*The Testimony of William Thorpe* becomes Thorpe’s inner man that is now altogether departed from Arundel, or at least it is a representation of that inner man, whose very existence indicates to its readers that Thorpe was indeed correct. No matter what ultimately happens to Thorpe, his mind of exile preserved in *The Testimony* remains free to teach, transform, and
validate his message. The text represents the mind of exile set free to wander like Custance. It will eventually come to rest and bring with it a tale of transformation and constancy. In some ways *The Testimony* proves the Shipman’s concerns about what might happen if a Lollard sows “cokkel” in clean corn. It shows quite dramatically what happens when a mind of exile engages with the orthodox center. As Arundel’s own frustration shows, Thorpe’s position becomes unassailable. Lastly, the text goes forth to teach those who read it the power of mental dislocation. Thorpe’s arguments, and the care with which he distinguishes his faith from Arundel’s, serve a polemical function, drawing lines in ideological sands to distinguish a friend from a foe. Thorpe’s readers who recognize their own beliefs in this exilic text can recognize their own positioning as minds at the margins.

**The Plowman’s Tale: Exilic Text and Text as Exile**

*The Testimony of William Thorpe* suggests, as I have argued, that the mind of exile could transform the content and structure of late medieval religious texts. An examination of the textual history and content of the Lollard *Plowman’s Tale* demonstrates this phenomenon in action as it passes from the medieval to the early modern period. The narrative is a type of exile literature, one where its central character assumes a mind of exile. The Tale’s subsequent sixteenth century additions indicate that as time passed its underlying exilic theme became increasingly more apparent to its editors, who in turn, sought to make it more explicit to their own audiences. Lastly, the text itself assumes the role of an exile when it finds its way into Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. This marginalized text comes to rest in Chaucer’s masterpiece as a means of authenticating both its message and its literary merit.
The textual history of *The Plowman’s Tale* deserves some preliminary attention. Andrew Wawn dates the poem in its current form to the sixteenth century.\(^{39}\) His analysis of the poem’s vocabulary, rhyme scheme, and content, however, suggests an *ur*-text dating to the beginning of the fifteenth century.\(^{40}\) On the surface of this “original” text there is little to suggest that it deals with exile of any sort, mental or otherwise, apart from its narrator.\(^{41}\) A wandering man, who evokes the image of the “lollare,” encounters a Griffon and a Pelican having a religious debate concerning which of two religious groups – the Church or the “lollers” – have more spiritual merit. The Pelican dominates the poem with a sustained attack on the worldliness and materiality of the church, arguing that poverty truly reflects Christ’s teachings. The Griffon, who speaks very little, finally makes an impassioned but unconvincing speech for the Church’s wealth before flying away in anger to gather a following of carrion fowl. A conflict ensues, with the Pelican’s rescue coming via the appearance of a Phoenix who swiftly dispatches his enemies. The wandering narrator/plowman then reappears and offers a careful retraction distancing himself from the Pelican’s opinions and reaffirming his allegiance to the Church.

The original poem becomes more clearly the product of a mind of exile when approached through Robert Edwards’s modes of transformation. The core of the Pelican’s argument consists of a comparison between the present practices of the medieval Church and the past poverty and

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\(^{39}\) Andrew N. Wawn, “The Genesis of *The Plowman’s Tale,*” in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, ed. T. J. B. Spencer and R. L. Smallwood (Leeds: W.S. Maney and Son, 1972), 21–40. Using the poem’s modern linear notation, the “original” poem consists of lines 53-205 (the beginning of the tale proper and the pelican’s diatribe against papal authority’s encroachments on secular authority); 229-716 (a continuation of the previous theme and polemic against the church’s riches); 717-1268 (a polemic against secular canons and monks which was likely much shorter originally); and 1269-1380 (the avian battle and the plowman’s retraction) (39). As far as I know, no recent scholarship disputes Wawn’s chronology.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 39.

humility of the apostolic Church. He relies heavily on the authority of the past, both secular and ecclesiastical, so that his idealized Christian past intersects with the Christian present to call attention to the failings of the latter. In a particularly acerbic moment the Pelican claims:

There was more mercy in Maximyen
And in Nero that never was good
Than is nowe in some of them
When he hath on his furred hoode.
Theye folowe Christ that shedde his blode
To heven as buckette in to the well
Suche wrecches ben worse than wode
And all such faytours foule hem fall (ll. 293-300).

This juxtaposition of past and present, however tongue in cheek it might be, represents a thematic trend throughout the poem’s middle section where the deeds of the present reflect poorly on either the teachings of Jesus or the example of the early Church. Of course such rhetorical strategies are not limited to exilic literature, but in this case the intersection of past and present precedes the creation of an imagined social order implied by the Pelican’s attacks on the wealth of the Church. The imagined order is, not surprisingly, a poor and simple Church devoid of secular power:

Kynges and lordes shulde lordshyp hane
And rule the people with mylde mode
Christ for us that shedde his blode
Badde his preestes no maystershypp have… (ll. 1119-23).

The Pelican reconceives the Church as a primarily spiritual force whose “lordshype shalbe unyte” and whose defense will be neither wealth, armies, nor political might, but “hummyte” (ll. 1128, 1131).

Thus far the text contains two of the three modes of transformation. All that remains to establish the poem as exilic literature is Edwards’s final mode, an imagined future constructed from the exile’s point of view. This future is placed firmly in the mouth of the Pelican, but is the
Pelican an exile? The author certainly does a great deal to emphasize its marginality, beginning with the bird’s speaking for the “poore and pale…I-cleped lollers and londlese” (ll. 69, 73). The reference to the lollers’ lack of property indicates disenfranchisement and the location of these lollers at the margins of religious authority as well as the social. Their lack of property, coupled with the author calling the lollers “caytyffes,” locates the group “out of prease,” literally “out of the crowd” (ll. 71, 75). The Pelican’s diatribe targets wealth and worldliness as the moral failing of the Church and preaches, as does Thorpe in his *Testimony*, that the true faithful “All worldly worshyppe defye and flee” (l. 115). Even the choice of the Pelican as the voice supporting the Lollard position hints at liminality. The Aberdeen Bestiary recounts:

Est autem solitudo pellicani, quod immunis est a peccato sic et vita Christi…Moraliter autem per pellicanum intelligere possumus non quemlibet iustum, sed a carnali voluptate longe remotum…Sic et iustus in civitate solitudinem facit, dum immunem se in quantum humana fragilitas patitur a peccato custodit…Huic siquidem pellicano heremite vita fit similis qui pane pascitur, nec querit replecionem ventris, qui non vivit ut comedat, sed comedit ut vivat.

[The pelican is solitary because it is free from sin, as also is the life of Christ…In a moral sense, we can understand by the pelican not any righteous man, but one who distances himself from carnal desires…Thus the righteous man creates solitude for himself in the city, when he keeps himself free from sin, as far as human fraility allows…Indeed, the life of a hermit is modelled on the pelican, in that he lives on bread but does not seek to fill his stomach; he does not live to eat, but eats to live.] (fol. 35v) 42

The Pelican, already symbolic of Christ, further implies solitude and hermitage in medieval iconography. The Pelican’s link to marginality is further enchanced by the *Bestiary*’s distinction between a righteous man and one who specifically and actively “in civitate solitudinem fecit” [creates solitude for himself in the city]. This man “distances himself” as much as possible from

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42 *The Aberdeen Bestiary* (Aberdeen University Library, n.d.).
the carnal world. The use of a pelican thus situates the arguments of the marginalized into a creature symbolic of the margins that, in turn, is further symbolic of the truly righteous man.

The Pelican, like Thorpe, also experiences an exilic epiphany near the poem’s conclusion, just prior to the climactic avian non-battle. Enraged by the call for a poor church, the Griffon threatens to have the Pelican “dissevered from holy churche,” an obvious reference to the physical and spiritual exile of excommunication (l. 1243). The Pelican dismisses and rejects the threat as “of lytell value” (l. 1246), saying “I drede nat all thy mayntenaunce / For if I drede the worldes hate / Me thynketh I were lytell to prayse” (ll. 1256-58). His courage directly relates to his pre-existing mind of exile. Equating the Griffon’s threat with the world’s hate demonstrates the Pelican’s self-positioning in some place apart from it. This carries over into the climactic encounter between the Pelican and Griffon. The two never engage in direct conflict because the Pelican “flew forth” from the site of the debate before the Griffon returns with all manner of carrion fowl (l. 1325). The poet then writes:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Long the Pelican was out,} \\
\text{But at last he cometh againe:} \\
\text{And brought with him the Phenix stout,} \\
\text{The Griffon would have flow full faine:} \\
\text{His foules that flewen as thicke as raine,} \\
\text{The Phenix tho began hem chace,} \\
\text{To flie from him it was in vaine,} \\
\text{For he did vengenaunce and no grace (ll. 1341-48).}
\end{align*}
\]

A flight, not a fight, and a subsequent return, brings with it transformation. The poem’s many allusions to marginality culminate in the Pelican’s assumption of a mind of exile and flight from the debate. Mental exile becomes physical flight, and the exile’s physical return – as with Custance, the blind old man, the Christian audience of “Sermo 12,” and Thorpe – brings with it the overthrow of a corrupted center precipitated by a liminal figure. The recognition of being already departed from the interrogator’s authority proceeds to transform the nature of the
narrative just as it did for Thorpe. Thorpe’s assumption of a mind of exile begins a series of academic debates, but the Pelican’s mind of exile ends the debate with the Griffon’s departure and the beginning of a new narrative between the Pelican and a speaker whom the text identifies as the plowman. The Pelican wishes the debate might have been heard by others and the Plowman promises to retell the tale.

All together, these allusions to marginality in the original poem confirm the presence of Edwards’s modes of transformation and indicate that the Tale itself is a work of exile literature. The lack of explicit references to exile suggests that the exilic nature of the text stems not from the physical location of the poet, but from the internal sense of his own position at the margins of orthodox discourse. And as was the case with the other texts already discussed, transformation and authentication find explicit links to marginalization. The narrator desires to know which religious group reflects God’s truth and he seeks an answer not in the mouths of priests or monks or theologians, but in “many a countrey” where “ever my travayle was for nought, / All so ferre as I have go” (l. 77). He seeks the truth outside the central venues of religious authority, at the margins, and he ultimately finds his answer “as I wandred in a wro” (l. 81).

What remains to be addressed are the subsequent additions that transform the original poem into The Plowman’s Tale of the sixteenth century. The most substantial addition is the text’s fifty-three line Prologue, narrating why the titular plowman resolves to go on a pilgrimage. Gathering up his meager possessions, a hat and a walking stick, the plowman encounters the Canterbury pilgrims and joins them when the Host invites him to tell a tale. The plowman opts to

43 The second speaker’s identification as the plowman, though labeled as such in both the 1533 and 1606 versions of The Plowman’s Tale, makes little sense given that the Plowman telling the tale explicitly says in the prologue that he relates a sermon he once heard given by a priest. The second speaker here should either be that priest or still another plowman distinct from the Tale’s narrator. This inconsistency likely arises from the sixteenth century addition of the prologue. In the original poem, the “I” at this point is presumably the poet.
recount “a good prechyng,” which in turn is the beast fable of the original poem (l. 48). Little needs to be said here about the importance of the plowman figure in the later middle ages. Langland’s *Piers Plowman* firmly established in the popular imagination the association of that figure with honorable poverty, hard work, and piety. A stand-alone printed edition of *The Plowman’s Tale* first appeared in 1533, a full nine years before it found a new home (and author) as the final episode in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.44 After it appeared in Thomas Godfrey’s 1542 *Works*, it remained there for over two centuries and established Chaucer’s credibility as a proto-Protestant for years to come. McCarl notes that *The Plowman’s Tale* was to inspire Protestant authors including John Foxe, Antony Wotton, Edmund Spenser, and John Milton.45

*The Plowman’s Tale* demonstrates a clear textual link between the fifteenth century Lollards and the early modern reformers of the following century, and a closer examination of additions to the text reveals an extension of the mind of exile into the early modern period. The most overt of these is the choice of the plowman, whose description distinctly associates him with symbols of exile well known at the time. The prologue offers very specific details about the Plowman’s outfit in its second stanza:

He toke his tabarde and his staffe eke
And on his hedde he sett his hat
And said he wolde sainct Thomas seke
On pilgrimage he goeth forth plat
In scrip he bare both bred & lekes… (ll. 9-13).

His hat, staff, and scrip recall Caesare Ripa’s icon of an exile in *Iconologia* (see Figure 1). Ripa describes an exile as “A man in the Habit of a Pilgrim, with his Palmer’s Staff in in his Hand,

44 I find it unlikely that the addition of the prologue grew solely out of a desire to link *The Plowman’s Tale* with Chaucer. There are enough irreconcilable conflicts between the General Prologue and prologue of *The Plowman’s Tale* to suggest that the latter’s addition was meant as a purposeful attempt to write the Lollard poem into *The Canterbury Tales*. For a summary of these inconsistencies, see McCarl, *The Plowman’s Tale*, 33–34.

45 Ibid., 52–64.
Figure 1: "Exile" from Ripa's *Iconologia*
and a Hawk on his fist.” He further explains: “there are two sorts of exile; one, when a Man is banish’d for some Misdemeanor, which the Hawk denotes; The other is when a Man voluntarily chuses to live abroad, which the Pilgrim’s Staff shews” (Ripa 28). A similar image appears in the engravings of the Italian Enea Vico in the mid-sixteenth century, suggesting that the association of these particular items, pilgrimage, and exile was a widespread motif. An admittedly more tenuous connection is the presence of birds in the Tale, since neither is a hawk. Nevertheless, the prologue’s plowman/pilgrim becomes linked with exile several times by his physical description. As a result, the sixteenth century prologue transforms the fifteenth century poem into a text of the Piers Plowman tradition and into a tale narrated by a figure wrapped in the outward symbols of exile.

The exilic themes of the Tale extend beyond the symbolic and into the fabric of the textual transmission and reception of Chaucer’s works. If we examine The Plowman’s Tale as, in a sense, a textual exile, we see the process of exilic transformation and authentication in action within Chaucer’s masterpiece. The plowman tells a tale that’s not a tale. It is a sermon cum beast fable cum polemic, brought into The Canterbury Tales by an exile. The Tale’s plowman and the plowman of the General Prologue are clearly not the same person. Chaucer’s plowman is with his brother, the Parson, at the Tabard Inn when The Canterbury Tales begins in April, but it is “Midsomer Moone” when the Tale’s plowman encounters the pilgrims (l. 2). His alien-ness is further heightened by his skeletal appearance: “Men might have seen through both his chekes / And every wang toth & where it sat” (ll. 15-16). Inserting this new plowman and his narrative into The Canterbury Tales allows the transformative power of exile to work on both The

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46 Caesar Ripa, Iconologia (London: Benjamin Motte, 1709). Ripa’s emphasis. Iconologia was first published in 1593, and again in 1603 with the addition of 151 woodcuts.
47 Randolph Starn, Contrary Commonwealth: The Theme of Exile in Medieval and Renaissance Italy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), Fig. 1 following p. 44.
Plowman’s Tale and Chaucer. McCarl argues that John Foxe “placed The Plowman’s Tale squarely in the center for the proper Protestant appreciation of Chaucer.” The 1570 edition of Acts and Monuments reads:

I meruell to consider this, how that the Bishoppes condemnyng and abolishyng all maner of Englishe bookes and treatises…did yet authorise the woorkes of Chaucer…Who (no doubt) saw in Religion as much almost, as euen we do now, and vttereth in his workes no lesse, and semeth to bee a right Wicleuian…[W]hat finger can pointe out more directly the Pope with his Prelates to be Antichrist, then doth the poore pellycan reasonyng agaynst the gredy Griffon? Vnder whiche Hypotyposis or Poesie, who is so blind that seeth not by the Pellicane, the doctrine of Christ, and of the Lollardes to bee defended agaynst the Churche of Rome? (1004)

Its “discovery” and inclusion by Thomas Godfrey turns out to be a catalyst in Chaucer’s transformation into a proto-Protestant figure. The Tale, on the other hand, benefits from the authentication of Chaucer’s name. In other words when the “exiled” plowman returns to the “orthodox” center of The Canterbury Tales, it transforms Chaucer into a “Protestant” author while granting the Tale itself the rhetorical and literary gravitas of Chaucer’s name.

This process is admittedly circular, but it is nonetheless powerful and seemingly designed with posterity in mind. In 1606 The Plowman’s Tale was republished as a stand-alone text complete with a title page announcing it was “written by Sir Geffrey Chaucer, Knight, amongst his Canterburie tales: and now set out apart from the rest, with a short exposition.” The exposition appears in the form of copious marginal glosses that Paul Patterson argues “transformed the new poem into a new entity and vehicle for propaganda…[I]t is clear that the 1606 edition of The Plowman’s Tale is a mediated text that appropriates the rich cultural legacy of the Middle Ages in order to tear it apart and reconstitute it in the maelstrom of post-

48 McCarl, The Plowman’s Tale, 63.
50 McCarl, The Plowman’s Tale, 121. Emphasis original.
Reformation print."51 To put it another way, Chaucer becomes an “exile polemicist.” These new marginalia gloss “lollers” as “true Christians which either severed themselves from popish idolatry and abomination, or were knowne to mislike of them.”52 The marginalia represent still another manifestation of the mind of exile, for what are marginalia if not a literal voice in the margins that transforms the central text? I am not suggesting that all marginalia result from a mind of exile. Yet as William Slights points out, “Alternative voices from the margins of society and the text were never more contentious in early modern England than in…religious polemics.”53

At the end of the middle ages then, it is possible to see a transformation beginning in textual modes from exilic testimonies and imaginative literature to religious polemic. The 1606 version of The Plowman’s Tale demonstrates how, of the many means early modern Protestants chose to make those arguments, one was a voice and a mind of exile preserved in the textual margins as England transformed into a Protestant nation. If Lollardy was a type of internal exile, an exile of the mind, it makes sense that later reformers who also found themselves at the margins of religious orthodoxy identified a kindred literary spirit in the Lollard pamphlets still circulating in England as Reformation began in earnest after 1536. Lollards imagined themselves as a purer form of the Church defined by their self-imposed banishment. Nevertheless they worked frequently to find a place within that orthodox community, insisting that they were excluded from it because of its worldly corruption. The encouraging faith of “Sermo 12’s” preacher in Christ’s care for those fleeing persecution appears in the letters and pamphlets of

52 McCarl, The Plowman’s Tale, 131.
exiled reformers a century later. Thorpe’s boldness in the face of Arundel’s threats seems tame compared with some of the polemic later English Protestant exiles wrote. Later editors of *The Plowman’s Tale* seem increasingly and explicitly aware of the liminal position its narrator holds and they heighten that liminality by adding the plowman character, his clothing, and his place to *The Canterbury Tales*.

I began this chapter by referring to the importance of exile in the Christian tradition and Harry Bailey’s seemingly passing comment about Lollards in the wind. The importance of exiles to Lollard literature cannot be ignored, nor can the way that mental “exile” extends into the early modern period. Chaucer’s *Man of Law’s Tale* highlights the transformative and authenticating power of exile on religious orthodoxy, and even the mere suggestion of Lollard sympathies in the Parson causes an intense and immediate anxiety in the Shipman concerning religious transformation. Chaucer hints at the Lollards’ marginality as a source of their transformative power. That association carries with it important implications for the development of national identity in the religious polemics written in the years after 1536. The Lollard mind of exile does not vanish with the suppression of their teachings. It survives in the literature of reform begun by Wyclif, enhanced by Luther and others, and finds purchase in the minds of those reformers who inherited their skepticism about the Church’s material wealth and witnessed firsthand its corruption. Exile becomes a central theme of many of these authors as well when they become exiles in truth.

Several of these exiled authors from the Protestant tradition are the focus of the next chapter, especially William Turner and John Bale. The polemics of these men and others contain evidence of the mind of exile defined here as it continued to develop in the sixteenth century.
Polemic in particular, as I will show, becomes a significant part of exilic literature, as well as the medium best suited for the exiles to explore and profess their national identities.

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Chapter Three: “To the Glory of God and Profit of the Commonwealth:” Protestant Exilic Rhetoric and National Identity

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, polemic came into its own as a genre of reformation, and one of its most proficient masters was William Turner. Turner occupies the margins of early modern scholarship, which is fitting given that he lived several portions of his life as an exile of one type or another. Among Turner’s many surviving publications is his two-volume commonplace book, which includes personal sentiments as well as excerpts from a variety of texts on botany, religion, medicine, and science.¹ An unnamed student who writes of Turner’s imprisonment in 1540 records one of its more personal moments:


[Cromwell was arrested 19 July and beheaded on 28 July. At the same time my teacher Turner was twice thrown in prison. Once in the Fleet, once in the Marshalsea, without an answer to the charge. At the same time Bernard, Gerald, and Jerome were burned without cause; that is to say they were condemned to their deaths without knowing the cause. Powel, Fethersten, and Abel were hanged because they denied that the king was the supreme head.]

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Turner’s student neglects to record the charge leading to imprisonment, but it was almost certainly preaching without license, an infraction Turner was apparently wont to practice.³ Turner’s imprisonment is the first of many exiles (of one type of another) that he would face before his death in 1568. Soon after the student’s entry, Turner either escaped or was released and fled to the Continent where he would remain for the next seven years, one of two exiles to the Continent. His second would come during the reign of Queen Mary.

Turner was a vocal religious reformer, never satisfied with the Church of England’s unwillingness to sever ties completely with Roman Catholic pageantry and practice. Educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, Turner met and formed lifelong relationships with prominent Protestant reformers who would later take on major roles in the nascent Church of England, including Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, and William Cecil. Before his death in 1568, he wrote numerous religious polemics and translated other notable religious works from Continental sources, including Urbanus Rhegius’ *Novae Doctrinae et Verterem Collatio* and the Lutheran *Unio Dissidentium*.⁴ Despite these accomplishments, he never achieved the status of a man at the center of Reformation.⁵ He appears in passing, in footnotes, and in the margins – a career bookended by exile.⁶

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³ The *Athenae Oxonienses* records that Turner “following his old trade of preaching without a call was imprison’d and kept in close durance for a considerable time.” See further Anthony A. Wood and Philip Bliss, *Athenae Oxonienses: An Exact History of All the Writers and Bishops Who Have Had Their Education in the University of Oxford*, vol. 1 (London: T. Bensley, 1813), 361.
⁵ He most often appears in connection with the natural sciences, particularly botany and ornithology, and his *Herbal*, a tome of botanical lore compiled from his own meticulous observations at home and abroad. As an exile he earned his M.D. at the University of Ferrara or
A dialectic dynamic of exile and identity is certainly visible in the life and polemics of a man like William Turner. Polemic, a genre so inherently focused on drawing ideological lines in the sand, would have obvious appeal to an exile whose life revolved around spaces where inclusion was no longer perceived as possible and enemies were clearly established. “Polemic seeks to divide its readers into friends and enemies,” as Jesse Landers succinctly puts it.\(^7\) Turner wrote no fewer than seven in his lifetime.\(^8\) Such productivity deserves attention, especially given the widely accepted link between print and the Reformation.\(^9\) “Though the relationship between

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\(^7\) Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, 16.

\(^8\) These include: *The Huntyng and Fynding Out of the Romishe Fox Whiche More Than Seven Yeares Hath Beene Hyd Among the Bysshoppes of England, After That the Kynges Hyghnes, Henry VIII, Had Commanded Hym to Be Dryven Out of Hys Realme.* (Basil, 1543); *The Rescuynge of the Romishe Fox Other Wyse Called the Examination of the Hunter Devised by Stephen Gardiner* (Winchester: Laurenz von der Meulen, 1545); *A New Dialogue Wherein Is Conteyned the Examinatio[n] of the Messe and of That Kind of Priesthode, Whiche Is Ordeyned so Saye Messe: And to Offer up for Remission of Synne, the Body and Bloud of Christe Againe* (London: W. Hill, 1548); *A Perserusuatiue, or Triacle, Agaynst the Poyson of Pelagius* (London: S. Meirdman, 1551); *The Huntyng of the Romysh Woulf* (Emden: Egidius van der Erve, 1555); *A New Booke of Spiritual Physik* (Emden: Egidius van der Erve, 1555); *The Hunting of the Fox and the Wolfe, Because They Make Havocke of the Sheepe of Christ Jesus* (London, 1565).

\(^9\) The Reformation’s debt to books and printing is discussed in Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and James
print and Reformation cannot be reduced to a one-way causality,” writes Lander, “together they created a culture that formed not homogenously but continually in debate, a culture that can itself be seen as polemical.”\textsuperscript{10} Polemic culture relies on texts to draw clear allegiances between groups through the texts themselves, and it results in a genre that “emerges out of the failure of consensus and the institutions of adjudication – it acts as a powerful social solvent at the very same time that it constitutes new communities.”\textsuperscript{11} Polemic is simultaneously divisive and unifying because it creates binary positions of inclusion and exclusion: Protestant/Catholic; English/Non-English; citizen/traitor. Yet within each half of those dichotomies it creates the illusion of unity.

Placing Turner’s polemics alongside those of his contemporaries reveals what Philip Major calls a “rhetoric of exile” that defines and explores an English national identity formed extra-nationally.\textsuperscript{12} This rhetoric is most evident in two of Turner’s polemics that will be the primary focus of attention here: \textit{The Huntyng and Fyndyng Out of the Romishe Fox} and \textit{A New Booke of Spiritual Physik}. Both texts are products of the commonwealth tradition that developed in the late Henrician period and continued well into the Edwardian. \textit{The Romishe Fox} identifies and limits political and religious centers of power through the concentration of authority in written texts, and it employs metaphors of texts as a means both for disentangling sacred from secular authority and for declaring Turner’s own continued loyalty to the nation. \textit{Spiritual Physik} uses the well-known somatic metaphor of “the body politic” common in the sixteenth century and going back to at least Livy and St. Paul. Turner’s use of the metaphor includes the Romish

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 10–11.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 19.

\textsuperscript{12} Philip Major, \textit{Writings of Exile in the English Revolution and Restoration} (Ashgate, 2013), 3.
pox, a disease that imagines Catholicism as an invading pathogen and an imperial power threatening English national sovereignty. In Physik we also find acts of ideological recovery and the rewriting of both national and ecclesiastical histories that derive their influence from a position of national exteriority. Alongside these two polemics I also examine John Bale’s Yet a Course at the Romeysh Fox and John Ponet’s A Short Treatise of Politike Power. The shared “rhetoric of exile” in these polemics forces their readers and authors to take sides, and it allows for the creation of an unambiguous ideological platform codified in the authority of print to create a textual confessional both spiritual and national.

**Defining Authority: Texts, Kings, and Governors in The Romishe Fox**

*The Huntyng and FYnding Out of the Romishe Fox* has been discussed elsewhere as an important early text for its use of “what might broadly be called ‘history’” in its attacks on the Roman church. It prompted Stephen Gardiner’s direct response, *The Examination of a Prowd Praesumptuous Hunter* and inspired Bale’s *Yet a Course at the Romeysh Fox*. Turner’s *Romishe Fox* opens with an address to King Henry but primarily targets English bishops, who Turner alleges maintain aspects of Roman Catholic worship, and English nobles, whom he hopes to inspire to action against these same practices. The polemic argues that a Catholic fox, the Pope supported by his “son” Bishop Gardiner, remains in England despite King Henry’s explicit decree that all elements of Catholic worship be expunged from the realm. In making this argument, Turner seeks to define and stabilize the boundaries of multiple authorities – secular, sacred, and textual – to create an idealized English identity originating from an extra-national position.

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The centrality of texts in Turner’s argument appears on *The Romishe Fox*’s title page, where he encourages the reader to give King Henry the book before Catholic bishops suppress it. The text’s preface turns into an address by the pseudonymous William Wraghton, who directly addresses the King. Wraghton pleads, “If ye will of your Kyngly liberalite grant me licens … I so shall hunt out thys best et [sic] discover hym that all your hole realme may spy hym and se hym an know hym what he is…” (Turner, *The Romishe Fox* A3v). This address is a highly “present” moment. Turner, as Wraghton, speaks as one granted an audience with the king. At first glance the direct address and the pseudonym are hardly unusual. Of greater significance is the preface’s conclusion. Making his own exile explicitly clear, Turner closes, “From Basil, the first day of May. *Anno domini* 1543” (*The Romishe Fox* A3r). The illusion of Wraghton/Turner directly addressing Henry abruptly shatters. The voice so present in the court begging license moments before abruptly recedes to the European continent. Turner’s voice for the remainder of the text thus becomes one spoken from afar. Whether or not Turner actually expected King Henry to receive and read the book cannot now be known with any certainty, but the text speaks for Turner and Turner speaks to the king through the text. Turner’s address marks a sort of textual “return” from exile that at the same time underlines his absence as *The Romishe Fox* crosses the boundary that he cannot.

Much of what Turner says in *The Romishe Fox* involves a reconception of sacred and secular authority into three distinct textual sources. At the apex is the absolute authority of God recorded in the Scriptures. Fully half of *The Romishe Fox* is a point-by-point refutation of Catholic practices in the English Church. The remaining two textual sources are the authority of the King, established by royal proclamations that are sovereign within England (save when they conflict with God’s law) and the authority of the Pope, inscribed in canon law. The “hunt” itself
stems from the passage of the 1536 See of Rome Act. Turner claims that a long list of Catholic liturgical practices continue after its passage, and what he sees as its failure fuels his polemic. At the outset sacred and secular authority are in a constant state of flux or transference. Turner notes, for example, that the fox found sanctuary in the church where “the clergi set up streght way on the chirche dore a letter wher in was contend that from hence forth no man shuld...call that romish fox, a fox, but the kynges beste” (*The Romishe Fox* A4v). Such porous boundaries are unacceptable.

Turner suggests that once the King became the supreme head of the English Church, papal practices became Henry’s by means of his proclamation of ecclesiastical authority. The fox is now the king’s beast. But Turner refuses to allow this conflation. He counters the argument with hypothetical analogies, several of which associate a person with that person’s *oeuvre*. He writes,

> If the kyng of Portugale shuld command in a proclamation, that Aristotel and Platoes workes should no mor be called Aristoteles workes and Platoes, but hys works; shuld Aristotel and Platoes workes by thes meanes be cum hys workes? I thynk nay. For if the kyng of Portugagal [sic] might take Aristotoles workes from Aritsstotel, then myght Maevius become Maro, and the most unlerned in a countre might have as noble workes as the best leaned [sic] man in the world. (Turner, *The Romishe Fox* [B8]v)

Turner rejects the notion that a king – or any authority, sacred or secular – can assume the authorship and authority of another by a simple declaration, which undermines the argument that papal traditions can be made Henry’s by decree – implicitly or explicitly. What Henry enacts must be his alone; else he might “take” any number of works, deeds, or traditions. This would amount to the usurping of authority and infringe upon the sovereignty necessary for the deeds of others to remain sovereign in and of themselves. His choice of comparisons – Plato and
Aristotle, Maevius and Maro – further solidifies this notion of sovereignty as located in texts.\textsuperscript{14}

Assigning the works of the former to the latter would be an injustice and it would elevate a lesser author over the greater as well as violate the clear authorial distinction between them.

Turner then extends this critique to the textual cornerstone of the Roman Church, canon law. Turner contends that those same bishops, seeking to protect the Romish fox in their midst, manipulated the political situation so that:

[T]he ceremonies whiche the pope made shuld no more be called the popes ceremonies, but the kynges ceremonies. … [Y]e made the kynge pope. For if the popes acts and the kynges be all on, then is the kyng the pope or ellis partner with the pope. … Call ye theyr for no more the popes canon law the law of the chirch of England; call no more from henceforward the popes ordinances the kynges ordinances for fere of it that foloweth. \textit{(The Romishe Fox C[1]\textsuperscript{“”})}

The underlying metaphor is textual: royal acts, canon law, and the law of the Church of England are all textually codified. Henry’s law cannot be equated with the Pope’s canon law, which he ordered removed from the realm, lest he be culpable of paradoxically banishing himself by association. The “fere of it that foloweth” is that the bishops are at the very least guilty of ignoring his majesty’s commands and, at worst, of attempting to circumvent Henry’s authority by grafting a foreign power’s authority onto the king. The King and the Pope become two individual wielders of powers who cannot both function within the same geopolitical space. Turner provides a position for “reading” the nation’s regnal “authorship” with a more accurate understanding of its real source of authority. This authority, discussed as it is by texts and metaphors of texts, is stripped of its imagined transferability from one person to another and “written” as it were by distinct “authors” inseparable from their work.

\textsuperscript{14} “Maevius” refers to the ancient Roman critic whom both Virgil and Horace mocked as an inferior writer. Maro is Virgil’s surname.
A similar reliance on texts to limit authority appears in Bale’s *Yet a Course at the Romeysh Foxe*. Bale’s polemic responds to the public recantation of Robert Tolwin, a Protestant preacher. He relies on a line-by-line glossing of Tolwin’s printed recantation to attack the London Bishop Edmund Bonner, an attack that relies, in part, on an overt refusal to conflate two distinct “authors.” Though Tolwin speaks the words, Bale calls “thys open promes to the devyls obedience most tyrannously coactd by the verye satellyte of Sathan” and reiterates later, “For though the voyce be Tolwin’s, the wordes of the voyce are [Bonner’s]” ([B7]ґ, F5ї). Bale critiques the author of the words, not their speaker. Bonner’s words cannot and should not be assigned to Tolwin because the one cannot take on the voice of the other within the text. As did Turner, Bale uses texts to institute a clear division between authorities. Crossing that divide cannot be tolerated. Bale’s careful distinction between who spoke the words and who “wrote” the words reveals a certain anxiety in the minds of these exiles that might be understood as an anxiety of authorship. If the contents of a text could be transferred from one sovereign authority to another, their works too might become another’s. Where then does that leave an exile reliant upon texts? The assurance of having a voice at home would fade to silence or be lost in a confused babble.

For Bale this anxiety appears in one of *Yet a Course’s* longest glosses, on a bag purportedly shown to the audience at St. Paul’s Cross and containing “erronyouse, heretycall, and noughtye bokes” (F4ї). In the polemic, Bale describes how Tolwin shook out a bag filled with books onto the stage (F5ї). Tolwin proceeds to identify one book after another, describe it, and then replace it in the bag. Bale contends this performance is so that “[the observers in the

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15 John Bale (1495-1563) was the author of *Kynge Johan*, an important play in the transition from medieval morality plays to later historical dramas. He was later, albeit briefly, Bishop of Ossory. Textual references are to John Bale, *Yet a Course at the Romeysh Foxe* (Antwerp: A. Goinus, 1543).
crowd] myght yet testyfye that [Tolwin’s] heresyes were schewed at Paules crosse in soche a bagge” as proof that Tolwin deserved to die ([F6]v). Bale further assigns to the spectacle Bonner’s fear that the books’ contents might result in the bishop “be[ing] judged both an heretyque and a traytour, and also a cruell persecuter of Christ in hys faythfull members…” (F5v). If the truth within the books were known, Bale argues, then Bonner would be exposed as the true “heretyque and a traytour.” The texts, in other words, function as witnesses to the falsehood of both Bonner’s beliefs and his national allegiance. Bale manipulates the entire scene so that revealing the books, even if just their names, places them on trial alongside Tolwin. Their “authors” appear as if in person – seen but not heard – and then vanish back into the depths of the bag. The strangest example of this elision of text and subject occurs when Tolwin mentions a book concerning two fifteenth century Lollards “called Thorpe and oldecastell” (Bale [F7]v).16 Bale writes, “Thorpe and oldecastell are the names of ii dyverse menne, and not of one severall boke…. For a monstrouse thynge yt were ii menne to be one boke, unlesse he coude brynge yt in by some straunge fygure of the canon lawe whych now adyaes worketh manye newe myracles” ([F8]v). Setting aside his sarcastic and deliberately literal misreading of Tolwin’s intent, Bale’s “monstrose thynge” involves the conflation of “two diverse men” into a single text. Bale separates Thorpe and Oldcastle’s beliefs in the following pages to imbue these two narratives, which have been left unread, with their individual, distinct voices. Text and man merge into one and the same, but each textual voice remains unique. The bag of books transforms into a collection of individuals, each with its own voice, whom Bonner has left silenced and

16 These are William Thorpe (c.1407) and Sir John Oldcastle (d.1417). The reference is almost certainly to William Thorpe, *The Examinacion of Master William Thorpe Preste Accused of Heresye Before Thomas Arundell, Archebishop of Ca[n]terbury, the Yere of Ower Lord .mcccc. and Seuen. the Examinacion of the Honorable Knight Syr Jhon Oldcastell Lorde Cobham, Burnt Bi the Said Archebisshop, in the Fyrste Yere of Kynge Henry the Fyfth.*, ed. George Constantine (Antwerp: J. Van Hoochstraten, 1530).
condemned. It is only through Bale’s careful glossing that these “exiled” subjects, removed from the public view and relegated to a bag, present but absent, do not simply fade into silence.

For Turner and Bale, the text is the creation of an individual and “belongs” to that person, an early modern metaphorical copyright, and a situation more familiar in imaginative literature – Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, and others – but strikingly different in the political sphere. Both Turner and Bale apply textual metaphors in order to denote the boundary between one authority and another and thus to establish a more modern conceptualization of the authorial relationship between text and writer (i.e. a text is the property and intellectual product of a specific individual). What is at work here is a polemical example of the shifting authorial role from *compilator* to *auctor* finding purchase and application in critiques of regnal authority. Textual sovereignty, or authorial designation, prevents one authority from claiming the power of another and excludes the possibility of two secular authorities coexisting within the same geopolitical space.

Authority, tradition, and law thus undergo codification in texts and textual metaphors and away from longstanding religious consensus. The struggle with a universal Church becomes a struggle between national, secular, and textual centers of power. The anxiety of authorship present in both Bale’s and Turner’s polemics underlines what Lander calls “a world in which religious identity is perceived as shifting and unstable, and a world in which language is used to conceal as well as reveal.” Their polemics are proclamationary: declaring citizenship, declaring religious creeds, and declaring codified voices for both themselves and others who they feel

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represent voices “in defense of unambiguous truth.”

Each of these declarations set boundaries and each eventually extend into meditations on the divisions between sacred and secular authority. The king’s law is absolute but subject to God’s law. That Turner holds this belief, at least in print, is evident in The Romishe Foxe’s inscription “To the Most excellent Prince, King Henry the Eighth, King of England, France, and of Ireland, Supreme Governor in earth of these his Realms” (Turner, The Romishe Foxe A2v). As W.R.D. Jones notes, “This must be one of the earliest appearances in print of the title which was ultimately to be adopted in religious context by Elizabeth I.”

In the sixteenth century both “king” and “governor” share similar meanings. Each term signifies a ruler (usually male) who wields power (usually absolute) over a group of subjects. At times the two terms appear in more or less the same breath such as they do in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer where Edward VI is referred to as “our kyng and gouernour” (W4v). Turner, though, seems to argue for a more nuanced understanding of the terms. Turner’s understanding of “supreme governor” is clarified in a later work. There he writes that “supreme governoure in earth under god betokeneth as myche as supreme hede doth, and is as honorable a terme for the majesti of a kyng as the other is…I gave hym so myche honor as is lawful to gyve unto any erthly man by the worde of god” (Turner, The Rescuynge of the Romishe Foxe C2v-C3v). Turner acknowledges that the king of England has the right and the power to dictate religious reform via secular decrees, but only if those decrees fall in line with the Word of God. Beyond that, Turner will not grant additional authority because of God’s sovereignty codified in Scripture. God’s

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18 Lander, Inventing Polemic, 37.
19 Jones, William Turner, 151.
laws are His alone and He is their author. Henry might follow, implement, or enforce them, but they cannot be made or unmade by him. He concludes, “I hold that the kyng our master is the supreme polytike hede under god both of all the spiritualti and also of the temperalty of England and Irelande and that there is nether spirituall nor politike hede in earthe above hym nether bisshop kyng nor emperour” (Turner, The Rescuynge of the Romishe Fox C4v, my emphasis). As supreme governor, Henry holds secular eminence within the geopolitical boundaries of his territories and can only “govern” the people in following God’s laws. As spiritual governor Henry’s power is substantial but still limited.

Though he had not yet made this distinction while writing The Romishe Fox, the same ideas are present when Turner places Henry’s decrees in opposition to papal traditions, arguing that the two cannot occupy the same geopolitically defined space. What results is an exposure of the loci of power operating in Tudor England and a continued separation of sacred and secular authority accomplished via textual metaphor. The argument’s driving force revolves around a list of religious practices Turner observed in England. Each practice – creeping to the cross, banishing demons with holy water, and others – is assigned to a historically specific period and to a clearly named “author” not to be conflated with the English sovereign. The men he names – Gregory, Alexander, Felix, Pelagius – underline the point that neither Henry nor God instituted these practices (Turner, The Romishe Fox [A7]v-r). Turner’s insistence on referring to the Church of England reinforces its separateness from the Church of Rome and Roman authority, and both churches’ inclusion within geopolitical boundaries. This line of argument leads to a long syllogism in which Turner concludes that such practices prove canon law still governs the Church of England and “the popis chirch and the English chirch ar all on… [and] therfor the Pope by your saying is the hede of the chirche of England” (The Romishe Fox [B6]). Thus
England remains under the dominion of a foreign authority, an argument Bale makes as well. Bale references Bonner’s careful linking of the king’s proclamations with papal proclamations in order to justify Bonner’s authority, and points out how in doing this Bonner reveals his “owne Antichristiane decre and inhybycon” (Bale C3'). Here is another invocation of sovereignty, without which papal authority might be (falsely) grafted onto English sovereignty. Both these arguments secularize papal authority by removing from it any divine sanction and placing its authority in the works of men. They recast the Pope in a gubernatorial role, one whose decrees must be checked by God’s Word. England’s reformation transforms from a struggle between sacred and secular authorities, Pope and Monarch, into a struggle between two sovereign, secular political nations, England and Rome. Rome becomes a political threat to English national identity in addition to being a religious one, a claim that opens a rhetorical space where Turner can argue that the Pope’s secular authority has invaded England.

Turner continues his argument by criticizing the Latin mass and thus by pivoting from texts to language. In matters of the church, especially in forms of worship, Turner saw Latin as a marker of papal authority. He charges that:

[T]he pope willeth and commandeth in all places where he hath dominacion, that all Psalms and all messes shall be sayd and song in hys old mother latin tong thoge the peple understand never one word of the latin tong; yit thys doth he, in a token, that the peple … shuld knowledge them selves to be under the se of Rome. (Turner, The Romishe Fox [D7])

By contrast, Turner continues, the Greeks and Germans have long since taken to reciting their services in their respective languages and thereby “forsake the popes ordinances and the popes romish tong” (The Romishe Fox [D7]). Nationalistic implications of language float just beneath the surface. Language, more specifically the language of liturgy, becomes a marker of national identity. The Romishe Fox links both an English liturgy and an English Bible with a distinctly
English (in the national sense) form of Christianity and proceeds to add an additional level of complexity by referring to Latin not as something purely liturgical but as something nationalistic. So does calling Latin the Pope’s “mother tongue,” a term he uses multiple times. One’s mother tongue refers to the language of one’s youth and native culture. The Italian Paul III was Bishop of Rome in 1543. Italian then, not Latin, was the pope’s mother tongue. Turner’s glossing over that fact by substituting Latin associates Pope Paul with the older Roman culture while simultaneously evoking the connotations of secular imperial power that the Roman Empire represented.

Language plays a similar role in Turner’s The Huntyng of the Romishe Wuolfe (1555). The text, written during his second exile, takes the form of a dialog between a Hunter, a Forester, and a Dean who chance to meet on the road to London. One of the texts’ most frequent metaphors is the figure of a watchman on the walls of a city. This liminal figure, literally on the margins of the community, looks outward to protect what is behind him. “For as if an Englishman,” the Hunter argues,

> Which were made the watchman of Barwick, if he saw the Scotes come toward Barwick, and spake to the citezins and soouldiers of the citie, ether only ἐρχονται σκότοι in Greke, or veniunt Scoti in latin and would not saye in Englyshe, the Scotes come, and the people woste not what the watchman said, and so were suddenly taken of the Scottes, and were for the more part killed, were he not a murderer… (Turner, *The Huntyng of the Romyshe Wolfe* [C6])

The Hunter’s point is intended as a critique of priests speaking Latin during the Mass, but the metaphor also invites a reading related to the security of the city the watchman guards. While the critique might be spiritual, the metaphor is domestic. The English watchman, Turner argues, is culpable of allowing the city to fall if he fails to speak in the vernacular, a failure explicitly linked to foreign invasion. Turner then pivots from this example back to the presence in England of papal authority:
The Pope requires Latin so that all who speak it in the English Church will know who rules above them and whose authority extends outward from Rome even into England. Latin thus represents the presence of a papal authority dictating a competing tongue within England and threatening the integrity of the English, Christian commonwealth.

These observations reveal larger, cultural implications related to the status of exile. From a liminal position Turner and his fellow exiles gain a privileged vantage point. They are both Englishmen and outsiders, offering at least the appearance of objective observation. I do not mean to imply that Turner, or exiles exclusively, were alone in seeing these Catholic influences. William Baldwin’s *Beware the Cat*, to name just one example, recognizes and attacks Catholicism in England even though Baldwin never became an exile like Turner.21 The 1584 reprint, though, explicitly links exile with the exposure of falsehood:

> This little boke Beware the Cat
> moste pleasantly compiled:
> In time obscured was and so,
> since that hath been exiled.
>
> Exiled, because perchaunce at first,
> it shewed the toyes and drifts:
> Of such as them by wiles and willes,
> Maintained Popish shifts. (A2\(^f\))

This address to the reader by “T.K.” positions the text as a voice speaking from the margins as Turner did in his Preface to *The Romish Foxe*. Just as Turner the hunter can follow the fox because he observes the trail from above it, so too does Baldwin’s text reveal the traces of Catholicism in England.

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Catholicism in part because it speaks from the margins.

Turner’s view of reformation is more than a spiritual goal; it is also a national and cultural one. The overthrow of Catholic tradition establishes a “true” English nation, a point he explicitly discusses, as I will shortly show, in *A New Booke of Spiritual Physik*. He casts himself in the role of the hunter as a means of commenting on and reimagining authority in England, but he can act only indirectly and at a distance to effect change. England becomes a geopolitical realm within which Turner sees two primary secular centers of power in conflict that he can engage from afar: a corrupt, secular papal tradition, not a unified Holy Church, and Henry’s self-proclaimed embodiment of both sacred and secular authority, which must be carefully kept in check to avoid making the king into an English Pope.

Creating a defensible separation between sacred and secular authority – between Henry as an English spiritual governor and Christ as the Head of the Church – helps Turner to accomplish his goal of religious critique without also attacking Henry’s secular authority. He envisions these separate authorities as closely associated with texts and reduces the complications of reformation by reimagining it not as disagreements on doctrine, but as the infringement of one secular authority on another. Catholic orthodoxy and sacred authority are demystified, flattened, and secularized. Turner transfers the authority of the Church onto the person of the Pope so as to expose the human origins of its teachings and relocates God’s authority in the Scriptures. This allows Turner to reimagine the Church of England as a return to the purity of the Apostolic Church with King Henry not as its head but its governor. And while Turner and others continue to refer to a king in all their polemics, they fairly evenly divide that title with the use of “governor,” particularly when their criticisms of the monarch are sharpest. They carefully maintain an outward appearance of loyalty to the crown but hesitate whenever
royal power approaches divine associations. And so we see hints that loyalty, for Turner, appears much more closely associated with England the nation than with the person of its ruler, especially once Mary comes to power.

The use of “governor” as opposed to “king” therefore signals an attempt to deploy a functional understanding of the commonwealth in response to early modern discourses of regnal superiority. The distinction finds its most notable application in John Ponet’s exile polemic *A Short Treatise of Politike Power*.\(^{22}\) He emphasizes the superior position of the commonwealth over the monarch:

> Next unto God men ought to love their countrey, and the hole common wealth before any membre of it: as kinges and princes (be they never so great) are but membres: and common wealthes mai stande well ynough and flourishe, albeit ther be no kings, but contrary wise without a common wealth there can be no king. Common wealthes and realmes may live, whan the head is cut off, and may put on a newe head, that is, make them a new governour, when they see their olde head seke too muche of his owne will and not the wealthe of the whole body, for the which he was only ordained. ([D7]⁴)

Ponet’s words are startlingly direct. The ideal of a political commonwealth extends well back into the medieval period and beyond, but here it is reimagined along with the body politic as something far more malleable than traditionally understood. The decapitated “head” is a “king” but the entity replacing it is “a new governor.”

Here is the “rhetoric of exile” and its careful separation of powers carried to a natural conclusion. If one power is not working, remove and replace it because that power is secular, not sacred. As history would later show, Ponet’s ideas were only a little ahead of their time. It would be just over a century until Charles I’s execution. Turner and his contemporaries largely shrank

\(^{22}\) John Ponet (b.1514) became Bishop of Winchester in 1551 after the removal of Stephen Gardiner. He became one of the Marian Exiles in 1553 and died in Strasbourg three years later. Textual reference is to John Ponet, *A Shorte Treatise of Politike Pouuer and of the True Obedience Which Subiectes Owe to Kynges and Other Ciual Gouernours, with an Exhortacion to All True Naturall Englishe Men* (Strasbourg: The heirs of W. Köpfel, 1556).
from open rebellion in their writing even as they reimagined England as a nation.\textsuperscript{23} Yet the ideas preserved in these polemics remained in the national consciousness until the Civil War when many of them resurfaced with chilling effect. This new England is in many ways more simplified. Sacred authority is overseen by a Protestant governor/king informed and guided by the Word of God, which in turn translates into a secular authority guided by the same principles. And Turner’s own restoration to both England and to positions of merit during Edward VI’s reign likely seemed the realization, though short lived, of his dream. King Edward’s death and Queen Mary’s restoration of Catholic orthodoxy reintroduced into England what Turner saw as an invasive culture. He fled a second time in 1553, resulting in a second sustained attempt to define the boundaries of sacred and secular authority that goes several steps further than *The Romishe Fox* in reimagining the English body politic.

**From Foxes to Poxes: The Interior/Exterior Dichotomy of Exile Polemic**

Only a few pages into *Yet a Course at the Romeysh Foxe*, Bale makes a startling claim: “I know certenlye I schall for thys be called a thousaunde tymes heretique, but I waye it nothynge at all, for it is the olde name of true christianes” (B\textsuperscript{1}). The claim carries a doubled sense of Bale’s faith and conviction. He recalls that Christianity began as a Jewish heresy and acknowledges that his convictions will find scorn and derision from the orthodox establishment. It is also a reflection of one exile’s sense of self. A heretic is a type of exile – one excluded from the community of the faithful. Yet Bale’s own spiritual exile, reflected here as his belief in being a “true Christian,” hints at a final characteristic of the rhetoric of exile: a noticeable reliance upon an interior/exterior dichotomy manifested in images of foreign contamination. We have seen how marginality results in a preoccupation with authoritarian boundaries and an anxiety of

\textsuperscript{23} Jennifer Loach, “Pamphlets and Politics 1553-8,” *Institute of Historical Research* 48, no. 117 (1975): 44.
authorship, but it also manifests as an anxiety that regards national boundaries as penetrable places susceptible to “foreign” influence. Alongside this anxiety appears an effort to clearly label key players in the Catholic/Protestant divide as either English or foreign, even if the “foreigner” is in fact English. Fears of contamination prompt an active rewriting of English origin narratives into narratives of invasion and infection. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, this dichotomy reveals a belief in exile polemic that both damnation and salvation lay outside the native country. Only one can triumph.

Exiled Protestants worked tirelessly to maintain the appearance of citizenship in England and they worked equally hard to cast their enemies as foreign insurgents of both Satan and the Pope. Bale criticizes Bishop Bonner by explicitly “other-ing” him. Bonner is a native born Englishman, but Bale insists, “Yet wyl I in the quarrel of thys poore Israelyte [Tolwin], thys naturall cuntre manne of myne, and fellawe servaunt of Jesus Christ, with Moyses invade thys proude stranger and cruell Egypcyane [Bonner]” ([A6]). In a single sentence, Bale does three remarkable things: he denaturalizes Bonner; redeclares his own citizenship with Tolwin, whom he further associates with Israel, Christ, and Moses; and promises to engage with Bonner not as a man but as an imperial power doing battle with an enemy. “Invading” Bonner conjures an image of penetration into a sovereign territory. The metaphor continues in the remainder of the paragraph:

Non other weapon wyll I take here, but the swerde of the sprete (whych ys the worde of the eternall lyvynge God) with the most auctorysed hystoryes and cronyckes, and with them wyll I stryke hym to the grounde, so leavynge hym there in the sande. (Bale [A6]⁻<sup>r</sup>)

Texts again play a crucial role, though now to God’s Word are added histories and chronicles, the preservers of an English national mythology, which both Bale and Turner will exploit to great effect. Bale in particular speaks of papal traditions as something akin to an imperial force.
He accuses the papacy of being the downfall of two hundred “lawfull kynges” including Frederick Barbarossa, Desidarius, and John of England. Bale recounts how, “By the vertu of confessyon was the plesaunt kyngdome of Italye destroyed, and became saynt peter’s patrimonye,” leaving the the Lombard King Desidarius and his family to die in exile. King John fell victim to “hate of hys nobylyte and commons and [was] compelled to give up hys crowne and tyttle for hym and hys heyres to the apostolyck seate” (Bale [C7]v). Historical infelicities aside, these instances all refer to a foreign influence that invades and topples a sovereign power. The Papal See does not come with the sword but with subterfuge, with ideological contamination of the people through the Church. In other words, the Church acts like an infectious disease invading a healthy body that results in the body’s eventual death. There are hints of this underlying contamination rhetoric in Bale’s reference to these examples being traceable back to “the most pestylant counsell of laterane” ([C7]v, my emphasis).

If Bale’s *Yet a Course* hints at Catholic influence as pestilent infection, Turner’s *A New Book of Spiritual Physik* removes any doubt regarding the power of the “foreign” Roman church to invade the English body politic like a disease. As Catherine Davies has noted, “The fact that the body analogy applied to both church and commonwealth allowed the boundaries between them to be blurred or overridden.” Turner uses this elision to his advantage. A narrative of infection requires a physical body; *Spiritual Physik* employs the metaphor of the English nation as a diseased human body and draws on Turner’s medical training and interest in natural science. The text resembles a medical self-help book written by a doctor who diagnoses an illness, writes a purgative prescription, and issues a cautionary note to prevent reinfection. The interior English body requires external treatment from a physician to heal.

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The problems England suffers become more easily visible in this metaphor; complex theological debates become symptoms of disease. *The Romishe Fox* employs texts and metaphors of texts as a means of exploring the boundaries of authority in a reforming England and as a means of secularizing authorities. In contrast *Spiritual Physik* concentrates its attention on the effect of the diseases Turner believes have penetrated those boundaries to contaminate and hobble the entire national body. Turner attempts to diagnose the maladies in order to motivate and empower the nobility to retake their true roles as advisors and administrators of justice to the commonwealth, thus “curing” it. The medical metaphor allows Turner to comment on, and reinforce, a traditional hierarchical social structure while still criticizing the Queen’s Catholicism. It makes possible the conversion of Catholic practices into diseases with identifiable effects on the nation for which Turner can offer an effective treacle, and it reconceives Catholic tradition as an infectious and invading pathogen within an otherwise enclosed and independent body.

*Spiritual Physik* administers its cure to the nobles for a very pragmatic reason. A Protestant polemic hoping to appeal to the head of the body politic in 1555 encounters an obvious problem in a Catholic queen. Turner sidesteps this inconvenience by making his address to the English nobles, “the principall partes, and the hede of the common wealth” (*Spiritual Physik* A4'). Lest this seem too treasonous a statement, he immediately clarifies himself though not entirely convincingly; “I make you the heade of all the nobilitie in Englaende under the Quene” (Turner, *Spiritual Physik* A4'). If we carry through his metaphor, he effectively names the nobility the body’s neck on which the head rests and by which the head gains its vitality and communicates its intentions. He shifts a great deal of power onto the nobility from the outset while subordinating the queen’s role. He appeals on behalf of England’s subjects, whose well-
being depends upon the actions of those same nobles he seeks to diagnose and spur into action. Turner makes this clear by tracing the etymology of “gentlemen”: “A gentleman hath hys name of thys worde gens-gentis, whych may be called in Englyshe, a folk, a nacion, or a family…” (Spiritual Physik B3'). It is the duty of these English nobles to rise up and act on behalf of the nation and work to return the land to a “true” faith. Thus the “gentle” vocation of a noble is simple, “to set forth and defende the true religion of almyghty God, to defende the innocentes and to ponishe the evel doers, and to shewe justice and judgement unto all men, that are under hys goverment” (Turner, Spiritual Physik C2').

Such a definition raises the question, what role does the queen have if not these same duties? On this Turner is largely silent. Most of his references to a monarch are to a king, not a queen. And in case the nobility question their appropriate role from a Biblical standpoint, Turner puts them at ease by referring them to the example of King Josaphat, “conveniently ‘sliding’ from the term ‘king’ to ‘noble’ or ‘gentlemen’” in his exposition.25 Similar slippage occurs in the rendering of God’s servant as “Duke Moses” (Turner, Spiritual Physik D'). He encourages the nobility to embrace their role as rulers in their own right who function as governors and judges, and he does so without mention of subservience to the queen, who is noticeably excluded from this conceptualization of the ruling class. Turner also places the nobles in direct opposition to Queen Mary’s faith, for the “true religion” Turner advocates is most certainly not Roman Catholicism. When he finally mentions the Queen, a full sixty pages into his argument, he consistently undermines her authority. The nobles assume all the traditional roles of the monarch assigned to Henry VIII in The Romishe Fox: defender of the true faith, enforcer and protector of the law, and governor of the people. In this way Turner restructures the metaphor of the body

politic so that the Queen either falls under the direction and control of the nobles themselves or need not be present at all.

*Physik*'s rewriting of the body politic externalizes secular power by making it something transferable from one “head” to another, or, in this case, from the head to another part of the body. While *The Romishe Fox* works to define and limit Henry’s authority, *Spiritual Physik* redraws those boundaries while still leaving them to appear traditionally intact. The appearance of stability was essential: “True religion depended on right order if it was to flourish, and the godly prince was ultimately responsible for that order. Only he could wield the sword of temporal power against sin and popery, as directed by the preaching ministry.”26 The body is not beheaded, only reconceived so as to place emphasis where Turner wishes it.

His most creative use of the somatic metaphor appears when he diagnoses four diseases dependent upon an interior/exterior dichotomy: the palsy, dropsy, the Romish pox, and leprosy. He diagnoses each through its external signs of infection, provides a “prescription” for a spiritual treatment, and concludes with advice for avoiding reinfection. Physical palsy manifests outwardly as a bodily numbness or paralysis whose spiritual equivalent is a lack of knowledge related to the Scriptures. The treatment requires strict physical and mental discipline whenever someone shows a tendency toward idleness or a disdain for learning. As Turner amusingly and grimly puts it, “they must be let blood oft times in the buttocks” (*Spiritual Physik* [B7]). Next, spiritual dropsy is described as a swelling or a puffing up of the body resulting from a noble’s discontent with his material wealth, holdings, and selfish ambition. The figurative disease is widespread and, interestingly enough, infected Henry VIII who “dranke up all the monkries, freries, and nunries in England...[and a] tenthe parte of all spirituell mennes livynges in all the

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hole realme” (Turner, *Spiritual Physik* [H8]). The cure is simple but hard to swallow: sermons against covetousness twice a day for two weeks along with a daily dose of the water of repentance. If those are too difficult, Turner advocates Christ’s advice in Luke 19 to the rich man, give half of what you own to the poor (*Spiritual Physik* I5-[I6]). Turner’s third disease is the Romish pox, a spiritual syphilis. Rounding out the list is leprosy, which manifests as the “defamation and shame that cometh to you by recevyynge...such persones as shame you,” namely “proud stertuppes, or selfe-made gentlemen, and lordeley byshoppes” (*Spiritual Physik* M3r-M4r). The cure here is harsh, but effective: hold accountable all who claim a noble title and shame and dismiss those who do not belong.

In each of these cases Turner conceptualizes these diseases from the inside out. The nobility’s internal failures manifest outwardly and damage the larger national body. However, this dynamic undergoes a noteworthy shift when Turner addresses the third malady, the Romish pox. The pox, like the crafty fox he hunted years earlier, severely threatens the health of the nobility and the nation. The other diseases are caused by actions from within the body or by members of the society themselves, but the Romish pox originates *outside* of England. It infects and invades. The Romish pox is “a disease of the mynde whych maketh a man worship God not accordyng unto hys wrytten worde but after the tradicion and ordinance of the bishop of Rome” (Turner, *Spiritual Physik* L'). It manifests more visibly than the others and more closely resembles the physical disease it mirrors. Look first, Turner warns, for the loss of “spirituall noses” and those infected who “snevel alwayes of wyl werkes, of pylgrimages, of ymages, of purgatory, of Messes, and of Diriges and such lyke stuffe” (*Spiritual Physik* L'). And beware too of tonsured heads, “for there is not one gentleman of the clergie, that hath the Romyshe pokkes, in the hole realme of Englande, that hath his hole heade covered wyth heere, but one part is bare”
This is an amusing image, but it also provides one of the most
direct assaults on specifically Catholic traditions found in Turner’s diseases and a clever
metaphorical linkage of the body physical to the body spiritual. The metaphor of the Romish pox
combines with Turner’s medical training to reimagine Catholicism as not just a disease, but also
an invading, even colonial contagion. He explains the Romish pox by comparison with the
French pox, which he claims originated during the Italian War of 1494-98. The allusion to the
Italian War gestures towards one nation invading another only to fall victim to contamination.
French soldiers contracted the physical pox from prostitutes, carried it back, and exposed their
own nation to its effects. The motivations for this invasion were largely political, with France
hoping to extend her imperial territory into Italy. In Turner’s mind Roman Catholicism acts in a
similar manner.

Over time, as Turner narrates events, the Whore of Babylon gradually “thrust into all
kyngdomes of Europa” but seemingly left England uninfected (Spiritual Physik L3\^-L4\^). He
looks back through chronicles of English history to corroborate his diagnosis and insists on
England’s initial purity. In this historiographical argument, Turner describes the contraction of
Romish pox explicitly as a foreign infection:

We read in olde histories that the Britanes receyved the true and unlevened
religion in the tyme of Kynge Lucius, the kynge of the Britannes, and that it
continued undefiled, unto the tyme of Gregory the great, who sente into England a
monkyshe apostle of his which brought with him the Romyshe pox in to thys
lande… [and] the hole churche of the Britanes at length was infected and
poysoned, and the true worde of God chocked, or at the least shamefully
mynished…. The truth is (which can be safely proved by the churche story of
Bede’s wrytynge) that the Brytannes had the fayth many yeares, even 400 years
and more before that Austen came into England…. (Spiritual Physik L4\^-r)

Here, in a remarkable moment of revisionist history and nationalism, Turner recreates a familiar
national myth. He glosses over the Germanic invasions of England entirely, maintaining that a
pure, “disease-free” faith was only lost due to an unsolicited, contaminated source from outside it. He imagines his fellow Englishmen as inheritors of the true faith, though he neglects to specify from whence it came. It was simply “received” and continued to thrive in this English national body until Pope Gregory sent Augustine into England, the carrier of spiritual plague, whose influence “dyd not only infect the Englyshe, but also the Brytannes” (Turner, *Spiritual Physik* L46). Part of England’s foundational myth, that it was reclaimed for Christ by Augustine following years of pagan rule, transforms into an infection story where a Protestant nation continued unsullied from the days of Lucius until the advent of the colonizing infection. The Catholic presence in England as a unifying force becomes instead a festering infection that has gradually undermined English national sovereignty and brought it under the authority of Rome, as if for the first time.

Such historical revisionism, what Felicity Heal calls the “plasticity” of the Lucius narrative, underscores the fact that control over conversion narratives is essential to sixteenth century polemics because it offers a degree of ideological legitimacy. Turner’s use of King Lucius places him firmly in a tradition replete with nationalist sentiments. Heal argues that, “The British story of origins [King Lucius] long seemed more attractive than the Anglo-Saxon, because early conversion was less contaminated by Rome - Augustine having unquestionably been a missionary for and from the papacy.” To build on Heal’s point, we can note that Turner’s reference to King Lucius thus carries with it at least two crucial meanings. First, it asserts that the “olde histories” of England function to preserve what Turner believes is a thoroughly English, Protestant religion. Second, his use of Lucius indicates a desire to preserve, or restore, a valuable aspect of “English” culture threatened by infection, invasion, or

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dissolution.

Similar historical revision occurs in Bale’s Yet a Course with a reinterpretation of the Norman Conquest. Drawing on a narrative that those “expert in the cronycles knoweth full wele,” he proceeds to lay blame for the collapse of Anglo-Saxon England on the perfidious duplicity of the Norman Archbishop Robert Chambert who “within a whyle after hys othe of allegeaunce to kynge Herolde, brought into thys realme Duke Wyllyam of Normadye a bastarde, with a baner from pope Alexander the second, and cleane remyssyon of synne to subdue both hym and yt” (Bale M3³). Though Bale lacks an overt metaphor of infection, Robert’s duplicity resides in his record of admitting a foreign influence into England. The Archbishop carries the papal banner, whose entry into England signals a loss of its sovereignty. At play in both Bale and Turner are narratives of a threat to England from both within and without. Both authors rewrite English history as an enclosed and healthy geopolitical space into which came a destructive foreign influence.

This intense polemical focus on external contaminating forces is balanced by an equally powerful recognition of the exile’s own exteriority as a vehicle for national salvation. Both polemics reflect how each author sees the ultimate “cure” for England’s ills as coming from outside. Bale’s bag of books includes authors both English and non-English, though all are Protestant. These texts are exiled in the sense that they are hidden within the confines of the bag – present and not present like the exiles themselves. Their words, which Bale contends are salvific and good, go unheard by the masses despite their importance.²⁸ In Spiritual Physik the

²⁸ The image of the bag also recalls the traveler’s scrip discussed in Chapter Two. There may also be an obscure cultural image here that Bale hints at by associating a bag of books with hidden truths. The medieval poem Mum and the Sothsegger includes a similar moment where a bag containing documents is opened in order to reveal a truth (ll. 1343-1345). See further James
treatment for an external contagion comes from outside too. Turner imagines Physik as a medicine in and of itself, encouraging the nobles to “take it unto you, and into you, and dispose it, and send it to suche partes of the body as have most nede of it” ([A5]⁴, my emphasis). The polemic functions as an extension of Turner himself as England’s nation physician and the diseases’ antidote. Indeed texts from outside of England were the original source of England’s recovery from the Romish pox. These included “Luthers bokes, and other new wryters, and partly by preachyng, and by the translacion of the newe Testament, and the readyng of the same” (Turner, Spiritual Physik L4⁴). The work of Luther and others functioned as spiritual physicians in their own right just as Turner now hopes to do because the contagion has again infected the English national body. And so salvation from this disease entails nothing less than complete severance from everything associated with Roman Catholicism: a complete, self-imposed quarantine from tonsured priests; from partaking of the Eucharist from “pokky marchuntes” who “breath upon hym in theyr confession bothees” and from those who “put…theyr pokky spattell into theyr chylders mouthes” (Turner, Spiritual Physik L5⁴). Those already infected must daily drink “a gallon of the water of repentance” flavored with numerous “herbs” of scripture heated on the ashes of “popyshe bookes” (Turner, Spiritual Physik M⁴). Those very same external forces, guided by the advice of the exile, become the curative to be taken internally. England, enclosed and self-contained like a physical body and infected by the contagion of Catholicism, must take in the sources of contamination that have been recognized as contagions and render them harmless by burning them to ash (Turner, Spiritual Physik M2⁴). The source of disease, properly rendered, becomes the cure – a spiritual pharmakon. The nobles, once cured, can then become what they are called to be, the healers of the English body politic and body spiritual.

Dean, ed., Richard the Redeles and Mum and the Sothsegger, TEAMS Middle English Texts (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institutes Publications, 2000).
They are the internal bearers of a cure originating from outside the body.

That cure, as I argue, comes in part from the exiles themselves. The key ingredient of the cure is a growing sense of English nationalism present within these pages of polemic, what Philip Schwyzer calls “not the nation per se so much as the nation in potentia.”29 This potential English nation imagined in exile suggests several conclusions, not the least of which is that nation-building and the development of an English national consciousness is partly a textual phenomenon, a thing conceived and developed in texts and more specifically polemic texts. Polemic’s attempts to define clear lines, to lay unambiguous claim to the certainty of one’s position, also partly accounts for the early modern movement from what James Simpson has called “complicated accretion” to “cleanliness of line” in doctrine, art, and culture.30 The rhetoric of exile’s attempts to disentangle authority and to insist upon clear, unambiguous loci of power which cannot overlap without conflict stand in direct contrast to the complicated intersection of sacred and secular authority running throughout the middle ages. Yet as Simpson points out, the appearance of that sharp divide is itself a fiction created by the revolutionary moment. Through polemic, the rhetoric of exile justifies itself by its assumption of being a voice that imparts the correct interpretation or represents the winning side. The intimate relationship between reformation and an emerging national consciousness codified in polemic helps to account for the success of the Reformation’s creation of the seemingly sharp divide between “medieval” and “early modern.”

The writings of Turner, Bale, Ponet, and other exiles demonstrate that the contribution of exile polemic to the formation of an English national consciousness should not and cannot be

overlooked, including “exiles” of other types, such as William Baldwin who wrote from the margins despite remaining in England. The “rhetoric of exile,” as I have demonstrated, influences the development of polemic as a type of ideological declaration. Exile polemics declare the beliefs of the authors and establish allegiance among like-minded believers in England. They are a means of self-validation that consistently and repeatedly affirms their authors whose status as exiles has diminished neither their citizenship nor their desire to return. Polemics do not persuade; they proclaim. This creates an ideological and nationalistic solidarity between those at home and abroad, an Andersonian imagined community.\footnote{Benedict Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism} (London: Verso, 2006).} Protestants in England continued to imagine, support, and claim English exiles as fellow citizens, just as those abroad continued in their self-declaration of being citizens. These imagined communities extended not just over a hill but also across an ocean to a collection of citizens in exile. Just how widely these exiles were recognized as citizens by the general English population is less clear, but among elite circles or among individuals who eventually became powerful figures in Elizabeth’s England, the “place” of exiles as citizens was not in question.

Turner and Bale in particular display a preoccupation with borders and boundaries: national, ideological, bodily, and cultural. Both legitimize and recognize the king of England’s secular authority, but they place on it careful limits via the commandments of God, transforming the monarch from king to governor. The exiles’ position outside the nation creates a complex point of view that imagines how outside forces have entered into the idealized culture constructed by the exiles themselves and “infected” it. Models of infection and contamination “others” Catholicism as an imperial threat to English national sovereignty while simultaneously claiming that the cure – in the form of continental reformation doctrine \textit{and} its polemics – comes
from outside and from another “other,” the community of exiles themselves. The exiles become, to extend Turner’s metaphor from *Spiritual Physik*, a spiritual vaccine and textual catalyst whose words inject into England a Protestant ideology that will heal and enlighten the nation and allow for their triumphant return. Such was the hope of the imprisoned Nicholas Ridley writing to Edmund Grindal of “whersoever God shall call us home … to light and set up again the lanterne of his word in England” (E3v). The exiles that saw Mary’s death and were eventually called home, including Turner, returned to a nation that they themselves actively shaped in spite of and because of their absence.

One wonders if Turner’s student who chronicled his teacher’s incarceration would have recognized his *praeeceptor* after years in exile. That student’s name is lost to history, as is his ultimate fate. What can be said with certainty, though, is that the England that student died in was a very different place from the one into which he was born. His teacher and like-minded believers fled into exile to escape political and religious persecution, but their time abroad ultimately shaped their own identities and the identity of the nation they left behind. As his student records, the men executed while Turner was in prison lost their lives for denying the king’s self-appointed status as the head of the Church. As I have shown, Turner and other Protestant exiles were equally uncomfortable with that designation and actively sought to distance sacred and secular realms of authority. It is perhaps fitting that this anonymous student “speaks” through Turner’s commonplace book, exiled as he is now from history. His brief entry records a moment in his teacher’s life just before Turner’s departure from a changing England.

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His voice, like Turner’s works in exile, speaks to us now from a distance and asks us to recall those who are absent from our present – but still speaking.

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Chapter Four: “Oportet meliora tempora non expectare sed facere”: A Catholic Rhetoric of Recusancy

Queen Elizabeth’s ascension to the English throne must have seemed to many Protestants, at home and abroad, like the realization of a long held dream. England was never again Catholic after 1558 and the impetus for reform, even radical reform, extended through the English Commonwealth and beyond. The exiles’ efforts to reimagine England as a Protestant nation whose original purity had become corrupted bore at least some fruit as early as 1589. In that year Timothy Bright published *An Abridgement of the Booke of Acts and Monuments*, which makes it clear that concerns about sovereignty and national identity had indeed found purchase. At its outset Bright includes “A special note of England,” which warrants reproduction in full:

England, the first kingdome that universallie embraced the Gospel.

Constantine, the first Christian Emperor (who utterlie destroyed the idolatrie of the Gentiles, and planted the gospel through out the world) an Englishman.

John Wycliff, that first manifestly discovered the Pope, and maintayned open disputation against him, an Englishman.

The most noble Prince, king Henrie viii, the first king that renounced the Pope.

The worthie Prince, king Edward vi, the first king, that utterlie abolished all popish superstition.

Her Royall Maiestie, our most gracious Soverainge, the verie Maul of the Pope, and Mother of Christian princes: whome the Almighty long preserve over us.

England, the first that embraced the Gospel: the onely establisher of it throughout the world: and the first reformed.¹

Jesse Lander writes of Bright’s comment that “the keyword “universallie,” asserts that the kingdom was united in faith in antiquity, and, by a certain vagueness in the language…it implies

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¹ Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, 73 (fig. 8).
that the kingdom is united in faith now.”

Bright’s nationalistic comment represents the rhetoric of exile practically whole cloth. Bright himself was not an exile, but he clearly saw the value of an historical narrative that advanced the notion of an England being restored to the “true” faith of its past, and he reproduces, consciously or not, many of the tropes that dominated Protestant exile literature of the previous generation. Bright’s note is a chronicle in miniature serving as an epigraph to John Foxe’s own Protestant history, a history that creates a new “Protestant vision” of the nation. Bright’s comment is a result of the nation building begun, in part, by the exiles of the previous generation. England is a pure, healthy, and guiding light, a nation whose role is clearly to assume the mantle of God’s chosen. Bright rewrites an English history that is decidedly Protestant, including in its ranks Constantine, who has English connections, but is most certainly not English, and entirely forgetting the reign of Queen Mary Tudor. His epigraph foreshadows England’s new role in a now rapidly expanding world as an “establisher” of faith, a small body of faithful whose citizens will change the world.

Yet as any history of Elizabeth’s reign confirms, the newly Protestant England was anything but united in faith. Queen Mary’s forced abdication was only the latest in a series of political upheavals affecting England’s faith and triggering still another movement of Christian faithful to the Continent. The return of the Protestant exiles created a new group of Catholic ones who, like their Protestant counterparts, found themselves looking at England from outside it.

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2 Ibid., 74.
Their polemics too reveal the complicated understanding of an English national identity mediated through the experience of exile.

There had been English Catholic exiles before 1558. A substantial group had fled during Edward I’s short reign and returned en masse after Mary’s ascension, and these Elizabethan exiles were not alone in their flight from Protestantism. The Low Countries saw increasing numbers of Catholic exiles leaving for the sake of religious conscience, and popular opinion about these exiles grew more positive after 1580. Geert Janssen notes that some Catholics even begin annotating their books with the year of their exile and signing their letters “exules.”\(^5\) Exile as a status retained and expanded its relevance well into Elizabeth’s reign, and ultimately continued well after her death. Philip Major’s recent *Writings in Exile in the English Reformation and Restoration* suggests that a rhetoric of exile continued to play a significant role in English politics into the seventeenth century. This chapter, though, focuses on English Catholic exiles from Elizabeth’s coronation in 1558 until roughly the Spanish Armada’s defeat in 1588 because it is in these years that distinct groups of Catholic exiles emerge to challenge the legitimacy of Protestant England in both actions and texts.\(^6\)

English Catholic exile polemic shares a number of similarities with its Protestant counterpart: exile signifies faithfulness, both to God and sovereign; salvation from religious error comes from outside the nation; and exilic polemic acts as the exile’s “voice” returning home when the speaker cannot. In many ways, though, the similarities end there. Demographically,

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there are distinct class differences between Protestant and Catholic exiles. By and large, Protestant exiles were students, lay clerics, merchants, and “middle class” people comprised of roughly equal amounts of men and women. Elizabethan Catholic exiles, on the other hand, were almost exclusively male aristocrats, ecclesiastics, or manorial, non-urban dwellers. They were also decidedly more numerous. Kathy Gibbons offers the potentially underestimated figure of 3,000 English Catholics abroad as opposed to an estimated 800-1,000 Marian exiles in the later sixteenth century. Historian Thomas Clancy divides the former into three distinct subgroups: “the Louvainists, the Allen-Persons party and the Appellants. The latter two parties had branches both at home and abroad, but all three depended a good deal on their exile contingent, especially for their literary productions.” These English Catholics develop their own rhetoric of exile abroad, which I call the rhetoric of recusancy, as a means of distinction. Recusancy is, after all, a type of willed exile, and throughout this chapter I will use “recusant” as a term of convenience to distinguish Catholic exiles from Protestant ones. Recusants, both at home and abroad, make conscious decisions to exclude themselves from congregations of English faithful at a time when Catholic worship could be a capital offense and evidence for treason.

Accusations of treason certainly rested on the lips of the Protestant polemicist William Cecil regarding one group of recusants: the Allen-Persons party. They consisted of like-minded Catholics following William Cardinal Allen (1532-1594) and the Jesuit Robert Persons (1546-

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7 Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles in Late Sixteenth-Century Paris*, 35. Recent scholarship has begun to look more closely at the role Catholic women played while in exile, particularly the life of Anne Percy, Countess of Northumberland. The Countess went into exile after her husband’s execution for leading the failed Northern Rebellion of 1569. See further Katherine Holden and Fiona Reid, eds., *Women on the Move: Refugees, Migration and Exile* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).


Allen was particularly influential among Catholic exiles, a proponent of their repatriation, and their *de facto* leader in Douai, France.\(^{10}\) Robert Kingdon writes of his mission,

> The great practical purpose for which William Allen created the Douai seminary was to launch a Mission to England. Hundreds of the eager young exiles from England were to be fully educated as priests. The ablest among them were to be sent to Rome for more advanced training, and many of these were to be inducted into the Society of Jesus. When training was complete they were to be smuggled back into England, where their very presence was illegal.\(^{11}\)

There is little information of Allen’s life before he matriculated at Oxford in 1547, but even there he was resistant to Edwardian Protestantism. When Elizabeth took the throne he fled England for France and later died, still in exile, in Rome.\(^{12}\)

Robert Persons was equally notable, educating a generation of clergy in order to send them back as spokesmen rallying the religious faithful around the Catholic recovery of the English crown that both Allen and Persons were sure would come to pass. Persons enjoyed a distinguished career as a scholar and tutor at Balliol College. By 1574 he was studying in Louvain and joined the Jesuits the following year. Meeting Cardinal Allen ultimately led to his appointment as leader of the English mission to rally the Catholic faithful still in England. Though he successfully managed to sneak back into England with Edmund Campion, Persons fled to France in 1581 after Campion’s arrest and execution. He never returned to England again.\(^{13}\) Thus Allen and Persons found themselves in the same position of exteriority that inspired both the Henrican and Marian polemicists, and it was only a short time after the start of

\(^{10}\) Ibid., 6.


Elizabeth’s reign that presses on both sides of the Channel began in earnest to define a new group of religious exiles and their ideas about England’s national identity.

A focus on Allen and Persons develops naturally from their respective positions of importance. Allen in particular is representative of a loyalty clearly divided between England and Rome. His writings show a highly complicated sense of national identity and allegiance, but especially clear is his desire to quit his exile and return to England, which would mean transforming the nation back into a Catholic kingdom. This chapter’s Latin title, attributed to Allen, also underlines the active role that he believed all Catholics at home and abroad should embrace, a role that his polemics makes all too clear. “Oportet meliora tempora non expectare sed facere [One must not look forward to better times, but make them],” succinctly captures the rhetorical mood of Catholics in exile. Two of Allen’s polemics in particular stand out as representative of this motto: A True, Sincere and Modest Defense of English Catholics and An Admonition to the Nobility and People of England and Ireland. These texts argue aggressively for a change of political course in England, through radical intervention if necessary. This chapter’s focus is on how both texts treat exile as a way of understanding what it means to be English, and how each functions as what I term polemic chronicles, texts that rewrite narratives of national identity in order to reshape the rhetoric of exile into a pro-Catholic position.

I argued in the previous chapter that William Turner, John Bale, and John Ponet maintained something of a radical conservatism with their appeals to the nobility and to God’s divine law, an ideology that ultimately embraced the formation of a national church and recognized an essentially sovereign England. Allen and others, on the other hand, recognize a secular English sovereignty that is still spiritually subservient to the Papal See and dependent upon the same. This crucial difference more closely resembles a return to patrimony in recusant
literature and not, as it was in Protestant polemic, a return to a nation in the more modern understanding of the term. Recusant polemics construct an English national identity formed transnationally as a part of the mystical body of Christ, under Christ’s spiritual authority, and that of his earthly vicar, the Pope. This in turn influences the mind of exile present in recusant literature. In short, Allen and some of his fellow recusants conceptualize England as the spiritual patrimony of Rome and Catholicism, after 1558, as an exile from England in its own right.

Recusant polemics, unsurprisingly, portray Protestant England as a nation in cultural and civil collapse than as a nation under foreign rule. Catholicism, rather than something invasive and foreign as Turner argued, was England’s natural state. Thomas Clancy writes,

The Recusants tended to consider the ‘fluddes of foreigners’ [after Elizabeth’s coronation] a menace to England, chiefly because of the wilder sorts of heresy which they brought with them. This was their reply to the reformers’ taunt that papistry was something foreign.¹⁴

Allen voices the same opinion in 1588 by accusing Queen Elizabeth of harboring “strangers,” rebels, and heretics of all nations who have caused “great impoverishinge of the inhabitants, an no small peril of the whole realme” (An Admonition 16). Or as he had written more succinctly just four years earlier, “Protestants folowe faction and popular mutinie, we [Catholics] reduce al, to lawe, order, and judgement” (Allen, A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense 88). In essence it was England’s spiritual wellbeing, overseen by Rome, which made England capable of having an independent, ordered national identity.

The rhetoric of recusancy, though distinct from the rhetoric of exile, nevertheless concerns itself with many of the same issues. As we have seen, the rhetoric of exile might be painted in broad strokes: deploying texts and metaphors of texts to disentangle sacred from secular authority; reaffirming the exiles’ status as English citizens despite their absence from the

¹⁴ Clancy, Papist Pamphleteers, 29.
country; implementing a complex metaphor of the body politic with Catholicism as a foreign invader; and attempting to rewrite national foundational myths in support of a Protestant faith. In equally broad strokes, the rhetoric of recusancy could be rendered: legalistic and historical appeals to disentangle sacred from secular authority; a national identity that believes Catholicism is a prerequisite for national integrity; a body politic in a state of dissolution; and the use of chronicle dedicated to rewriting contemporaneous history. The rhetoric of recusancy examined in this chapter demonstrates the interplay between a nationalism dependent upon a national church (as with Protestantism) and one dependent upon the a priori existence of a transnational church (as with Catholicism), an inversion, in a sense, of the rhetoric of exile. One result of these textual debates is the appearance of what I call “polemic chronicle,” polemics that adopt the conventions of chronicle in order to present a “right reading” of English history for the purposes of gaining control of a national narrative. The recusant culture discussed here is a battle over a fundamental question of national identity and a calculated argument about what constitutes treason towards one’s nation. From a literary standpoint it is also a question about the relationship between exile and nation in a fundamentally textual debate concerned with writing national narratives in historical chronicles.

**Concurrence and Sub-alternation: Recusants and the corpus mysticum**

In 1583 William Cecil anonymously published *The Execution of Justice*, a Protestant polemic attempting to legally justify the persecution of English Catholics on grounds of treason. Cecil’s preface seeks to vilify “naturally born subjects in the Realme of England and Irelande” who have become “stirred up and seduced by wicked spirites…to enter into open rebellion” against the Queen (A2'). Unsurprisingly these persons are all Catholic, but Cecil is careful to argue that their faith is unrelated to their current plight. What prompts their arrest and
persecution is their desire to overthrow Queen Elizabeth. Nationalism then, not faith, dominates his argument. The remainder of the text goes to great lengths to excuse the Elizabethan court’s treatment of Catholics by carefully sidestepping the religious differences between the two parties. Allen would have none of it because Cecil’s central argument is, of course, entirely disingenuous, as Allen points out in his 1584 rebuttal *A True, Sincere and Modest Defense of English Catholics*.

English Catholics were clearly being persecuted for their faith. Both the length and quality of Allen’s argument sets it apart from Cecil’s polemic, so much so that it came to represent “in an important way, the official view of [the exiled Catholic] community.” As the exiles’ representative, Allen believed that he spoke with the authority of God’s Church, and his *Defense* directly engages throughout its first two chapters with Cecil’s insistence that English Catholics now suffer for treason alone. Citing recent executions, show trials, and Cecil’s own words, Allen rapidly dispenses with *The Execution of Justice’s* primary claims. But in dispensing with Cecil, Allen reveals one aspect of the rhetoric of recusancy, the privileging of the body spiritual over the body politic, which manifests in Allen’s dislike of the conflation of sacred and secular authority in the person of the Queen.

Allen, like William Turner and John Ponet, worries about the confluence of sacred and secular authority within the English monarch. At its core, this debate is about allegiances “between, on the one hand, a church and international society presided over by the Bishop of

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16 Ibid., xxiii.
17 Ibid., xxv.
Allen cites one of Elizabeth’s first Parliaments, which sought to grant her the title of Supreme Head of the English Church, and which initially rejected that title in favor of another, “Cheef governor.” The distinction, Allen contends, “was thought to be a qualification of the former tearme of Headship. But it is al one with thother, or rather worse…” Worse because such conflation of sacred and secular authority “mak[es] indeed a King and a Priest al one: no difference betwixt the state of the Church and a temporal common wealth…” (Allen, *A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 8). Without any additional context, this objection could just have easily come from Turner. Both he and Ponet make similar arguments, as I showed in Chapter Three. Allen’s reasoning, though, inverts Protestant exile polemic by citing the fracturing effect the merger of prince and priest will have on Church, nation, and a transnational Christendom: “it maketh one parte of the Church in different teritories to be independen...And finallie it maketh every man that is not borne in the kingdome to be a forreine also in respect of the Church” (*A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 8-9). The separation of Allen’s argument from Turner’s requires a definition of national identity grounded on the *a priori* presence of a transnational mystical body whose unity precedes and predicates the identity of an individual nation. National identity is directly dependent upon inclusion in a universal Church, a *corpus mysticum*, and not a national one.

The metaphor of the body politic was especially vivid in exilic polemics. Protestant appeals to the health of the national body were frequent and purposeful. Susan Scholz links the rise of somatic metaphors with the development of national identity in *Body Narratives*:

In the historical context of the separation of European Christendom into single states which defined themselves by their difference from and their competition

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with the respective others, emphasis was put on the control of individual body margins because the margins of one’s own society or national territory were believed threatened.\textsuperscript{19} 

She alludes as well to “diasporic communities and threatened political entities” being particularly engaged with body metaphors as a means of articulating a perceived threat to national identity.\textsuperscript{20} Jonathan Gil Harris makes a similar point in \textit{Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic}. He writes, “[W]hat generated the fear of infiltration that is registered so powerfully in late Elizabethan organic political metaphor? There can be no doubt that the persistent threat of Catholic invasion in the last decades of the sixteenth century was in large part responsible.”\textsuperscript{21} It is therefore not surprising that Turner and his fellow exiles embraced metaphors of the body in order to voice fears of Catholic contamination.

Recusant communities, it would stand to reason, would suffer from similar political anxieties and employ similar somatic metaphors. Yet this is not the case. Allen’s polemic in particular shifts the focus off the integrity of the body politic to the body spiritual, privileging the integrity of the latter. Allen claims:

\begin{quote}
Where the lawes of Christ are received, and the bodies politique and mistical, the Church and Civil state, the Magistrate Ecclesiastical and temporal, concurre in their kindes together...there is such a concurrence and subalternation betwixt both, that the inferior of the two (which is the civil state) must needes (in matters pertaining anie way ether directly or indirectlie to the honor of God and benefit of the soule) be subject to the spiritual, and take direction from the same. (\textit{A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense} 98)
\end{quote}

Allen’s comments here about the supereminence of the mystical body in \textit{Defense} appear in one fashion or another throughout recusant literature. Thomas Stapleton, whom one scholar has

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{19} Susanne Scholz, \textit{Body Narratives: Writing the Nation and Fashioning the Subject in Early Modern England} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 82. \textsuperscript{20} Ibid. \textsuperscript{21} Jonathan Gil Harris, \textit{Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 45.
\end{flushleft}
called “probably the most erudite of the Elizabethan exiles,”\textsuperscript{22} writes in 1565 that Scripture does not teach of the “church of some certaine place...of Geneva, of England, and of some part of Suicerland.” It teaches instead of a universal church “which I see to be in many places where protestants are nott, and yet in all suche places where protestants are...[N]o heretike can pretend: *Communicare omnibus gentibus*. To be joined in communion with all nations” (Stapleton 27\textsuperscript{r}-28\textsuperscript{v}). His argument too relies on the transnational idea of the Church’s mystical body, whose constituent members consist of nations and whose presence defines those same nations.

Stapleton writes:

> A disease disquieteth the uniforme constitution of the body. Evil wedes let the growth of good corne. A rebellion disturbeth the common assent and allegaunce of subjectes. A disordinat pasion dissolveth the settled iugument of the minde and troubleth the swete uniformite of the contemplation. Right so heresy breaketh the well ordered aray of Christes church, disquiteth the universall agrement of true belevers, disturbeth their settled consciose, troubleth the quiet profession off our faith and hope in Christ Jesus. If the desease be universall the body dieth. If all be wedes it is no field of corne. If all rebell, it is no state of allegeaunce. If all pasions be disordered, the mind is frantick and beside itsef...If bothe the shepheheards and the shepe runne astray and leave the fold, there is no church at al, no folde at all, no army at all...if al fall from the faith, this is no heresy but a what shal I cal it: a thing that is not a thing that is nothinge. (82\textsuperscript{r}-83\textsuperscript{v})

What at first appears a random assortment of references is in fact representative of total societal collapse: physical, agricultural, political, emotional, and spiritual. They all point to the same conclusion: national chaos and dissolution. Stapleton’s syllogism results from his argument against the Protestant claim that England had always been embroiled in heresy, even from its beginning. In other words, he argues that the nation cannot have been cut off from the body of true Church because without it, England would have been nothing at all.

The recusant narrative’s granting preeminence to the *corpus mysticum* has several notable results in the rhetoric of recusancy. First, it likens England to a forcefully (and wrongfully) seized property from which the true faith has been cast out. In a departure from the rhetoric of exile, the exiled faith’s return is much more closely linked with patrimony than with “nation” in the modern sense. The recusants’ return to England is justified as returning “lost property” to Rome. A Catholic “return,” and the restoration of Catholicism will restore England to wholeness because the nation depends upon the body of Christ and the spiritual leadership of Rome before it can be a Christian nation and exercise its own national sovereignty. Stapleton claims that it is Catholicism by which “the Imperiall crowne of Engelande hath vanquished the forrain, maintained honorable peace at home, dilated her dominions, [and] enriched her royall title” (76v). He prays: “We have o Lorde forsaken the obedience of thy spirituall Vicar, to whom thou gavest the keys of the church, to whom the blessed apostle bad us to submit ourselves, and have made a king over us in spiritual causes, and induced our Soverain not desyring, to unlawful government” (Stapleton 151v-r). The appeal to the keys was, of course, an appeal with a long history in Catholic apologetics, but here it reiterates the Pope’s right to England as the Church’s spiritual patrimony. The people have “made a king over us” of their own will, and against the laws of God. They have taken that right from one lawful Sovereign, and given it unlawfully to another.

The assumed necessity of the transnational body spiritual in recusant literature gives way to references of unjust seizure and usurpation, furthering the underlying understanding of nation as patrimony. Protestant control, from the recusant point of view, amounts to the unlawful possession of England’s spiritual allegiances. Allen writes in *Defense*,

[B]ly evident rape and violence, against the lawes of God and man, [strife between the bodies spiritual and politic] bereaveth Christes Vicar of his whole
Soveraintie...and the Catholique Church of al rights and douries, which our Master her spouse endowed her withal. (153-154)

England’s transference of spiritual power to Queen Elizabeth, or anyone else, divests the Pope of his patrimonial claim. Persons makes the same claim more bluntly: “[Protestants] entered into possession, without tryall or title: they thrust us out, before sentence or proufe” (A Brief Discourse [#5]). Allusion to the Church’s “rights and douries,” and its appeal to common law sensibility, solidifies the England-as-property metaphor, while Persons’ notion that Catholics have been forcefully thrust out invokes images of property owners evicted from their lands. Such metaphors stand in sharp contrast to Protestant images of an England contaminated by foreign rule. In essence, Allen is proving their point. The Church, based in Rome, does indeed exercise a “sovereign” right to English soil. Yet as I have just shown, the Catholic understanding of the body spiritual’s importance in recusant literature influences not only their conceptualization of the nation-as-patrimony, but also the very metaphors of their polemic.

The idea of the Church’s “sovereign” right to England runs parallel to Allen’s initial objection: Elizabeth’s role as supreme head of the church. The conflation of priest and prince “was deemed in her Father a lay man, and her Brother a childe very ridiculous: so now in herself, being a woman, is it acompted a thing most monstruous and unnatural, and the verie gappe to bring anie Realme to the thraldome of all sectes” (Allen, A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense 7). Elizabeth’s usurped spiritual authority has opened a “verie gappe” in the sovereign boundaries of the nation and allowed inside an invading and enslaving force. A similar image appears later when Allen markets his text as,
A] warning to al Princes and Provinces, that yet happily enjoye the Catholique religion and the onlie true libertie of conscience in the same, to take heed by our miseries how they let this pernicious sect [i.e. Protestants] put foote into ther states: which by promis of libertie and sweetness in the beginning, entereth deceitfullie, but when she is once in an getteth mastery…she bringeth al to most cruel and barbarous thraldome. (A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense 16)

Liberty and national identity become intimately linked with Catholicism, but “national” identity here is polemically figured differently from the “national” identity of Protestant exile polemic. For the recusants, Protestantism’s presence in England marks a loss of national identity because it separates the nation from the universal faith of the Church. Allen writes in his preface that his polemic came into being “for the honour of our nation, which otherwise...would be thought wholie and generallie to have revoluted from the Catholique faith, and consented to al the absurdities and iniquities of this new regiment and religion.” To this concern he holds out hope that “the whole state (excepting the authoritie of the Prince) may yet be rather counted Catholique, then heretical; this is the honour of our nation in al places” (Allen, A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense *3'-*[4]*). The bodies mystical and national reinforce one another, and without the former, England loses something fundamental to its identity. Without a specifically Catholic body mystical, England loses its place amongst other Christian nations.

Another way of thinking about Allen’s point here is that the boundary between England’s national identity and its dissolution is directly related to the right of the Pope to oversee the nation’s spiritual health. Robert Persons articulates this idea directly in The Judgment of a Catholike English-man. Persons’ Judgment appears in 1608 as a response to James I’s An Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance. Persons argues that Catholics cannot swear allegiance to James because it goes against “their rule of Subordination” that places the Pope’s authority

Admonition to the Nobility, he goes out of his way to legitimate Queen Mary’s right to rule even though she is a woman.
above that of secular princes in matters of spiritual allegiance (*The Judgment* 10). Swearing loyalty to James is an implicit acceptance of his Protestant faith, but he is careful to avoid denying James’ secular authority. In fact James’ right to rule England is clearly noted as the parts of the oath that “were lawfull.” It is only when “other things, being interlaced and mixt threewith, which do detract from the spiritual Authoritie of their said highest Pastour (at leastwise indirectly) [that] the whole Oath, as it lieth, was made therby unlawfull” (Persons, *The Judgment* 10). Following almost immediately after this point, Persons corrects “an error” in James’ *Apologie* that claims that the Pope “mittere falcem in alienam messem” [put a sickle into another’s harvest] (*The Judgment* 12). England, Spain, France, Flanders, Italy, Germany and “other states and Kingdomes” cannot be *messis aliena* because they are always already under the spiritual authority of Rome. “Neyther,” Persons continues, “doth the materiall separation of our Iland, separate us from the union of one body, nor of one Obedience to one and the selfe same general Head and Pastour, no more, than it doth from the union of one beliefe...belonging to the internall and externall unitie of Catholicke Religion” (*The Judgment* 12-13). Like Allen, Persons defines England’s national identity as a symbiotic relationship between faith and “nation.” When Persons refers to the “internall and externall unitie of Catholicke Religion,” he refers to a variety of different dichotomies: soul and body, church and state, and spiritual and socio-political unity.

Allen’s and Persons’ polemics thus codify an English national identity that reinforces vertical structures of power and establishes a rigid boundary between priest and prince, precisely as Protestant exiles do. Yet presupposing and privileging a transnational mystical body causes Allen and Persons to resist the nationalizing forces present in Protestant polemic. They present instead a pre-modern idea of nation as a type of patrimony granted to the care of a select person or group of people, in this case the Pope, monarch, and nobility – in that order. Recusant polemic
thus does not “profess” nationalism, as did Protestant ones, so much as “declare” a socio-political reality. Or to adapt Allen’s phrase, it tries to make better times by recalling the national health and wholeness of Catholic England rather than expecting a change of heart that will bring Protestants back into the Catholic fold. The call is for return, not reformation.

Allen’s desire to make better times grows far more overt as his exile grows longer, so does his understanding of England as Rome’s patrimony. It culminates in April of 1588 with the publication of An Admonition to the Nobility and People of England and Ireland. Here he makes an astonishing case for what will become the attack of the Spanish Armada four months later. The short text, some five-dozen pages, engages in the difficult task of encouraging the English people – commoner and gentry – to engage in open rebellion. The text is overtly treasonous, and confirms Cecil’s accusations laid out in The Execution of Justice that Allen had so carefully refuted only four years earlier. An Admonition’s central hope is the return of an exiled faith to a dissolving national body, but it also employs a gendered metaphor of a body politic open to contamination. Elizabeth’s body and the nation elide into one another whenever necessary to demonstrate the gradual dissolution of England’s national integrity and justify invasion “for the restitution and preservation of the Catholike religion...[and the] godly purpose of restoringe” the same (Allen, An Admonition 50-51). For the recusant community, An Admonition must have read like the ideal resolution to their time abroad as well as a final vindication of their efforts to restore a Catholic England. It promises an end to Elizabeth’s rule by the collective might of God, the Pope, and the Spanish army. But the return that Allen promises is built upon the same concept of national identity that imagines England as the patrimony of Rome, and not a “nation-state” in the more modern sense.
An Admonition opens with a reminder of how England came to be in its current state.

“[T]his great miserie,” Allen notes, “and mutation of state and Religion in this our realme of England by which our Churche (Alas) ys already overthrowne” began in the days of Henry VIII “and afterwarde till this daie, hathe bene specially pursued, by our princes pretensed lawes, and usurped soveraintie over our soules” (An Admonition 3-4). The picture is rather bleak, but already the relationship between Catholicism and England is becoming clear. By using “overthrown” and “usurped,” Allen speaks of the Church as an ousted property owner. As he promises soon after, forces are in motion “to pursue the actuall deprivation of Elizabethe the pretensed Queene, eftsones declared and judicially sentensed...for an heretike and usurper” (Allen, An Admonition 6-7). Thus begins a caricature of an Elizabeth who has “intruded” on the English throne. Allen writes, “by force she intruded, and constreyned many men to give theire consentes, deposinge unjustly the Lords of the clergy.” At another point he insists, “She hathe by unjust tyrannicall statutes injuriously invaded the lands and goods of Catholike Nobles and gentlemen, that for conscience sake have passed the seas: and molested, disgraced, imprisoned, and spoiled, many at home of all degrees.” By guile and accident of birth, she unseated the Church from its rightful place of spiritual authority and “did breake, violate, and deride, the sollemne othe and promise made in her coronation, for defeNSE of the Ecclesiastical libertie and priveleges graunted by the ancient Christian kinges of our realme.” Queen Mary I is named “by law and right the true owner of the crowne of England” (Allen, An Admonition 9, 14, 11, 28). Again and again, allusions to separation by violence precipitate allusions to unjust property seizure, as does the more explicit mention of the crown as Mary’s property.

These references to usurpation echo, but invert, the Protestant metaphors of infection and hints of unwanted penetration from outside the national body. Charges of violent seizure give
way to the dissolution of England’s national identity entirely. The purported dissolution begins with Elizabeth’s “Luciferian pride” in assuming the ecclesiastical headship of England’s church, but it quickly escalates to the profanation of the sacraments, churches, and holy men and women; divesture of the gentry and seizure of manorial properties; and finally to the gathering to herself of all manner of reprobate people (Allen, An Admonition 11-16). The list of charges continues over several more pages, but a unifying thread connects them all: Elizabeth is an unrepentant tyrant who stole the throne from Queen Mary and, more seriously, from the Roman Church.

Allen writes, “she pasingly hath inndaungered the kingdom and cuntrie by the great alteracion of religion, which thinge ys never without inevitable perille, or rather ruine of the commonwealth.” The dissolution of national integrity begins in the court with the appointments to high office, again connected to intrusion, of “infamous amorous Apostats and heretikes” and ends only when Elizabeth “hathe laide the cuntrie wide open to...all Atheystes, Anabaptistes, heretikes, and rebellious of all nations...to the great impoverishinge of the inhabitantes, and no small perill of the whole realme” (Allen, An Admonition 15-16). Her first act was to “abolish the whole Catholike Religion, and faiythe...[which] severed herself and subjects violently from the societie of all Catholike cuntries” (Allen, An Admonition 12). Allen suggests a progressive collapse of national boundaries traceable back to the initial “exile” of Catholicism. Severing England from the Church leaves the nation in exile from the body mystical and those of the faith exiled from the body politic. It is as if a healthy organ were suddenly cut off from the body. It might briefly appear well, but slowly withers and dies without the sustenance of the body. The nation begins to fall apart.

Allen then turns to the Queen herself, who he argues is consumed by lust and self-indulgence “which modesty suffereth not to be remembered, nyther were it to chaste eares to be
uttered how shamefully she hath defiled and infamed her person and cuntry, and made her Courte as a trappe…to entangle in sin in the yonger sorte of the nobilitye and gentlemen of the lande.” The entire world, furthermore, bears witness to England’s “effeminate dastardie” and national dissolution resultant from the Queen’s usurpation of Rome’s spiritual patrimony “to the extinguishinge not only of religion but of all chaste livinge and honesty” (Allen, *An Admonition* 19). The queen’s body and the national body blur into one another and much of what Elizabeth does with her body (or that Allen imagines she does with her body) manifests as happening to the nation. Her refusal to marry, for example, denies “lawfull heires of her bodie to inherite her dominions after her” (Allen, *An Admonition* 20). Allen reports in a particularly vivid image that,

> She hath bene heard to wishe that the day after her death, she might stand in some high place betwene heaven and earthe, to behold the scamblinge that she conceyved would be for the croune; sporting herselfe in the conceyte and foresight of our future miseries, by her onlie unhappines procured: not unlike to Nero.... (*An Admonition* 22)

Allen here crafts an imaginative scene to underline the collapse of England into chaos. Elizabeth’s purported “wish” mimics similar scenes such as the one at the conclusion of Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, but Elizabeth’s sport of watching England tear itself apart is a far cry from Troilus’ laughter at the world’s vanity. Elizabeth’s ascent, unlike Troilus’ own, is incomplete; she does not reach heaven. Instead of gaining insight, Elizabeth becomes a petty god, laughing at the vacuum of power her death left behind while remaining in her own personal limbo.

> This blurring of body and nation, though, never develops into the obvious metaphor of the nation as a body with a corrupt head. That absence is intriguing because it was certainly popular with Protestant exiles. The significant lack of the headless body metaphor makes sense if Allen is imagining England as severed from the transnational body of the Church and its
transnational head. There is no sustained body metaphor because there is no longer a clear national body without allegiance to Rome. What does appear, though, is an allusion to a spreading spiritual corruption spilling out of England in the form of “intelligenses, spies, and practicisers” who find their way into foreign nations “to deal with the discontented of everie state for the attempting of sumwhat against their lorde and superiors” (Allen, An Admonition 23). As the national body dissolves, it releases these contagions that purposefully cause similar unrest abroad. As a final barb, Allen returns to the threat that Elizabeth poses to other nations by explicitly linking her actions with national collapse:

How didest thow fall Lucifer from heaven, that wast so orient in the morninge?
How wast thow brought doune to the grounde that would woundest nations and subvertedst kingdoms, and saidst in thy hart, I will be like the highest? (An Admonition 25).

Allen’s reference to Isaiah 14 is explicit in the text’s marginal note. Transforming Queen Elizabeth into Lucifer brings Allen’s argument full circle. The link recalls Satan’s desire to usurp God’s place on Heaven’s throne. In essence, Elizabeth’s banishing of Catholicism recreates this event with the same potential results. It has begun a chain reaction that is tearing England apart and its contamination begins to move outward just as Satan’s fall ultimately leads to the destruction of Paradise.

At this point Allen pivots his argument from laying blame on Elizabeth to proposing a solution. To restore England, Catholicism must “come home” and reclaim the spiritual patrimony

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24 Stapleton references “the poisoned blastes of their pestiforous heresies...blown abrod” and translates a small portion of an epistle claiming “All these were heretikes sent of their Archeretike John Calvin to infect this part of the world.” See further Thomas Stapleton, A Fortresse of the Faith First Planted Amonge Us Englishmen (Antwerp: Ihon Laet, 1565), 77v, 78v. Likewise Persons contends that Catholics refuses to attend Anglican services despite the law due to “peril of infection.” See further Robert Persons, A Brief Discourse Contayning Certayne Reasons Why Catholiques Refuse to Goe to Church (Doway [i.e. East Ham]: Iohn Lyon [i.e. Greenstreet House Press], 1580), 59v.
it lost, even if that means foreign invasion. This is not unlike King Alla in the Custance story, who must make a pilgrimage (a type of exile) to Rome “to receyven his penance” (l. 991). Only there, as he recommits himself to his faith, does he find his long lost wife and return “To Engelond…Wher as they lyve in joye and in quiete” (ll. 1130-1131). His own “exile” to and return from Rome, in other words, is a prerequisite for “joye and quiete” in a nation now specially called England.” Yet while Alla’s restoration of England’s wholeness is peaceful, Allen’s requires more aggressive actions. Allen argues for the Roman Church’s right to actively invade England by making clear that “the commonweale of the Catholike Churche formed by Christe, [is] more excellent then any secular societie ordeined by man.” And then questioning, “Where were then these disordered lawes and statues, that make the Apostles, yea Christe himself, and all his preistes that be borne out of England to be forren powers?” (Allen, An Admonition 37, my emphasis). “Borne out of England” means both non-English spiritual leaders like the Pope and also, I believe, refers to exiled Catholics such as Allen. This is supported by Allen’s specific acknowledgement of the exiles’ effect on Pope Sixtus, who was moved “not a little by my humble and continual sute together with the afflicted and banished Catholics of our nation, of all and every degree, who have bene by his speciall compasion and Regall munificence principally supported in this their long exile” (An Admonition 49). It is Allen’s plea, and that of Catholic exiles, that moved the Church to begin England’s “deliverie...from the yoke of heresie and thraldom of your enemies, and for restitution of those realmes and the subjects of the same to their ancient liberty of lawes and conscience” (An Admonition 49-50).

Salvation, in other words, comes from the recusant exiles. Allen’s call in An Admonition for the active invasion of a foreign nation onto English soil would certainly seem to justify all of William Cecil’s accusations of treason against Catholics. Supporting the coming invasion, Allen
assures his fellow (English) Catholics that Spain does not seek to impose its own control over the nation save to restore Catholicism to its rightful place: “to deliver yourselves, your cuntrie, and posteritie, from that miserable servitude of body and soul which you have longe bene in” (An Admonition 52). England here belongs to Catholicism, and those of the faith belong to it, a point he reiterates later: “If you winne, you save your whole realme from subversion, and innumerable soules, present and to cum, from damnation” (Allen, An Admonition 55, my emphasis). By Allen’s own admission, foreign invasion is preferable to a continued Protestant court, but while Cecil’s accusations of treason were true, so too were Allen’s own cries of innocence. The solution to this paradox becomes clear when viewed through the recusant understanding of national identity, and more specifically English citizenship.

An Admonition claims that “all true Englishmen have to embrace and set forward” the Queen’s removal by open rebellion (Allen 8). To be English, one must remove the usurper and replace her with one whose faith will restore the realm’s legitimacy. Even after the Armada’s failure, “englishness” remains linked to Catholicism. Persons writes in 1608 that a good Catholic will swear gladly to King James,

[A]s much loyalty, as ever any Catholike Subject of England, did unto their lawfull King in former tymes, and ages, before the change of king Henry the eyght...[but] for the preservation of any Countrey, and for the universall good of Gods Church, is a matter belonging to doctrine and Religion, [a good Catholic] cannot with safety to his Conscience sweare unto the Articles and branches of the Oath touching that point. (The Judgment 16-17)

Persons’ careful qualification of English loyalty associates inclusion in the national body with the monarch’s relationship with the spiritual body. Thus both authors continue the pre-modern association of nation with patrimony. Each remained convinced that England was indeed their home and that within its borders a true monarch might reign secure, but that Rome and the Papal See maintained a divinely mandated right to English spirituality. In that sense England belonged
to the Catholic Church, which by Elizabeth’s command had become an exile in its own right. By returning Catholicism to England, Allen and his fellow exiles were restoring health and spiritual vitality to their nation.

These observations suggest that the mind of exile manifests in recusant writing by recasting Catholicism as the marginalized faith struggling to regain its unjustly claimed patrimony. Recusant Catholicism results in a reimagining of England in collapse because of its separation from the *corpus mysticum* and, in turn, stimulated the use of the metaphors of social collapse and usurped property. These ideas have their roots firmly in the complicated relationship between *sacerdotium* and *regnum* found in the middle ages. Pope Boniface’s *Unam sanctum* “stressed, and overstressed, the hierarchical view that political bodies had a purely functional character within the world community of the *corpus mysticum Christi*.”25 From this perspective recusant literature can link citizenship with faith and manifest in arguments that appear openly treasonous while simultaneously declaring loyalty. Yet these metaphors and the careful distinction between the bodies mystical and politic are only part of the rhetoric of recusancy. In order for the recusant argument to be successful, England needs to be demonstrably Catholic prior to its “usurpation” by Protestantism.

England’s spiritual past is thus essential, and the recusants, like Turner, recall and retell English foundational myths. The third chapter of Allen’s *Defense* begins by returning to the past to outline the distinction between Protestant persecution under Queen Mary and the current Elizabethan persecution of Catholics. Allen insists,

> We complain justly of persecution for that our cause for which we suffer, is the faith of al our Forefathers; the faith of our persecutors owne auncestors; the faith into which our countrie was converted and by which we ar called Christian…[we]

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can not be forced from it, nor punished for it, by any lawe of God, Nature, or Nations. (*A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 36)

The national memory Allen invokes is the same one Turner recalls in *Spiritual Physik*, the transformation of England from pagan to Christian during the 6th century. Here though is the established narrative without alteration or exposition. So secure is this narrative that Allen launches from it into an uncompromising declaration that because of England’s conversion “no lawe of God or man can force us to be Protestantes,” though by the same logic Protestants can be forced into Catholic unity (*A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 37). His argument essentially relies on a religious version of primogeniture. While Turner retells a foundational narrative with a Protestant spin, Allen alludes to this same narrative almost immediately with little or no exposition. The distant past, it seems, speaks for itself. For Allen, it is the more recent historical narratives that need attention.

The use of historical narratives in Elizabethan literature has been noted before now. Susanne Scholz demonstrates that these historical narratives, “organize their subject matter as a chain of causally connected events teleologically moving towards the goal of full realization of national autonomy within a linear time scale.”26 Controlling the narrative chain of causality thus constitutes a powerful form of cultural control, and for a displaced group, Protestant or Catholic, seeking to recreate an idealized English culture meant actively controlling a narrative best suited to support their respective positions. Allen and his fellows “make better times” by asserting textual control over an English historical “chronicle,” which, as Richard Helgerson argues in his watershed study of nascent English nationalism, “was the *Ur*-genre of national self representation. More than any other discursive form, chronicle gave Tudor Englishmen a sense

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of their national identity.”

Helgerson continues, noting that these authors “were what students of more recent nationalist movements have called “transitional men,” men uprooted by education and ambition from familiar associations and local structures, men who were free – and compelled by their freedom – to imagine a new identity based on the kingdom or nation.”

Exiles are nothing if not a significant part of these “transitional men.” They are defined by their transitions, spatial and cultural. I have already shown the popularity of polemic and historical narratives amongst English exiles in general. The final section of this chapter examines the synthesis of polemic and chronicle in recusant Catholic literature.

**The Faith First Planted: The Authority of the Past and Struggle for the Present**

Elizabeth’s own origin narrative is what Allen seeks to control in *A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense*. From his point of view, all that Elizabeth has accomplished is tied to the elimination of the past. He claims laws made in the past dealing with heresy were repealed in Elizabeth’s first year of rule, a change Allen humorously claims “smelleth of something I need not here express.” Queen Mary, on the other hand, embraced the past and executed only laws long established (*Allen, A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 35). Elizabethan England’s faith, was not extant in England above five or six years before in the short reigne of K. Edward the sixt, or rather of his protectour; for before that, in K. Henries dayes the same profession was accumped heresie, and the professours therof were burned for Heretiques. (*Allen, A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 37)

This historical narrative is highly selective. John Wyclif’s challenges to the Church in the fourteenth century are completely ignored, as are the Lollard’s challenges after his. Allen omits Henry’s own complicated ecclesiology, the Acts of Supremacy, and the execution of the thoroughly Catholic Thomas More. Elizabethan Protestantism’s origin becomes something

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28 Ibid., 13.
entirely new in Allen’s argument, suggesting that the narrative of the recent past is far more malleable (and useful) than the narrative of the distant past. Persons makes a similar historical gesture in *A Brief Discourse Contayngne Certayne Reasons Why Catholiques Refuse to Go to Church*. There he speaks of four religions currently in England, “the Catholiks are the first, the auncientest, the more in number, and the most beneficial to al the rest (having begotten and bred up the other, and delivered to them this Realme, conserved by Catholike religion, these thowsand yeares and more)” (Persons, *A Brief Discourse* t3r-t4v). Past or present though, Allen’s polemic is concerned with controlling a foundational narrative.

Allen’s and Persons’ appeal to a seemingly unquestionable Catholic past is scarcely unique. It is the primary focus of Thomas Stapleton’s *A Fortress of Faith*. Stapleton’s entire polemic fortress rests firmly on the established historical narrative of the Church preserved in Bede’s *Historia eccelesiastica*. Again and again, Stapleton recalls this narrative: “What can then move you [Protestants] to reject this history of Venerable Bede, to departe from the faith first planted among us englishmen and so many hundred yeares continued”; “yt pleased God off hys goodnes by the meanes of his servaunt blessed S. Gregory then Bishop of Rome, to sende the worde of lyfe, and the joyfull tydings of his holy ghospell to our forefathers the english men”; “the faith, planted first among us englishmen by our blessed S. Augustin and his company”; “it is evident the faith of England planed by S. Augustin...hath continewed these 900 yeares and upwarde” (Stapleton 3r, 70r, 81r, 103v). These are only a handful of such references, yet all these share commonalities. Each recusant here discussed assumes that the conversion of England made it a Catholic nation and each assumes the unquestionable certainty of this narrative: “for to Catholikes and the right believers the history itself is sufficient” (Stapleton 7r).
Stapleton, Allen, and Persons demonstrate a consistent rhetorical appeal to the unity and evident fixity of the distant past and the importance of origin narratives. I noted in the previous chapter, such appeals appear in the rhetoric of exile. All three recusants here understand its importance. Allen alludes to it by undermining Protestant appeals to the past, claiming that “because we Catholique Christian men doe justly ground our selves upon the former profession of our faith...these [Protestant] men apishlie would imitate our phrase and argument in a thing as far differing as heaven and hel” (*A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 37). Take heed, Allen warns, because Protestants will seem to argue the same way we do in order to further their cause. Persons’ *Judgment* argues that Catholic authority extends to Protestants “as her due Subjects, for that by their Baptisme, they were made her Subjects...the Protestant Church of England hath Nullum Ius acquisition upon Catholickes that were in possession before them, for many hundred yeares, as is evident” (23). The final qualifier is absolute and self-justifying. Only a few pages later, he turns to Elizabeth’s reign and goes into great detail about her failings and unjust actions towards Catholics. This much more recent history is far less “evident,” it seems. Persons writes his own polemic chronicle of the Elizabethan legacy (*A Judgment* 26-28). Stapleton contrasts England’s “evident” past with what appears to be the disharmony and unstable historical narratives in Protestant works. Protestant texts cannot even agree on when the alleged “corruption” of papistry infected the primitive church (Stapleton 9v). Stapleton goes on to cite numerous Protestant texts which present different (and often contradictory) views of ecclesiastical history before concluding, “[A]s ye can avouche no certain thinge of al protestants (so double and variable they are in their doctrine and doinges) so for any certain prescript time of papistry they are not yet agreed upon” (10r).
Appeals to historical narratives are not exclusive to recusant literature, but they nevertheless form an integral part of them, just as exile does. In Allen’s *Defense*, exile flits at the margins for much of the text, but it abruptly crashes into focus when he turns from reclaiming England’s recent past to the subject of persecution. He begins with a lament concerning the Protestant seizure of Catholic homes, goods, and children before shifting to those imprisoned for their faith: “every dungeon and filthie prison in England [is] ful of our Priestes and brethen; al Provinces and Princes christiane witnesses of our banishment” (Allen, *A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 39). Allen forges a link between prison and banishment, those at home and those abroad. The collective “our” blurs the line between the two groups and they elide into a single collective of persecuted exiles. Those imprisoned are no more at home than those in exile because the nation finds itself cut off from the unity of the church. Catholics everywhere are seemingly banished. Those within the nation are exiles from the Church’s spiritual guidance while those without are exiles from the nation. Yet are all exiles in some fashion.

By the end of Allen’s third chapter, exile becomes a key aspect of Allen’s argument and something of a litmus test for the veracity of England’s “true” religious faithful: “The poorest and worst that be in trouble at home, or in banishment for the same abrod…may be in al life and behaviour accounted Saints” (*A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 44-45). This claim precedes his final argument in chapter three, yet another revisionist narrative of recent history in which he gives a literal tally of those who were burned during Queen Mary’s reign. He names just one Bishop, Thomas Cranmer, and several unnamed persons “of the basest (for the most part) worst, and contemptiblest of both sexes” (*A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 45). Set against this paltry (and dubious) sum Allen cites “in banishment two worthie English Prelates” and “three whole Convents put out of their possessions either into prison or out of the Realme…
besides manie [a] one made in our banishment.” Students and doctors “for conscience sake fled the Realme, or were in the Realme imprisoned.” All “have passed their long banishment in honest povertie” (Allen, *A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 46). The points rest firmly on transforming exile into a position of pride and persecution, a position Cecil had explicitly attempted to deny Catholic exiles in *The Execution of Justice*. Cecil writes, “That verie few ar fled for Relgion other then such as were not able to live at home but in beggerie” (5). Allen acknowledges that some who fled did return and convert “for weariness of banishment,” but these are the exception rather than the rule. “[T]he world knoweth how exceding few you gayne or get from us,” Allen writes in rebuke, “whilst we in the meane space (through Gods great grace) receive hundrethes of your Ministers, a number of your best wits, manie delicate heires of al ages, voluntarily fleeing from your damnable condition, and seeking after God” (Allen, *A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense* 47). Allen never once mentions those hundreds of Protestants who fled under Queen Mary. The Marian exiles simply do not exist in his narrative. Yet exile looms large in the persecution of Catholics; it is a persecution exclusively Catholic to Allen.

Persons makes similar rhetorical moves in *The Judgment*, where the experience of exile appears front and center. The polemic’s full title is *The Judgment of a Catholicke English-man Living in Banishment for His Religion* and the inscription to the reader ascribes the text to a letter “from my learned friend beyond the seas” (Persons *3). A third allusion comes in the first paragraph of the first chapter. There he claims, “I have determyned with my selfe in this my banishment, to spend my tyme in other studyes, more profitable, then in contention about Controversies” (Persons, *The Judgment* 1). That said though, he plunges immediately into a variety of controversies. The clustering of such exilic references transforms the text into an exile’s voice returning home. Persons closes with the plea:
Would God his Ma[jes]ties eares, and those of his wise Counsell could reach into these partes beyond the seas, and to all forrayne nations of Chistendome besydes, to hear what is said, what is written, what is discoursed by men of best judgment in this behalfe not only in regard of justice and piety, but in reason also of State and Policie. (The Judgment 124).

This image vividly evokes a pilgrimage of sorts in the reader’s mind that links absence with a means of accessing truth. Exilic allusions abruptly become overt as Persons closes his text:

There have not passed many moneths, since there were seene some threescore Priests more or less (to omit others) cast into banishment about one tyme, and wandring up and downe, throughout Christendome...naturall borne subjects of the Land...cast out of their native soyle, for professing that Religion only, wherby their said Countrey was first made Christian...from the beginning of their Conversion, unto this our age. (The Judgment 125-126).

Persons here articulates the rhetoric of recusancy essentially in full. Elizabethan exiles were made so by and for their faith, which was England’s original faith as demonstrated by recusant appeals to the established historical narrative of the nation’s origins.

From these polemics begins to emerge a clearer picture of exile’s effect on recusant polemic and recusant ideas about national identity. For example, Stapleton writes in *A Fortress of the Faith*,

The church hath continued sound and uncorrupted in doctrine not only these hundred yeares after Christ, as Melanchthon thought, or 500 yeares as Luther preached and Calvin somtimes confessed...or at last a thousand yeares as Fox in his Acts determineth, but even this fiftene hundred yeares and upwarde, and so shall continew to the worldes ende. (28v)

Such contradictions, to Stapleton and his fellow recusants, clearly demonstrated the polemic struggle for the control of England’s historical and spiritual narrative. In their own ways Stapleton, Allen, and Persons writes his own English national chronicle, just as Timothy Bright did in his “Special note of England” where this chapter began. The recusant polemics discussed here all appear roughly at the beginning, middle, and end of Elizabethan England (in 1565, 1580, 1584, 1588, and 1608), a time marked by exile both spiritual and physical. The experience of
exile fractures established national narratives. That is an essential point, I think, to the literary
significance of exile to polemics (and perhaps more imaginative works as well). The cognitive
dissonance that exists between the Catholic and Protestant understanding of “nation” at this time
is directly related to the belief (or not) in a transnational church under the authority of Rome or a
more national church governed by a body of believers existing in a relatively narrow geo-
political space. The dissonance is further intensified by each group’s struggle to contain and
interpret England’s past, distant and contemporary. Polemics gain in popularity as a genre at
precisely this point in history because they are essential to conducting a transnational debate (a
type of polemic culture) in the age of print between two competing nationalizing ideologies
whose most prominent members are very often exiles from the very nation they are trying to
define.

Allen, Persons, and Stapleton engage in a type of polemical/historical nation building,
writing a national identity forged extra-nationally, transnationally, and textually. We might call
their efforts “polemic chronicles,” and even attempt to define their characteristics. Polemic
chronicles would “confess,” as polemics do, a religious or national identity that draws clear,
unambiguous lines in the sand. They would find their “evidence” in the past, recent or distant,
and create the illusion of ideological “purity” and teleological continuity while attacking the
alternate narratives as revisionist or “corrupted.” That this genre appears precisely at the moment
when so many religious dissidents are in exile suggests that the polemic chronicle is a means of
textual nation building and, at least in part, the product of liminality. The experience of exile
creates a fracturing effect by displacing an established cultural narrative valued by the exiled
group. As a result, controlling one narrative while deconstructing the opposing narrative is a
means of restorative control. It is for this reason that Protestant exile polemic rewrites the distant past while recusant polemic focuses on the recent past. Each is the other’s dominant narrative.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the rhetorics of exile and recusancy found their most prominent place in the many polemics making their way back and forth across the English Channel and into the hands of friend and foe alike. The polemic culture they represented was fundamentally influencing the narratives of national identity occurring both within and without of England. Of central importance to both these rhetorics was the ability to control historical narrative and thus define a national identity consistent with the political and religious beliefs of the exiles. Into this polemic culture was born Edmund Spenser, one of the greatest poets in English history. He is an inheritor of both rhetorics and, as I will show in the final chapter, he applies elements of both to create his own English identity, an identity formed between lands and nations, a nationless exile.

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Chapter Five: “Exuls Out of His Court Be Thrust:” Edmund Spenser and Nation-less Exile

Edmund Spenser purportedly wrote to Queen Elizabeth in 1592, “I am a stranger in mine owne countrye, and almost unknowne to my best frends, onely remembered by her Maiestie…I should account my ten years absense a flatt banishment, were I not honoured in her Maiesties service…In all humility, I desire this Dart to be delivered, an Irish weapon, and this with an English hearte, that in whose heart faith is not fastened, a Darte may.”¹ It is tempting to read sarcasm into Spenser’s letter, but there too is an acute melancholy and a heartfelt sense of longing for his home in England and a place at the court. Especially striking is the dual significance of the Irish Dart. The image encourages the reader to see past the outward appearance. What seems Irish is actually English. What seems to hail from the margins actually belongs to the center. Clear too is Spenser’s sense of himself as an exile, “a stranger in mine owne countrye” living in “flatt banishment.” What then might exile reveal about Spenser’s literary legacy? In this final chapter, I examine the imaginative work of Edmund Spenser, a national poet deeply motivated by an exile that was both mental and physical. Much of Spenser’s work engages with the concept of nationhood and England’s growing importance on a world stage, while his life was one fundamentally shaped by exiles of one type or another, many of whom have already appeared in previous chapters.

Andrew Hadfield’s recent biography of Spenser indicates that from a young age the poet was familiar with contemporary exiles. His daily travels took him from the edges of London to its center, “a cosmopolitan urban community in which exiles had an obvious presence.”² These exiles, primarily French and Dutch Protestants, had fled the religious persecution in their

homelands for the relative safety of Elizabethan England. Exiles also played a large part in his formative education. Spenser’s schoolmaster, Robert Mulcaster, was “associated with the generation of Protestants who had been exiled under Mary in Geneva and who were directly influenced by Calvin.” Miles Coverdale and Bishop Edmund Grindal can be connected to Spenser, and both John Foxe and John Bale were highly influential on his eschatology.³

Exile, already deeply rooted in his formative years, also shapes Spenser’s literary creations. Harold Stein has suggested that William Turner’s influence appears in *The Shepherds’ Calendar* and *Mother Hubberd’s Tale*. Specifically, Stein argues that both texts draw on Turner’s distinction between a fox and a wolf, symbols of false clergy, and suggests that Spenser remembered Turner’s works fondly. Stein asserts, “Spenser found [in Turner] a way of using symbols that was congenial to him and of vital significance in his work.”⁴ This connection opens up the possibility that the exilic influences discussed in previous chapters may well find reflection in Spenser’s writing, and Stein encourages Spenserian critics to be “ready to spot a personal attack and equally ready to swim in an undefined medium that connotes only a general attitude of mind.”⁵ Stein seems to here intuitively sense a mind of exile at work in both Turner and Spenser, though he leaves it undefined.

Roughly sixty years later Richard McCabe’s Chatterton Lecture on Poetry attempted to define that general attitude of mind as one fundamentally shaped by exile. McCabe argues that:

> The years of [Spenser’s] poetic and political maturity were passed not at the centre but on the periphery of the Elizabethan state, not in the city but in the wilderness. Exile and the conditions of exile preoccupy much of his canon. Paradoxically, one might say that the ardour of Spenser’s devotion to the state

³ Ibid., 33–34, 47.
⁵ Ibid.
was born of exclusion from it. As I will show, exile formed a central part of, and was a preoccupation in, a number of Spenser’s works written in Ireland. McCabe’s critical focus is primarily on *The Faerie Queene*, but he also touches on two other works that are the focus of examination here: *A View of the State of Ireland* and *Colin Clouts Comes Home Againe*. McCabe underlines Spenser’s own sense of national dislocation and defines one aspect of Spenser’s literary mind as forged in the crucible of exile. His lecture offers convincing and insightful readings of *The Faerie Queene*, *A View*, and *Colin Clout* through an exilic lens. His readings, though, all assume that Spenser’s mind of exile manifests primarily in “the degree to which our traditional ‘English’ Spenser is the product of an Irish environment, the product of mortal conflict between two irreconcilable cultures.” My research suggests that an “English” Spenser is too one-dimensional an approach to such a skilled poet and polemicist.

The conflict that McCabe refers to is consistent with the polemic culture of the early modern period and, provocatively, may suggest a relationship between the mind of exile defined in this project and early manifestations of the rhetoric of colonialism. Using the mind of exile as a lens opens up a new mode of inquiry into Spenser as a proto-colonial author, and in his work it is possible to see the development of the mind of exile into the rhetorical movements that ultimately define colonial apologetics: staunch nationalism, an assumption of national superiority, and a systemic, almost single-minded, desire to expand national borders in the name of progress. Complimenting McCabe, my reading sees Spenser’s exile as an early example of what we now recognize as a hybrid cultural identity and not a source of “mortal conflict.”

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7 Ibid.
other words, it is precisely Spenser’s “in-between-ness” that influences much of how Spenser represents himself as English and how he understands what it means to be English. If he truly was never “home” in England, neither was he entirely “home” in Ireland. Ben Myers observes,

> A long critical tradition speaks of Spenser’s exile in Ireland, but such a term for the poet’s Irish experience is misleading in that it captures only one mood of the man in Ireland. The work of Louis Montrose has revealed to us another side of exile, in which Spenser came to view his new home in Ireland as an alternative to, rather than a distraction from, the center of things at court.⁸

I disagree with some of Myers and Montrose’s conclusions here. Exile was certainly only one mood of Spenser’s Irish experience, but it is the opportunity for conversion, recognized and desired by the exile, which influences many of his imaginative works.

Though Spenser moved more or less freely from England to Ireland on several occasions, his lands and wealth were firmly planted in Irish soil. *A View of the State of Ireland* relies heavily on the rewriting of an Irish origin narrative in order to justify English colonization; as I demonstrated in Chapter Four, this occurs frequently in exilic polemic. Colonizers, though not exiles in a traditional sense, are nevertheless concerned with transforming their foreign “not-home” into their native soil. In *Colin Clouts Comes Home Againe*, Colin represents a pre-colonial figure, a different kind of exile whose relation to the “nation-state” is central to his religious identity and to his moral and ethical ambiguity. The simple life he enjoys is challenged and upset by his encounter with a more complex, sophisticated culture that is, at the same time, his culture. Like the dart given with Spenser’s letter, Colin is a product of the margins and the center and a reflection of both. The culture, he notes, is appealing and perilous because he is aware that being a part of it will result in a loss of something in him. Ultimately, *Colin Clout* becomes an extended meditation on national and cultural displacement and seeks to

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fundamentally transform what it means to be an exile and a true citizen. Both *A View* and *Colin Clout* open up questions about Spenser’s ideas surrounding England’s attempts to bring a Catholic Ireland completely under the English (and Protestant) crown. These questions were possible only because of Spenser’s unique position between cultures, an exile in both lands and nations.

**Writing an English Ireland: *A View* as Polemic Chronicle**

*A View of the State of Ireland* is well known in Spenser scholarship. A printed version did not appear until 1633, but before that it circulated widely in manuscript. Spenser wrote the prose dialog while serving as secretary to Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton, in Ireland. Spenser introduces two speakers, Irenius and Eudoxus, and each man represents the margins and the center of English political life. Irenius, having lately returned from Ireland, meets Eudoxus in England. There Irenius adopts the voice of an authority with first hand knowledge, a point both characters seem obsessed with establishing. Eudoxus speaks “of Ireland, whence you lately came,” and asks for information gleaned from “your late continuance there.” Irenius sets out to tell of Ireland’s problems “as I observed them” (Spenser, *A View* 11-12). The name Irenius might be rendered as “man of Ireland.” Why he was in Ireland is never made clear, but his return to England prompts a lengthy discussion about England’s role in bringing “civilization” to Ireland.

*A View* begins *in medias res*, omitting such biographical information. However, the text hints that at least some of Irenius’s experiences come from Spenser’s own, suggesting that the reason for Irenius’s time abroad may well reflect Spenser’s. Irenius calls for the conquest and colonization of Ireland by the English crown, an issue that directly impacted Spenser’s life.

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10 Ibid., 23, 28.
Spenser, as a member of the New English\textsuperscript{11} in Ireland, had firsthand knowledge of what one stood to gain and lose from being part of a continued English presence:

\begin{quote}
[O]n the one hand great wealth, power and influence were available to those who would be excluded in the metropolis; on the other, the price of isolation from the ‘real’ centres of power, a crisis of identity and the constant threat of danger.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Spenser’s house in Kilcolman certainly spoke to the success one could have abroad,\textsuperscript{13} but as for Spenser’s desire to become a national poet, banishment from court proved a difficult problem. He faced the classic conundrum of any exile: “How do I get home?” or, if that is not possible, “How do I make where I am now into a place that’s home?”

Spenser, as a member of the English diaspora in Ireland, ended his life caught between lands, a “nation-less” exile. The notion of the “nation-less” exile is something heretofore unexamined. While the other exiles discussed in this project either found their way home or died abroad, the majority of Spenser’s life was spent somewhere between England and Ireland. Custance eventually finds her way home. William Turner and John Bale die in their native England. William Allen, Robert Persons, and Thomas Stapleton all die in exile. Spenser’s exilic experiences are different because, unlike these other figures, he rarely seems to come to rest either at home or abroad. The motivations behind his first move to Ireland are unclear. Hadfield comments, “We will probably never know whether [following Lord Grey to Ireland] was a great opportunity…or an effective banishment as a result of offending too many people in his early work….”\textsuperscript{14} Spenser’s removal to Ireland was followed by at least two journeys back and forth to

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\textsuperscript{11} The New English were Protestant men and women who settled in the English Pale during the sixteenth century Protestant Ascendancy. The title distinguishes them from the Old English settlers of the twelfth century.

\textsuperscript{12} Andrew Hadfield, “Introduction,” in \textit{A View of the State of Ireland} (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), xiii.


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 154–155.
England before his ultimate return to London in 1598.\textsuperscript{15} Spenser’s final trip was clearly out of necessity. James Ware, the seventeenth century editor of \textit{A View}, explicitly acknowledges Spenser’s final displacement (and loss of place and property) from Ireland during the Nine Years’ War, calling him “\textit{à rebellibus (as Camdens words are) è laribus ejectus & bonis spoliatus.} [on account of rebelliousness, ejected from his home and deprived of his property].”\textsuperscript{16} His final year in England did not result in a place of honor as either a court poet or a civil administrator. Subsequent Spenser biographies have depicted “Spenser as a man who, exiled from court, really wanted to be there.”\textsuperscript{17} In other words he lived (and died) at home in neither England nor Ireland.

Given such personal experiences, it is no surprise that “ambivalence, hybridity, and the role of the diaspora, are central motifs in Spenser’s [\textit{View of the Present State of Ireland}].”\textsuperscript{18} Andrew Hadfield notes that \textit{A View} has been interpreted as a call for a militant Protestant expansion into Ireland or, more recently, a call for implementing martial law on rebellious Irishmen.\textsuperscript{19} Bruce Avery’s “Mapping the Irish Other” takes another approach and examines Spenser’s hybrid identity in relation to the composition of \textit{A View}:

[Spenser] was both a poet \textit{and} a part of the political administration of the British colonial government; he was an Englishman, yet he spent most of his life in Ireland: hence the \textit{View} seems to waver between Irenius’s eyewitness accounts, which might square with Spenser’s interpretation of his experience of the place, and accounts which would be acceptable to the home authority represented by Eudoxus.\textsuperscript{20}

Avery’s reading of \textit{A View} could be interpreted as a means of understanding the text’s dialogic

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 231.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Spenser, \textit{A View of the State of Ireland}, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Hadfield, \textit{Edmund Spenser}, 403.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Spenser, \textit{A View of the State of Ireland}, xvi.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid., xii.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Bruce Avery, “Mapping the Irish Other: Spenser’s a \textit{View of the Present State of Ireland},” \textit{ELH} 57, no. 2 (1990): 264.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
hybridity. Two personalities – Spenser’s English identity (in Eudoxus) and Spenser’s Irish identity (in Irenius) – meet to discuss Ireland’s transformation into English soil. When both personalities speak of “reformation,” a ubiquitous term in *A View*, they refer not to religious reform per se, but to a fundamental reshaping of the Irish commonwealth. Yet despite this, the discussion takes on those “reformation” valences as experienced in the sixteenth century.

Hadfield’s and Avery’s arguments have merit, but neither sufficiently addresses the dialog’s constant Irish historical revisionism. For a text ostensibly about Ireland’s present state, a remarkable portion of it relates to its past. *A View* is best understood as a polemic chronicle written by a Spenserian incarnation of the mind of exile. Spenser concerns himself with rewriting Ireland’s past so as to prepare it for an English future. A brief review of the components of polemic chronicle from the previous chapters is in order. First, the genre functions, as polemic generally does, to profess. It professes either a religious or a national identity free of ambiguity. In this way it mirrors the exilic polemic discussed in Chapter Three, where William Turner and John Bale cannot abide the presence of Catholicism in any form, as it will always infect, corrupt, and subordinate English national sovereignty to the papal see. As with any chronicle, polemic chronicle’s “evidence” stems from an historical narrative that emphasizes both an ideological and a teleological “purity.” We have seen similar uses of history in Chapters Three and Four. William Cardinal Allen and Thomas Stapleton both cite Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica* as an unquestionable version of English Catholic history, just as Turner does from a Protestant point of view. Finally, polemic chronicle functions as self-justifying, attacking alternate historical narratives as either corrupt or in need of proper interpretation. In short, polemic chronicle is an act of nation building tied to both the writing and the reading of history as a text.

Irenius telegraphs *A View*’s interest in origins very near its beginning. The dialog begins
with an examination of Ireland’s purported barbarity and whether “it proceed from the very
genius of the soyle, or influence of the starres,” or God himself (Spenser, A View 11). The use of
“genius” calls to mind its Latin origin *gen-* or “root,” as does the later insistence that in order to
understand the roots one must first understand that the causes of Ireland’s problems are “most auncient and long growne” (Spenser, A View 13). Such rhetoric establishes the text as a
chronicle; Irenius seeks to probe the roots of Irish national identity by narrating the events
leading to the present. Eudoxus encourages a pursuit of origins when he asks why a newly
elected Irish captain takes his oath upon a stone:

Have you ever heard what was the occasion and first beginning of this custom? For it is good to know the same, and may perhaps discover some secret meaning and intent therein, very materiall to the state of that government. (Spenser, A View 17)

Eudoxus calls for chronicling a seemingly trivial cultural tradition, only to extrapolate from it the possibility of coming to know something hidden, fundamental, and “material” to Ireland’s national constitution. The elision of the custom and its historical origin is reinforced by the vagueness of “the same,” which could refer either to “first beginning” or the custom. The request to know a beginning prompts a lengthy discussion of Ireland’s cultural origins written from a decidedly English point of view, and Irenius does indeed seem desirous of finding not only the root of the custom, but also the root of Irish national identity.

Approximately one third of the way through the text, Irenius turns his attention specifically to the origins of Irish culture. Eudoxus calls the historical narrative that Irenius expounds a “sweete remembrances of antiquities, from whence it seemeth that the customes of that nation proceeded” while Irenius names it the “ample discourse of the originall of them, and the antiquity of that people” (Spenser, A View 43). Irenius theorizes that Irish culture evolved from Scottish culture, which in turn grew from Scythian culture. The narrative casts as barbarian
both Ireland and Scotland by connecting both to one of the barbarian cultures of the ancient world. Like a good scholar, Irenius is never far from his sources, referring to the “Chronicles of Spaine” and the “Bardes or Irish Chroniclers” as the root of his historical narrative (Spenser, A View 44, 46). Eudoxus then challenges the claim of Scythian lineage, arguing that Irishmen claim a Spanish descent. Irenius responds:

They doe indeed, but (I conceive) without any good ground. For if there were any such notable transmission of a colony hether out of Spaine, … the very Chronicles of Spaine … would not have omitted so memorable a thing, as the subduing of so noble a realme to the Spaniard, no more then they doe now neglect to memorize their conquest of the Indians…But the Irish doe heerein no otherwise, then our vaine English-men doe in the Tale of Brutus, whom they devise to have first conquered and inhabited this land, it being as impossible to prove, that there was ever any such Brutus of Albion or England, as it is, that there was any such Gathelus of Spaine. But surely the Scythians (of whom I earst spoke) which at such tyme as the Northerne Nations overflowed all Christendome, came downe to the Sea coste, … and arrived in the North parte thereof, which is now called Ulster, which first inhabiting, and afterwardes stretchinge themselves forth into the Ilande as their numbers encreased, named yt all of themselves Scuttenlande, which more briefly is called Scutland, [or] Scotland. (Spenser, A View 44)

Irenius’s argument exposes the polemic nature of his chronicle history by erasing any ambiguity in the past that Eudoxus’s objection might introduce. The initial *argumentum ex silentio* dismisses the Irish claim to a Spanish (and Catholic) heritage. Irenius sets aside this historical narrative in order to substitute his own. Notably, he attempts to link both Irish and British origin stories. Citing Brutus and Gathelus ties each culture to a notable ancient culture: the Trojans and the Spanish respectively. Yet he transmutes both from “history” to “myth,” denying both as “impossible to prove.” Yet while both Brutus and Gathelus are made mythic, Irenius insists that “surely” the Scythians peopled both Scotland and Ireland. He concludes that “Scotland and Ireland are all one and the same…Ireland is called Scotia-major, and that which is now called Scotland, Scotia-minor” (Spenser, A View 45). His distinction is consistent with the sixteenth century conceptualization of England as an island almost unto itself surrounded by the “islands”
of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. It also further severs Irish claims to a Spanish lineage. By setting England apart, Spenser emphasizes the cultural “otherness” of both Ireland and Scotland, writing the “history” of the former so as to better prepare it for the cultivation of an English culture. He is emphasizing the nationalizing power of historical narrative and the need for a “right reading” of history.

The polemic nature of such a right reading appears during Irenius’s long exposition of the “evidence” linking Irish and Scythian culture. Weapons of war and religious ceremonies, to name only two examples, allow him to conclude a Scythian connection, but it is Eudoxus’s response that is most noteworthy (Spenser, A View 62-63). “Surely Irenius,” he responds, “in these few words, that from you which I would have thought had bin impossible to have bin spoken of times so remote, and customs so ancient: with delight whereof I was all that while as it were intranced, and carried so farre from my selfe, as that I am now right sorry that you ended so soone” (Spenser, A View 64). Eudoxus experiences a moment of personal displacement, instigated by this “right reading,” that “intrances” and convinces him of the truth of Irenius’s narrative. Numerous other times in the dialog Eudoxus followed Irenius’s claims with additional questions or outright disputation. Yet here the “right reading” overcomes his objections. From this point in the dialog, Eudoxus’s objections become fewer, ultimately disappearing altogether. Structurally, it is the moment when Eudoxus is “carried so far from himself,” that the dialog shifts from demonstrating the need for an Irish solution to a discussion about how to solve the problem. Mapping the text around this rhetorical moment yields the following structure: Irenius proposes the need for an Irish reformation; Eudoxus is skeptical and wants to know why Irenius thinks so; Irenius obliges, and crafts an Irish national narrative; Eudoxus, carried away by that

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narrative, abandons his skepticism; together, both men then discuss the means of making Ireland British. Or to put it another way, it is a moment of mental displacement that allows Eudoxus to see the “truth” of Irenius’s narrative, and chronicle becomes polemical.

Irenius’s “reading” of Irish history underscores the plasticity of the historical narrative by calling into question its textuality and thereby opening up the need for a “correct” interpretation. Prior to Eudoxus’s moment of displacement, he demonstrates this interpretative need in skeptical comments about Irish chronicles, which he calls “most fabulous and forged” (Spenser, A View 46). Irenius counters:

[U]nto them besides I adde mine owne reading…I doe gather a likelihood of truth, not certainly affirming any thing, but by conferring of times, languages, monuments, and such like, I doe hunt out a probability of things, which I leave to your judgement to believe or refuse. (Spenser, A View 46)

Irenius sounds very much like a modern historian and literary critic in this response. He treats history as a text, collated fragments of the past in need of interpretation that end with “a probability of things.” But his dissembling is disingenuous. Irenius’s “history” is clearly meant to be the “true” one, and his interpretation is privileged above any made by the Irish themselves, as is clear in his subsequent comments that “there appears among them some reliques of the true antiquitie, though disguised, which a well eyed man may happily discover and find out” and which he sets in opposition to the “many forged histories of their owne antiquity, which they deliver to fools, and make them believe for true” (Spenser, A View 47, 49). The scholar/poet sets himself against the Irish “Bardes” whom “the Irish themselves…doe most constantly believe and avouch” (Spenser, A View 46). The “well eyed man,” i.e. scholars and poets such as Irenius and Spenser, is required in order to interpret Ireland’s history correctly.

Writing a “true” historical narrative is thus made synonymous with confessing a national identity. In essence, Spenser becomes an imperial anthropologist questioning what makes an
Irishman Irish. His answer defines, as well, an English identity, broadly summarized as all that the Irish are not. Neither identity is self-evident. They must both be defined by the ability to produce a right reading of history. Spenser suggests that one’s national identity is inherently malleable, and to support his claim, he refers to the so-called Old English, the settlers who moved to Ireland following the English conquest of the island in the twelfth century. Some, Spenser insists, “are degenerate, yea, and some of them have quite shaken off their English names, and put on Irish that they might bee altogether Irish” (*A View* 68). Robert Vere, the Earl of Oxford, and his kinsmen “did cast off both their English name and allegiance…and termed themselves very Irish, taking on both Irish habits and customes” (Spenser, *A View* 69).

Specifically, Spenser links national identity to language: “for the minde followeth much the temperature of the body: and also the words are the image of the minde, so as they proceeding from the minde, the minde must needs be affected with the words. So that the speech being Irish, the heart must needs bee Irish” (*A View* 71). Historical narrative and, to a lesser extent, language, defines national identity.

*A View* thus becomes a polemic chronicle. Spenser writes a history of Ireland that defines an Irish national identity and an English national identity. Spenser’s, though, is a polemic chronicle that follows a recognizable pattern of cultural othering very well known to colonial and post-colonial scholars of the modern world. Reading Spenser’s *View* as a pre-colonial text reveals the narrative of colonialism – the transformation of one culture into another via a sense of cultural superiority and colonization – present in the very first English colonial endeavors in Ireland. Finally, in a distinct departure from the polemic chronicle of both Turner and Allen, control over the historical narrative shifts from transforming the exile’s homeland to the extension of the homeland beyond its geo-political borders. In other words, Spenser’s
experiences as an exile in-between nations and lands results in some of the earliest literature of colonial apologetics. Echoes of this rhetoric continue even into the present day.

The Irenius-persona that Spenser adopts is himself a character in-between nations, neither wholly English nor wholly Irish. Nicholas Canny writes,

Irenius (from the Latin Irene, or Hibernia or Ivernia, and the masculine form of Irena, Spenser’s allegorical name for Ireland in Book V of the Faerie Queene), suggests an Englishman who had practical experience in Irish affairs; one who might have been referred to at the English court as an ‘Ireland man.’

His hybrid identity undergirds Irenius’s rhetorical ethos, and Canny’s comment demonstrates the complicated nature of Irenius’s national identity. He is English, but recognizably Irish as well. Indeed at court, as Canny notes, he might well be referred to as an Irishman. For Spenser, whose experiences mirror Irenius’s own, a similar sense of national identity is at play. Irenius/Spenser uses A View to confess his continued English national identity, which, as I demonstrated in previous chapters, is a frequent marker of the mind of exile. Irenius, for example, fears for England’s soundness if Ireland is not reformed; he speaks of the Irish “stepp[ing] into the very rooms of our English”; and lauds the English as paragons of virtue by setting them implicitly against the “evil” Irish (Spenser, A View 11, 30, 93). Irenius/Spenser marks his own separation from the Irish vis-à-vis a total denial of Ireland’s redemption outside of English, militant conquest and transplantation of an English national culture. In an act of pure “othering,” Irenius argues that “evill people, by good ordinances and government, may be made good; but the evill that is of it selfe evill, will never become good” (Spenser, A View 93). Having reached this rhetorical point, and distinguished fully both himself and Englishness, from the Irish and Irishness, he returns to his call for planting the English in Ireland as a means of national

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reformation.

I chose “planting” deliberately, because husbandry metaphors abound in *A View*, and Spenser’s use of soil, specifically one’s relationship to that soil, further demonstrates the mind of exile within the text. Spenser writes of the English “planting…some good forme or policy”; he recalls the reign of Henry II, “when Ireland was planted with English”; he references the success of Rome’s conquest of England by “plant[ing] some of their legions in all places convenient;” and he refers to England’s “planting of religion” in Ireland (Spenser, *A View* 26, 70, 120, 153). McCabe comments that the recurring image of the cultivated field gradually assumes a militaristic connotation: “to ‘plant’ colonists one must ‘plant’ garrisons to protect them.” This point underlines the purpose of the planting metaphor: to facilitate the transformation of Irish soil into English soil, or to put it another way, to transform Spenser’s dwelling place in Ireland into his home *vis-à-vis* an extension of England. It might be called an act of imperial agriculture, in which the exile creates “native” soil. The exile returns to his nation via the conversion of his exiled house into his native home. Given that goal, *A View*’s use of planting metaphors becomes clear. Land and place, inscribed within national borders, grow closely related to self and national identity. Avery posits that the sustained use of the planting metaphor links self and nationality:

The ‘frame’ Eudoxus sees around those British ‘planted’ outside the pale is formed by territorial borders, which both contain the British subject geographically and produce the dialectical identification of self and territory. To grow out of that frame is to grow out of a constituted British subjectivity which simultaneously draws identity from, and inscribes its identity on, the land. Such a view of Ireland, as a framed territory where the English may be planted and so redefine that territory as ‘English,’ is essential for the policy both Eudoxus and Irenius want to pursue. Avery acknowledges that a causal link exists in the early modern period between the diasporic

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23 McCabe, “Edmund Spenser, Poet of Exile,” 76.
New English and English colonization. Irenius speaks very much like many later colonists when he says, “I eftsoones bring in my reformation, and thereupon establish such a form of government, as I may thinke meetest for the good of that realme…the Irish will better be drawne to the English than the English to the Irish government” (Spenser, *A View* 134-135). The comment embraces the sense of cultural superiority found in all colonial endeavors. It assumes that English culture is inherently “good” and destined for embrace by the colonized. There is also a religious subtext in this rhetoric of colonization demonstrated by Irenius’ use of the word “reformation.” The extension of the English crown will bring with it the extension of the Anglican Church. When Ireland assumes English law, (and Protestantism) it becomes in essence English.

To illustrate this point Irenius urges a “union of manners, and conformity of minds, to bring them to be one people…by scattering [the Irish] amongst the English…to bring them by daily conversation unto better liking of each other” (Spenser, *A View* 145). The goal, in short, is to leverage the Irish’s own displacement into the margins, and control that displacement to facilitate England’s colonization of the island. By severing Irish identity from the land, he is, in effect exiling them as a means of remaking them, just as Spenser himself was remade by his own exilic experience. Canny summarizes Irenius’s plan: “Existing septs and kinship groups were now to be dissolved, and the Irish population was to be resettled on property assigned to the new proprietors, or in towns to be erected close to the garrisons.”

Such displacement transforms the Irish into exiles in their own land, but not from it. Exile paradoxically becomes a place of error (i.e. you are exiled from your land because you are not English) and a place of transformation and reformation (once Irish land is English, your new identity will come with it). It is thus

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through the process of exile and return that Irish soil becomes British soil. Simultaneously the exiled New English cease to be exiles by “returning” to their native soil. Exile is thus doubly transformative. It functions to remake both the exiles themselves and, in certain circumstances, the land into which the exile is banished.

Crucially, *A View* is a view from in-between historical narratives, lands, and nations. Spenser writes an Irish historical narrative somewhere between polemic and chronicle, the narrative neither wholly true nor wholly false. As a polemic, the text defines and dismisses Irish culture by undermining its legitimacy and confessing its inferiority to English culture. It succeeds in this process by turning to history, writing an Irish historical narrative designed to chronicle Ireland’s development as stalled or failed, while projecting a possible future onto it as an extension of English soil. Simultaneously, Spenser’s polemic chronicle dismisses the Irish’s own chronicles as misleading, false, or mistaken – texts in need of a right reading. Irenius’s attempt at accomplishing his “owne reading” of Ireland’s history creates a narrative that is an act of writing as much as it is of reading, an act of writing in-between nations in order to extend a national boundary in a colonial endeavor. *A View* is thus a dialog fundamentally about nations, with Ireland somewhere between an Irish and an Anglo-Irish identity. The text is a confessional of English national identity written in Ireland seeking to transform the *insula Hibernia* into another *insula Britannia*. Lastly, *A View* is something of a meditation on Irenius/Spenser’s own sense of being in-between cultures. *A View* purports to define and implement a transformation that will make Ireland British, and thus bring Irenius/Spenser “home.”

The many militant and totalitarian recommendations that *A View* makes were, thankfully, never fully implemented, but the text’s influence helped shape English views of Ireland well into
the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{26} The voice in the text is often a hostile one, which John Breen argues “speaks of the insularity of the islander who, as pedagogue to the court, feels hostility for the world of the Other.”\textsuperscript{27} In the same essay, Breen refers to Ireland as a “refracted vision of England” and an “otherworld” similar in symbolic nature to the island that the exiled Meliboeus fears in Virgil’s first eclogue, and one now “experienced by a fictive genealogical inheritor, Colin Clout.”\textsuperscript{28} The link between Meliboeus and Colin is echoed by Catherine Nicholson, who argues that Spenser’s \textit{Shepheardes Calender}…transforms Meliboeus, Virgil’s unwilling victim of exile, into Colin Clout, a poet whose exile from the pastoral community is both self-imposed and strangely productive.”\textsuperscript{29} The Colin figure, like Irenius, is a man between lands and, like Meliboeus, an exile. The creative productivity Nicholson describes in \textit{The Shepheardes Calender} appears as well in \textit{Colin Clouts Come Home Againe}. There, the narratives of transformation and reformation expressed in \textit{A View} appear in a poetic medium. Colin assumes the role of a proto-colonist, a man caught between lands struggling to reconcile the two cultures he simultaneously inhabits.

\textbf{A Nationless Exilic Poem: Colin Clouts and Spenser’s Distance and Return}

If \textit{A View} works to write a history of Ireland to enable its transformation, \textit{Colin Clout} represents Spenser’s poetic efforts to transform Ireland, the Elizabethan court, and England into idealized versions of themselves by redefining what it means to be an exile and a citizen. \textit{Colin Clouts Come Home Againe}, like \textit{A View}, has received a robust and varied body of critical scholarship. Nancy Hoffman calls the poem a “failed pastoral” because “it does not present a

\begin{footnotes}
\item[26] Hadfield, “Introduction,” xi.
\item[27] Breen, “Edmund Spenser’s Exile,” 38.
\item[28] Ibid., 28–29.
\end{footnotes}
coherent pastoral world.”  

David Shore defends the poem from Hoffman’s accusation, claiming its apparent contradictions stem from Spenser’s attempts to harmonize his public and artistic lives, arriving “at the far more important conclusion that ultimately the demands of poetry and the demands of public life are entirely distinct.”  

Other scholars have focused on its use of classical myth, its use of political imagery, and its central structure’s reliance upon love in order to understand it. Part of the poem’s appeal is in Spenser’s return to pastoral in 1591, at the very height of his work on *The Faerie Queene*, as well as in his return to the Colin figure after a dozen years, one of only three times in Spenser’s oeuvre when he adopts Colin Clout as his persona.

The poem opens with the scene-setting common to pastoral and a link to the eclogues of *The Shepheardes Calender*. His fellow shepherds call upon Colin, lately returned from a trip to the court of Queen Cynthia, to tell of his journey. Isabel MacCaffery calls this “the formula of out-and-back” and claims that *Colin Clout* “derives its tripartite structure from this paradigm.” The liminal figure at the margins of the poetic world travels to its representative center and finds both grace and falsehood. The paradox drives him back to the margins, but he carries with him still the desire for the grace of the center and the desire to transform, via his return, the margins

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33 The other appearances are in *The Shepheardes Calender*, and a brief appearance in Book VI, Canto X of *The Faerie Queene*.  
to a center in its own right, as an extension of the Cynthian court and an opportunity to both praise and critique her court. This mirrors the process of exile and return now familiar in Chaucer, Turner, and Allen. We see yet again a liminal figure interacting with a center of power that results in a transformation of the exiled figure, the center, or both. Much of Colin Clout is concerned with displacement and the effects of displacement on both individuals and lands. Hobbinol claims that,

\[
\text{Whilst thou [Colin] wast hence, all dead in dole did lie:} \\
\text{The woods were heard to waile full many a sythe,} \\
\text{And all their birds with silence to complaine} \\
\ldots \\
\text{But now both woods and fields, and floods revive} \\
\text{Sith thou art come, their cause of merriment,} \\
\text{That us late dead, hast made againe alive (ll. 22-24, 29-31).}^{35}
\]

Though the moment reflects pastoral conventions, it also implies the effect of Colin’s displacement on the land. The land dies for the duration of his absence, reverting to a sterile and empty place. Colin’s return brings salvation to his land, a salvation natural and aesthetic, national and poetic. As I have demonstrated in previous chapters, a liminal figure’s return that heralds salvation is a staple of exilic literature. Colin Clout is no exception, but neither is it identical to the exilic literature discussed in previous chapters.

*Colin Clout* is a poem heavily influenced by the theme of “in-between-ness,” a type of liminality heretofore not present in the literature of exile. Shore has noted that the poem falls somewhere between the pastoral of The Shepherd’s Calendar and the epic of The Faerie Queene.\(^{36}\) Colin Fairweather has suggested that the poem represents a conflict between “inclusive” and “exclusive” pastoral, and contends that from this conflict, “Colin emerges not as

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\(^{36}\) Shore, *Spenser and the Poetics of Pastoral*. Especially Chapter 3.
triumphant Virgilian poet, but as the victim of ideological contradiction…a representational conflict involving inclusive and exclusive pastoral.”

37 He continues, “Inclusive pastoral asserts the unity of nationhood, which absorbs Ireland into its immanent power; exclusive pastoral, by contrast, emphasizes the otherness of Ireland and its dissociation from centralized control.”

38 Put another way, the poem is structurally “in-between” one type of pastoral and another and thematically concerned with Ireland’s identity in relation to England’s. Nicholson contends that “[F]or Spenser, the pastoral tradition has more to say about the ‘unhomely’ - about alienation, exclusion, and the paradoxical virtues of exile.”

39 W.A. Oram posits that the poem is a meditation on what constitutes the poet’s home: “The central question that the poem asks is where Colin’s home lies, in the uncultured ‘waste’ of Ireland or at the English court, presided over by an idealized Cynthia.”

40 As Spenser’s title suggests the poem is ostensibly about a homecoming, but its titular character begins and ends the poem in-between lands. Though “home” in Arcadia, part of Colin remains behind in Cynthia’s court. He tells his fellows: “Since that same day in nought I take delight, / Ne feeling have in any earthly pleasure, / But in remembrance of that glorious bright, / My lifes sole bliss, my heart’s eternall treasure” (ll. 44-47). Part of him remains with Cynthia, dividing his loyalties and rendering him incapable of resting contentedly in Arcadia. McCabe believes that such sentiments represent Colin’s sense of displacement:

The returning exile adopts the persona of an alien to gain clarity of vision. The suspicion that he may actually have become something of an alien in the process


38 Ibid., 307.


is neither endorsed nor refuted.\textsuperscript{41}

The returning exile becomes an exile all over again in the act of composing the narrative. Colin’s “in-between-ness” then is simultaneously physical and mental, and represents a creative matrix from which Colin attempts to understand and articulate his experiences in the poem.

Following Nicholson, Oram, and McCabe, I propose a new reading of Colin Clout as a meditation on Spenser’s own sense of “in-between-ness” as an exile between both nations and lands. The poem examines the plight of the nationless exile, a figure at home in neither England nor Ireland, and his attempts to negotiate the condition of “not-belonging.” The poem approaches but does not attain success in this endeavor by attempting a redefinition of what it means to be an exile: not a person relegated to the margins because of an error, but a true citizen from the center of England’s political life who is marginalized nevertheless.

This definition of citizen is best demonstrated by Colin himself, who was never “home” to begin with. He, like Spenser, is a member of the New English in Ireland.\textsuperscript{42} From the poem’s beginning, Colin is doubly displaced. His encounter with the Shepherd of the Ocean occurs because he is already living on Arcadia’s margins as a result of a forsaken love, “That made me in that desart chose to dwell” (l. 563). The Shepard of the Ocean (i.e. Sir Walter Raleigh), himself an exile “debar’d,” empathizes with Colin’s “lucklesse lot: / That banisht had my selfe, like wight forelore, / Into that waste, where I was quite forgot” (ll. 180-185). The obvious parallel intended between Colin/Spenser and the Shepherd/Raleigh invites parallels between Colin’s feelings of displacement and Spenser’s own. Spenser too is not “home” when he writes his poem’s dedicatory note to Raleigh “not from his ‘home’ (as [the poem’s] title seems to demand) but from his ‘house’ in Kilcolman. Colin is ‘home’ in Ireland, Spenser merely ‘housed’

\textsuperscript{41} McCabe, “Edmund Spenser, Poet of Exile,” 90.
\textsuperscript{42} Myers, “The Green and Golden World,” 482.
Colin’s journey to Cynthia’s court, which echoes Spenser’s own, thus carries with it a dual valence. Colin travels further away from a home where he already did not belong, while Spenser traveled back to an England that was no longer fully his home either.

Colin’s displacement begins when he leaves Arcadia. Colin’s travels begin with a description of the totality of his removal:

[A]n huge great vessell to us came,
Dauncing upon the waters back to lond
As it it scorned the danger of the same;

... The same aboard us gently did receive
And without harm us farre away did beare
So farre that land our mother us did leave,
And naught but sea and heaven to us appeare,
Then hartlesse quite, and full of inward feare,
That shepherd I besought to me to tell,
Under what skie, or in what world we were
In which I saw no living people dwell. (ll. 212-214, 224-231).

A ship bears him away from everything he knows and loves, and it is the moment when “naught but sea and heaven did to us appeare” that he experiences fear. He is, quite literally, afraid at the moment of separation between lands; he is neither in the Arcadia that he knows, nor in the realm that he plans to visit. The place is isolated and bereft of people, unsettling Colin so much that he needs reassurance that the voyage has not removed him entirely from the world. Like Chaucer’s Custance, Colin finds himself alone on the sea and unsure of his fate. And like Custance, his eventual return to land symbolizes a moment of rebirth. Colin’s arrival in England is likened to a new birth when “the ship her fruitfull wombe unlade, / And put us all ashore on Cynthia’s land” (ll. 288-289). Rebirth would seem to signal a new beginning for Colin in a Paradise free from sadness, disharmony, famine, and war (ll. 312-315).

But Colin is not “home” there either, despite its seeming perfection. He retains a sense of

his own foreignness by identifying with some of the Nymphs in Cynthia’s court when he eventually reaches it. These include the fellow Anglo-Irish Galathea for whom “there is not her wont, but here with us / About the borders of our rich Coshma;” and “Neæra ours, not theirs, though there she be” (ll. 521-522, 525). The distinction between “ours” and “theirs” indicates Colin’s separateness from Cynthia’s realm, a distinction Cuddy seems intent on reminding Colin of when he interrupts the recitation of the Nymphs to remind Colin of his place as a “base shepherd” distinct from the “Angels” (ll. 618-619). The morphological similarity between “Angels” and “Angles/Angli” must be deliberate, further emphasizing Colin’s distinction from the English. At the same time, the wordplay recalls Pope Gregory I’s words to Augustine in Bede’s Historia, “Non Angli, sed angeli” [Not Angles, but angels]. Colin’s response to Cuddy’s challenge is especially telling, and supports the idea that Colin too picks up on Cuddy’s wordplay by underlining his sense of displacement:

Her name in every tree I will endosse,
That as the trees do grow, her name may grow:
And in the ground each where it will engrosse,
And fill the stones, that all men may it know.
The speaking woods and murmuring waters fall,
Her name Ile teach in knowen termes to frame:
And eke my lambs when for their dams they call,
Ile teach to call for Cynthia by name. (ll. 630-639)

His experience at the court severed, at least in part, his connection to Arcadia. Colin attempts to bring Cynthia to him by making the land hers in the colonial gesture of writing her name on the trees. As was the case in A View, the soil itself must be remade, or taught as it is here. In a similar way, Ireland too is not Spenser’s home until Elizabeth’s rule extends fully into Ireland. Writing Cynthia’s name into the trees, the stones, and the very land is a colonizing act. It transforms “here,” Arcadia, into “there,” Cynthia’s land. It is the poetic equivalent of the imperial agriculture occurring in A View.
Given this reading of *Colin Clout*, it becomes possible to see in the skein of the poem manifestations of a Spenserian mind of exile. First there are the now-familiar concerns about the conflation of sacred and secular authority discussed in Chapters Three and Four and about the exile’s privileged ability to access the Truth of the center from the margins. The former appears twice: the gods of the sea “Cynthia serve” and in her realm “Religion hath lay power to rest upon her, / Advancing virtue and suppressing vice” (ll. 260, 322-323). Both mentions are immediately followed by voiced, if subtle, concerns. At the first mention, Spenser writes, “Therat I wondred much, till wondring more / And more, at length we far off land descryde” (ll. 264-265).

“Wondred” could mean either “experienced awe” or “found need to question,” an ambiguity deepened by the line’s medial caesura, which interrupts the line’s iambic meter and forces the reader to pause, as if to consider both possible meanings. After the second mention in lines 322-323, he again follows with a caveat: “For end, all good, all grace there freely grows, / Had people grace it gratefully to use / For God his gifts there plenteously bestowes, / But gracelesse men them greatly do abuse” (ll. 325-327). The *a* rhyme links two positives – grace freely growing and plenteous gifts – supporting a connection between them. That linkage suggests a similar relationship in the *b* rhyme: something used and abused. “It” in line 325 seemingly takes “grace” as its antecedent, resulting in “grace to use grace.” If, on the other hand, “it” refers to religion’s connection with lay power, the subsequent lines become more subversive, especially if the reader is still wondering about “wondred.” The latter reading seems more likely as these same lines also establish a conflict that will arise later in the poem regarding falsehood and grace. Grace is free, and freely grows, but encounters graceless men who cannot access it.

Spenser’s mind of exile also is visible in Colin’s return to Arcadia, and the challenge *Thestylis* poses to him regarding his return. It is he who asks the obvious question:
Why Colin, since thou foundst such grace
With Cynthia and all her noble crew:
Why didst thou euer leaue that happie place,
In which such wealth might vnto thee accrew?
And back returnedst to this barrein soyle,
Where cold and care and penury do dwell:
Here to keepe sheepe, with hunger and with toyle,
Most wretched he, that is and cannot tell (ll. 652-659).

Thestylis urges a resolution to the poem’s central paradox, namely why Colin came home at all
given the joys he experienced abroad. Hoffman writes of these lines, “The source of Spenser’s
wretchedness lies in his exile from the queen and court and in his reluctance to make Ireland his
home, but these truths cannot be ‘told’ directly, and certainly not in pastoral.” She also astutely
notes that “‘wretched’ comes from the Anglo-Saxon wrecca: an exile, or one cast out.”44 Spenser
would surely have known this etymology from Chaucer and other early English authors, and
therefore its presence in the poem becomes more significant when reading it as a meditation on
Spenser’s own exile from Elizabeth’s court. It also creates another link with Chaucer’s exiled
Custance, whom he describes as a “wretch” in some form at least four times, and a term that he
reserves for Custance alone (ll. 274, 285, 918, 941). Clearly Spenser intends Colin to be read as a
type of exile caught between lands, much as Spenser himself was.

Thestylis’s inquiry into Colin’s return instigates an extended critique of that court at the
center of Colin’s world. Shore further refines the poem’s world, making “Cynthia’s court…the
golden center of a golden land.”45 It would seem then that if anyone in Colin Clout is truly home,
it should be those living in Cynthia’s realm and attending Cynthia’s court. Indeed it is the court’s
wretchedness that drives Colin back to Arcadia. Its courtiers only “happie seemd to bee” and are
“wretches” as well (ll. 667, 675). Colin the exile sees the shallowness of the center where “each

44 Hoffman, Spenser’s Pastorals, 121. See her note 5.
45 Shore, Spenser and the Poetics of Pastoral, 117.
mans worth is measured by his weed,” and where “single Truth and simple honestie / Do wander up and downe despysed of all” (ll. 711, 727-728). The mention of wretches suggests that the courtiers too are exiles in their own right, but exiles from what? Truth seems to be the answer. Truth, like Colin, is neither in the Court nor welcomed there. Both wander in-between lands “up and downe and despysed by all.”

The center of the court thus becomes, paradoxically, a place of both falsehood and grace. It represents falsehood because the courtiers are concerned only with appearances and self-promotion. Simultaneously it also represents grace because Cynthia reigns there and the court remains the place where Colin feels most blessed. Fairweather claims “Colin evokes Cynthia as a generative pastoral spirit who transfigures and pervades the rustic landscape…Colin’s Orphic powers collapse the distinction between the center and the margins of power.” The Orphic moment, in other words, represents a transformation occurring at the margin that affects the center, as well as originating from a figure at the margins that has been to the center and returned. A similar paradox occurs when the reader moves to the margins of the poem in Arcadia where a conflict arises between authenticity and error. Colin tells Thestylis that he “rather back chose to my sheep to tourne, / Whose utmost hardnesse I before had tryde, / Then having learnd repentance late, to mourne / Emongst those wretches which I there descryde” (ll. 672-675). The authenticity of the rural and pastoral Arcadia on the margins is set in clear opposition to the corrupt and corrupting urban center of Cynthia’s court. Despite this, Arcadia is incomplete because it lacks Cynthia’s court. Essentially it is the proto-protestant exile dynamic written into colonial court politics. The conflict arising between the interplay of the margins and the center thus becomes the poem’s underlying structure.

Following MacCaffery’s suggestion of a tripartite structure, I propose dividing *Colin Clout* into three major episodes defined by Colin’s movement from margins to center and back again. The first movement is actually the last one chronologically, Colin’s return to Arcadia and the point at which the pastoral begins. The second is his narration of the journey with the Shepherd of the Ocean. The third and final movement is the poem’s shift from a bucolic to an erotic mode in its closing meditation on the Court of Love. Colin affirms the presence of Love in Cynthia’s court, but laments that the Love worshipped there is corrupted by the same superficiality he observed in the courtiers. Against such superficiality, Spenser sets a neo-Platonic notion of Love worshiped by the shepherds of Arcadia.

The Court of Love corresponds to an allegory within an allegory of Queen Elizabeth’s court echoing that of Gloriana’s in *The Faerie Queene*. McCabe writes of their similarities:

> In so far as the ideal condition of Gloriana’s court had always been presented as the earthly equivalent of the New Jerusalem, and she herself as the earthly equivalent of God, estrangement from court is equivalent to estrangement from heaven, and the Neo-Platonic doctrine of souls exiled in a world of matter corresponds to that of courtiers exiled in Ireland’s ‘salvage’ wilderness. 47

Colin/Spenser is one of those courtiers attempting to return from exile both national and spiritual. Reading the final section of *Colin Clout* as an allegory of the Elizabethan court reveals one possible interpretation that upsets the notion of the exile as a figure privileged with either a special way of seeing or a special claim to national identity. The figure at the margins, Colin/Spenser, arrives at the center and “sees” the court for what it really is, an idealized place of grace and truth, but one corrupted by vapid courtiers and yes-men. They, not Colin/Spenser, are the true Exiles, figures who deserve marginalization for their failures. Spenser attempts a resolution to *Colin Clout*’s central paradox by defining who the true Exiles are. They are not, like

Spenser, those located at the margins of the empire, but those worshipers in the Court of Love who are “outlawes:” “For their desire is base, and doth not merit, / The name of love, but of disloyall lust: / Ne mongst true lovers they shall place inherit, / But as Exuls out of his court be thrust” (ll. 891-895). The moment is a declaration of national allegiance presented in an erotic poetic mode. The exiled Spenser, through the Colin-persona, speaks Truth to the power of the center to transform it. Colin/Spenser establishes himself as one of the “true lovers” in line 894 who will, in fact, receive a place in the grace of the center. The only resolution to Spenser’s displacement is a return to that grace in the center of the Elizabethan court.

Together, *A View of the State of Ireland* and *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* represent Spenser’s attempts to write himself out of his “in-between-ness,” or as Breen puts it “Writing is the exile’s means to presence; it constitutes …an affirmation of identity.” In this light Spenser’s 1592 letter, with which this chapter opened, now reads more like a declaration than a melancholy lament. The author is a stranger because he is not fully a member of either nation. Only his service to Elizabeth, bull’s-eye of his dart and heart, gives him a sense of place. The Dart is symbolic of its giver, the “Ireland man” with an English heart. Certainly *A View* and *Colin Clout* reflect Spenser’s desire for that transformation so that he might find a place where he truly felt at home.

Spenser’s attempts at resolution, though, are incomplete, both in the historical record and in Spenser’s poem. Though he died in London, Spenser never achieved his desire to become a national poet in his lifetime, and his exile to Ireland fundamentally shaped his relationship to England. It is fitting then that in *Colin Clout’s* conclusion, Colin does not return triumphant to Gloriana’s court, now restored to its true glory, nor does Arcadia become a land written over

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with Gloriana’s name. The poem’s final lines are far more ambiguous:

So, having ended, he from Ground did rise,
And after him uprose eke all the rest:
All loth to part, but that the glooming Skies
Warn’d them to draw their bleating Flocks to rest. (ll. 952-955)

Colin and his fellow shepherds, the liminal figures, can do nothing but return to their livelihoods. Like Spenser and so many of his fellow exiles, Colin must continue to wait for transformation, of either the court or Ireland, that will allow him to return home. The paradox of the poem becomes the paradox of the exile, in-between grace and error, truth and falsehood, house and home.

Spenser’s attempts to resolve the paradox of exile were also a source of his literary genius, and they worked their way into the very roots of his prose and poetry. Both texts, recalling Edward Said’s memorable definition of exile as “the perilous territory of not-belonging,” explore the social, political, and artistic power exile. Spenser serves as a convenient endpoint for the development and literary manifestations of the mind of exile heretofore defined. As the previous chapters showed, the mind of exile present in the works of the late fifteenth century primarily viewed exile as a culturally transformative experience. Custance’s “there and back again” narrative heralds cultural change while well-established cultural icons such as the plowman function as culturally marginalized figures speaking truth to power. Moving into the sixteenth century, the mind of exile appears once more in the writings of religious refugees, both Protestant and Catholic, who turn to texts as their surrogate voices capable of returning to the homeland when they cannot. Turner, Bale, Allen, and Persons all “resorte to the fountayes and rootes,” in John Ponet’s words, to reimagine England and English citizenship from positions outside the nation. Here though, at the dawn of the seventeenth century, the mind of exile once again adapts to a changing world. As with earlier texts, exile

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represents truth and a desire to return to the center or to grace. Spenser’s mind of exile then inverts and complicates this formula, while still preserving the exile’s status as a “true citizen.” This paradox and its attempts at resolution, speak to the imaginative power of the mind of exile, one neither at the margins nor at the center.

Viewed in this light, Spenser’s View and Colin Clout allow some speculative conclusions about one mind of exile in the late sixteenth century. At the dawn of England’s colonial period there was a complex rhetoric of national identity formed at the margins of England’s geopolitical borders that critiqued the center of power, codified in the polemical and imaginative literature of Edmund Spenser. This rhetoric, as I have shown, had roots reaching back to the end of the middle ages. As the rhetoric of exile developed over the course of the sixteenth century, it gained traction in polemic literature that drew inspiration from, among other things, the chronicle traditions also inherited from the middle ages. Spenser, the man behind A View and Colin Clout, was one inheritor of a polemic culture shaped by the mind of exile. That his was a mind of exile suggests that the ideals of the exiles – especially their desire to define English citizenship and to control the historical narrative – were essential to the development of the modern English nation. Spenser’s place as a proto-colonial figure, an author and member of the first English colony, also suggests that the development of his colonial narratives are due in part to his mind of exile. His was an English heart exiled to the margins of the empire, but which hoped and worked to expand those borders and eventually come to rest in his home, an exile no more. Or, perhaps more succinctly, it was from a position outside of and in-between England where Spenser attempted to reconcile his exilic experience with the rise of an English Empire that was itself in-between what it was, and what it would become.

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Chapter Six: Epilogue

A few months before John Ponet’s death in August of 1556, he wrote a letter to Heinrich Bullinger from Strasburg. Reflecting on his time there, Ponet writes:

> What is exile? A thing which, provided you have wherewithal to subsist, is painful only in imagination. I know that it is the scourge of the Lord; but with what mildness and fatherly affection he deals with me, I can readily learn even from this, that he has afforded me for my comforters Bullinger, Melanchthon, Martyr, and other most shining lights of his church.¹

A month later, and in his final letter to Bullinger, Ponet speaks of exile a second time in reference to the recent news of John Cheke’s recantation and repentance. Ponet writes prophetically that Cheke “will seal his testimony to the gospel with his blood. What will not Pharaoh attempt against Israel, especially on his return from exile?”² In his final days, exile was clearly on his mind. Like Ponet, I have asked and attempted to answer a similar question: “What is exile?” The answer cannot be adequately articulated in only a few words. When the question, however, is expanded slightly – “What effect does exile have on the earliest days of the modern world?” – I can offer several significant answers.

At the end of the middle ages, when reformation was beginning to take shape, the figures on the margins hoping to fundamentally change what it meant to be person of faith did so by recognizing the power that came from being on the margins. Lollards such as William Thorpe wrote testimonies and sermons lauding the voices in the margins as the voices of the true faithful. More significantly, liminality came to represent the place of truth and wholeness, distinct from the corrupted center. Chaucer recognized this in The Man of Law’s Tale when the “wretched” Custance emerges as the triumphant bearer of Christian faith. Thorpe testifies to the

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² Ibid., 1:117–118. Cheke was burned at the stake in September 1557 for apostasy.
rightness of his belief only after recognizing himself as possessing a mind of exile. Each of these texts are “confessions” in their own right that rely upon a cognitive understanding of exile as the shining light of faith in a corrupt world.

By the end of the sixteenth century, Protestant exiles and Catholic recusants came to embrace the mind of exile and to reflect it in their polemics. Indeed it might be possible to say that polemic was mastered in exile as it provided a means for transnational communication between exiled peoples and their estranged homelands. By professing faith and national allegiance, exilic polemic allowed exiles a means of returning home when they physically could not, as well as a means of influencing religious and political change within their homeland from afar. The experiences of exile instigated a revitalized commitment to historical narrative and the preservation of an historical past codified in print that served a religious and political purpose. Polemic chronicle in particular emerged from the exiles of the sixteenth century in order to “write” a national history consistent with their understanding of what it meant to be English and Christian. Writing a past in order to define a present allowed exiles a means of controlling their own national narratives and those of their enemies. It thus functions as a means of self-fashioning both individual and national.

In addition to these conclusions is a more speculative one. The mind of exile present in the writing of Edmund Spenser suggests that by the conclusion of the sixteenth century exile had come to signify a place both of truth and falsehood, power and silence. The paradox was not entirely new. In 1407 Thorpe’s Testimony reveals that conflicting understandings of exile were present. When Archbishop Arundel attempts to leverage his own return from exile as evidence of God’s favor, Thorpe promptly shuts him down. To control the mind of exile is, in part, to control the narratives of those who wish to claim it. In the final lines of Colin Clout, Spenser has
The stylis remind Colin that to be a wretch is doubly tragic for one “that is [a wretch] and cannot tell” (l. 659). The ambiguity of the penultimate word in that line serves well to highlight the shifting and shifty understanding of exile at the close of the sixteenth century. The wretch who “cannot tell” may be a person unable to speak, or who is uneducated in the way to express himself, or who is silenced by his distance or exclusion from the nation. Simultaneously, “cannot tell” may also mean that one is a wretch, an exile, who is in error and does not know it. In the context of the poem, these would be the yes-men and false-faced courtiers who will be thrust out of Love’s court. What is new, though, in Spenser’s View of the Present State of Ireland and Colin Clout is the deployment of rhetorics of exile and recusancy in a newly emerging narrative of colonization. Together, these rhetorics utilize historical narrative and a desire for transformation – truly reformation in both the secular and religious meanings of that word – in order to write a need and justification for the expansion of socio-political and territorial boundaries beyond the English island.

Where then does that leave the understanding of exile? Appropriately, it leaves it in-between truth and falsehood, grace and error. The center imagines the exile to be a wretch cut off and excluded from both truth and the community. From the margins though, exile becomes something much more potent. The literatures of exile, and the minds behind it, create narratives of transformation and self-identification. The mind of exile allows and encourages the composition of a new national identity. It is a means of expressing control over an uncontrollable situation. Most importantly, it is a matrix of creative possibility formed at the intersection of culture, history, and literature.

Ponet was right. Exile is “painful only in imagination.”

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