

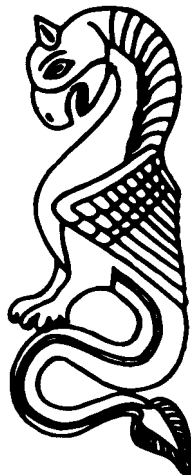
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The Art of Fiction: Poetry and Politics in Reformation England

Andrew Hadfield

I

In the *Faerie Queene*, V, ix, as Arthur and Artegall are entering the Court of Mercilla, they pass three notable figures in the ante-chambers of her castle before coming into the 'presence of that gracious Queene'.¹ In the porch stands Awe, of 'gyantlike resemblance', who is there

To keepe out gyule, and malice, and despight,
That under shew of times of fayned semblance,
Are wont in Princes courts to worke great scath and hindrance.
(V. ix. 22. 11. 7-9)

Next, they come to 'a large wyde room' in which a huge crowd of people is 'making troublous din'. Fortunately the marshall of the hall, Order, presses through the mass of bodies to confront them; on his command, their clamour ceases and he is able to guide the knights through the throng. The silenced crowd stand in amazement, never having seen such warriors before, so used are they to peace. As Arthur and Artegall approach the throne of Mercilla, they encounter a third, more sinister, presence:

There, as they ent'red at the screen, they saw
Some one, whose tongue was for his trespass vile
Nail'd to a post, adjudged so by law;
For that therewith he falsly did revile
And foul blasphemie that queen for forged guile,

Both with bold speeches which he blazed had,
And with lewd poems which he did compile;
For the bold title of a poet bad
He on himself had ta'en, and railing rhymes had sprad.

Thus there he stood, whilst high over his head
There written was the purport of his sin,
In cyphers strange, that few could rightly read,
BON FONT; but Bon, that once had written bin
Was razed out, and Mal was now put in:
So now Malfont was plainly to be read;
Either for th'evil which he did therein,
Or that he liken'd was to a welhead
Of evil words, and wicked slanders by him shed.

(V. ix. 26-27)

Having taken note, they enter the magnificent throne-room of the Queen.

How should we try to read the details of this iconic sequence, which prefaces the trial of Duessa, an episode which has usually been interpreted as a straightforward allegory of the trial of Mary Queen of Scots by commentators from the Renaissance to the present day?² Significantly enough, one of the poem's early readers, the then James VI of Scotland, was outraged by what he saw as the defamatory comments regarding his mother and demanded that their author be punished. Spenser was in grave danger of suffering the (metaphorical) fate of Mal (Bon) Font, had he survived Elizabeth's reign.³

David Norbrook has argued that Spenser was pointing an accusing finger at Elizabeth through his portrayal of Mal (Bon) Font: 'the grotesque image of censorship is too disturbing to reflect complete credit on the monarch'.⁴ Nevertheless one would do well to remember firstly that Mal (Bon) Font has supposedly blasphemed against the Queen with 'forged *guyle*'; and secondly that not only is Awe guarding the castle from 'guyle' and other dangerous fakes, but also Artegall and Arthur have just defeated and destroyed Malengin, the Protean villain often taken to be a representation of Irish rebellion, whose name is glossed as 'guyle' in the quatrain preceding the canto as a summary of its argument.⁵ There is a direct link between Malengin and Mal-Font which prevents us from reading the poet's fate as a straightforward critique of royal authoritarianism. The account of the

Irish bards in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* should also alert us to the error of assuming that Spenser could not conceive of poets as dangerous enemies of the social order and thus meriting the most brutal suppression, however much he may have seemed to envy their exalted social status:

[P]oets in their writing do labour to better the manners, and through the sweet bait of their numbers to steal into the young spirits a desire of honour and virtue, are worthy to be had in great respect, but these Irish bards are for the most part of another mind, and so far from instructing young men in moral discipline, that they themselves do more deserve to be *sharply disciplined* [my italics], for they seldom use to choose unto themselves the doing of good men for the ornaments of their poems, but whomsoever they find to be most licentious of life most bold and lawless in his doings, most dangerous and desperate in all parts of disobedience and rebellious disposition, him they set up and glorify in their rhymes, him they praise to the people, and to young men make an example to follow.⁶

II

Spenser's anxiety regarding the overlap between poetry and politics is hardly a unique problem and two recent articles have suggested that the two major works of Chaucer and Langland played significant roles in the progress of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt; *Piers Plowman* as a radical text giving the rebels their rallying cry,⁷ the *Canterbury Tales* as a 'sign of the ruling class's response to economic crisis and social unrest'.⁸ Both works had important politico-aesthetic lives reaching beyond their immediately contemporary circumstances, although, interestingly enough, post-Reformation readings tended to conflate their messages.⁹ Of course, Chaucer's reincarnation as, simultaneously, the father of *English* poetry and a proto-Protestant was by no means a random historical accident.¹⁰ Henry VIII's break with Rome demanded the production of all three inter-related histories; literature, protestantism and Englishness.¹¹ It is to the neglected but crucial period of the immediate aftermath of the Reformation that I want to turn; usually played down in, or written out of, literary histories (most famously by C. S. Lewis's notorious adjective,

'drab')¹² this was the time when the first attempts to formulate what was later to become recognisable as 'English Literature' were made. With its pre-history forgotten, 'the Great Tradition' has all too often failed to observe the common origin of a 'literariness' which supposedly describes and expresses an 'Englishness'.¹³ It was this problem, essentially that of how to aestheticize politics and politicize aesthetics,¹⁴ which demanded and received responses in the Reformation.

*The Voyacyon of Bishop Johan Bale to the Bishoprick of Ossorie in Ireland*¹⁵ has generally attracted three types of scholars; those concerned with evaluating the impact of the English Reformation on sixteenth-century Ireland,¹⁶ those seeking to locate its place in a history of autobiography¹⁷ and those attempting to reconstruct the polemical debates and impact of Reformation writers.¹⁸ So far as I am aware, no one has examined what the *Vocacyon* has to say about literature as a category of writing distinct from other kinds of writing, in the sense that Philip Sidney sought to define poetry as a discourse with its own rules and specific treatment of its subject matter.¹⁹

Yet this was a central concern of Bale's, a voluminous and virtually inexhaustible writer who had turned out numerous plays as part of Thomas Cromwell's project to foster Reformation propaganda through the re-writing of a morality play tradition in addition to the Biblical translations and polemical tracts penned by protestant humanists.²⁰ Bale's *King Johan*, 'a history play that represents the medieval king as a reforming prototype of Henry VIII'²¹ who fails to preserve his nation's independence in government and religion only through the evil intervention of the Papacy's agents, had been performed at Thomas Cranmer's household at Christmas, 1538.²² Many of Bale's other plays seem to have been designed for performance in churches,²³ presumably as replacements for the Corpus Christi plays (the feast was suppressed in 1548, although the plays continued well into Elizabethan times), and other festival performances. Bale also gained a reputation as a literary historian, cataloguing manuscripts in danger of destruction and mapping out a native literary tradition.²⁴ The first manifestation of this work, the *Illustrium Maioris Britanniae Scriptorum Summararium* appeared in 1548, coinciding with his return to England after his first period of exile; a revised, expanded edition, *Scriptorum Illustrium Maioris Brytanniae . . . Catalogus* (1557) appeared during his second exile and just before his return with Elizabeth's accession.²⁵

Bale's literary histories bear little resemblance to modern works such as those of George Sampson or Alastair Fowler;²⁶ he is more concerned with charting a

recognisable British history of writing, a native voice, to complement the history of a distinct native church established in (amongst other writings)²⁷ his influential protestant saints' lives of Anne Askew, Sir John Oldcastle and others.²⁸ L. P. Fairfield has argued that the *Vocacyon* is related to this genre of protestant saints' lives, using autobiographical material to transform the author into an analogous figure and make his life experience an exemplum.²⁹ His self-identification with St Paul suggests that he read his text as a modern 'truth' of Scriptural authority:

Sain: Paul boasted much of his persecutions, and described them at large; concluding thus in the ende, 'Very gladly (saith he) will I rejoyce of my weaknesse, that the strengthe of Christe maye dwell in me. Therefore have I dilectation in infirmitees, in rebukes, in nedes, in persecution, and anguyshe, for Christe's sake'. 2. Cor. 12. If I have lykewyse felte a great manye of the same afflictions, as I have done in dede; maye not I also with him rejoyce in them? Maye I not be glad, that I am, in sorowes for the Gospell, lyke fashioned to him, and not pranked up in pompe and pleasures, lyke the wanton babes of this worlde?

(p. 439)

Having established his subject position as an authentic recorder and interpreter, Bale proceeds to describe his brief but eventful stay in Ireland. He recalls how Edward VI asked him to become Bishop of Ossory in August, 1552, and despite grave doubts he agreed and arrived in Waterford in January, 1553. He recounts his horror at the 'abominable ydolatres maintained by the epicurish priests in the city' who are supposedly protestant, but to Bale's eyes, still catholic. Moving on to Dublin, he vociferously demanded the use of Edward's Second Prayer Book, arguing that '[i]f Englande and Irelande be undre one kinge, they are both bounde to the obedience of one lawe undre him' (p. 447).³⁰ This was a significant issue in Tudor Ireland as the Second Prayer Book, unlike the first, replaced the Latin syntax of the Mass with an English idiom and thus aroused particular hostility from the Irish.³¹ Indeed, throughout the tract Bale fulminates against 'Latin momblings' and 'howlinge and jabberinge in a foren language' at God's service, conveniently ignoring the fact that although nominally subjects of the English king, the Irish had their own vernacular and the discarding of the Latin mass signalled a new obscurity for them rather than enlightenment from the dark ages. Bale's aggressive English protestantism aroused

predictable hostility in Kilkenny, especially when he tried to force the priests to take wives (p. 448). When Edward died and the news of Mary's accession reached the diocese, he saw the writing on the wall and retired to his country retreat, but insisted on sending his servants out to cut hay on September 8, Our Lady's Nativity, which was nearly fatal for him and was for the five servants. With catholic rites firmly established in the Cathedral, he decided that it was time to leave; finding no support in Dublin, he had the misfortune to be kidnapped en route to Scotland, having been mistaken for a rich Frenchman by a Flemish pirate. A storm drove them all to St Ives (where Bale found that protestantism had made as little headway as in Ireland); the captain and crew threatened to leave him to face the Marian authorities in Dover, but Bale persuaded them to transport him to the continent for the sum of fifty pounds, which friends in exile paid. He then made his way from Flanders to the exiled protestant community at Wesel. In December, 1553, the *Vocacyon* was published there with the provocatively satirical colophon, 'Imprinted in Rome before the Castle of S. Angell, at the signe of S. Peter'.³²

Bale ends the *Vocacyon* with a warning to the Church of England, which given the confused notion of national identity in the text may include the Church of Ireland as part of the English king's dominions:³³

Thou woldest fain be like the malignant Church of the Papistes, prosperouse and welthe in worldly affaires, and therwith sumwhat gloriouse; but thy eternal Father in Heaven will not so have the, but by persecutions transfourmeth the into the *very similitude* [my italics] of his derely beloved Sonne, to whome he hath espoused the, to reign with him at the lattre in eternal glorie. (p. 463)

Just as the modern saint is a repetition of the Biblical one, so is the true Church a simulacrum of God's Heaven. Bale is working with a simple and clear notion of 'truth', an allegorical way of reading the world which refuses to face the possibility that surface and significance may not coincide neatly. For example, in *The Image of Both Churches* his commentary on the *Revelation* 11.5:

If any man shall hurt them [i.e., God's witnesses], fire shall proceed out of their mouths and consume their enemies. And if any man will hurt them, this wise he must be killed.³⁴

is interpreted as an allegory of false debate; 'the hurt' being the 'subtle reasons and deceitful arguments' of the church fathers, destroyed by 'the eternal word of the Lord that they shall declare (which is the consuming fire) [which] shall utterly destroy them'.³⁵ In effect such hermeneutics spirits figurative language away and the distinction between a trope and the 'truth' it signifies is rather neatly elided – does 'the Word' destroy via its own logic or 'literally' as a fire sent from God? Once God's voice has been identified, falsehood, the parodic image of 'truth', is easy to detect. The individual can be certain of God's desires through the correct reading of his word in the Bible, hence the importance of exemplary saints' lives as tales of true readers.

Obviously, this belief that individual subject, the world and the language that mediates between the two, are in perfect harmony, leads to certain problems: what happens when voices conflict; where can a consistent 'true' message be discovered then; how should the godly individual act in such circumstances? In the *Vocacyon*, Bale has to confront the classic dilemma of sixteenth century protestantism. He had consistently argued that government on earth should be divided into the two swords of secular and spiritual authority, the one remaining rigidly separate from the other.³⁶ Unfortunately he was then faced with a monarch, Mary, whom he believed to be ungodly because she insisted on interfering in both public spheres.³⁷ Indeed, given his premisses, this was the only way Bale could have regarded a Catholic sovereign.³⁸ In the *Vocacyon* he exhorts the Irish to obey the monarch as the fundamental duty of the good citizen;³⁹ failure to have done so himself might have forced Bale to face up to an ethical and interpretative crisis. Yet to take no action was to neglect one's 'vocacyon' 'to preach the . . . Gospell to the Irish heathens' (p. 439). Bale solves his dilemma by having his plays performed in the market square at Kilkenny, just as he had produced them up and down England on Cromwell's instructions:⁴⁰

On the xx. daye of August, was the Ladye Marye with us at Kylkennye proclaimed queene of Englande, Fraunce, and Irelande, with the greatest solempnyte, that there coulde be devysed, of processions, musters, and disguisings⁴¹ . . . I toke Christ's testament in my hande, and went to the Market Crosse; the people in great nomber followinge. There toke I the xiii. chap. of S. Paule to the Romanes, declaringe to them brevely what the authoritie was of wordly powers and magistrates, what

reverence and obedience were due to the same. . . The yonge men in the forenone, played a tragedye of 'God's Promyses' in the olde lawe, at the Market Crosse, with organe, plainings, and songes very aptely. In the afternone agayne they played a commedie of 'Sanct Johan Baptiste's Preachings', of Christ's baptisyng, and of his temptation in the wildernesse; to the small contentacion of the prestes and other papistes there. (p. 450)

Bale, his tenure as Bishop about to end, felt able to preach and put his art on display as parting gestures. Significantly, both acts point in opposite directions: his sermon demanded loyalty to the new Queen, but his plays told them that her rule was godless. The trilogy referred to is completed by the comedy *The Temptation of our Lord*, in which the final speech of the defeated Satan Tentatour marks his self-identification with the Catholic Church, one of the principal themes of Bale's writings. Satan warns Christ:

Well than it helpeth not to tarry here any longer;
Advantage to have I se I must go farther.
So longe as thou lyvest I am lyke to have no profyght;
If all come to passe I maye syt as moch in your lyght.
If ye preach Gods worde as me thynke ye do intende,
Ere foure years be past I shall yow to your father sende.
If Pharysees and Scribes can do any thyng therto,
False prestes and byshoppes with my other servauntes mo,
Though I have hynderaunce it wyll be but for a season.
I dought not thine owne hereafter wyll worke some treason;
Thy vycar at Rome I thynke wyll be my frynde.
I defye the, therfor, and take thy wordes but as wynde.
He shall me worshypp and have the worle to rewarde;
That thou here forsakest he wyll most hyghlye regarde.
Gods worde wyll he treade underneath hys fote for ever,
And the hartes of men from the truth therof dyssever.
Thy fayth wyll he hate and slee thy flocke in conclusyon.
All thys wyll I worke to do the utter confusyon.⁴²

Bale has made it clear that he can sanction such a performance precisely

because, unlike Mal (Bon) Font's unheard subversive utterance, his drama belongs to the spiritual and not the secular or political realm; hence the seemingly contradictory emphasis of the sermon. Art, for Bale, is clearly acceptable when it reproduces the breath of God and does not 'degenerate' into the duplicity of rhetoric or literariness. Metaphors, representation rather than presentation, are the province of the debased, fallen language of the false, imitative, parasitic church of the world.⁴³ The voice in Bale's texts announces a double aporia: that between the spiritual and the political, and that between the literary and the literal. There is no distinct sphere for art or poetry; it cannot avoid affirmation and refuse to tell lies⁴⁴ because it must tell the truth or else become political and false. For Bale, poetry aspires to be a sermon or a biblical text.

III

A Mirror for Magistrates, although often cited as if it were no more than an extended homily on obedience,⁴⁵ betrays a similar sense of ideological confusion, of unease regarding its own status. In at least two ways this predicament is hardly surprising because it is not clear whether the *Mirror* is a literary or political work, or whether the same answer would have been given at every stage of its complex textual history. Any attempt to look at these problems must involve re-reading the history of the production and consumption of the text.

According to Lily Campbell,⁴⁶ the originator of the plan for the *Mirror* was the printer, John Wayland, who was keen to publish Lydgate's *The Fall of Princes* in 1555, a 'series of narrative tragedies in verse, tragedies in each of which the reason for the prince's fall is explained, some having fallen for disobedience to God, some for avarice, some for sloth . . . the vagaries of fortune are always directly related to the sins for which the princes fell'.⁴⁷ He approached William Baldwin, a prominent protestant man of letters at the court of Edward VI and described by John Bale as the English Cato,⁴⁸ hoping that a continuation might be added, 'concernynge the chefe Prynces of thys Iland, penned by the best clearkes in such kind matters that be thys day lyving'.⁴⁹ Baldwin stressed the need for others to be involved and later claimed that seven worked on the original project,⁵⁰ although only the names of Baldwin and George Ferrars,⁵¹ another prominent Edwardian Protestant, who, like Baldwin, found a place at Mary's court, 'are identified in the 1559 text'.⁵² The first edition, which used material based on the chronicles of Thomas More, Fabyan and Halle,⁵³

was suppressed when only partly printed with Lydgate's poem in 1555, almost certainly owing to an edict which banned seditious books, but which mentioned only 'the boke commonly called Halles Chronicle'.⁵⁴ When Elizabeth came to the throne an edition was licensed through the Stationers' Register in July 1558⁵⁵ and printed in 1559, but it contained only part of the original text. A second edition appeared in 1563. Added to the text was a second part dating from the reign of Mary, which probably contained passages from the suppressed edition. The whole was revised in 1571. A third part, containing two new tragedies, one promised since 1559, appeared in 1578, whilst the edition of 1587 added material to the first part. Meanwhile two supplementary works had appeared; one by John Higgens, *The first part of the Mirror for Magistrates*, which made use of the matter of Britain derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth, Grafton, Stowe and others, was printed in 1574; the other by Thomas Blenerhasset, and confusingly titled *The second part of the Mirror for Magistrates*, was printed in 1578, and contained twelve tragedies of conspicuously British/English subjects, from the invasion of Caesar to the Norman Conquest. The 1587 edition of the *Mirror* included Higgens' work (but not Blenerhasset's) in an attempt to fix the acceptable canon of tales in such a heterogeneous and manifestly popular text. An edition printed in 1610 put all the material together for the first time.⁵⁶

Lawrence Green has argued that as the *Mirror* grew the didactic function of its early editions became less prominent, so that the tragedies came to seem 'a celebration of admirable stances which are to be appreciated for their own sakes and not for any consequences they might have'.⁵⁷ If so, this is not in keeping with the stern moral message of the 1559 edition:

[W]here the ambitious seeke no office, there is no doubt, offices are fully ministered: and where offices are duly ministered, it can not be chosen, but the people are good, wherof must nedes folow a good common weale. For if the officers be good, the people can not be yll. Thus the goodnes or badnes of any realme lyeth in the goodnes or badnes of the rulers. And therefore not without great cause do the holy Apostels so earnestly charge us pray for the magistrates: For in dede the welth and quiet of everye common weale, the disorder also and miseries of the same, cum specially through them.

(*A Mirror for Magistrates*, p. 64, ll. 19-27)

Baldwin's dedication stresses that political offices are 'not gaynful spoiles for the gredy to hunt for, but payneful toyles for the heedye to be charged with' (p. 63). The tragedies, all addressed to Baldwin, but discussed by the group of writers in the prose links, aspire to give a genuine lesson. Thus the opening tragedy represents the ghost of Robert Tresilian,⁵⁸ chief justice of England in Richard II's reign, telling the story of the growing corruption under the King and his intimate councillors. He describes how the law was used like wax to pillage the people (p. 77, ll. 85ff.) until parliament insisted that the King's transgressing of the limits of the law be halted and the main offenders, Tresilian among them, hanged. The speaker rails against the 'fyne of falsehood, the stypende of corruption' (p. 79, l. 120) and urges future councillors to tread 'the paths of equitie':

If sum in latter dayes, had called unto mynde
The fatall fall of us fro wrestyng of the ryght,
The statutes of this lande they should not haue defynde
So wyfully and wytingly agaynst the sentence quyte:
But though they scaped paine, the falte was nothing lyght:
Let them that cum hereafter both that and this compare,
And wayling well the ende, they wyull I trust beware.

(p. 80, ll. 141-47)

The prose link simply notes that the tragedy 'semed not unfytt for the persons touched in the same' (p. 81). Two points can be made. Firstly, the moral and political focus of the work is announced and its specific target, the would-be magistrate, unequivocally identified. Secondly, in concentrating on material from the reign of the deposed Richard II,⁵⁹ in insisting that government makes the people what they are, and in establishing a fictional universe which vindicates the natural rights of subjects via their means of political representation against the extra-legal designs of their sovereign,⁶⁰ it is easy to see why Mary's censors might not have been acting merely out of paranoia. It was, after all, Shakespeare's *Richard II* that Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, had performed for him as a preface to his rebellion in 1600.⁶¹

Other tragedies in the 1559 edition tell related but not identical tales. The two Roger Mortimers⁶² advise magistrates not to trust in Fortune because 'welth and lyfe are doubtfull to endure' (p. 89, l. 146); the innocent Thomas of Woodstock, Duke

of Gloucester,⁶³ warns that Fortune may seem unstable but God will strike down the unjust prince:

For blood axeth blood as guerdon dewe,
 And vengeaunce for vengeaunce is iust rewarde,
 O ryghteous God thy iudgements are true,
 For looke what measure we other awarde,
 The same for us agayne is preparde:
 Take heed ye princes by examples past,
 Blood will haue blood, eyther fyrst or last.

(p. 99, ll. 197-203)

Indeed as the *Mirror's* narrative progresses, so its terms become more complex and the discussion in the prose-links more sophisticated. Fortune gives way to Providence as a governing principle for the meta-narrators.⁶⁴ The text also keeps up its antagonistic political stance; despite the inclusion of the narratives of rebels such as Jack Cade, one of 'fortune's whelps' (p. 170, l. 19) and Owen Glendower, one of 'fortune's darlings' (p. 119, l. 17), the conclusion of the tragedy of John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester,⁶⁵ proclaims:

Warne all men, wisely to beware,
 What offices they enterprise to beare:
 The hiest alway most maligned are,
 Of peoples grudge, and princes hate in feare.
 For princes faultes his faultors all men teare.
 Which to auoyde, let none such office take,
 Save he that can for right his prince forsake.

(p. 202, ll. 134-40)

Such a clear focus has disappeared in the additions made in 1587. There Cardinal Wolsey concludes his narrative in a voice closer to Spenser's *Mutabilitie* than that of an ethical constitutionalist:

[T]he best is wee are gone,
 And worst of all, when wee our tales haue tolde,
 Our open plagues, will warning bee to none,

Men are by hap, and courage made so bolde:
They thinke all is, theyr owne, they haue in holde.
Well, let them say, and thinke what they please,
This weltring world, both flowes and ebs like seas.

(p. 511, ll. 484-90)

The additions made by Higgins and Blenerhasset (in the 1570s), whilst containing pious exhortations to readers to obey their rulers and shun the false promises of Fortune, seem to be based more on a desire to re-work British and English material to form a chronological account of the nation's origins rather than provide an advice book as such. For example, Higgins has Humber, the king of the Huns, who drowned in the river where he left his name (*Parts added*, p. 72, l. 10), tell the reader:

If thou be *forrayne* [my italics] bide within thy soyle:
That God hath giuen to thee and thine to holde,
If thou oppression meane beware the foyle:
Beare not thy selfe, of thee or thine to bolde:
Or of the feates thy elders did of olde,
For God is iust, iniustice will not thriue:
He plagues the prowde, preserves the good aliue.

(p. 76, ll. 113-19)

The warning is no longer to would-be governors, but to princes, and by implication to any of their subjects. The question of conduct, how the individual governs, has been replaced by the 'imagined community'⁶⁶ of the nation which absorbs its subjects into the metonymic figure of the sovereign who now represents (stands for) them. Humber's tale is sandwiched between the tragedy of Albanact, which tells how Brutus, his father, founded Britain as a new Troy, and his own death at the hands of the Hunnish invaders; and that of Locrinus, Brutus's eldest son, who defeated the Huns but fell for Humber's daughter, Elstride, consequently splitting his kingdom when he banished his first wife, Gwendoline, at Elstride's insistence. Albanact's tragedy warns 'worthy warriors' (p. 70, l. 596) that Fortune is not to be trusted, whilst that of Locrinus indicates that God will punish those who transgress the moral law. The dialogic⁶⁷ format of the early editions and the deliberate non-identification of governors and governed which allowed critical discussion,

pluralistic interpretation and the adoption of oppositional stances, has given way to an unproblematic, more crudely ideological series of narratives, ironically, just as the text becomes more cornucopian⁶⁸ with its juxtaposition of such diverse narrative strategies. The implied subject position of the reader is as unstable as the text.

This very problem of reading and writing the text is, in fact, discussed in the tragedy of the poet Collingborne, added to the *Mirror* in the second edition of 1563 and possibly a survivor of the suppressed edition.⁶⁹ This tale follows the tragedy of Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham,⁷⁰ approved by all the (fictionalised) contributors, but which leads to a lively discussion. One speaker (unnamed) objects to the description of princes in hell because most would have gone to heaven and, anyway, 'it sauuerth so much of Purgatory, whiche the papistes have digged thereout, that the ignorant may be deceyved'. Baldwin replies that what is meant is not hell, but the grave where the dead await resurrection: a usage he defends by claiming that many learned Christian writers follow such a convention. However, a third speaker argues that what is at stake is the very nature of fictional representation itself:

Tush (quoth an other) what stand we here upon? it is a Poesie
and no diuinitye, and it is lawfull for poetes to fayne what they
lyst, so it be appertinent to the matter: And therefore let it passe
euen in such sort as you have read it. (p. 346, ll. 14-17)

Baldwin agrees (though one suspects that John Bale would not have), but points out that artists have not always had the freedom they should have had:

21: [W]here as you say a poet may faine what he list: In deede my
thinke it should bee so, and ought to be well taken of the
hearers: but it hath not at al times been so allowed (ll. 17-20)

One notes that he neglects to include the present.

Speaker three assents, then refers to the story of the poet, Collingborne, 'crudely put to death for makyng of a ryme', which conveniently comes after the life of Buckingham in the reign of Richard III. Baldwin tells his audience that they must imagine Collingborne before them, 'a meruaylous wel faouered man' who holds in his hand 'his own hart, newly ripped out of his brest, and smoaking forth the lively spirit', beckoning to and fro to them, thus hoping that they will be persuaded to

avoid his fate. Like Astrophel, and Dante in the *Vita Nuova*, Collingborne speaks from the heart.⁷¹

He tells his listeners to beware of tyrants who will act to end the ancient 'Muses freedom'. Poets can no longer be 'rough in ryme' as Juvenal was, but will either be put in jail like Jeremiah (Bale might well have appreciated this comparison and the implied role of the poet), or made into flatterers of Caesar's faults like Martial. Imitating a tyrant's reasoning, Collingborne personifies them as understanding the wheel of Fortune and its danger but despising those who refuse to play their game, 'we count him but a lowte/ That stickes to mount, and basely like a beast/ Lyves temperately for feare of blockam feast' (p. 348, ll. 27-29). Tyrants want to be seen as gods and hate those who threaten their lofty position, such as poets. Strangely enough, according to Collingborne, both poets and tyrants agree ('We knowe our faultes as well as any other', admits or boasts the tyrants' spokesman in Collingborne's text); but tyrants merely want to interpret the world, poets want to change it. However, this task is futile warns the ghost:

Ceas therefore Baldwyn, ceas I the exhort,
Withdrawe thy pen, for nothing shalt thou gayne
Save hate, with loss of paper, ynke and payne . . .

Thy entent I knowe is godly, playne, and good,
To warne the wyse, to frayne the fond fro yll:
But wycked worldelinges are so wytles wood,
That to the wurst they all thinges construe styl.
(ll. 52-60)

The world is so corrupt that people will pervert the intended message, either because they are poor readers or wilfully bad ones. Poets' efforts are thus doomed.

Collingborne now recites the lines for which he was put to death:

The Cat, the Rat, and Lovel the Dog,
Do rule all England, under a Hog.
(ll. 69-70)

The meaning, as the author explains, was no 'dark conceit', but 'playne and true': Cat stood for Catesby, Rat for Ratcliffe, and Lovel 'barkt and bit whom Rychard

would' (hence Dog), a word which rhymed well with Hog, signifying Richard whose symbol was a boar.⁷² Unfortunately, this witty truism was not appreciated, and he was put to death with a barbarity which exceeded the usual fate of traitors.⁷³

The moral Collingborne draws from his bitter experience is that poets should stay aloof from politics and 'meddle not with *Magistrates* [my italics] affayres,/ But praye to God to mende them if it nede' (ll. 135-36). The message could hardly have been more carefully chosen as the opposite of the premisses on which the *Mirror* was founded. A poet must be like Pegasus, flying upwards towards 'the sprynges of truth most pure'. Death has made Collingborne something of a Neoplatonist;⁷⁴ but this adoption of a mystical concept of truth is as much because there is no suitable audience for an intersubjective, political communication to function successfully, 'For tyl affections from the fond be dryven,/ In vayne is truth tolde, or good counsayle geuen' (ll. 174-75). Like Raphael Hythlodæus, he despairs of the 'public sphere', preferring to be a voice in the wilderness because no one is fit to hear his message.⁷⁵ He appeals to authorial omniscience as a principal for determining meaning, so that such confusion can be avoided, 'The authors meanyng should of ryght be heard,/ He knoweth best to what ende he endyteth:/ Wordes sometyme beare more than the hart behiteth' (ll. 212-15), and further suggests that just laws should merely require a slanderer or heretic to recant what has been said. When Catesby (the Cat) objects that words are public and have a potential significance way beyond the limits of an individual's intention in uttering them ('rayling words be treason' and traitors harm the power of the prince), the poet now claims that his verse was just a 'foolyshe ryme' which meant no harm to anybody. He alleges that he stated no more than a banal series of 'true' metaphorical correspondences. It was the guilt of the readers which provided the interpretation of treason and had him put to death. He concludes by exhorting Baldwin 'not to passe the bankes of Helicon' but to save his freedom by remaining in the streams, presumably rigorously avoiding anything political.

This tragedy asks central and disturbing questions both about the relationship between poetry and politics and about the nature of interpretation. Collingborne's rhetorical shifts in argument, first asserting that poets should have the freedom to say what they want, then denying that his verse was political in any way but merely a statement of fact, avoids the problem of defining what poets can and can not say. In a similar fashion he straddles the possibilities of interpretation, as to whether meaning is a product of the author's intention or the reader's response⁷⁶ because although he states at one point (see above, p. 141) that what he says was 'playne

and true', he later alleges that he used the metaphors, 'Cat, Rat, the halfe names of the rest,/ To *hide* [my italics] the sense which they so wrongly wrest' (ll. 258-59). Who has hidden the wrongfully wrested sense if not the poet? Why say metaphors hide something if, as Collingborne claims elsewhere, they do not? Is he not here appealing to a notion of allegory as unequivocal as that of John Bale, where hermeneutic unravelling depends on an agreed common-sense of correspondences; judging that his interpretation of his words is right, whilst that of his executors is wrong? If so, why say 'hide' and refer to a depth below the text? Or is it that, as the authors of the *Mirror* well knew, being protestants who had survived at Mary's court, interpretation was a contentious and dangerous business?

In the colloquy addressed to the reader that follows, all speakers agree on two things: firstly, that Collingborne should not have been executed, and secondly, that the ancient freedoms of poets should be restored. Magistrates are exhorted to grant these liberties after hearing this poem:

Gods blessing on his heart that made thys (sayd one) specially
for reuiuig our auncient liberties. And I pray god it may take
suche place with the Magistrates, that they maye retifie our olde
freedome, Amen (quod another) For that shalbe a meane bothe
to staye and upholde them selues from fallyng: and also to
preserve many kinde, true, zealous, and well meaning mindes
from slaughter and infamie (p. 359, ll. 1-7)

They certainly hope that the tale of Collingborne affects the public sphere. The question as to what may be considered treasonable has not been addressed (hardly surprisingly), but the message, as I interpret it, is that Collingborne must be wrong to try to persuade poets to avoid considerations of politics, otherwise why write the *Mirror*? The sub-text is a demand for the freedom from political control that Collingborne's ghost has condemned as naive; the implication is that if such discussions are suspended by Elizabeth, as they were by Mary, then the restored protestant dynasty may share the nemesis of Richard III whose tragedy follows Collingborne's. His fate, according to the colloquy linking the two (and thus, in advance of the tale), was caused by his refusal to listen to his subjects: 'Vox populi, vox dei, in this case is not so famous a proverbe as true: The experyence of all times doth approve it' (p. 359, ll. 14-15). Counsel, such as that provided by the *Mirror*, is vital for good government. Poetry has to be allowed to be political if it needs to

be, although what is political and what is treasonable (and who decides) is another matter. The hapless voice of Collingborne's ghost, arguing for an esoteric poetics,⁷⁷ must give way to an interactive critical medium, free to fabricate fictions which allow for diverse (albeit limited) interpretative possibilities.⁷⁸

IV

An example of the sort of poetry that the authors of the *Mirror* may have hoped to promote, is Wilfrid Holme of Huntington's *The Fall and Evill Successe of Rebellion*.⁷⁹ The poem enjoyed (at least) two lives; the first, when it was written, as a moralisation of the lessons of the failure of the Pilgrimage of Grace, making it a verse counterpart to the prose tracts on the rebellion by Henrician propagandists such as Thomas Starkey and Richard Morison.⁸⁰ The propaganda war during the insurrection was fought between the sermons and exhortations of the government and the poetry and ballads of the Pilgrims.⁸¹ Holme's poem is a rare, apparently government-sponsored metrical piece, possibly designed to contribute to the fulfilment of Cromwell's desire to establish a protestant literature (see below, note 20). The work's second life occurred when it was printed (for the first time) in 1572-73, very probably as a response to the Northern Rebellion of 1569-70 – ⁸² Holme was a Yorkshireman and parts of the poem were written in the dialect of his native county. Thus it both pre- and post-dates the *Mirror*. Holme's poem comes from the same protestant humanist milieu which informed the younger writers of the *Mirror* and yet might very well owe its printing to the success of the latter work.⁸³ Like the *Mirror*, it was caught up in a complex interpretative and functional history; its relationship with its readers, both implied and actual, also fluid.

The poem has excited disappointingly little comment⁸⁴ although, I would argue, it asks questions about its own status as literature that are every bit as interesting as those raised by the *Vocacyon* or the *Mirror*. To summarize: the narrator, Holme himself, falls asleep and meets a 'dolorous princess',⁸⁵ Anglia, who orders the poet to tell her about sedition. Holme obliges with a wealth of biblical and Roman examples and a brief survey of English medieval history,⁸⁶ before coming to the recent 'commotion', the Pilgrimage of Grace. Anglia, by now furious, demands an explanation of the rebellion and why so many 'gentlemen' were persuaded to join in. Holme alleges that some were compelled by the commons, but that many were seduced by the Pope's words. The major part of the work is a

discussion of the Pilgrims' five articles and the king's replies, asserting the ultimate futility of the demands, the power of the king to punish transgressors, as well as his dutiful competence in uniting the church under the umbrella of his sovereignty. The poem finishes with Holme satisfying Anglia's fears about the outcome of the insurrection (including Sir John Bigod's later, rather desperate, action) and emphatically denying the rebels' claims that Henry could be equated with Merlin's prophecy of the Moldwarp, the evil king, cursed by God, who would be defeated by the forces of good inaugurating a better age.⁸⁷

Holme, like Bale and the authors of the later additions to the *Mirror*, makes extensive use of the 'Matter of Britain' to situate the reader within a national 'interpretative community' – ⁸⁸ the poet's interlocutor is, after all, a figure named Anglia. This presupposes an independence from any authority other than the monarch's as the source of political legitimization for the poem. The king is a metonymy of the land; just as crown serves to stand for king, the king stands for his subjects and a trope authorizes the literary artefact, the place where such rhetorical practices can be performed. Anglia is able to hear her story secure in the knowledge that history is a straightforward battle between the godly obedient and the godless rebels led on by the false sedition of Rome. But this is not to suggest that the poet has no room for manoeuvre. William Haller has argued that the Marian protestants, returning from exile in France, Germany and Switzerland, sought to write both a figure of the queen and a narrative within which she was to be represented in order to facilitate the prophetic history they desired:

And yet that providence should be left to shape its ends as it would, or the new queen her politics, was the last thing to occur to the returning exiles and their partisans. Believing that they had everything to lose if she should fail them, they undertook at once to impose upon her, her government and the public their conception of the role which the Lord expected her to play. They announced at once that a great new age was about to begin for the Church and the nation, and that Elizabeth was the appointed agent for bringing it about. Thus the notion of a great climactic Elizabethan age, though as yet not fully designated, may be said to have sprung fully blown from the apocalyptic imaginings with which the Marian exiles kept up their courage during the years of their discontent.⁸⁹

Or, to make the point in more overtly literary theoretical terms, 'representing the queen in a text, ineluctably reconstitutes the queen as a textual product'.⁹⁰

Much of Holme's narrative is a straightforward dramatisation of Henry's response to the Pilgrims' five articles. These demanded firstly that the Catholic Church be fully restored with its independence from the monarch left intact, secondly that unpopular laws such as the Statute of Uses be repealed,⁹¹ thirdly that the Kings' Council be purged of 'villein blood' and replaced with traditional nobles, and lastly, those that blamed for the protestant onslaught, Cromwell and Richard Rich, be banished as heretics.⁹² Henry's replies had been printed and circulated throughout the rebellious areas, Lincolnshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire, and often what Holme writes is simply a transference of these from one medium to another, so that the verses can be lined up against the original statements.⁹³

But there is a point in the story where narrative strategies seem to be laid bare and illusionistic pretence turns against itself. Anglia, chiding Holme for being over-detailed in providing an exhaustive list of the principal rebels, loses her temper and demands he obey the rules of her discourse:

Then with an ardent fury quod Anglia and frowned,
Holme it is but *fiction* [my italics] I say thou dost devise,
Shewdest thou not me that gentlemen and men that were,
fled to castles & fortresses, what made them then to rise?

(fol. 7)

Anglia, another prosopopeia of England,⁹⁴ orders that a literature (fiction) be written to represent her, tell her story more truthfully than a mere chronicle. Fictions, as many modern students of nationalism have noted,⁹⁵ are often 'real', something the fictionalised Anglia recognises. Without fictions there can be no sense of belonging, no 'imagined community' within which to live and it is this acknowledgement of the doubleness of fictional status, as both anterior and posterior to an 'ordinary' language, which makes *The Fall and Evil Success of Rebellion* such a problematic work – though whether this revelation was apparent to Holme or any of his early readers is another question. Without fictions, 'facts' can mean nothing.

All three texts discussed betray an anxiety about their status roughly similar to the dilemma posed by Mal (Bon) Font. Although the works by Bale and Holme try to justify virtually identical narratives of history and pedagogical virtues of literature, they do so by adopting diametrically opposed stances and strategies of argument. Bale attempts to efface the difference between the literal and the figurative, lumping literature and Scripture together, whereas Holme perhaps suggests that nothing can be literal if it is not figurative in some way and no reality can be without its fictions. The authors of the *Mirror*, more worried by a potential absolutism if meaning is held together by the monarch, demanded that literature should be a form for political criticism, free from interference. This suggests that what literature was and what it was supposed to do was by no means clear after the profound upheavals of the Reformation. There was now no other category than a national one within which to define an identity.⁹⁶ Those who saw the need to write an English literature and establish a vernacular culture recognised that such a task involved renegotiating the relationship with the political authority under which this writing was to exist. How was literature to write the nation?⁹⁷ In whose name and to whom should it speak? English literature, one of the sixteenth century's most enduring inventions, was to be the site of a complex, confusing and often violent struggle.⁹⁸

NOTES

¹ *The Faerie Queene*, ed., A. C. Hamilton (London, 1980, reprint of 1977 edition), V. ix. 27, 1.2. All subsequent references derive from this edition. This paper was written with the help of a British Academy Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship in the Humanities and Social Sciences. An earlier version was given as a paper at a staff seminar in the School of English, University of Leeds; I am grateful to those who attended for their useful critical comments. I also wish to thank Professor John Barnard and Dr Andrew Wawn for commenting helpfully on an earlier draft.

² See [anon], 'MS Notes to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*', *Notes and Queries*, 202 (1957), 509-15; D. A. Northrop, 'Spenser's Defence of Elizabeth', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 38 (1969), 277-94; Graham Hough, *A Preface to 'The Faerie Queene'* (London, 1968, rpt. of 1962 edition); M. O'Connell, *Mirror and Veil: the historical dimension of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1977), pp. 140-42.

³ See, *The Works of Edmund Spenser, A Variorum Edition*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw et al., 10 vols (Baltimore, 1966, reprint of 1933 edition), V, 244; entry on James I of England, *Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed., A. C. Hamilton (Toronto, 1990), p. 409. The identification of Duessa as Mary, Queen of Scots was repeated by Ben Jonson; see, 'Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden', in Ian Donaldson, ed., *Ben Jonson* (Oxford, 1986), 595-611, at 599. On censorship under the Tudors, see D. M. Loades, 'The theory and practice of censorship in sixteenth century England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 24 (1974), 141-57; R. A. McCabe, 'Elizabethan satire and the Bishops' ban of 1599', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 11 (1981), 188-93. See also the fate of the puritan, John Stubbs, whose right hand was severed for criticising the projected Alençon marriage, as told in J. E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1934), pp. 241-43. Spenser too, may have been forced to go to Ireland after criticisms he made of Lord Burghley's stance on the marriage plans in 'Mother Hubbard's Tale'; Muriel Bradbrook, "'No room at the top": Spenser's pursuit of fame', *The Artist and Society in Shakespeare's England: the collected papers of Muriel Bradbrook*, 4 vols (Brighton, 1982), I, 19-36.

⁴ David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London, 1984), p. 133. See also Simon Shepherd, *Spenser* (London, 1989), p. 50.

⁵ Arthur and Artegall catch Guyle,
whom Talus doth dismay,
They to Mercilles pallace come,
and see her rich array.

On Malengin, see Jane Apteckar, *Icons of Justice: iconography and thematic imagery in Book V of 'The Faerie Queene'* (New York, 1969), Ch. 10; T. K. Dunseath, *Spenser's Allegory of Justice in Book V of 'The Faerie Queene'* (Princeton, 1968), Ch. 4; A. C. Hamilton, *Allegory in 'The Faerie*

Queene' (Oxford, 1961), Ch. 5.

⁶ Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. W. L. Renwick (Oxford, 1970, reprint of 1934 edition), p. 73.

⁷ David Aers, 'Reading *Piers Plowman*: Literature, History and Criticism', *Literature and History*, 2nd series, 1, i (1990), 4-23. See also, Rodney Hilton, *Bond Men Made Free: Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Rising of 1381* (London, 1988, reprint of 1973 edition), pp. 159-60, 221-22 and passim. Hilton notes that one chronicler thought that 'Piers Plowman' was the name of one of the leaders of the revolt.

⁸ John Simon, 'The *Canterbury Tales* and fourteenth century peasant unrest', *Literature and History*, 2nd series, 1, ii (1990), 4-12, at 11.

⁹ See Alice Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer* (New Haven, 1975), Chs 6, 8 and passim. Miskimin points out that much more was included in the Chaucer canon in the Renaissance than today, because Renaissance readers tended to see medieval writers as a more homogeneous group than they were; disparate pieces tended to be attributed to one 'author'. She is also sceptical of Renaissance readers' ability to detect irony in these texts and hence of their ability to distinguish between different genres and writers. See also, John N. King, *English Reformation Literature, the Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton, 1982), Chs 1, 7 and passim.

¹⁰ Miskimin, *Renaissance Chaucer*, pp. 251-54.

¹¹ See William Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London, 1963); A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London, 1986, reprint of 1967 edition), Ch. 8 and passim; King, *English Reformation Literature*, Ch. 1.

¹² C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, excluding drama* (Oxford, 1973, reprint of 1954 edition), Book 2.

¹³ '[T]here is no fine nationality without literature, and seen the converse also, that there is no fine literature without nationality', John O'Leary, quoted in Philip Edwards, *The Threshold of a Nation: a study in English and Irish drama* (Cambridge, 1979), Pt 1, p. 1. This opens up the question of the treatment of Gaelic peoples within the English king's dominions after the Reformation. Did attitudes towards them change as a greater stress was placed on the importance of national identity? See Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (London, 1975); S. G. Ellis, 'Crown, Community and Government in the English Territories, 1450-1575', *History*, 71 (1986), 187-204; W. S. K. Thomas, *Tudor Wales* (Llandysul, 1983).

¹⁴ This is derived from Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans., Harry Zohn (London, 1982, reprint of 1973), p. 244; 'Mankind, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of

politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicising art'. The quotation is adapted by David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics*, pp. 5-7, as a cornerstone of his argument. Norbrook's book has been one of the most widely read recent studies of the Renaissance, but his (mis)use of Benjamin to justify a means of unmasking the political concerns of art is a conflation of too many problems to go into here. I hope it is clear that, unlike Norbrook, I do not think that writers in the sixteenth century thought in terms of a distinct either/or choice between art (aesthetics) and politics.

¹⁵ Text in *Harleian Miscellany*, 10 vols (1813), X, 437-64. All subsequent references to this edition.

¹⁶ See S. G. Ellis, 'John Bale, Bishop of Ossory, 1552-3', *Journal of the Butler Society*, 3 (1984), 283-93; Brendan Bradshaw, 'The Edwardian Reformation in Ireland, 1547-53', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 24 (1977), 83-99.

¹⁷ L. P. Fairfield, 'The *Vocacyon of Johan Bale* and early English autobiography', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 24 (1971), 327-40.

¹⁸ A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, pp. 236-37; King, *English Reformation Literature*, pp. 418-19; L. P. Fairfield, *Johan Bale, Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (West Lafayette, Ind., 1976), Ch. 5.

¹⁹ See Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetry*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (Manchester, 1973, reprint of 1965 edition). Recent discussions include, Anthony Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse* (London, 1983); Geoffrey Leach, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (London, 1969), Ch. 1; Derek Attridge, *Peculiar Language: literature as difference from the Renaissance to James Joyce* (New York, 1988).

²⁰ See King, *English Reformation Literature*, Chs 2, 6; *Tudor Royal Iconography: literature and art in an age of religious crisis* (Princeton, 1989); J. K. McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics, under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford, 1965), Chs 5, 6; Michael Brennan, *Literary Patronage in the Renaissance, The Pembroke Family* (London, 1988), pp. 9-10. On Cromwell's re-writing of earlier drama, see Glynn Wickham, *Early English Stages, 1300 to 1660*, 3 vols (London, 1966), I, 239 (Ch. 7, 'Morals and Interludes').

²¹ King, *English Reformation Literature*, p. 49.

²² Dickens, *The English Reformation*, p. 237.

²³ King, *English Reformation Literature*, p. 293; Fairfield, 'The *Vocacyon of Johan Bale*', pp. 328-29.

²⁴ King, *English Reformation Literature*, pp. 66-71.

²⁵ *Illustrium Maioris*, STC 1295. See also *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, ed. R. L. Poole and M. Bateson (Oxford, 1902). For commentary, see Fairfield, *John Bale*, Chs 4-6; J. W. Harris, *John Bale, a study in the minor literature of the Reformation* (Urbana, Ill., 1940), Chs 6, 9, 17.

²⁶ George Sampson, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, rev. R. C. Churchill (Cambridge, 1979, reprint of 1972 edition); Alastair Fowler, *A History of English Literature* (Oxford, 1989).

²⁷ See also the important *The Image of Both Churches*, reprinted in H. Christmas, *Select Works of Bishop Bale* (Cambridge, 1849), pp. 249-640.

²⁸ *Examination of William Thorpe, Examination and Death of Lord Cobham, Examination and Death of Anne Askew*, in *Select Works of Bishop Bale*, pp. 1-59; pp. 61-133; pp. 136-246.

²⁹ Fairfield, 'The Vocacyon of John Bale', (see above, note 17), p. 339.

³⁰ Bale's assertion was by no means obvious to all students of the Constitution and many argued that Ireland was a country ruled by the English king but with its own separate legislature and executive; see Hans Pawlisch, *Sir John Davies and the conquest of Ireland: a study in legal imperialism* (Cambridge, 1985), Chs 3, 6; R. Dudley Edwards and T. W. Moody, 'The history of Poyning's Law, 1494-1615', *Irish Historical Studies* 2 (1941), 415-24.

³¹ See Ellis, 'John Bale', pp. 285-88; Brendan Bradshaw, 'George Browne, first Reformation Archbishop of Dublin, 1536-54', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 21 (1970), 301-26.

³² See Fairfield, 'The Vocacyon of Johan Bale', p. 331; King, *English Reformation Literature*, p. 419.

³³ For an analysis of the legal and ecclesiastical changes which took place after the Reformation in Ireland, see Brendan Bradshaw, *The Irish Constitutional Revolution of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979).

³⁴ Quotation from *The Geneva Bible, a facsimile of the 1560 edition*, ed. Lloyd Berry (London, 1969), NT, p. 118.

³⁵ *Image of Both Churches*, p. 389.

³⁶ See W. D. Cargill-Thompson, 'Martin Luther and the "Two Kingdoms"' in David Thompson, ed., *Political Ideas* (Harmondsworth, 1969), pp. 34-52; Anthony Kenny, *Wyclif* (Oxford, 1985), Ch. 6; Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1978), II.

³⁷ On Mary's reign, see D. M. Loades, *Politics and the Nation, 1450-1660* (London, 1974, reprint of 1973 edition), Ch. 9; Christopher Morris, *The Tudors* (London, 1985, reprint of 1955 edition), Ch. 6; Jennifer Loach and Robert Tittler, eds, *The Mid Tudor Polity, c. 1540-1560* (London, 1980). The concept of 'the public sphere' comes from Jürgen Habermas, 'The Public Sphere', trans. S. and F. Lennox, *New German Critique*, 3 (1974), 45-55.

³⁸ Fairfield, *John Bale*, Ch. 4; Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Ch. 2.

³⁹ See Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, II, Chs 3, 7-9.

⁴⁰ Fairfield, 'The Vocacyon of Johan Bale', (see above, note 17), pp. 328-29.

⁴¹ On these, see Wickham, *Early English Stages*, I, Chs 5, 6. The implication may also be

that Catholic plays are disguised and 'dark conceits', whereas Bale's Protestant dramas are clear and 'true'.

42 The Temptation of Our Lord in Peter Happe, ed., *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1986), II, 51-63, at 61.

43 *Image of Both Churches*, passim.

44 Sir Philip Sidney, *Apology*, ed. Shepherd, pp. 123-24.

45 A. M. Kinghorn, *The Chorus of History: literary-historical relations in Renaissance Britain, 1485-1558* (London, 1971), pp. 266-69; Gary Waller, *English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1986), pp. 40-41; Maurice Evans, *English Poetry in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1969, reprint of 1967 edition), pp. 124-28.

46 Lily B. Campbell, 'The suppressed edition of *A Mirror for Magistrates*', *Huntington Library Bulletin*, 6 (1934), 1-16.

47 Lily B. Campbell, *Tudor Conceptions of History and Tragedy in A Mirror for Magistrates* (Berkeley, Calif., 1936), p. 9.

48 John Bale, *Scriptorum Illustrium*, Pt 2, p. 108, cited in Lily B. Campbell, ed., *A Mirror for Magistrates* (Cambridge, 1938), introduction, p. 21. All subsequent references to this edition. On Baldwin's life, see Stephen Gresham, 'William Baldwin: Literary Voice of the Reign of Edward VI', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 44 (1980-81), 101-16; *D.N.B.* entry; Campbell, ed., *Mirror for Magistrates*, Introduction, pp. 21-25.

49 Campbell, *Tudor Conceptions*, p. 10.

50 Thomas Warton claimed that Thomas Sackville was the originator of the plan for the *Mirror*, which he intended to be a Dantesque descent into hell where 'all the illustrious but unfortunate characters of the English history, from the conquest to the end of the fourteenth century, were to pass in review before the poet', *The History of English Poetry* (London, 1781), p. 38. According to Warton this had been scotched when he was called away on important matters of state with only the famous 'Induction' completed and he passed responsibility on to Baldwin and Ferrars. Warton cites no source for such a history of the text and Campbell, ed., *Mirror for Magistrates*, p. 38 was unable to find any evidence to support his contentions ('that he was the "primary inventor" of the design . . . there is certainly not the faintest suggestion'), although she believes 'Sackville must . . . have been cognizant of events connected with the suppressed edition, and he may have been one of the group who undertook to write the account of the unfortunate English princes.'

51 See Campbell, ed., *Mirror for Magistrates*, pp. 25-31; *D.N.B.*

52 Campbell, ed., *Mirror for Magistrates*, p. 10. However there is a single extant leaf of the suppressed edition which identifies two other contributors, Thomas Phaer (author of the tragedy of Owen Glendower) and Thomas Chaloner (author of the tragedy of Richard II); for details, see pp. 31-34. Later contributors included Thomas Churchyard (author of the tragedy of Jane Shore).

⁵³ Prose links 4 and 24 in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, pp. 110-11, 371-72. Edmund Halle, *Chronicle, containing the History of England* (London, 1809); Richard Grafton, *Chronicle, or History of England*, 2 vols (London, 1809); Thomas More, *History of King Richard III*, in *Complete Works of Saint Thomas More*, ed. R. S. Sylvester, 15 vols (New Haven, Conn., 1963), II.

⁵⁴ Campbell, 'The suppressed edition of *A Mirror for Magistrates*', *Huntington Library Bulletin*, 6 (1934), 1-16, at 10-11.

⁵⁵ The printer was Thomas Marsh: Edward Arber, ed. *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of the Stationers of London, 1554-1640*, 5 vols (London, 1875), I, 33.

⁵⁶ Campbell, ed., *Mirror for Magistrates*, pp. 3-20; Lily B. Campbell, ed., *Parts added to 'The Mirror for Magistrates'* (Cambridge, 1946), pp. 8-10. All subsequent references are to this edition.

⁵⁷ Lawrence D. Green, 'Modes of Perception in *The Mirror for Magistrates*', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 44 (1980-81), 117-33, at 123-24.

⁵⁸ On Tresilian, see *D.N.B.*; also Anthony Steel, *Richard II* (Cambridge, 1941), pp. 89-90, 149-56 and passim.

⁵⁹ Grafton, *Chronicle*, I, 412-73. Halle's *Chronicle* only begins with the reign of Henry IV.

⁶⁰ See Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, II, Ch. 7. On Richard's reign, see F. R. H. Du Boulay and C. M. Barron, eds, *The reign of Richard II, essays in honour of May McKittrick* (London, 1971).

⁶¹ G. B. Harrison, *The Life and Death of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex* (London, 1937), pp. 281-82.

⁶² On the Mortimers, see *D.N.B.*; Steel, *Richard II*, pp. 230-46 and passim; J. H. Harvey, 'Richard II and York', in Du Boulay and Barron, eds, *The reign of Richard II*, pp. 202-17, at 212-14.

⁶³ On Woodstock, see *D.N.B.*; also Steel, *Richard II*, pp. 117-18, 147-57, and passim.

⁶⁴ Something ignored by Frederick Kiefer in his discussion of these terms in the work: see 'Fortune and Providence in *The Mirror for Magistrates*', *Studies in Philology*, 74 (1977), 146-64.

⁶⁵ On Tiptoft, see *D.N.B.*

⁶⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 1990, reprint of 1983 edition).

⁶⁷ On this concept see Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: four essays*, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin, Texas, 1981); *Rabelais and his World*, trans. H. Iswolsky (Bloomington, Ind., 1984).

⁶⁸ See Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: problems of writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford, 1975), Pt 2, Ch. 1.

⁶⁹ See Campbell, ed., *Mirror for Magistrates*, pp. 11-15, on the 1563 edition.

⁷⁰ See *D.N.B.*; Rosemary Horrox, *Richard III, a study of service* (Cambridge, 1989), passim.

⁷¹ Philip Sidney, 'Astrophel and Stella', Sonnet 1, in Maurice Evans, ed., *Elizabethan Sonnets* (London, 1977), p. 2; Dante, *La Vita Nuova*, trans. Beatrice Reynolds (Harmondsworth, 1978, reprint of 1969 edition), pp. 31-33.

⁷² For details on William Collingborne's life and death, see K. Hillier, 'William Collingborne'; and K. Hillier, P. Normark and P. W. Hammond, 'Collingborne's Rhyme' in J. Petrie, ed., *Richard III: Crown and People* (London, 1985), 101-06, at 107-08. Halle glosses the 'hogge' as 'the dreadful wilde bore which was the king's cognaisance', calls Catseye 'his secret seducer', and Ratcliffe 'his myschevous mynion' (p. 398). Grafton copied Halle; see *Chronicle*, II, 137-38. The poem was apparently nailed to the door of St Paul's Cathedral.

⁷³ See Penry Williams, *The Tudor Regime* (London, 1986, reprint of 1979 edition), Ch. 11.

⁷⁴ See Rosamund Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery: Renaissance Poets and Twentieth Century Critics* (Chicago, 1965, reprint of 1947), Ch. 2.

⁷⁵ See Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Paul Turner (Harmondsworth, 1980, reprint of 1965 edition), pp. 57-68; Alastair Fox, *Thomas More: History and Providence* (Oxford, 1982), Ch. 2; R. S. Johnson, *More's 'Utopia': Ideal and Illusion* (New Haven, Conn., 1969).

⁷⁶ For brief recent discussions of this problem, see Annabel Patterson, 'Intention', and Stephen Mailloux, 'Interpretation', in Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, eds, *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (Chicago, 1990), pp. 121-34; 135-46.

⁷⁷ Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, Ch. 14; Frances Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London, 1983, reprint of 1970 edition).

⁷⁸ My interpretation of the *Mirror for Magistrates* would place it among the humanist texts analysed by Arthur F. Kinney, *Humanist Poetics: Thought, Rhetoric, and Fiction in Sixteenth-Century England* (Amherst, Mass., 1986).

⁷⁹ (London, 1573), n.p., STC 13602-03.

⁸⁰ See Thomas Starkey, *An Exhortation to the People instructing theym to unitie and obedience* (London, 1540), STC 23236; Richard Morison, *A Lamentation in which is shewed what ruine and destruction cometh of seditious rebellyon* (London, 1536), STC 18113.3; *A Remedy for Sedition* (London, 1536), STC 18113.5; W. Gordon Zeeveld, *Foundations of Tudor Polity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), Ch. 8; McConica, *English Humanists*, Ch. 6.

⁸¹ R. and M. H. Dodds, *The Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536-1537 and the Exeter Conspiracy, 1538*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1915), I, 280. On the history of the Pilgrimage, see also, C. S. L. Davies, 'The Pilgrimage of Grace Reconsidered', *Past and Present*, 41 (1968), 54-76; *Peace, Print and Protestantism, 1450-1558* (London, 1990, reprint of 1977 edition), pp. 200-09; Margaret Bowker, *The Henrician Reformation: the diocese of Lincoln under John Longland, 1521-47* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 149-56; J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London, 1988, reprint of 1983 edition), Ch. 10; Anthony Fletcher, *Tudor Rebellions* (London, 1985, reprint of 1968 edition), Ch. 4.

⁸² See A. G. Dickens, 'Wilfrid Holme of Huntington: Yorkshire's first Protestant Poet', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 39 (1956-58), 119-35, at 119. For the value and number of unsold copies on its bookseller's death, see John Barnard and Maureen Bell, 'The Inventory of Henry Byneman (1583): A Preliminary Survey', *Publishing History*, 29 (1991), 5-46, at 28-29. They estimate that probably 750-1000 copies were printed in 1572 and, at most, 865 sold between that date and 1583 (about 79 a year). On the 1569 Northern Rebellion, see *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series: Addenda, 1566-79*, ed., M. A. Everett Green (London, 1871), passim; R. Wood, ed., *The Rising in the North: the 1569 Rebellion* (Durham, 1975); Fletcher, *Tudor Rebellions*, Ch. 8.

⁸³ Both title pages advertise the poem as written in 'Old English Verse'. On protestantism and humanism at the early Tudor court see Maria Dowling, *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII* (London, 1986), Ch. 6.

⁸⁴ Except for Dickens, 'Wilfrid Holme', see above, note 82. Even the researches of John King have passed over *The Fall and Evil Success of Rebellion*. The poem is currently the subject of Mrs Gillian Roberts' doctoral dissertation at the University of Leeds.

⁸⁵ Dickens, 'Wilfrid Holme', p. 123.

⁸⁶ Holme makes no distinction between English and British history, assuming the two to be synonymous or common roots of a sixteenth Century England. He stresses the barons' rebellion against King John (see above, note 21) and adds that death is the fate of rebels when Irish, Scots or French meddle in 'our region'.

⁸⁷ On the Moldwarp prophecies which stem from Geoffrey of Monmouth, see Howard Dobin, *Merlin's Disciples; Prophecy, Poetry, and Power in Renaissance England* (Stanford, Calif., 1990), pp. 40ff.

⁸⁸ On 'interpretative communities', see Wolfgang Iser, 'The Reading Process: a phenomenological approach', *New Literary History*, 3 (1972), pp. 279f..

⁸⁹ Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, pp. 85-86.

⁹⁰ Louis Montrose, 'The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian text', in Patricia Parker and David Quint, eds, *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts* (Baltimore, 1986), pp. 303-40, at 322.

⁹¹ See R. and M. H. Dodds, *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, I, 12-13.

⁹² R. and M. H. Dodds, *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, I, Ch. 11.

⁹³ Conveniently reprinted in R. and M. H. Dodds, *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, I, 275-78. See also II, Ch. 16.

⁹⁴ It is striking that Anglia as a woman *stands for the land*; Henry VIII as king for the people, thus sexualising the representative figurae.

⁹⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Chs 1, 2 and passim; Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990).

⁹⁶ See J. G. A. Pocock's description of 'the common-law mind', which he claims developed between 1550 and 1600 as an attempt to assert that English custom had always functioned independently from the rest of Europe in order to validate a sense of Englishness: 'Its eyes were turned inward, upon the past of its *own nation* which it saw as making its own laws, untouched by foreign influences, *in a process without a beginning*' [my italics], *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: a study of English historical thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 41. This might usefully be linked with Anderson's stress that nations have to exist in 'homogeneous empty time', *Imagined Communities*, p. 132. See also Homi Bhabha, 'DissemiNation: "time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation"', in Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990), pp. 291-322.

⁹⁷ Homi Bhabha, 'Introduction: Narrating the Nation'; Timothy Brennan, 'The National Longing for Form', in Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration*, pp. 1-7; 44-70; Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: a study in its origins and background* (New York, 1946), Chs 1-4. Disappointingly few studies of nationalism go back beyond the eighteenth century, when modern manifestations of nationalism are assumed to have developed; see, for example, Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, 1983).

⁹⁸ See Brian Doyle, *English and Englishness* (London, 1989); Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism, from the Spectator to Post-Structuralism* (London, 1983); Peter Widowson, ed., *Re-Reading English* (London, 1982); Francis Mulhern, *The Moment of 'Scrutiny'* (London, 1979). Valuable as these studies are, they also serve to highlight a less well discussed problem, which this essay seeks to address. In addition to looking at the historical moment when the notion of literary/critical studies came to be, surely we should examine the moment(s) when the object they study – a *national literature* – emerged.