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## CLASSICAL MODELING AND THE CIRCULATION OF CONCEPTS IN EARLY MODERN BRITAIN

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### COSMOPOLITANISM AND EMPIRE

If global identity may be seen to represent the cosmopolitanism of large aggregates or of empire, it also represents the class from which particularity is drawn. For empire lurked in the wings of the nation state from its very inception. As those small spaces carved out of the great garment of Christendom, the early modern European nation states not only emulated empires rather than city-states (hence Rome and not Greece), but they quickly went on to found empires. Cosmopolitan localism was a strategy for nationalism but the cosmopolitan element was by no means trivial. Nationalism, whether we like it or not, seems to reach for empire readily.

It is noteworthy that the quintessential theorists of the early modern state, Hobbes and Locke, made no systematic reference to empire or to the colonies of the New World in their canonical works, which may explain why imperialism was regarded as antithetical to nationalism in the beginning of the modern era. Hobbes's failure to discuss empire as the horizon of the absolute state, or to discuss technological developments in transportation, communications and warfare that made colonization feasible, is all the more remarkable due to the fact that he was himself a regular participant at meetings of the Virginia Company.<sup>1</sup> In the some thirty-seven meetings of the Company, Hobbes is recorded as having attended with his patron, William Cavendish, earl of Devonshire, justifications for settlement were actually discussed. Rationales canvassed included: the natural-rights arguments of Sir Edwin Sandys, playwright brother of the great translator of Ovid, George Sandys; rights of conquest, officially endorsed by James I; and the conversion of Indians, as preached by John Donne at a meeting attended by Hobbes and Cavendish in November 1622.<sup>2</sup> Very probably *Leviathan*, intended as the bible

of the nation state, avoided the question, treating the colonies as private business or as business too controversial for the reading public at whom this particular work was directed. Hobbes may even have dismissed the New World colonies as merely the work of bootleggers and carpet-baggers of the likes of Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, and Co., who founded them, men expected to leave no permanent mark on history. Or he may have viewed them as heretical Puritan communities which should not be dignified by recognition.

When we come to Locke, more active even than Hobbes in the new colonies, reference to the Americas in the *Two Treatises of Government* is frequent, but anecdotal. Once again, Locke, like Hobbes discusses conquest, albeit the conquest of England and, probably for prudential reasons, refrains from discussing colonization. Although, holding the post of Secretary for Transportation in the Colonies, Locke never discusses the specifics of economics and infrastructure required to sustain an empire well under way by his time. The purposes for which the *Two Treatises* were written were not conducive to such meanderings. It was sufficient to try and reconcile a public with a long history of binding oaths to the Stuarts in order to switch allegiance to a Dutch impostor. To suggest that the British were imperialists like the Dutch would have been definitely hazardous. But the significant absence of empire from these early treatises on the modern nation state should not mislead us into thinking that the reality of empire went unremarked. The most formative text of new nation states (and for Hobbes as well), Machiavelli's *The Prince*, empire appeared only negatively, in the final chapter, an "Exhortation to Liberate Italy from the Barbarian Yoke." Nonetheless, it makes an appearance.

## PRINT CULTURE AND THE RISE OF THE NATION STATE

Modernity, in its early phase, is associated with two mutually dependent phenomena: the rise of print culture and the rise of the nation state. Michel Foucault and Koselleck have postulated two watersheds in the rise of modernity: the transition from the Renaissance to the neo-classical era, 1625-50; and the transition from the neo-classical to the modern 1775-1825. Koselleck's notion of the *Sattelzeit* and his concepts of temporalization more generally point to the interfaces between print culture and the rise of the nation state. For print culture made time itself a resource, reproducing and recirculating clas-

sical texts updated for present purposes.<sup>3</sup> Print culture changed dimensions of time and space in a dramatic way, deepening and broadening the “timeless” universality of modern collective identity, local yet cosmopolitan. Changing conceptions of time challenged the ancient caution, to which Hobbes in fact subscribed, that “the future does not exist.” The Renaissance saw a transition from polis to politicking, from politics as city-state management to strategies of power-seeking that were deliberately future-oriented. Changes in the conceptualization of space involved the fabrication of “the West” and Western civilization of which particular states were the privileged bearer.

The change of vision opened up by print culture was profound. Life was no longer confined to lived-in institutions. Great vistas of different lives, lived in different and exotic structures, stretched before the Renaissance humanist, captured in ancient books. Generally speaking, however, these were vistas for the elite, to whose safe-keeping the texts could safely be entrusted. As guardians of antiquity, officers of church and state and counsellors to kings, Renaissance humanists were keepers of *arcana imperii*, the secret and the hidden. The texts they kept complicated any straightforward conceptions of space/time, anticipating the revolutions their new guardians were to bring about. Not only were many of them deliberately archaizing works but they also syncretized oriental and occidental sources, problematizing the concept of “the West” that they were marshalled to defend. If fabrication of a collective identity both cosmopolitan yet local required manipulation of time/space dimensions, and being that these distortions were already present in the texts Renaissance humanist resurrected, it was precisely the reason that they served to bring about new collective identities by sleight of hand.

It is not by accident that court poets of the Tudor and Stuart period turned to the imperial poets of Rome, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Theocritus, Tibullus and Catullus as their models, poets who themselves turned to the vast repository of ancient writings belonging to an oral tradition, whose provenance and processes of transcription are still incompletely known. The works of Homer and Hesiod, imitated by Virgil, and with an archaizing analogue in the *carmina* of Horace, enjoyed special status as relics of ancient memory from which counsels of state might be drawn. Their very archaism offered, at the same time, an evocation of immemorial tradition effectively applied to the imperial cult and the works of the Roman senatorial class. These imperial poets marshalled the primal language of seasonal chant and primordial sentiments of hearth and home

to lend legitimacy to Emperors, many of them upstarts, as well as to celebrate the country estates of *nouveaux riche* Roman senators, to render their palatial piles more acceptable and familiar to common folk. Pastoral, a genre so celebrated by early modern court poets, also offered an alternative immemorial religious pagan tradition, durable enough to challenge the Catholic Church on its chosen ground: enjoying the marks of time, tradition and universality. Not without reason was Homer presented as the poet of kings.<sup>4</sup> Celebrated early modern debates over the relative merits of Homer and Virgil, in which Hobbes himself and his interlocutor, William Davenant, participated, usually concluded in favor of the former on the grounds of antiquity alone, because Virgil was then cast as an imitator. But Roman archaizing practices were themselves a lesson in the power of tradition. For Rome's conventional reputation as imitator of the Greeks hid an accomplishment that early modern humanists hoped to emulate: a cultural syncretism in which the most primitive expressions of human artifice were assimilated, the songs of the poets of remote antiquity and the song lines of genealogy and kingship that they sung. By resurrecting a literary tradition specifically designed to empower kings, early modern mirrorists were able to juxtapose the powers of an ancient church with syncretic roots in the same cultural wellsprings, the countervailing power of pagan texts.

Among the most favoured transmitters of this "ancient wisdom" were the Alexandrine poets, servants of the Ptolemies, who grafted onto Pharaonic Egypt the tradition of the Greeks and retransported it to Greece and Rome. Roman Alexandrians, imitators of Callimachus and Apollonius of Rhodes, had turned away from the Greek classics to Hellenistic poets of first and second century B.C. Alexandria, who, schooled in old forms, adapted them to a new empire. Breaking ground with innovations like the small scale epyllion, if compared with the classical epic, the Roman Alexandrians were mocked by Cicero as *neoterici*: "the Moderns."<sup>5</sup> Their vitality was epitomized in the epigrams of Porcius Licinus, Valerius Aedituus, and Lutatius Catullus and the "bizarre erotic poems" of Laevius. Poets of Cisalpine Gaul, of whom only Catullus survives, included Valerius Cato, Cinna, Calvus, Cornelius Nepos, Tigidas and Furius Bibaculus. Ovid and Propertius, among the archaizing moderns represent them best.<sup>6</sup>

Five or more English translations of Ovid were completed between 1590 and 1632, which include those of playwrights such as Arthur Golding,

Christopher Marlowe, John Dryden, and George Sandys, Hobbes's colleague at the Virginia Company meetings, whose translation outdoes all the others in the elaborateness of its textual apparatus, the commentary on some books exceeding even the length of Publius Ovidius Naso's original text. Why were these pioneers of the English theatre and fabricators of the nation engaged in the translation of Ovid? Because Ovid was foremost representative of the Alexandrian school among the Roman "moderns," with authorial legitimacy as the transmitter of ancient songs (*carmina*) about the elemental, an alternative repository of knowledge to the traditions of the old Church or the Bible as the text of the new churches. In tropes of mutability and metamorphosis, he posed the problems of cosmic generation, genealogy and identity, epistemic and categorial questions that lay at the heart of new national identities under construction. The "new science" of the moderns is this old science passed through the filter of a new theory of language, but for the same old purposes: to create legitimacy for states or to empower kings.

The difference in disposition between Ovidius Publius Naso, Virgil and Horace as imperial poets was analogous to their early modern Renaissance imitators. There were those who deplored the costs of empire, hardship and war, and those who believed that only war was a palliative to human inertia and the softness of sedentary society. Moreover, the moderns self-consciously debated and reflected upon these differences. A peculiar literary genre, the country house poem, which emerged with the spate of aristocratic palace-building on which it commented, was the peculiar vehicle of classical reflection upon national expansion, political involvement and individual retreat which engaged servants of the Roman Empire as well as the courtiers of early modern nation states.<sup>7</sup>

## ENGLISH COURTIER CLIENTS AND THE FABRICATION OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Union of England and Scotland engineered by James I, to whose circle Hobbes belonged as a courtier's client, was much in the spirit of Machiavelli, as were efforts to pacify the countryside with good arms and good laws and to create in the Church of England a civic religion. English Renaissance humanists and courtiers vigorously debated the relative merits of classical aesthetic forms versus a "Gothic" vernacular immemorial tradition that included Druids, fairies and a rough native tongue. These debates and quaint discus-

sions of the nature of “fayrie-land” in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I, for instance, reflected a larger and less openly discussable concern over the relative merits of empire and localism. Spain, as England’s primary competitor in the New World represented Empire. The Spanish Inquisition and the engagement of Spanish Jesuits in English dynastic politics were seen as imperial interventions. Catholicism was the religion of cosmopolis and empire. For if civilization is the ethos of empire, civilization itself does no work, it has no structures or institutions of its own. It is superstructural rather than structural, an emanation of empire that may extend well beyond the boundaries of effective control that constraints of organizational competence, technology and communications impose.

Renaissance Englishmen, debating the relative merits of empire and nationhood under the surrogates of republicanism or monarchy, Catholicism or a national church, imperial metre or native rime, demonstrated this understanding. They referred to themselves as cosmopolitan imperialists or transmontani, using the language of the Romans for Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul to make it clear that their affiliation was with Gallican France and Northern Europe across the Alps, and not with that “ghost of the Roman Empire”, Catholic and Latin Europe. National and tribal incursions on the imperial heartland had demonstrated a capacity to bring about the collapse of the centre from time immemorial. When Gibbon reflected on the success of the Barbarians in bringing about the fall of Rome he laid it to the door of two factors: crusading religion and the primordial vigour of tribal society, the explanation of Tacitus in his much emulated *Germanica*, belonging to a subset of theories about the mutually interactive principles of tribalism and cosmopolitanism that has classical and early modern examples.

“Great Britain,” as the product of the union of England and Scotland, celebrated by Michael Drayton as *Poly-olbion*, chronicled and mapped by Camden and Speed, was fabricated with all the trappings that heroic poets of antiquity and their archaizing counterparts of modernity could bestow. This is a perfect case of cosmopolitan localism: the resources of antiquity and modernity jointly plundered to fabricate a particular identity out of a global class. In some of the more deliberate efforts to accomplish collective identity formation through persuasion, eloquence and the power of image, the nation in an imperial mould was explicitly evoked. Sir William Davenant, poet laureate and playwright, celebrated national heroes and colonizers like Sir Francis Drake in support of “Cromwell’s ‘imperial western design’”<sup>8</sup> in his

plays written in the 1650's. Davenant was also author of the long and tedious heroic poem, *Gondibert*, to which was appended a preface on poetics dedicated to Hobbes, from whom its theories of sensationalist psychology were drawn, and to which Hobbes further appended a lengthy Answer.<sup>9</sup> Davenant hoped that his poem might be read aloud at civic festivals like *Homer*. In epitome to his *Proposition for the Advancement of Moralitie*, Davenant outlined a "new way of Entertainment of the People" which would accomplish crowd control through multi-media diversions:<sup>10</sup>

*In which shall be presented severall ingenious Arts, as Motion and transposition of Lights; to make a more naturall resemblance of the great and vertuous actions of such as are eminent in story; and chiefly of those famous Battails at Land and Sea by which this Nation is renown'd; representing the Generalls and other meritorious Leaders, in their Dangers Successes and Triumphs; and our Enemies in such acts of Cruelty (like that at Amboyna) as shall breed in the Spectators courage and animosity against them; diverting the people from Vices and Michiefe; and instructing them (as in a Schoole of Morality) to Vertu, and to a quiet and cheereful behaviour towards the present Government.*

The vitality of the English Renaissance, which came later than the Italian and French, and extended well into the Stuart age, derives from profound philosophical debate in dramatic and poetical dress. Aesthetic disguise worked well enough that formalistic analysis has dominated literary criticism to this very day and the political or prudential content of these works of the "autonomous aesthetic moment" has been largely ignored.

Of the myriad of aesthetic forms under which the courtiers of the English Renaissance wrote, one of the most symptomatic is the country house poem. Imitative of the great poems addressed by Roman clients to their patrons, Horace to Maecenas, Virgil to Augustus, etc., English courtiers addressed to patrons in the great age of palace building on confiscated monastic lands, profound reflections on the ups and downs of politics. Aware, as we tend to be forgetful, of the precariousness of new families enriched at the expense of the church, the writers of country house poems were mindful of their own contribution to the stability of the house in the form of intangibles, reputation and honour. As a *quid pro quo* they extracted the right to remind their patrons of the enduring hazards of political life and the ethical alternative – Stoic withdrawal and enjoyment of pastoral and rural life in the present.

Horace, the great exemplar of the Roman country house poem, most beautifully presented the moral dilemma of the courtier as client in relation to the *illuminati* and Emperor as clients. While advising them on how to exercise their power better, he must constantly remind them that it is best not to exercise it at all. Pastoral withdrawal, the enjoyment of the present, and the delights of nature and “home” as one’s favored spots are all appeals to the patron to be mindful not only of the hazards of Fortune, which take man far from his roots, but also that reason enjoins one to enjoy the present, refusing to sacrifice it to a future that does not exist.

The long diatribe against rhetoricians in Ben Jonson, his clumsy and rather crude veneration for local “fairy” traditions of Robin Hood, nymphs of the solstice, Puck and Maid Marion, represent a form of English pastoralism, as well as an attack on Machiavellians at court who would use their erudition for political enrichment. At the same time, Jonson held in contempt playwrights and poets who could not demonstrate sufficient classical erudition to know where danger lay – in imitation of French and Italian models that might give entrée to European powers on English soil. The threads of a debate picked up here and there between the relative merits of nascent “Gothic,” Northern European, and therefore barbarian, traditions, against imperial, Francophone or Italianate incursions represent forms that the reception of Machiavelli took. “Old Nick” was himself too notorious to mention, but Machiavellian themes are everywhere to be found, in discussions of the merits of war as a purgative, and the anti-war themes of Horace and Virgil; in discussions of the merits of pagan civic religion against the claims of the Roman Church; in assessment of the role of the people and whether to enrich them economically or pacify them politically as strategies. Specific debates over Elizabeth’s marriage suitors, the dynastic struggles between Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots, and discussions about the shape of the Stuart polity, revealed deeper underlying concerns about the viability of an island nation, however well cultivated its garden, set in an imperial sea.

Mindful since Machiavelli of the lessons of *The Prince* in the purgative effects of war and primordial violence, courtiers of the Tudor and Stuart state set about to create a quasi-tribalism in the notion of nation as a genealogical and racial construct that might mobilize the intense powers of localism indigenous to any homogeneous community and particularly pronounced in insular cultures. “Nation,” from *natus*, emerged simultaneously with “race,” for which it was synonymous. It was a self-conscious effort in



primordial prefabrication. Courtiers crafted for genealogies in England that went back to imperial founding fathers, Aeneas and Brut, placing England on the fringes of an ancient diaspora. They fabricated for the royal house genealogies worthy of Homer and Ovid, whom they translated and then mimicked. Genealogy and patriarchy as titles to rule (Filmer) gave rise to genetic historiography of which the theory of progress from primitives to polis to nation state is a product. Spurning classical republicanism they focused rather on undivided sovereignty, *arcana imperii*, and royal absolutism as appropriate to the new nationalism. The congruence of race, genealogy, nationalism and hereditary monarchy was persuasive.

None of this was affected without debate, and the fertility of Renaissance aesthetic forms represent both the subterfuges under which subversive philosophical and religious principles were explored and the genuine doubt with which courtiers in the brave new world of nation and empire were faced. Emulation of French literary forms was recognition that the French had been there before them. Gallican religion and the promotion of royal absolutism based on theories of undivided sovereignty, both directly challenged the diffusion of Empire registered in classical republican theory, and the reality of Catholic and Spanish imperial hegemony. The choice of the Gallic Hercules, Lucian's "cave man" or Gallic primitive with the silver tongue, who rules by rhetoric and not by arms, symptomized a nationalist project with both a folk and an intellectual dimension. From Oberon, Puck, the Fairy Queen and Robin Hood, folk characters representative of local popular culture, were juxtaposed with the genealogies, chorographies, and myths of origin the antiquarians could provide. Both were important as two wings of a single project: music and masques for the masses, heroic poetry, history and philosophy for the elite.

### HOBBS AND THE CAUDIAN FORKS

Hobbes's country house poem, *De Mirabilibus Pecci Carmen* was produced around 1626-7 and presented as a New Year's gift for his patron, the Earl of Devonshire. The subject of the poem, while ostensibly a celebration of the Cavendish dynasty and Chatsworth, the family seat, is in fact an allegory about dynastic fragility. The poem is an extraordinary synthesis of classical and Renaissance material centering on marriage quests, the trials of suitors,

women and their impossible powers, the intrinsic capacity for anarchy in the human reproductive system, the country house as an institution facilitating dynastic stability, and the corrosive waters that lie beneath its foundations. It is prompted, one might guess, by the marriage negotiations for Prince Charles, and seems to rehearse arguments raised by courtiers who had lived through the rough times of marriage negotiations undertaken on behalf of Elizabeth I.

The ignominious defeat of the Roman army, deceived by deliberately propagated rumours of superior Samnite strength, which led them into ambush in a narrow defile between two mountains, is evoked by the topographical description in Hobbes's heroic poem, *De Mirabilibus Pecci Carmen*. Overwhelmed at the implications of their own success, the Samnites sought advice from a respected elder, who advised them first to treat peace on terms which would humiliate the Romans so much that they cease to be a threat. If that failed, advice was to kill one of the opponents, which although a less moral solution, would achieve the same result. The treaty that was eventually negotiated, Livy tells us in Book 9 of his *History of Rome*, so violated the religious foundations of the Roman state that it could only be concluded under a special judicial formula, as a compact between the senate and the Roman people, which went unratified by the priests and which eventually remained to be revenged.

The early lines of Hobbes' poem, describing Chatsworth and its water works, water seeping through a thousand little channels around and under the house, represent pollution. It is the language we are familiar with, from Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, and a range of Elizabethan poetic and dramatic works which could be read as reflecting on the growth of London and its vulnerability to the plague spread through the city's water supply. Given the intensity of dynastic preoccupations, the focus on marriage negotiations between Elizabeth and the long line of potential foreign suitors, the persistent trope of water born pollution might well suggest dynastic defilement through foreign marriage. Later in Hobbes's poem, once the protagonists have undertaken their quest through the narrow defile that marks the path of a river through mountains and the declivity between the buttocks of a woman's body, more Roman language takes over: the language of national humiliation represented in Livy's account of the ambush at the Caudian Forks. Frequent reference to "the crack" or defile in question, evokes John Stubbes's seditious work, *The Gaping Gap*, deemed obscene, and for which an honour-

able man, while swearing allegiance to his queen, lost his right hand.

Stubbes fiction, while far less explicit than Hobbes's, created an obscene figure for the power vacuum the Queen's virginity represented. Into the gap either the Popish Spanish or the traditionally threatening French might step. Stubbes's poem was especially targeted at Alençon, with whom on and off negotiations were being conducted, and in whom the Queen had expressed real interest. Images of snakes and poisons seeping into the Tudor body politic through the tubes and pipes of the female body characterize this work and *The Jew of Malta*, an equally seditious work woven around a tissue of rumours about the poisoning of the Queen by her Jewish doctor, whose neck was sacrificed to Royal decorum.

The specificity of instances in which the language of Roman pollution surfaces, prompts us to ask why, especially concerning Hobbes's valedictory poem to the Cavendish house, these themes were so prevalent in his work. Did he fear in the struggle between the favorites, Somerset and Buckingham, an analogous dynastic crisis? Playing perhaps on the tolerance of James for literatures which elevated his Mother, Mary Queen of Scots, at the expense of Elizabeth, Hobbes called for reflection on the fragility of dynastic monarchy under the aegis of the Royal Marriage. To the trope of seeping poisons he added the powerful Boccaccian spectre of a gulf, into which houses or temples might be plunged and ships swallowed up, cataclysmic events that accompanied sacrilege and violation of the gods in Virgil and Horace. In Boccaccio's *Il Corbaccio* we have an earlier instance of hyperbole and gigantuanism to express the potentially devastating effects of female procreative powers and their capacity for pollution. Chorographies such as the specific presence of Dudley in Hobbes's poem, a well known knight in Eliza's day, sending a probe down the hole to test the waters, and the specific absence of Mary Queen of Scots, who in fact visited Buxton spa on two occasions to take the waters, suggest that Royal marriage arrangements were on Hobbes's mind.

Marriage, love and honor were persistent general themes of Jacobean drama. Sir William Davenant, of whom among the poets in Hobbes's circle we have the best evidence of his views, was the maestro supremo on the subject of love and honor, although largely misinterpreted on the subject. Davenant, who in 1650 specifically acknowledged his debt to Hobbes's epistemology and psychology as laid out in *De Cive*, seems to have shared these assumptions much earlier. The Queen's Poet, long interpreted as a harmless

sycophant, seems to have been engaged in critical reflection on Neoplatonist principles of love and honor as seen in official royal propaganda.

The impact of Alexandrianism had been, such as importing English literary culture off the backs of the French who had initiated the movement, was not the only concern of Alexandrian poets faced with a brave new world of empire and syncretism. They also had to reckon with Hellenistic cults of kingship. It is hardly surprising that royal propagandists capitalized on the resources of a tradition in this way, quarried with spectacular success by Bodin and French theorists of absolutism, once poets had laid the groundwork. Alexandrianism moved between the atomistic metaphysics, sensationalist psychology and utilitarianism of the Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics, and Neoplatonist idealism as a reaction. A profound belief of the Hellenistic materialists in *kata physin*, “the life according to nature” or an understanding of the limits of the possible, as the first principle of ethics and politics, ruled out grandiose political theory for them. As a result, Stoics, Sceptics and Epicureans evinced a wide range of different positions, some in support of monarchy, some in support of republics, depending upon the circumstances. Neoplatonism, by contrast, was wedded to divine kingship.

Davenant’s dramatic disquisitions on love and honor, like the poetry of Suckling and Carew, marshal Stoic sensationalism against Neoplatonist abstractions in a serious moral enterprise to establish that the good man and good citizen are one and the same. Davenant like Carew, demonstrates Alexandrian preferences for the sensual and the real against Platonist abstractions. Mocking the Platonist conceits of Henrietta Maria’s court, he describes the figure of the Eunuch as the perfect expression of Platonist idealism, referring salaciously to the symptomatic irony of Jermyn’s impregnation of the Queen’s maid, and probably knowing his friend Carew’s story about intercepting a tryst between the Queen herself and Jermyn, Lord St. Albans.<sup>11</sup> Comments on the hypocrisy of the French, whom Davenant refers to in 1638 as “having made our gentry drunk” and “perfuming their very shadows,” point in the direction of Gondibert, Davenant’s anti-Platonist attack on giants and spirits and his condemnation of Virgil whose landscape is peopled by spectres and “shades.” Metamorphic Hermegild and riddles of sense that it describes affirm Davenant’s Alexandrian sensationalist psychology. Like the magnificent sensualism of Carew’s Rapture, a Virgilian trope executed in the manner of Horace, Davenant’s poem alerts us to an axiom of the cavaliers: that sexuality is an affirmation of sense

both moral and physical. Investigations on love and marriage of high moral seriousness by Carew and Davenant, in the circumstance of royal marriage negotiations that divided the court, focused on marriage as that which unites the metamorphic anarchy of reproduction with the rule of law. Like Jonson they deplored infidelity, as not only morally decadent, but socially corrosive.

To bewail Virgilian classicism and French hypocrisy was all of a piece. The French, importing Italian styles to create for their own monarchy a pagan imperial style which transcends sectarian struggle, had overplayed their hand. English courtiers who imitated French imperial rhetoric, demeanour and dress, forgot the most basic principles of the marriage-contract analogue: that the relation between rulers and ruled must be a marriage of hearts and minds. Davenant, like Suckling, Carew, Newcastle, Hobbes and later Charles Cotton, may be numbered among “the sons of Ben” (Jonson), distinguished for their moral seriousness. They thought that the function of the government was to create the conditions in which moral behaviour could be developed. A rising tide of critical comment against the French and the artificiality of the court were accompanied by a search for the authentic, the nascent and the “Gothic.” The tendency of city and country dwellers likewise to view courts as sites for scheming Machiavellis was reflected in Jonsonian depictions of provincials burlesquing the bookishness of courtiers and antiquarians. Charles I’s own program for the pacification of the countryside through the creation of a rural magistracy and constabulary, by which members of the Cavendish family who served as sheriffs of the Peak benefited, probably contributed to this search for positive images of provincials. Not all of the “sons of Ben” shared an unambiguous view of rural provinciality, however, and Davenant himself, in his character’s “Sir Furious Inland” and “Sir Solemn Trifle” expressed obvious misgivings. Debate over the role of common people ranged from those who simply saw them as a rabble or mob, Davenant’s general position, and the views of Hobbes who, while employing the same language, empowered them to covenant and consent in cases where the survival of the state required it. This was Hobbes’s classical solution to the Caudine Forks dilemma. The volatility of dynastic monarchy led ineluctably to representative government as the only viable expression of the marriage contract/social contract homology. It was a path that Hobbes officially refused to take, leaving it to his successor Locke, but the implications are there.

The degree to which religion lay at the heart of the dynastic dilemma receives extraordinary testimony in the explicit religious tracts that some of these poets undertook to write. Suckling's *An Account of Religion by Reason* (1637) anticipates by half a century the deism of Dennis and Locke. Davenant, Carew Waller and Suckling, sensationalists whose explorations of the aesthetics of sense perception in some cases made them outstanding poets, showed uncanny prescience in their diagnosis of abstractions. Davenant could mock the young Palatine wit with his Genevan band (in the language) of may-poles and main-stays, equalling the abstractions of self-castrating Puritanism with those of Platonism. Puritanism was a heresy which represented the full equal of Platonism in the sense in which Diogenes Laertius employed the term: sects premised in division and schism. Davenant's juxtaposition of primitive Christianity that "hath the innocence of village and neighbourhood", compared with the religion of the sects cloaking Reason "in dark School clouds" is worthy of Hobbes's *Historia Ecclesiastica* written decades later.

Davenant, Suckling and Carew appreciated that Platonism, later known as "Enthusiasm," and Puritanism, later known as "Fundamentalism" shared the same set of errors: abstraction and literalness; life by "the Word." Puritanism cannot be "lived" because it is "by the book" any more than Platonism, whose "ideas" are merely generalizations or abstractions. Both Platonism and Puritanism are operationalized by deception. Hobbes saw his task to deceive the deceivers. *Leviathan* was his book. More Machiavellian than his friends, perhaps, Hobbes understood the necessary connection between fundamentalism and the foundation of states. The birth of nations, from natus, brought with it aspirations to freedom as of right. Nationalism was indeed a work of fancy, as Hobbes saw and instructed Davenant, involving a new birth, separation, new beginnings and perhaps divorce, all facilitated by "life by the book." If oral traditions of memory and rote, perpetuated in the rhetoric of the court and its poets, facilitated secret machinations that were ultimately destabilizing, print culture and the republic of letters led ineluctably to the democracy of reading and writing. "Life by the book" provided a set of legitimations powerful enough for new beginnings, and a lot of rhetorical claims masquerading as facts.

## DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE STATE CULT

Invented and institutionalized in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the early modern national kingdom was theorized in the seventeenth.<sup>12</sup> The court produced chronicles and other mnemonic devices to enhance the institutionalization of kingship as a set of ceremonial performances. With repetition and the aid of memory, practices became rituals. Hobbes's discourse on memory in both *Leviathan* and the *Answer to Davenant* applies his theory of memory, imagination and *pictura poesis* representation to historiography, to render in history a further resource for the state cult.

The debate over the comparative merits of print culture as opposed to scribal publication also concerned the guardianship of public information and control of the state cult. Should it be monopolized by courtiers in privately circulated manuscripts, or made accessible to the print-reading public? Hobbes flags his own position in the opening sentence of chapter four of *Leviathan*, where he disparagingly remarks: "The Invention of Printing, though ingenious, compared with the invention of Letters, is no great matter." Hobbes's failure to gain admission to the Royal Society, devoted to the wider promotion of knowledge through public libraries, a project for which, as Quentin Skinner convincingly argues, Hobbes had no enthusiasm, was consistent with his view on the significance of the printing press.

This was however a hotly contested topic and Michael Drayton opens his *Preface to Poly-Olbion* bemoaning to "the Generall Reader" the restriction of public information reserved for the curiosity cabinets of the savants:<sup>13</sup>

In publishing this Essay of my Poeme, there is this great disadvantage against me; that it commeth out at this time when Verses are wholly deduc't to Chambers, and nothing esteem'd in this lunatique Age, but what is kept in Cabinets, and must only passe by Transcription...; such I meane, as had rather read the fantasies of forraigne inventions, then to see the Rarities and Historie of their owne Country delivered by a true native Muse.

Drayton protests against the *arcana imperii* tradition of state secrets and royal mystique, an impression strengthened by the frequent mention of Machiavelli and Bodin in Selden's somewhat hostile commentary on the poem published with it. Richard Helgerson, in his magisterial account of chorographical histories, notes that *arcana imperii* could also include maps:

“in Philip II’s Spain, Pedro de Esquivál’s great cartographic survey of the Iberian peninsula was kept in manuscript, locked in the Escorial as ‘a secret of state’”.<sup>14</sup>

Drayton’s first song connects his account of the counties of England and their muses to the fabulous heroic tradition. Reference is made to the genealogies of Homer and Hesiod, to the principles of metamorphosis and the transmigration of souls, as if this particular local chorographical work is simply a local variant of a larger history of the world. Drayton commends the pastoral tradition of Orpheus, of nymphs and of popular pagan religion, condemning those

possest with such stupidity and dulnesse, that, rather then thou wilt take pains to search into ancient and noble things, choosdest to remaine in the thicke fogges and mists of ignorance, as neere the common Lay-stall of a Citie; refusing to walke forth into the Tempe and Feelds of the Muses, where through most delightfull Groves the Angellique harmony of Birds shall steale thee to the top of an easie hill, where in arificiall caves, cut out of the most naturall Rock, thou shalt see the ancient people of this Ile delivered thee in their lively images: from whose height thou mai’st behold both the old and later times, as in thy prospect, lying farre under thee; then conveying thee, downe by a soule-pleasing Descent through delicate embrodered Meadowes, often veined with gentle gliding Brooks; in which thou maist fully view the dainty Nymphes in their simple naked bewties, bathing them in Crystalline streames; which shall lead thee, to most pleasant Downes, where harmlesse Shepheards are, some exercising their pipes, some singing roundelaies, to their gazing flocks...

The elements of Drayton’s disarming case are complex. Evoking the country-house language of Horace, he claims to be able to meld local lore to a cosmopolitan heroic tradition. At the same time he evokes Machiavelli’s famous claim to be able to map the past and future from the high prospect of Mount Parnassus. Here Drayton gives entrée to Selden, the antiquarian, who, like his friend Hobbes, was obsessed with the history of paganism as a resource to mobilize against priestcraft and in support of a state-centered collective identity.

Entitling his comments symptomatically “Illustrations,” Selden gives Drayton’s claims careful attention:<sup>15</sup>

If in Prose and Religion it were justifiable, as in Poetry and Fiction,



to invoke a Locall power (for anciently both Jewes, Gentiles & Christians have supposed to every Countrey a singular Genius) I would therin joyne with the Author.

Selden claims to have researched the tradition of Brute, traveling to the Abbey of Beccensam on the way to Rome.<sup>16</sup> Absent from the Greek and Latin authors, he claims, “This Genealogie I found by tradition of the Ancients, which were first inhabitants of Britaine.”<sup>17</sup> Selden, while referring to “the whole Chaos of Mythique inventions,”<sup>18</sup> gives surprisingly careful consideration to the biblical, Hesiodic and Homeric genealogies. He alights on the metamorphic idiom to which the opening song appeals, connecting it to the transmigration of souls, or “Pythagorean transanimation,” a “Romane” rendering of the Greek metamorphosis. Selden, preoccupied with the Druids, wonders “whether Pythagoras received it from the Druids, or they from him, because in his travels he conversed as well with Gaulish as Indian Philosophers.”<sup>19</sup>

Institutional theorization and borrowing take place under pressures of some kind. The conversion of kingship from the *arcana imperii* of the Royal household and its aristocratic extension to constitutional monarchy may have been driven less by the march of democracy than we tend to think. Transition from the heroic orator king of the medieval period, to the silent and distant monarch, statue-like, preferably hidden, of Bodin’s ideal, an imitation perhaps of oriental monarchs recorded in travelers’ tales, may simply reflect the exigencies of institutionalization. The more people clamoured for the presence of the monarch, at royal entries, shows and assemblies, the more necessary for the theurgic king to conceal his mortality and vulnerability. The greater the pomp and ceremony, the wider the distance between fact and fiction became, and thusly had to be bridged. The gap of credulity yawned before monarchs on both continents. If royal ceremonies easily lent themselves to parody in staged burlesques, by the seventeenth century the royal masque was a state controlled event. Royal secrets, marking the boundaries between those in power and those out of it, became a feature of the cult of the king. Resistance to the *arcana imperii* in turn gave way to assemblies with all the forms of power and none of the substance, while the business of government continued being conducted behind the scenes. At least in this respect, the French analysts were open. Nor did the anti-democrats see unanimity of interests as the threat which the mob posed. Quite the contrary – the interests of the com-

mon people were too diverse and too unpredictable to allow them to enter politics directly.

The reaction of Thomas Hobbes and John Selden to sentiments of intense localism, reflected in the ideals of country-gentlemen writing regional histories, like Drayton, may simply have reflected their observation of the ungovernability of such a disaggregated collection of interests. Selden's particular form of antiquarianism preserves the private erudition of the *arcana imperii* for public purposes. Hobbes fears additionally that his sense-datum psychology is now going to be employed by Davenant to support the diversity of unordered individual experience against the hegemonic church. But this too poses a threat to sovereignty. The great advantage of public history, in the form of king lists and chronicles of courts, was that it admitted no intruders from the private sphere. What "modern" historiography represented was an intrusion of private interests into the public space. In other words, the attack on the *arcana imperii* of the royal cult was not politically innocent. When, at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Whigs in England vociferously tried to demonstrate that the French posed a threat, they targeted the closed nature of the royal cult to expand the circle of power. At the same time, Locke, in the form of sensationalist psychology, provided an epistemology for popular rule and equality of representation, and was confined as yet to the propertied classes.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Noel Malcolm (1981).

<sup>2</sup> Noel Malcolm (1981), 298, 303, and 306.

<sup>3</sup> In the same way that Virgil's *Aeneid* updated Homer, by appending the foundation of Rome and the history of its heroes, Edmund Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland*, transported Virgil's founders to England, providing spurious genealogies for the crown in the descent of Brutus from Aeneas and the descent of British kings from Brute.

<sup>4</sup> George Chapman in the Preface to his famous translation of Homer maintained that "Homer (saith Plato) was the Prince and maister of all prayes and vertues, the Emperour of wise men ... Onely kings & princes haue been Homers Patrones ... O high and magically rayseed prospect, from whence a true eye may see meanes to the absolute redresse, or much to be wished extenuation, of all he vnmanly degenerencies now tyransying amongst vs. (1589), iii-v.

<sup>5</sup> From the Greek, *oi neoteroi*; see Cicero, *Att.* 7.2.1. 50 BC; *poetae novi*, *Orat.* 161, 46 BC; *cantores Euphorionis*, *Tusc.* 3.45 (45 BC); and Horace, *Sat.* 2.5.41 on lesser men who aped the fashion.

<sup>6</sup> A brief synopsis of the career of Callimachus serves to indicate how closely the Alexandrine movement among the "moderns" imitated its precursor. Callimachus, during his dispute with Apollonius Rhodius, wrote *Ibis*, "a wilfully obscure poem in mockery of Apollonius, which gave Ovid the idea for his poem of the same name". Prominent among Callimachus' pupils was Eratosthenes of Cyrene, head of the Alexandrian library and the first to call himself philologus, whose works comprised, *Platonicus*, *On the Means and Duplication of the Cube*, *On the Measurement of the Earth*, *Geographica*, and a short epic *Anteriny* or *Hesiod*, which dealt with the death of Hesiod and the punishment of his murderers. Aristophanes of Byzantium, who succeeded Eratosthenes as head of Alexandrian Library, edited Hesiod, Alcaeus and Alcman, published the first edition of Pindar and helped formalize the Alexandrian canon. See *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Hammond and Scullard, 1970), 43-4, 184-6.

<sup>7</sup>Virginia C. Kenny treats the country house poem as it “explores the themes of individual retreat and national expansion where they occur in the same work” (1984), ix.

<sup>8</sup>James R. Jacob and Timothy Raylor (1991), 213.

<sup>9</sup>Sir William Davenant (1651), preface. The standard modern edition is David F. Gladish (1971).

<sup>10</sup>William D’Avenant and David F. Gladish (1971), 249.

<sup>11</sup>See Thomas Carew (1949), xiii-lix for an overview of Carew’s life and work and xxxv for *Preferment at court as a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber extraordinary* (April, 1630). Also see G. Clarke, Esq., formerly Lord of the Admiralty and Secretary to Prince George of Denmark, who relates: “Queen Henrietta Maria. – Thomas Carew, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, going to light King Charles into her chamber, saw Jermyn Lord St-Albans with his arm round her neck; – he stumbled and put out the light; – Jermyn escaped; Carew never told the KING, and the King never knew it. The Queen heaped favours on Carew” (1879), 244.

<sup>12</sup>See Lawrence M. Bryant, (1992).

<sup>13</sup>Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion, or A chorographicall Description of the Tracts, Riuers, Mountaines, Forests, and other Parts of this renowned Isle of Great Britaine* (London, Mathew Lownes et al., 1613) reprinted in (1931), v.

<sup>14</sup>Richard Helgerson (1992), 146.

<sup>15</sup>Drayton et al. (1931)

<sup>16</sup>Drayton et al. (1931), 22.

<sup>17</sup>Drayton et al. (1931), 21.

<sup>18</sup>Drayton et al. (1931), 16.

<sup>19</sup>Drayton et al. (1931), 17.

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**ABSTRACT**

In this article the author examines the way in which concepts of citizenship and rights have been transmitted not only by conquest, but also by the imitation of Greek and Roman models. Also, the article discusses the way in which early modern empires, modelling themselves on the classical Roman empire in particular, bring these two elements together. Extensive historiographical work on the reception of European thought in the New World has been produced on both sides of the Atlantic and some important contributions that deal with the impact of the New World encounters in European thought have recently been made. However, the author argues that little work has been done on classical modelling as a vehicle for the transmission of concepts. The long tradition of classical learning, revived in the European Renaissance, made Latin the *lingua franca* of Europe, and school curricula across Europe ensured that members of the Republic of Letters were exposed to the same texts. This, together with the serviceability of the Roman model as a manual for Empire, ensured the rapid transmission of classical republican and imperial ideas. The author takes England and the British Empire as a case study and provides a variety of examples of classical modelling.

**KEYWORDS**

Classical modelling, citizenship, empire, country house poems, transmission of concepts, Hobbes.