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Katherine Quinsey
University of Windsor

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"No Christians thirst for Gold!": Religion and Colonialism in Pope

In the combined expansion and delineation of borders both geographical and ideological that marked the emergence of early modern British empire and nationhood, the paradoxes were most vividly apparent in the politics of religion. Recent history and cultural criticism, informed by postcolonial perspectives, has focussed on early modern English Catholicism in particular as a religion proscribed by the state in the project of British nationalism. Work by such varied scholars as Alison Shell, Linda Colley, and Raymond Tumbleson has explored the extent to which not only British national identity but the English Enlightenment defined itself by constructing Catholicism as alien, irrational, and monstrous.¹ The process can be compared to Said's model of orientalization, whereby the primordial culture of origin becomes made Other;² Said's descriptors for an "orientalized" other are vividly apparent in the binary construction by which English Protestantism

1. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), ch. 1; Raymond D. Tumbleson, *Catholicism in the English Protestant Imagination: Nationalism, Religion, and Literature, 1660-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). The complexities of the relation between Protestantism and British nationalism are examined in Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, eds., *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland c. 1650-c. 1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

2. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 1-21.

defined itself against a Catholicism seen as decadent and tyrannical, primitive and irrational, governed by "superstition" and unquestioning obedience to an oriental potentate. As Catholicism changed its identity over the period of less than a century from the indigenous religion of the English people to "popery," a foreign faith ruled by a foreign authority,³ English Catholics became an indigenous population who were in some senses deracinated, or colonized within their own culture-- political and legal rights curtailed, and their "native" religion suppressed in favour of an imposed state religion.

In England, Catholicism thus had a double identity as both foreign faith and folk superstition, part of a primitive past generally characterized as the Dark Ages of monkish ignorance--as Pope himself describes it in *The Rape of the Lock*, "All the Nurse and Priest have taught."⁴ This association of Catholicism with primitive superstition was part of the colonialist dynamic of the "first Empire" or English domination of the British archipelago, seen especially in the treatment of the native Irish, who were portrayed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a barbarian population to be christianized, comparable to the native North Americans; in the more extreme version of this strategy, the Irish were treated as a dangerous indigenous population to be brutally suppressed and their culture eradicated, to be replaced by

3. See for example studies by Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400-1.1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992); J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984); A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, rev. ed. (London: Fontana / Collins, 1973).

4. Canto 1, l. 30, in John Butt, ed., *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A One-Volume Edition of the Twickenham Pope* (London: Methuen, 1963), 219.

the civilized and Protestant British culture.⁵ This link between Catholicism and "savage" indigeneity was heightened by the more extreme Protestantism characteristic of British national identity in the late sixteenth century, which was associated with British imperialism and fuelled by a sense of Providential destiny, particularly a desire to prove Britain's difference from the Spanish (and Catholic) European Other--not merely out of economic rivalry but also from religious

5. Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 24; Bruce McLeod, *The Geography of Empire in English Literature 1580-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 61-71; Willy Maley, *Salvaging Spenser: Colonialism, Culture, and Identity* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997), and Andrew Hadfield, *Spenser's Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), cited in McLeod, *Geography*, 34. See also Canny, "Identity Formation in Ireland: The Emergence of the Anglo-Irish," *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. Canny and Anthony Pagden, 159-175 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), for persistent construction of the native Irish as barbarians, with parallels to European colonialism in North America and elsewhere. The virulently anti-Catholic critic John Dennis applies the same equation of popery and Indian primitivism to Pope himself, eloquently paraphrased by Pope in the prefatory testimonials to the *Dunciad Variorum* (1729): "Mr. Dennis himself. . . assureth the public, that he [Pope] is an *open* and *mortal enemy* to his *country*; a monster, that *will*, one day, shew as *daring* a soul as a *mad Indian*, who runs a *muck* to kill the first Christian he meets," James Sutherland, ed., *Alexander Pope: The Dunciad*, 3rd. ed. rev. (London: Methuen; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 39.

conviction.⁶

Pope is generally read as an authoritative voice for Western cultural dominance, chief guardian of conservative Augustan classicism and proponent of British imperialism. While Pope is usually portrayed as complicit with the British imperial project,⁷ little critical writing as yet looks closely at the direct representation of colonialism in his writing, still less at its relation to English Catholicism. As a member of the indigenous Catholic population, Pope infuses his writing with a conscious sense of difference arising from his status as one who is both citizen and colonized subject. From this stance, he creates for himself

6. Louis B. Wright, *Religion and Empire: The Alliance between Piety and Commerce in English Expansion, 1558-1625* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), passim; Christopher Hodgkins, *Reforming Empire: Protestant Colonialism and Conscience in British Literature* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2002), ch. 2, 3. Armitage downplays Protestant conviction as a motive force for imperialism, but sees it as united in anti-Catholicism (*Ideology*, 62-67).

7. Laura Brown, *Alexander Pope* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 3. Brown's trenchant critical study reads Pope's poetic form and imagery as elaborately concealing and promoting the British imperial project (see especially chs. 1 and 4); her book elicited a response from Howard Erskine-Hill, "Pope and Slavery," in *Alexander Pope: Word and World*, 27-53, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 91 (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), where he sees Pope as "vigorous[ly]" denouncing slavery. John Richardson, in "Alexander Pope's *Windsor-Forest*: Its Contexts and Attitudes Towards Slavery," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35.1 (Fall 2001): 1-17, provides a well-historicized, nuanced response to both positions, seeing Pope and his contemporaries as well aware of the implications of the *asiento* clause of the Treaty of Utrecht, but engaging in euphemistic avoidance in their polemic.

an alternate realm of moral and spiritual authority. His position as a Catholic specifically supports the *vir bonus* stance of the satirist—“Unplac'd, unpension'd, no man's Heir, or Slave.”⁸ From there, he invokes the realm of religious authority, pointing the “last pen for Freedom” squarely at the heart of political corruption, immorality and irreligion—“Yes, I am proud; I must be proud, to see / Men not afraid of God, afraid of me.”⁹

Pope's relation to the models of British cultural dominance and emerging national identity, particularly in its colonialist expression, is more complicated. He is deeply engaged in the roots of British notions of empire in pre-Arthurian myth, in the putative Brutus project, in which he envisions himself as “My Countrys Poet” (Butt 836). As the heir of Christian humanism and Renaissance classicism, seen in the model of the *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* outlined in the *Essay on Criticism* (and massively parodied in the final *Dunciad*), Pope is also imaginatively rooted in the master narrative of Western civilization, the chief legitimizing myth of cultural imperialism. Yet his own identity as an English recusant leads him to appropriate and revise both Western classicism and British nationalism in significant ways. He questions and revises the Protestant tropes of British identity, in particular that of “Liberty,” throughout his writing. He goes to considerable lengths to rehistoricize and disrupt the dynamic of Self and Other, the binary oppositions, underlying British anti-popery and

8. *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*, l. 116, in Butt, 617. Pope's association of Catholicism with political integrity is examined by Erskine-Hill in *The Social Milieu of Alexander Pope: Lives, Example, and the Poetic Response* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 67, 71, 98-99.

9. *Epilogue to the Satires: Dialogue II*, ll. 208-209, in Butt, 701.

Protestant nationhood, by which Protestantism implies intellectual and spiritual freedom, enlightenment, moderation, reason, and British liberty, not to mention property, while Catholicism implies medieval ignorance, intellectual and spiritual slavery, French tyranny, despotic oriental-style government, and primitive superstition.¹⁰ In his more

10. This opposition was so commonplace as to appear even in casual conversation (Catholic neighbours would typically be referred to as nice people though "superstitious"). Pope responds to it when writing a letter (published as to fellow Catholic Edward Blount, probably a conflation of one to Blount and one to Pope's prominent Catholic friend John Caryll) on 27 August 1714, concerning the siege of Barcelona: "May I venture to say, who am a Papist, and to say to you who are a Papist, that nothing is more astonishing to me, than that people so greatly warm'd with a sense of Liberty, should be capable of harbouring such weak Superstition, and that so much bravery and so much folly, can inhabit the same breasts?", George Sherburn, ed. *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 247. A similar dynamic informs Pope's defence of the *Essay on Criticism* from the complaints of more conservative Catholic critics in writing to Caryll on 19 July 1711, where he sees himself as defending the Church from the "scandal" of superstition: ". . . we are the smaller party, and consequently the most misrepresented and most wanting vindication from a slander. For the same reason I took occasion to mention the superstition of some ages after the subversion of the Roman Empire, which is too manifest a truth to be denied, and does in no sort reflect upon the present Catholics, who are free from it. Our silence in these points may with some reason make our adversaries think we allow and persist in those bigotries, which in reality all good and sensible men despise, tho' they are persuaded not to speak against them . . ."

(*Correspondence*, vol. 1, 126-127).

purely literary works, such as the *Essay on Criticism* and the 1728-1729 *Dunciads*, Pope associates an idealized Rome with classical cultural authority but also specifically with enlightened Catholicism, and makes a strenuous effort to reclaim Catholicism as a religion agreeable to civilized humanist achievement. He defines "Liberty" in relation to a translated model of classical tradition, redefining the colonial dynamic on which both classicism and British nationalism are based, and devoting significant poetic energy, throughout his work, to revising images of British global dominance in a manner that harmonizes with the English Catholic position.

As Bridget Orr points out, British global domination was fraught with inner contradictions, based in an anxiety to prove their difference from Catholic Europe. Both the Whig idealizing of the mercantile empire and the Tory humanist critique of materialism and exploitation shared an energetic attempt to blur distinctions between the "enemies of Christendom," Catholicism and Islam (read also Spanish, French, and Turkish rivals for the colonial enterprise).¹¹ On another level, the British colonial enterprise of the late sixteenth century was fuelled by Protestant religious imperatives, blurring economic and spiritual motives, but with the common aim, fuelled by the Black Legend of Spanish atrocities in the Americas, elided with the Reformation rhetoric of popery as the antichrist, of proving themselves Not-Spanish, Not-Catholic--Protestant British saviours of oppressed natives, exemplars of moderation and tolerance.¹² As Orr suggests, Britain found ancient models for the colonial imperative not only in the *translatio imperii*, the removal of the seat of power from Rome to Britain, but, even more

11. Bridget Orr, "The Heroic Plays and Empire in the Restoration," in Susan Green and Steven N. Zwicker, eds., *John Dryden: A Tercentenary Miscellany* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 2001), 82-86.

12. Orr, "Heroic Plays"; Wright, 14-31, 46-51.; Hodgkins, ch. 3.

emphatically, in the *translatio studii*, the removal of the centre of cultural authority, of arts and "civilization," from one centre to the colonial other ("Heroic Plays," 78-79)--as Pope puts it, "And Arts still followed where her *Eagles flew*"¹³--thus remodelling colonialism as the conversion of suitably predisposed natives, and reinforcing British legitimation of the colonial enterprise by the blessings of civilization, or cultivation. Pope invokes this image of the *translatio* powerfully, even obsessively, throughout his work, culminating in the final *Dunciad*: he rehistoricizes the process of colonialism with a strong emphasis on the failure of military conquest and rule by force, and on the essential nature of colonization as cultural and spiritual conversion.

Finally, and most interestingly, Pope's poetic representations of the colonial dynamic are characterized by instability in point of view, a curious merging of the perspectives of the colonized subject and the colonizing authority. This instability has textual links to his complex position as an Englishman and a Catholic.

One of the most familiar examples is in the *Essay on Man*, 1.99-112.¹⁴ This passage is now rarely read in its local rhetorical context in the *Essay*, where it is part of an extended critique of reasoning pride, and, as such, is meant to challenge the normal power relations between Western scientific "exploration" and the native way of life:

Lo! The poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind

13. *An Essay on Criticism*, l. 686, in Emile Audra and Aubrey Williams, eds., *Alexander Pope: Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism* (London: Methuen; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 317. All quotations from these poems are taken from this edition.

14. Maynard Mack, ed. *Alexander Pope: An Essay on Man* (London: Methuen; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 27-28. All quotations from the *Essay* are taken from this edition.

Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
 His soul proud Science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
 Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
 Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
 Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
 Some happier island in the watry waste,
 Where slaves once more their native land behold,
 No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold!
 To Be, contents his natural desire,
 He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's file;
 But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.

While overtly taking the Western, educated, observing-subject, condescending perspective ("Lo!"), Pope also creates a sense of identification with what we would call the subaltern object; though inevitably he constructs the Indian's point of view, nonetheless, throughout the entire passage that point of view dominates. The eliding of the Indian with deported slaves (a similar elision to that made at the end of *Windsor-Forest*), while it may obscure the colonial triangle (of Britain, Africa, North America) and the slave trade at the time, at the same time indicates the pervasiveness of the association, which shaped both economic and cultural consciousness (see Richardson, "Pope," 13). Pope's couplet structure links this identification with the powerful critique of colonizers' rapacity, which made hell on earth for both slaves and American natives. This echoes the traditional anti-Spanish, anti-Catholic travelogues of early British exploration, in which Britain transfers the blame for Western greed to the Spanish Other,¹⁵ but it also bears a curious relation to the dichotomy set up in

15. Among the best-known examples are Raleigh's *Discovery of Guiana*

Catholic tradition itself, and exemplified in one of Pope's own favourite authors René Rapin, who contrasts Catholic spiritual mission and sacrifice to Protestant materialism and greed.¹⁶ Indeed, the "black legend" of Spanish cruelty in the Americas was itself based on the reports of the Dominican Bishop of Mexico City Bartolomé de Las Casas, helping motivate the Church to dissociate itself from the temporal aspects of colonialism; more, the Catholic Church in the seventeenth

(1595), in Jack Beeching, ed. and abr., *Richard Hakluyt: Voyages and Discoveries* (New York and London: Penguin, 1972), 388, 396; Raleigh recognized the importance of converting New World natives to stop "the intollerable tyranny of the Spanish" and the "mouthes of the Romish Catholicks" (qtd. in Wright, 29). The virulently anti-Catholic Francis Drake sailed with Bible and Foxe's *Martyrs* on board, held regular devotions (Wright, 14-15), and in his famous journal emphasizes Protestant piety in dealings with natives (Beeching, 180-182). This model was translated into the heroic drama of the mid-seventeenth century, most notably Davenant's 1658 operatic interlude *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (cited in Orr, 84), and Dryden's heroic plays *The Indian Queen* (1664) and *The Indian Emperour* (1664). By 1704 a similar contrast is being drawn between a French model of universal monarchy and English federative rule, on the classical model, in John Dennis's *Liberty Asserted* (Orr, 77, 82); Dennis's anti-popery was if anything more virulent than Drake's, and is most famously illustrated in his various attacks on Pope, many of which were carefully preserved by the latter in his appendices to the *Dunciad*.

16. René Rapin, *The Spirit of Christianity*, trans. Walter Kirkham Blount (London: Henry Hills, 1686), 23-24. This little book was recommended by Pope to his friend Sir William Trumbull, as mentioned in a letter from Trumbull to Ralph Bridges 26 March, 1709, qtd. in Brean Hammond, *Pope and Bolingbroke: A Study of Friendship and Influence* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984), 27.

century took a position separating itself from the material aspects of colonialism to emphasize spiritual conversion, doing so through policies of cultural relativism and accommodation (1659).¹⁷ It is also notable that Pope's couplet does not identify the greed of Christians with the Spanish *per se*, but uses the generalized term "Christians" that was applied to all European explorers in travel and exploration narratives

17. While the work of Las Casas spectacularly exposed the corruptions of the colonial enterprise, the Church based its policies on the teaching of Francisco de Vitoria of Salamanca (also Dominican), who taught universal ownership of the earth and a policy of colonial empowerment and self-government (Robert Delavignette, *Christianity and Colonialism*, trans. J. R. Foster [New York: Hawthorn Press, 1974], 53-55). The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, founded by Pope Gregory XV in 1622, outlined in detail a policy of respect for native cultures as key to its mission. The manual published for vicars apostolic in 1659 outlined this policy in detail: "Do not take our countries to them, but the faith, that faith which does not repulse or offend the rites and customs of a country, provided they are not detestable, but on the contrary desires that they should be preserved and protected. . . . How much worse it will be if, having abolished [their] customs, you seek to put in their place the manners of your own country, introduced from outside! Never make comparisons between the usages of these peoples and those of Europe; on the contrary, make haste to accustom yourself to them" (Delavignette, 59-60). It should be noted that the teachings of Vittoria were familiar to Protestants, notably the travel writer Samuel Purchas (Armitage, 81), whose travels were owned by Pope (Maynard Mack, "Pope's Books: A Bibliographical Survey with a Finding List," in *English Literature in the Age of Disguise*, ed. Maximillian Novak, 289 [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977]).

of the time, including, of course, the British.

The "poor Indian" passage, in its rhetorical context in the *Essay*, is about breaking down hierarchies, in particular the received hierarchy between proud Science and simple Nature (or, in our terms, between empowered Enlightenment observer and observed, objectified, feminized subject); both scientist and Indian are equally limited and human. Moreover, the contrast between the celestial imaginings of the scientist (1.21-32) and the humbler beliefs of the Indian show the Indian's to be Biblical, in the traditional psalmic imagery, used elsewhere straightforwardly in the *Essay*, of God in the clouds and wind.¹⁸ The whole passage, which appears on the surface to construct the "untutor'd" native point of view while privileging Western judgment, is part of a vociferous critique of that same Western judgment, and is thus very unsettled in its ironic framework, suggesting Pope's own problematical relationship to British colonial domination as well as to Enlightenment materialism. Even the "faithful dog" line, seemingly intended to mock the Indian's naïveté, picks up a strong theme from Epistle III of the *Essay*, that of human companionship with and creaturely link to animals ("joint tenant of the shade," 3.152)--not to mention Pope's own well-documented liking for dogs.

The passage is further unsettling in its relation to Catholic missionary theology: the Indian presumably lives in a state of invincible ignorance, but Pope accords him the same state of hope given to other equally limited humans, and moreover gives Christians very bad press.¹⁹ It is remarkable that Pope should describe the Indian's idea of

18. *Essay* 2.109-110--"Not God alone in the still calm we find;/ He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind."

19. Pope declares himself a universalist on a number of occasions in his letters, and takes issue with the teaching of no salvation outside the pale of the church in his letters to Caryll on the *Essay* on

heaven specifically in terms of its safety, purity, and shelter from Western domination. The Indian's idea of the afterlife includes neither Christian hell nor Christian heaven (fiends or angels); the revision of l. 108 (from "Nor Christians" to "No Christians") deliberately stresses the parallel between the fiends of hell and Christian rapacity, invoking not only traditional teaching against greed as one of the seven deadly sins (shortly to be portrayed in the *Epistle to Bathurst*), but also contemporary travelogue accounts of the Indians seeing white men as demons or gods, by now almost a commonplace. Note also the clever elision of the flames of hell and the "thirst" of cupiditas, one of which, in Pope's orthodox opinion, will very shortly lead to the other. The shift to positive statement, "To Be, contents his natural desire," can be seen as reflecting traditional Native teaching,²⁰ and also suggests a state of being more appropriate for man than the false ambition criticized elsewhere in the *Essay*. The challenge to the Western reader's point of view is strongly picked up in the rhetorical shift to the next section of the poem—"Go, wiser thou!"

Windsor-Forest, coming out of the period of Tory nationalist fervour under Anne, celebrates both Britain's internal order under Anne and Britain's global, economic colonial domination, drawing both into a larger analogical picture: harmony within the nation, harmony of man and nature under God, under the monarch the representative of God on earth; and nations ultimately in global harmony under the benevolent domination of Britain. The poem's non-linear, repetitious, episodic version of British history is in keeping with the georgic form, which juxtaposes

Criticism, see especially 19 July, 1711, *Correspondence* 1.126.

20. Concepts of Native beliefs and cultural practices were available to the British public through the travel narrative tradition, sufficiently recognized by this time to be popularized in the periodical press as accounts of Native moral and philosophical superiority. See for example *Spectator* nos. 11 and 56.

blocks of description and narrative, setting up implicit parallels and live correspondences. These work continually in Pope's poem, however, to unsettle the positive nationalistic ideals, most notably those around power and conquest--monarchical, colonial, and species-based (i.e., humanity's "natural" domination over animals). The poem continually highlights the violence inherent in colonial domination, whether military conquest, or the tyranny of monarch over subjects. Hunting imagery (itself a trope of the 1689 Settlement ideology²¹), though muted in the georgic mode, becomes the image of this violence, linked both with the conqueror / tyrant William I, and with Anne herself.²² The poem also problematizes the global ideal of Britain as benevolent colonizer, as the point of view of victor and victim becomes curiously blurred:²³

21. P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), 30.

22. The Jacobite tendencies in the poem have been long recognized and debated: see J.R. Moore, "Windsor-Forest and William III," *Modern Language Notes* 66 (1951): 451-545; E. R. Wasserman, *The Subtler Language: Critical Readings of Neoclassical and Romantic Poems* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1959), ch. 4; Pat Rogers, "'The Enamelled Ground': The Language and Heraldry and Natural Description in *Windsor-Forest*," *Studia Neophilologica* 45 (1973): 356-371; Douglas Brooks-Davies, "'Thoughts of Gods': Messianic Alchemy in *Windsor-Forest*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 18 (1988): 125-142. This critical tradition also examines the violence inherent in the poem and the problematics of the hunting imagery; for a more recent reading, see Brijraj Singh, "Windsor-Forest as a Modern and Postmodern Poem," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 18.3 (1992): 34-36.

23. J. Paul Hunter, "Form as Meaning: Pope and the Ideology of the Couplet," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 37.3 (Fall 1996): 263. See also Andrew Varney, "Ending the War and Making the

Thus (if small Things we may with great compare)
 When *Albion* sends her eager Sons to War,
 Some thoughtless Town, with Ease and Plenty blest,
 Near, and more near, the closing Lines invest;
 Sudden they seize th'amaz'd, defenceless Prize,
 And high in Air *Britannia's* Standard flies. (105-110)

Not only does the account of the conquest of this conquest contain an unsettling echo of the description of Albion's own peace under Anne ("Rich Industry sits smiling on the Plains, / And Peace and Plenty tell, a STUART reigns" [41-42]), but, as in the poor Indian passage, the perspective of the conquered and colonized is vividly stressed, while the emotions and ideology of the conquerors is left silent and blank. These lines also reveal the transition in Britain's identity, through the process of conquering, from Albion (the primitive name of Britain, emphasizing purity and whiteness, Britain itself as a virgin land to be conquered) to "Britannia," the official name of Britain as new Rome, empress of the world and inheritor of the Roman colonizer's authority. The phrasing "near, and more near" is the verbal parallel to a recurring concentric image in Pope, applied normally to an ever-expanding empire—"wide, and more wide" flows the charity of the "boundless heart" at the end of *Essay on Man*, and the influence of the empire of Dulness at the end of the *Dunciad*, Book II.²⁴ Here the phrase inverts the image of expanding empire, and with it the ideology of cultural conversion and global dominance, changing it to the image of a closing trap.

In other hunting episodes, Pope blurs the hierarchical boundaries

Peace: The Literary Languages of Public Controversy in 1713," *Guerres et Paix: la Grande-Bretagne au XVIII^e siècle*, tom. II, ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé (Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1998), 252-253.

24. Noted independently by Brown (150) and Quinsey, "Dualities of the Divine in Pope's *Essay on Man* and *The Dunciad*," *Symbolism: An International Journal of Critical Aesthetics* 4 (2004): 124.

between animal and human, again through representation of the victim's point of view, exerting subtle pressure within the framework of epic conventions of mortal glory and futility:

See! From the Brake the whirring Pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant Wings;
Short is his Joy! He feels the fiery Wound,
Flutters in Blood, and panting beats the Ground.
Ah! What avail his glossie, varying Dyes,
His Purple Crest, and Scarlet-circled Eyes,
The vivid Green his shining Plumes unfold;
His painted Wings, and Breast that flames with Gold? (111-117)

Oft, as the mounting Larks their Notes prepare,
They fall, and leave their little Lives in Air. (133-134)

In these lines a classic trope of British pastoral is rent asunder by violence. The lines are an extraordinarily vivid synaesthetic representation of the shooting death of small birds, as an object of our gaze, but the "little Lives" left in air suggest also the birds' subjectivity, the experience of the moment of death.

The animal-human divide is another ideological dividing line used to justify colonization and slavery, and Pope specifically associates it with the practice of slavery early in the poem; the division between animal and human is elided, yet emphasized, in the linguistic and legal origins of the Forest itself, when the Norman kings returned it to a savage state reflecting their own moral state. Pope focusses specifically on slavery as the result of a radical inversion in order, seen in beastly leadership; in traditional patriarchal monarchy the ruler should represent God, and the rational, spiritual principle, whereas these monarchs embody and enforce animality.

Not thus the Land appear'd in Ages past,
A dreary Desart and a gloomy Waste,

To savage Beasts and Savage Laws a Prey,
 And Kings more furious and severe than they:
 Who claim'd the Skies, dispeopled Air and Floods,
 The lonely Lords of empty Wilds and Woods.
 Cities laid waste, they storm'd the Dens and Caves,
 (For wiser Brutes were backwards to be Slaves.)
 What could be free, when lawless Beasts obey'd,
 And ev'n the Elements a Tyrant sway'd? (43-52)

Slavery is specifically associated with an inversion in the chain of being, and a violation of the laws of nature, in the "wiser Brutes [who] were backward to be Slaves" (50); it is the condition of existence under absolute monarchy (an idea normally deployed against Europe and Catholics, which Pope turns against the Protestant king in the lines eventually excised from poem).

The anti-Williamite tendencies in lines suppressed from editions of the poem until 1736 link Catholics to oppressed subjects under William I, and further underline the instability of Pope's point of view towards Anne: a key feature of Anne's policy (not unsurprisingly) was her devotion to the Protestant succession.²⁵

Oh may no more a foreign master's rage
 With wrongs yet legal, curse a future age!
 Still spread, fair Liberty! thy heav'nly wings,

25. While the Twickenham editors suggest that "fair Liberty, Britannia's Goddess" in the line immediately preceding may be Anne herself (159n), this seems both syntactically and politically unlikely, given the inclusion of this passage in the early editions. There is not room in this study to explore the full ramifications of Pope's ambiguities in representing Anne as monarch, a subject which has received some attention in studies of Jacobite tendencies in the poem, above.

Breathe plenty on the fields, and fragrance on the springs.

(ll. 91-94 [1736-1751]; Audra and Williams 159n)

The ideal of British Liberty, cornerstone of British national identity, was developing in the early decades of the century, while under some ideological stress: as is well recognized today and covertly recognized in Pope's time (Richardson, *passim*; Singh 36-37), British liberty and prosperity were in large measure founded on the *asiento* clause of the Peace of Utrecht, by which Britain was given controlling interest in Atlantic slave trade, a contradiction noted by Pope in the *peroratio* of this poem. In these excised lines Liberty is claimed for the land itself outside the dynamic of colonial control, and linked with the recurring notion of plenty and the fragrance more usually associated with Eastern riches. More, British ideas of Liberty are claimed as a right from the English Catholic perspective, with specific glance at their semi-colonized condition, the "wrongs yet legal" that deprived them of full liberty of citizenship, and put them into the position of colonized subjects within their own country, as the comparison to the invader William I suggests. As well, the term "foreign master" carries the imagery over into the discourse of slavery introduced under the Norman kings at the poem's beginning, and turns the anti-Catholic imagery of "foreignness" and "tyranny" against itself.

Pope attempts to resolve these instabilities through the apocalyptic vision of the poem's ending, in conventional millennial Restoration rhetoric, drawing heavily on the imagery of Isaiah 60, all nations coming to the City of God bringing offerings. This imagery was highly conventional by this time, as seen in representations of British mercantile mission in seventeenth-century pageants (Tumbleton, ch. 1), though it has a peculiar resonance throughout Pope's opus. In this period the allusion was also used to support contemporary mercantilist humanism, the idea that not only was Britain the trading centre of the

world, a new kind of imperial role,²⁶ but also that trade was meant to foster world harmony, a form of global neighbourliness or even brotherly love. As Pope puts it, "seas but join the regions they divide," in counteraction to colonialist division and the exploration dynamic of power; the image legitimizes Britain's economic and cultural dominance through the idea of trade as reciprocal, shared between global neighbours. As we would say today, Britain is simply a facilitator. The main point of Father Thames's speech appears to be the shift in the nature of empire, away from military conquest (Thunder and Cross, guns and British flag) to peaceful, open trade. Britain is now associated with peace and benevolence, as opposed to the military associations given the European and Asian locations; London is the new Rome, a female Caesar, Augusta, not a military conqueror but a beneficent female power, chosen by God-- as the millennial imagery suggests, the image of the City of God on earth.

Like the image of "fair Liberty" for those subjected to "wrongs yet legal," this powerful image of British global dominance contains its own ideological fissures. Pope specifically points this millennial vision towards a world that negates all colonialism, a world of peace and equality ("Conquest shall cease, and Slav'ry be no more"), a world where the direction of colonial power is reversed--the new world seeks and observes the old, native peoples are returned to pre-colonial peace and prosperity, ancient civilizations are restored. The irony of "Conquest shall cease, and Slav'ry be no more" would surely be hard to miss, for any reader familiar with the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht-- unless, of course, the doublethink involved was too powerful for anything but historical hindsight to overcome. The balanced line

26. *Spectator* no. 69, in *The Spectator: A New Edition, with Biographical Notices of the Contributors* (London: H. Washbourne; William Tegg, 1857), 82-83.

structure sets up an ironical parallel between "conquest" and the "slavery" that shall cease; the line immediately following simultaneously obscures and evokes the African blacks with its reference to the Indians who are ahistorically "freed" and the further inaccuracy of "sable" for their lovers (Erskine-Hill, "Pope and Slavery" 36). Thus the typical Eurocentric blurring of Others also works subliminally to highlight the distinctions, as it does in a similar elision in the *Essay on Man* passage discussed above ("Where slaves once more their native land behold, / No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold!"). It is conceivable that the association of freed slaves with restoration of "native groves" and "native lands" arises from a double consciousness of one who could no longer legally inherit in his own native land, subject to a "foreign master's rage." More generally, *Windsor-Forest's* intertextual relationships with other poems by Pope stress this discomfort with British colonial ideology; in *The Dunciad*, Pope's most sweeping narrative of colonial domination, which has the *translatio imperii* as its controlling action, and the corrupt city as its setting, the offerings of the world become the tribute of dead dogs rolling down to the same Thames.

The relationship between Catholicism and colonialism is most overtly negotiated in the *Essay on Criticism*, published a year earlier, coming from the same period of Pope's life, deep in Binfield and the heart of the Catholic community while emerging to prominence in the literary scene. A core issue in the poem is what can be called the "double Roman" theme, in which Pope plays repeatedly on the double significance of Rome as the center of classical cultural authority and the earthly center of Church authority--a recurring theme through the poem, opposed to conventional critiques of monkish narrowness. The most extended development of this idea takes place in the final section of the poem, where Pope expands the applications of criticism from the

moral and social to the global and transhistorical. In a wildly distorted thumbnail sketch of Western civilization, the Christian humanist Erasmus, Pope's professed exemplar, becomes the pivotal figure of the Renaissance--as he drives the "holy Vandals off the stage" and thus makes way for Leo X (in a somewhat ahistorical cause and effect!), he performs the personal and political function of reclaiming Catholicism for humanist tradition, providing an alternate model to the oppositional binary on which the emerging identity of both British nationalism and British colonialism depended.

More, Pope's account of the march of Western civilization from Rome to Britain also opens a way for a different model of the relationship of the colonizer and the colonized, together with a concept of British national identity which accommodates recusant beliefs. The spread of classical tradition in this section of the poem is emphatically represented as a colonizing process:

Poets, a *Race* long unconfin'd and free,
 Still fond and proud of *Savage Liberty*,
 Receiv'd his [Aristotle's] *Laws*, and stood convinc'd 'twas fit
 Who conquer'd *Nature*, shou'd preside o'er *Wit*.

Learning and *Rome* alike in empire grew,
 And *Arts* still *follow'd* where her *Eagles flew*; . . .

(649-652, 683-684)

Aristotle colonizes the "savage" and "free" race of poets; Rome colonizes through both military conquest and acculturation. Roman "arts" conquer Britain, conversely, as a result of Roman military defeat and the dissolution of the empire ("But soon by Impious Arms from *Latium* chas'd, / Their *ancient Bounds* the banish'd Muses past; . . . " [709-710]), but most significantly, through British recognition of their inherent value. While the close relationship of *imperium* and *studii* is crisply represented in ll. 683-684, the conquest relationship implied

breaks down when the actual *translatio* takes place--Britain only becomes the new Rome, both in power and cultural authority, when the old Rome is dissolved.

Central to this colonizing process as described by Pope is the process of conversion: poets are convinced of the value of Aristoteleian rules, as Britons are later of Roman cultural authority. This kind of conversion is at the core of the narrative of Pope's unwritten epic of British origins, "Brutus," where conversion is deliberately and repeatedly opposed to military conquest. The contrast between colonialism with a profit motive and colonialism that has conversion as its aim (a tension negotiated, as we have seen, in seventeenth-century Catholic formulations of missionary policy) is powerfully stated by Rapin, as he contrasts Protestant material greed and Catholic missionary zeal:

. . . though it be above an Age since some of our Neighbours, who have unhappily left the Faith, run into all parts of the World, there to plant Traffick and Commerce, which flourish amongst them: yet there has not yet appear'd any one Pastor of their Communion, that has had the virtue and courage to give his life to Baptize one Salvage, and Convert one Infidel. So true it is, that the disinterestedness and purity of Christian Charity, cannot be so much as counterfeited by Hereticks; who impudently boast themselves to inherit the Faith of the Apostles: when in reality they have not any mark of their Zeal, or sign of their Spirit; since they can behold without any concern, the People with whom they traffick continually, in a profound ignorance of the things necessary to their salvation. (*Spirit of Christianity*, 23-24)

More intriguing here, however, is the double role played by Britain in this colonizing process, and Pope's appropriation of Protestant British ideology in describing it. The notion of British "Liberty" was valorized through a concept of indigeneity, seen as the

essential quality of the native Britons and thus translated into the naturally dominant British culture. In the *Essay*, Britain is represented as the colonized subject, but it is a colonized subject, unlike France ("The rules a nation born to serve, obeys") that is "Fierce for the Liberties of Wit"--not fully colonized, still retaining a native character which in Pope's time was particularly identified with Liberty (and Protestantism), in contrast to France, the European Other, servile, Catholic, ruled by an all-powerful religious authority and an oriental potentate king. This "fierce" native subject ends up appropriating the centrality and ultimately the authority of the Roman colonizer, to become the center from which that culture is disseminated in imperial expansion.

The key element in this process as Pope described it, however, is the recognition of the inherent value of Roman authority, by those "who less presum'd, and better knew":

But we, brave *Britons*, *Foreign Laws* despis'd,
 And kept *unconquer'd* and *unciviliz'd*,
 Fierce for the *Liberties of Wit*, and bold,
 We still defy'd the *Romans*, as of old.
 Yet some there were, among the *sounder Few*
 Of those who *less presum'd*, and *better knew*,
 Who durst assert the *juster Ancient Cause*,
 And here *restor'd* Wit's *Fundamental Laws*. (715-722)

The phrase "juster Ancient Cause," in Pope, can be a linguistic echo of the loaded term "good old Cause" (still a live term at this time, associated with Puritanism, with rebellion and civil wars, and used by Pope in the *Dunciad* on two occasions to refer to the cause of Dulness). "Ancient" is multivalent, referring to classical culture but also with overtones of the old religion, the term that locates Catholicism as the indigenous English faith (as opposed to the good old cause of Calvinism, imported from Geneva). (It was a common phrase at this time, "the old

religion," when used by Protestant writers, or "our ancient faith," when used by Catholic writers.) As in the recusant argument for the universality of Church tradition,²⁷ wit's "fundamental laws" are universal, not culturally specific; and the equally loaded term "Restor'd" also has double valency. In this passage, it is not referring to the restoration of a monarchy but rather of a doctrinal framework and system of belief--classicisim as outlined in the first section of the *Essay*, with Homer as Biblical authority and the ancients as a communion of saints. It is rather more reminiscent, then, of the use of the term "restor'd" in early English Catholic post-Reformation polemic, i.e. the restoration of the English Church. Pope thus shapes his own version of British national identity through appropriating Protestant ideals of liberty and re-examining the concept of indigenous British culture. Catholicism is associated with an older Britain, while Britain is harmonized into a global context by adopting Roman rules. Both the indigenous and cosmopolitan (colonizing) nature of Catholicism is addressed here, and applied to British national and cultural identity.

A similar understanding of the process of colonization and British identity can be seen in Pope's outline of his mythic history (or pre-history) of Britain--the unwritten blank verse epic "Brutus," closely linked to the *Essay on Man* as a projected part of the *opus magnum*, but having its imaginative roots in this early period of the Homer translations, when Pope was conferring with Aaron Thompson on his

27. See for example James Sharpe [Francis Pollard], *Trial of the Protestant Private Spirit* (1630): "Because truth and faith is not private to one nor singular in any, but common to all and generally received by all the faithful . . . so also the Spirit of truth is not private to any one but common to all the faithful" (139), qtd. in George H. Tavard, *The Seventeenth-Century Tradition: A Study in Recusant Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 74.

British History, a version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's British history. Monmouth's famous story was one foundation for the British imperialist myth in the late sixteenth century (Hodgkins, ch. 1), and this pre-Arthurian myth is also part of the allusive matrix of *Windsor-Forest*. This unwritten poem--available to us only in a second-hand account, manuscript plans, and a fragment of verse--of the man who was "My Countrys Poet" but could never be laureate represents Pope's most direct attempt to define British identity through its roots, in the context of his own cultural and religious ideals--the civilized community with "the arts of good government" and "true religion" at its centre.

In this story Britain comes into being through the process of colonization, the transmission of a dominant culture onto (apparently) receptive natives. The power relation, however, is significantly altered from contemporary and classical historical reality. For one thing, Britain, as the new Troy founded (like Rome) by a Trojan refugee, is Rome's analogue, not its descendant, in keeping with the emergent emphasis in this period on British culture as distinct from classical. For another, Brutus's distinguishing trait--his ruling passion--is "benevolence" (as Aeneas's was piety)--figured here as the large-hearted wish to spread his own civic and religious virtues to the less enlightened but potentially enlightenable people he encounters, in a reflection of Rapin's contrast between Catholic and Protestant colonialism, and the need for conversion. In response to certain of his followers who wish to settle in Tenerife and live "without encroaching upon others, without the guilt of a conquest,"

Brutus . . . rejects this narrow and selfish proposition, as incompatible with his generous plan of extending benevolence, by instructing and polishing uncultivated minds. He despises the mean thought of providing for the happiness of themselves alone, and

sets the great promises of heaven before them.²⁸

The dominant theme in Brutus's quest is not military conquest (indeed, the proponents of military conquest and forced rule in this story tend to come to a sticky end) but rather conversion of suitably predisposed natives to his modes of religion, government, and society:

The climate [of Albion] is described to be equally free from the effeminacy and softness of the southern climes, and the ferocity and savageness of the northern. The natural genius of the native being thus in the medium between these extremes, was well adapted to receive the improvements in virtue, he meditated to introduce.

 . . . one of his kinsmen, who is young, fierce, and ambitious. . .
 is earnest for conquering all by force, and treating the people who submitted to him as slaves.

But Brutus gives it as his opinion, not to conquer and destroy the natives of the new-discovered land, but to polish and refine them, by introducing true religion, void of superstition and all false notions of the Deity, which only leads to vice and misery, among people who are uncorrupted in their manners, and only want the introduction of useful arts, under the sanction of a good government, to establish and ensure their felicity. (418, 420)

Like the "wiser Few" in the *Essay on Criticism*, the British are shown to be thus predisposed, and the British native character is essentialized as kindly, moderate, peaceable, enlightened/enlightenable, linked to their temperate climate. Moreover, through this description, and through the providential epic framework, Pope appropriates the traditional Protestant ideology of Britain as a nation peculiarly favoured by

28. From the outline given by Owen Ruffhead, *The Life of Alexander Pope* (1769) (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968), 414.

Providence, with "true religion" at its core and "superstition" confounded, yet sharing its roots with Rome. These are exactly the terms that were deployed against English Catholics: their religion was represented as false, as destructive of the nation's integrity, and as superstitious and primitive, while at the same time devious, foreign, and corrupt. Pope appropriates the terms of this polemic for his own purposes, as part of his ongoing attempt to vindicate humanist Catholicism as compatible with, even central to, civilized society.

The British Providential framework is adapted to Pope's theological sensibilities through the introduction of a designated guardian angel, and a context of sin and atonement:

The second book opens with a picture of the supreme God in all his majesty, sitting on his throne in the highest heaven. The superintending angel of the Trojans empire (the *Regnum Priami vetus*) falls down before the throne, and confesses his justice in having overturned that kingdom, for the sins of the princes, and of the people themselves. But adds, that after having chastised and humbled them, it would now be agreeable to his mercy and goodness, to raise up a new state from their ruins, and form a people who might serve him better. That, in Brutus, his Providence had a fit instrument for such a gracious design.

This prostrate angel is raised by the Almighty, and permitted to attend upon Brutus in his voyage to Britain, in order to assist him in the reduction of that island. (413)

Pope alters British providentialism to stress a theology of sin and punishment, the Old Testament concept of the chosen people who must be deserving--only the next generation can enter the promised land (Numbers 14:31). The suggestion of the sins of kings and (with less guilt) of the people, resembles the critique of monarchical imperialism in *Windsor-Forest*, and thus further qualifies Pope's representation of the English imperialist myth.

Brutus and the Britain myth were key elements in the early development of British national identity and its concomitant imperialism, even from the earliest concepts of "British empire" in medieval history (Hodgkins, ch. 1). By Pope's time, the central concept of Britain was thus hybrid, a union of indigeneity and civilization, native integrity and assimilated classical culture. Ironically, this union of British independence and Roman authority was also a traditional feature of English Catholicism, and, more emphatically, the main feature of Catholicism as interpreted by Pope. Nonetheless, in Pope's writing, the reality of imperial power and colonialist injustice, as experienced both in British global dominance and in his own English Catholic position, generates ambiguity, volatility, and displacement in his representation of British ideals. Indeed, it is that experience that may underlie the greatest erasure of all in Pope's poetry, the national epic that he never wrote--his own, and Britain's, Brutus.