EXILE AS AN EXISTENTIAL CONDITION

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We are here for the next three days, at the far reaches of the Roman Empire, to think about the experience of exile – and its effects on the art and artists who have been exiled. Those of us who are guests from elsewhere, speaking the barbaric language of the hyperboreans, the people from the back of the North Wind, who inhabit an island beyond Gaul, can be thankful we at least have received a warmer welcome than that received by Ovid when he first arrived in Tomis and recorded his own experiences of exile in his collection of poems entitled *Tristia*. If, in his second and last collection, *Epistulae ex Ponto*, he revised his view of the natives, the weight of exile itself had not lifted from him. He has become for us the epitome of the artist in exile, forced, not by choice, to live (and eventually to die) somewhere he can never think of as 'home'.

But though we are here to honour Ovid, let us remember that he was not the first exile to bemoan his fate, nor the first artist to complain that he could not create in a strange land. Sometime between 597 and 538 BC an unknown Hebrew poet gave voice to the sadness of exile in what we now know as Psalm 137. Here is the King James Bible's translation:

> By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
> How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand lose her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Few biblical commentators, however, point out the paradox at the heart of this well-known psalm: that, like so many Romantic poets after him, the writer is creating a poem about what he tells us is his total inability to 'sing' – to create art. Nor is even this 2,500 year-old poem the first to express such sentiments. A much older Ugaritic text dating from before the Hebrew conquest in about 1,400 BC runs 'if I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand wither…'

That long pre-Christian association of Jerusalem with the city from which we are in exile has come down through European Judeo-Christian art from at least the time of Ovid. It is, of course, central to Augustine's image of the City of God. Even before the Arab conquest of Palestine in the seventh century, Christians had learned to think of themselves collectively as a people in exile, with no abiding city. At times this identification had peculiar results. For the Protestants conquering Ulster in Ireland in the seventeenth century it seemed only natural to invoke images of the Israelites in the Book of Joshua, occupying the land of Canaan as given them by God.. To the conquered Catholic Irish it seemed no less obvious to compare themselves with the Children of Israel in bondage in Egypt – a reciprocity of images that prompted Conor Cruise O'Brien to comment that at times it seemed as if Ireland was inhabited not by Catholics and Protestants, but by two sets of imaginary Jews (O'Brien 309).

In 1795, some nine years before the probable date of Blake's poem 'Jerusalem', Joseph Bromehead had written another popular variation of this ever-popular theme:

> Jerusalem, my happy home,
> when shall I come to thee?
> When shall my sorrows have an end?
> Thy joys when shall I see?

That English word, 'home', has few precise equivalents in other languages, conveying as it does connotations of 'my place', 'the place where things are familiar', 'the place where I belong', and even 'the place where I began – but, God help me ! – have no intention of ever going back to…' For many of the English Romantics, exile was a cause of complaint but worn as a badge of honour. One thinks of Shelley fleeing the country with Mary Wolstonecraft Junior – not to mention a pregnant Claire Clairmont in tow – or of Byron, hounded out of the country by dark rumours of incest. Less dramatic, but perhaps in some way more poetically productive were the Brownings, fleeing to Italy from an impossible and angry father. In all three cases it is hard to think of their work outside the context of Italian exile.

But if, for some, life is a journey where there is no turning back, for others it is a process whereby one only discovers one's roots by leaving them. For T.S. Eliot, the American living in chosen exile in London:

> '…the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And to know the place for the first time.
> ('Little Gidding' V)

Whether that 'knowing' is platonic recognition, or the new discovery of the explorer, is left deliberately unsaid. But despite a life of considerable unhappiness and dislocation, it is noticeable that Eliot did *not* choose to return to his roots in St Louis, Misouri. If exile may be primarily where we do not feel at home, that, of course, may be a voluntary as much as an involuntary experience. Some writers have *chosen* not to feel at home

Indeed, a failure to feel at home may even be more closely connected with the creative impulse than might appear at first glance. Right at the heart of that sense of alienation, whether chosen or forced, there is a paradox central to nearly all literature: exile, for instance, may be necessary to our sense of place. Let me explain. There is, I think, no need to elaborate to an audience as sophisticated as this the reasons for upholding the thesis that 'exile', as we are using the word, is *created* by literature – that it is, to an astonishing degree, the product of the written, and, above all, the printed word. Why are we gathered in Constanta today? Because the poet Ovid was exiled here some two thousand years ago – and *wrote about his experience*. It is not the fact of exile, but the *writing* of exile that is important. In other words, from our point of view, exile is not so much a geographical placement as an experience in reflected in words, an existential condition.

The same is true even of 'landscape'. The more one looks at the great celebrations of place, and the writers and the words that have transformed a particular locality into universal myth, the more one is struck by the close association of those twin poles of attraction and alienation. Why do tourists from abroad flock every summer to the English Lake District, when, to be frank, the world is full of equally beautiful landscapes of lakes and mountains ? – many areas, even as close as large parts of Wales and Scotland, claiming vistas far more 'unspoiled' by the tourist trade. The answer, of course, is in one word: 'Wordsworth' – perhaps, incidentally, the perfect symbolic name for any worker in language…

Those of you who know Marjorie Hope Nicholson's seminal study, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*, will know the astonishing story of the transformation of our sensibilities towards mountains from loathing to awe in the last few hundred years. The earliest recorded mountaineer was St Bernard, whose holiness and powers of self-mortification were established for all time when he climbed a major Alpine peak – thereby performing, as a supreme act of penance, the most unpleasant act it was possible for anyone to conceive of. Even the poet Gray, visiting the Lake District only a few years before Wordsworth settled there, was overwhelmed by sensations of 'horror' – though by the late eighteenth century, of course, a person with any claim to real feeling could be expected to submit to a great deal of inconvenience to get a properly aesthetic sensation of horror.

Part of the peculiar power that Wordsworth's best landscape poetry has exercised on later generations is due precisely to that tension between

pleasure and repulsion. In his great autobiographical epic, only retrospectively called *The Prelude*, he describes himself as 'fostered alike by beauty and by fear,' and, as many of his critics have noted, a sense of fear or alienation has accompanied much of his best writing. To describe Wordsworth as being an 'exile' in the Lake District may seem strange when he was born in Cockermouth and had been to school in Hawkshead, yet we only need to recall the elegaic stanzas of his 'Immortality Ode' to realize that for him also exile was less a physical exclusion than an existential condition.

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere it's setting,
> And cometh from afar:
> Not in entire forgetfulness
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home:

Many would date the beginning of Wordsworth's poetic decline from the time when he began to lose that sense of being an exile in a strange land, and first began to feel himself truly at home in his native landscape.

Like Wordsworth and Eliot, not all writers who have come upon their 'place' from the outside have regretted the experience. Rudyard Kipling, for instance, was born in Bombay, India, and then returned to England, first to Southsea, where left by his parents at the age of five for six terrible years and then, more successfully, at boarding school in Devon. Returning to India he became a journalist, and after forging the beginnings of what was already a brilliant career, moved with his new American wife first to the banks of the Connecticut River in New England, then to Rottingdean, near Brighton in England, and finally to Batemans, a tudor manor house near Burwash, in the Weald of Sussex. Having lived on three continents, he was at home nowhere. For him, however, exile was gain rather than loss. It was what we might call 'the vision of the outsider' that fascinated him. 'England', he wrote in delight just after moving to Burwash, 'is a wonderful land. It is the most marvelous of all foreign countries I have ever been in' (Carrington 369). T.S. Eliot went one stage further: 'there is always something alien about Kipling,' he wrote, 'as of a visitor from another planet'.

Though Kipling was not unique in choosing to appropriate a 'foreign' landscape – similar acts of literary appropriation were performed by Henry James and, indeed, T.S. Eliot himself – Kipling's choice of the Sussex Weald was perhaps one of the most spectacular appropriations of a landscape ever attempted by an exile. Through his collections of linked

short stories, *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *Rewards and Faries*, he created a Kipling country with as distinct a flavour and atmosphere as Wordsworth's Lake District or Hardy's Wessex. The two volumes are not just an attempt to teach children history – though they have indeed done that for many children, including myself – they are also peculiarly about the spirit of a particular place. Because the landscape of England seems so intensely familiar, it must, in effect, be *defamiliarized* for us before it can be re-read and reinvented for his fictional purposes. Puck's own song sets the theme: that the landscape all around us is the creation of a past of which we are now scarcely conscious. Landscape is hermeneutic memory; a secret narrative, only to be read by those who can read its script.

> See you the dimpled track that runs,
> All hollow through the wheat?
> O That was where they hauled the guns
> That smote King Philip's fleet.
>
> See you our little mill that clacks
> So busy by the brook?
> She has ground her corn and paid her tax
> Ever since Doomsday Book.
>
> See you our stilly woods of oak,
> And the dread ditch beside
> O that was where the Saxons broke
> On that day that Harold died…

Not surprisingly, those lines formed the motto for another book, W.H. Hoskins' *The Making of the English Landscape* – which, almost by itself, was to help establish a new academic discipline. He demonstrated as never before the degree to which a particular landscape contained within itself the still decipherable signs of its own past – narrated their own story. Thus modern hedges or ditches often mark the boundaries between one Romano-British estate and the next. One of his most dramatic television programmes on this theme had him standing in a grassy field surrounded by sheep near Batemans on the Kent/Sussex borders with what looked like a large half-timbered manor house in the background. To his left were some low wooded slopes. 'This looks a pleasant rural scene,' he comments, 'but in fact it's slag' – a point he proves simply by digging his heel into what turns out to be black grit under his feet. 'Those wooded mounds over there are Roman slag-heaps from the iron-works they established here. That splendid-looking house behind me belonged to a wealthy Elizabethan arms-

manufacturer. In the valley over there are the hammer-ponds where the cannon were forged to defeat the Spanish Armada…'

Similarly, Kipling himself records how, in digging a well on his land the workmen found 'Jacobean tobacco-pipe, a worn Cromwellian latten spoon and, at the bottom of all, the bronze cheek of a Roman horse-bit.'

> In cleaning out an old pond which might have been an ancient marl-pit or mine-head, we dredged two intact Elizabethan 'sealed quarts' that Christopher Sly affected, all pearly with the patina of centuries. Its deepest mud yielded us a perfectly polished Neolithic axe-head with but one chip on its still venomous edge. (Kipling 185)

But Kipling's discovery of layer upon layer of ancient artefacts is part of a wider message. Right at the heart of his saga of this most domestic of rural landscapes in the insistent but muted refrain of the outsider: it is not the natives who have created England, but the new-comers, the invaders, the settlers, the exiles. Thus in his story 'Cold Iron', the stone-age Neolithic people are driven back and subdued by the iron-age Celts.

In the Roman stories civilization is upheld by the discipline and loyalty of the young centurian, Parnesius, who, though he was actually born in Vectis (now the Isle of Wight), is a Roman by race, training, and citizenship. And so it goes on. Even the old gods must give way to the new ones of the conquerors: Woden, once the king of the gods, becomes at last Wayland the Smith, himself caught up in the Sussex iron-working – and at last grateful for a few pence for shoeing the odd horse now and again. Hugh the Saxon is conquered by Richard the Norman. The tension between stasis and change forms a constant dialectic. On the surface England is ancient and unchanging, but that apparently timeless quality is achieved only by constant innovation – as newcomer after newcomer arrives in a state of exile from some other distant homeland, and merges with the locals.

Nor, though the stories do not go so far, must we forget that this is the narrative of the latest lord of the manor, a Bombay-born interloper with an American wife, whose Anglo-American children will one day inherit this particular piece of England, and make it their own. The cruelest confirmation of Kipling's dialectic was, of course, reserved for the future. His only son, John – the 'Dan' of the story – was soon to be killed in the First World War, his daughter died childless, and Batemans was eventually taken over by an organization meanwhile being founded at the other end of the country by a group of radical conservatives, including Beatrix Potter, author of *Peter Rabbit.* Does history come to an end, one wonders, with The National Trust?

Such reversals would not have surprised another of the great creators of places in which he was not at home: Joseph Conrad. He was, you will

recall, born in the Ukaine of Polish parents – Poland then being under Russian domination – and only learned English at the age of twenty, having already mastered Russian, French, and Spanish. Having begun as an involuntary exile, he went on eventually to choose not merely his place, but his language of exile as well. He is, perhaps, unique among major artists in making exile not merely an existential, but a total linguistic experience as well. Having eventually left the sea, he bought a house at Barham, just south of Canterbury, and he is in fact buried (under his Polish name) in a churchyard in Canterbury.

Nevertheless, if we think of Conrad in terms of place, we would normally begin I think with the South China Sea rather than the South East of England – but that, no doubt, is partly because we unconsciously tend to think of 'place' in terms of dry land rather than water. But Conrad's greatest evocation of place is, of course, the Thames estuary. Here is part of the beginning of *The Heart of Darkness*:

> The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. In the offing the sea and the sky were welded together without a joint, and in the luminous space the tanned sails of the barges drifting up with the tide seemed to stand still in red clusters of canvas sharply peaked, with gleams of varnished sprits. A haze rested on the low shores that ran out to sea in vanishing flatness. The air was dark above Gravesend, and further back still seemed condensed into a mournful gloom, brooding motionless over the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth.
>
> …The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories and ships it has borne to the rest of home or the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled – the great knights-errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time, from the *Golden Hind* returning with her round flanks full of treasure, to be visited by the Queen's Highness and thus pass out of the gigantic tale, to the *Erebus* and *Terror* bound on other conquests – and that never returned. It had known the ships and the men. They had sailed from Deptford, from Greenwich, from Erith – the adventurers and the settlers; kings' ships and the ships of men on 'Change; captains, admirals, the dark 'interlopers' of the Eastern trade, and the commissioned 'generals' of the East India fleets. Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they had all gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated

> on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth ! … The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires. (Conrad 3-5)

So great and splendid is this rhetorical drum-roll of achievement that generations of students have been caught out by the famous question: 'Where *is* the Heart of Darkness?' The answer, of course, is not the Congo, where most of the action of the story takes place, but London. Conrad, like Kipling, never loses his sense of the past – that 'this, too, has been one of the dark places of the earth,' and that between the centre of power and the colonial system that supports it there is a close and intimate link. But whereas for Kipling this is in the end a creative tension, for Conrad the layers of irony are so dense and ambiguous that we cannot in the end be sure. His choice of heroes, after all, is eccentric or even sinister. Drake was a pirate; Franklin's men ended in cannibalism. And just how glorious were the 'generals' of the East India Company – Robert Clive, Warren Hastings, and the other 'nabobs', notorious for extortion, embezzlement, and corruption ? What has happened to the real maritime heroes? Raleigh was at least a more likeable candidate than Drake; and what about Benbow, Cook or Nelson? By the end of the story we realize that Marlowe, Conrad's fictional narrator and here, I think, his *alter ego*, sitting on the stationary yacht at the turn of the tide at the mouth of the Thames, is himself a figure of exile, just off the shores of England, but 'no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation.'

Indeed, being a writer is, perhaps, a condition of exile in itself. If Conrad's Marlowe becomes a figure of 'internal exile', how different is that from the sense of alienation shared in various ways by other Victorian novelists: Dickens, Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell and many others? Even without considering the ambiguous position of women writers, there is enough evidence in all their lives to make us doubt their sometimes overdone protestations of 'belonging'. The novel, today apparently our central and most popular literary art form, is essentially the medium of the margins. Over and over again, the greatest prose narratives have come not (as has poetry) from the cultural centres, but from places scarred by a sense of social inferiority, of cultural marginality. One thinks of Russia in the nineteenth century, obsessed by its illiteracy, its social backwardness, its fringe status on the edge of Europe, home to Dostoyevsky, Gogol, Tolstoy, or Turgenev. One thinks of South America in the twentieth century, and the astonishing flow of talent that went into 'magical realism' – Isabel Allende, Jorge Luis Borges, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, Gabriel García Márquez, to name but the most famous.

But already with these writers, for all their feelings of physical isolation and separation from the centres of culture – not to mention

publication – the real exile is internal. 'I feel Latin American from whatever country,' wrote Marquez, 'but I have never renounced the nostalgia of my homeland: Aracataca, to which I returned one day and discovered that between reality and nostalgia was the raw material for my work.' This indeed reads like an inversion of Kipling's discovery of England, but once again the common thread is consciously re-inventing one's roots – experiencing a nostalgia for a place that can only be discovered by being in exile from it.

And yet… the argument that the mere act of writing creates a sense of 'exile' in the writer is clearly inadequate – and not merely on the logical grounds that if it has universal applicability it ceases to have useful meaning. Some novelists and poets write to create identity rather than distance. Despite – or indeed, because of their feelings of their cultural marginality, even alienation – the aim of the Russian, Australian, or South American novelists was to give themselves, their community, their place on the map, their ethnic inheritance, a voice: some kind of validity. This, for example, is also the purpose of Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, which despite its title from Eliot's 'Journey of the Magi', reflects not any individual alienation from his tribe – the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria – but rather the collective experience of the Igbo encountering the coming of the Europeans, the missionaries, the colonial government. His need here is to tell that familiar story of colonialism from the other side: to describe what it felt like to become a colonial people. But here the irony is yet stronger, for he tells his story not in Igbo – an unwritten language until colonisation – but in English, the language of colonialists, with title from an American exile, and representative of the alien missionary religion, about another exile – one of the Magi. A similar story could be told about many of the other writers seeking to establish national or tribal identities outside the main stream of European culture.

But there are other, yet stranger, forms of exile. For most of us, 'home' is not just our 'comfort zone', the place where we can feel part of a community by right rather than invitation or choice, but above all where through common language we are best understood. And that is not just a matter of our official language. English may be the *lingua franca* that Latin once was in Dacia and in Tomis, but I think we all know the discomfort to be found in moving to someplace where our own language is spoken – *but not as we speak it*. One thinks of the discomfort of the New York Jew, suddenly transferred to the midwest plains in the heart of the American Bible belt; the Englishman transplanted to Glasgow, or to New South Wales; or, stranger still, the Australian who actually arrives in England, the 'old Country' and the land of his ancestors, or the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant American suddenly moved to the London that his East-Coast culture has both romanticised and warned him against. In each case the transplanted

person hears and understands the words spoken, but knows he or she is somehow on the outside of what is being said or communicated. What such a person cannot begin to grapple with in such a context is 'irony' – the unsaid, unspoken gap that then exists between words and meaning in every line and phrase.

It was a problem that haunted another internal exile that so far as I can find out, (except for one visit to Berlin) never left his native land at all: Søren Kierkegaard. In his doctoral thesis about another internal exile, *The Concept of Irony: with Continual Reference to Socrates* (1841) Kierkegaard describes what he means by irony in terms of one of the most unforgettable images of exile ever created:

> There is a work that represents Napoleon's grave. Two tall trees shade the grave. There is nothing else to see in the work, and the unsophisticated observer sees nothing else. Between the two trees is an empty space; as the eye follows the outline, suddenly Napoleon himself emerges from this nothing, and now it is impossible to have him disappear again. Once the eye has seen him, it goes on seeing him with almost alarming necessity. So also with Socrates' rejoinders. One hears his words in the same way as one sees the trees; his words mean just what they say, just as trees are trees. There is not one single syllable that gives a hint of any other interpretation, just as there is not one single line that suggests Napoleon, yet this empty space, this nothing, is what hides that which is most important. (Kierkegaard 19)

Though Kierkegaard's interest in Socrates is genuine enough, the irony that interests him is not, of course, Socratic at all. It would have been unrecognizable to Plato. Kierkegaard's Socrates is a Kierkegaardian, post-Hegelian, ironist of the nineteenth century. The picture itself is, moreover, a piece of unspoken Kierkegaardian irony. Napoleon's tomb was a topical reference: Napoleon had died in exile on St Helena, but in 1840, while Kierkegaard was actually at work on his thesis, Louis-Phillipe had had his bones to be returned to France, and re-interred in Les Invalides. Nevertheless, we know nothing of the anonymous engraver's intentions. The print was actually discovered by a graduate student of mine in a file marked 'Kierkegaard' in the Royal Library – at least one 'Kierkegaard expert' had previously told me that it was 'probably invented'.

The interesting question, of course, is what other implications the picture may hold. The 'invisible' Napoleon towers over his exiled grave – and here we should probably recall that the Danish word 'kierkegaard' means 'churchyard' – an appropriate place to find tombs. But note the ship in the background, a reference either to the ship that brought him there, or, more likely, the ship that was to bring him 'home' to France –which, in turn, of course, was not the 'home' that he had left in Corsica. There is a further oddity about this anonymous print from the Copenhagen Royal Library: the ship is surely *back-to-front*. The three jibs apparently project from the stern, which is clearly shown, while the rear gaff-sail, or spanker, seems to be attached to the bowsprit. For a major port city, such as Copenhagen, in an age of sail, this is a most unlikely *mistake* by a Danish engraver. But assuming it *is* deliberate, what is the significance of the inversion?

Oddly enough, the line that occurs to any student of nineteenth-century English literature is from Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark*: 'Then the bowsprit got mixed up with the rudder sometimes…' And isn't that ghost of Napoleon suspiciously Snark-like? But, of course, that line was only written in 1876. More to the point, perhaps, is the suggestion that it is the ship that sails both ways: into the past and into the future. Or is it that there is something fundamentally impossible about the ship's mission: that Napoleon could not be encapsulated in a coffin, or a tomb, or shipped back and forth from exile to become one of the dead heroes of France. For Kierkegaard – who must surely have noticed the impossible ship – the ship that sails both ways, the silent contradiction that once noticed cannot be ignored – the phantom ship is the second irony,

Irony in this Kierkegaardian sense of the unspoken, that stands over against the spoken – even denying it – is the common language of the oppressed, the alienated, those who have gone into internal exile. For anyone from Eastern Europe, once part of the former Soviet Empire, examples abound. But it runs right through literature. Shakespeare, as usual, has some excellent examples. Take Lennox's speech from *Macbeth*, Act III, Sc. 4:

> My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
> Which can interpret further: only, I say,
> Things have been strangely borne. The gracious Duncan
> Was pitied of Macbeth: – marry he was dead:—
> And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late;
> Whom, you may say, if't please you, Fleance killed,
> For Fleance fled: men must not walk too late.
> Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
> It was for Malcolm and Donalbain
> To kill their gracious father? damned fact!
> How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight
> In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,
> That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?
> Was that not nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;
> For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive
> To hear the men deny't. So that, I say,
> He has borne all things well: and I do think
> That, had he Duncan's sons under his key,–
> As, an't it please heaven, he shall not, – they should find
> What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.
>
> (III iv: 1-20)

The parallels with Mark Anthony's more famous speech in Julius Caesar (1599-1600) are obvious enough. This is language familiar from any oppressive regime, where people who speak out are liable to disappear or be found murdered, from Napoleon's own dictatorship, to Nazi Germany, to Chechnia or Zimbabwe today. What Lennox is saying is in fact nothing but the official version: that Duncan's personal servants, bribed by his sons, Malcom and Donalbain, had murdered him; they, in turn, had been killed in righteous wrath by Macbeth before they had had a chance to speak; that Banquo was out 'too late', and murdered by his son, Fleance, who, like Malcom and Donalbain, had proved his guilt by escaping into exile. Yet simply the repetition of official facts is so damning towards Macbeth that it is scarcely necessary to add the pious hope that Macbeth shall not catch up with the various run-aways. It is no surprise to find Lennox turning up with the other Scottish rebels to join with Malcolm, Macduff, and the English army at Birnham wood for the final battle with Macbeth. This was a language well understood by both Shakespeare and his audience: Jacobean England was still a police state, and Shakespeare himself had only just escaped arrest three years earlier for suspected involvement in the failed rebellion of the Earl of Essex, who had arranged for *Richard II* to be staged the day before his attempted Coup.

More surprisingly, perhaps, the irony of internal exile is not absent from even the most apparently staid and domestic of later writers. Recall, if you will, the scene in Chapter 24 of Jane Austen's early but posthumously published novel, *Northanger Abbey* (1817), where Henry Tilney suddenly discovers the gothic complexity of Catherine Moorland's fantasies about his father and his family:

> Dear Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. What have you been judging from? Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English—that we are Christians. Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you. Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetrated without being known in a country like this, where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing, where every man is surrounded by a neighbourhood of voluntary spies, and where roads and newspapers lay everything open? Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting?

Let's be clear. I am not suggesting that Catherine Moorland is in internal exile – nor that Henry is being ironic. But, as D.W. Harding pointed out many years ago, in his classic piece, 'Jane Austen: A Study in

Regulated Hatred', there is a very real sense in which their author is both. For anyone who looks at her life – let alone her private letters – that phrase about being surrounded by 'a neighbourhood of voluntary spies' rings uncomfortably true. When one looks at the current popularity of Austen, the thought occurs that she too, might be the outsider in exile in her own place and time, persuading generations of adoring readers that she was much more integrated into her 'two square inches of ivory' than she appeared. Here is Claire Tomalin in her recent biography:

> For an author who took social discomfort as one of her main themes, it meant that Godmersham [her brother Edward's very grand house] was precious as a place in which to observe and record, but not always an entirely congenial place to be. There is nothing unusual about such a situation: in fact it is a classic one for a writer. (Tomalin 137)

Jane Austen, the exile? Not one's first thought, perhaps, but once it is raised, it towers invisibly over the entire text. Is *her* ship, one wonders, sailing both ways?

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