

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For many years C. S. Lewis's dismissal of the greater part of the sixteenth century as a 'drab age' has influenced literary scholars. Andrew Hadfield offers a challenging reinterpretation, through study of the work of some of the century's most important writers, including Skelton, Bale, Sidney, Spenser, Baldwin and the Earl of Surrey. He argues that all were involved in the establishment of a vernacular literary tradition as a crucial component of English identity, yet also wished to use the category of 'literature' to create a public space for critical political debate. Conventional assumptions – that pre-modern and modern history are neatly separated by the Renaissance, and that literary history is best studied as an autonomous narrative – are called into question: this book is a study of literary texts, but also a contribution to theories and histories of politics, national identity and culture.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LITERATURE, POLITICS AND
NATIONAL IDENTITY

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LITERATURE,
POLITICS AND
NATIONAL
IDENTITY

Reformation to Renaissance

ANDREW HADFIELD

University of Wales, Aberystwyth



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521118859

© Cambridge University Press 1994

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1994

This digitally printed version 2009

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Hadfield, Andrew.

Literature, politics, and national identity: Reformation to Renaissance / Andrew Hadfield.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 44207 9 (hardback)

1. English literature – Early modern, 1500–1700 – History and criticism.
2. Politics and literature – Great Britain – History – 16th century.
3. Nationalism – Great Britain – History – 16th century.
4. National characteristics, English, in literature.
5. Great Britain – Politics and government – 1485–1603.
6. Reformation – England.
7. Renaissance – England.
- I. Title.

PR418.P65H33 1994

820.9'358 – dc20 93–30382 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-44207-7 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-11885-9 paperback

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For Alison, Lucy, Patrick, George and Rebecca

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

(Elie Kedourie)

Throughout any international movement which seeks to destroy the independence of nations there must run a vein of madness.

(Rebecca West)

Nobody knows who the public is or what it wants or needs. Or whether it should be considered singular or plural. Though there are many people claiming to act on its behalf or speak in its name. And no one is quite sure what space belongs to it or to them, though that usually seems to be only what's left over when all of the other spaces have been appropriated, walled, shut, fenced, or screened off by whatever groups or individuals can enforce private claims to them.

(David Antin)¹

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page xii
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xvi
Introduction: the nation and public literature in the sixteenth century	i
1 A Skelton in the closet: English literary identity betwixt and between	23
2 John Bale and the time of the nation	51
3 Literature and history – <i>A Mirror for Magistrates</i>	81
4 Towards a national form: rhetoric and literary theory from Wilson to Puttenham	108
5 Whose bloody country is it anyway? Sir Philip Sidney, the nation and the public	132
6 ‘Who knowes not Colin Clout?’ The permanent exile of Edmund Spenser	170
<i>Notes</i>	202
<i>Select bibliography</i>	254
<i>Index</i>	262

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Illustrations

- 1 Edmund Spenser, *The Shepheardes Calender*, woodcut accompanying 'January eclogue', in *Works* (1611).
Reproduced by permission of the British Library. page 179
- 2 Edmund Spenser, *The Shepheardes Calender*, woodcut accompanying 'April eclogue', in *Works* (1611).
Reproduced by permission of the British Library. 183

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

This study has been made possible by the award of a British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Humanities and Social Sciences held at the University of Leeds, 1989–92. The idea for the project originated whilst I was completing a PhD thesis at the University of Ulster at Coleraine on English perceptions of Ireland in the sixteenth century. I came to realise that although I felt I was asking interesting and legitimate questions regarding the relationship between politics, literature and national identity, I had not applied these thoroughly enough to an English Renaissance tradition. Like many an arrogant, putatively politically correct young Englishman, I had avoided examining a past which defined my own identity and had proceeded to scrutinise others'.¹ In effect, although my intention was to criticise and expose certain prejudices, ideologies and dogmas, I was caught up in the same process of self-inflicted blindness and repression that had afflicted many of the writers I was studying. As Bill McCormack has pointed out in his acerbic manner, many on the English left are imperialists whatever their vehement denials.² Clearly the research I had started to do – although I still feel it has many merits as well as shortcomings – was inadequate in itself. I completed it within the three years of my grant, but decided that it could not be shaped into a publishable form until I had followed through the project which led to this book, namely, examining the crucial link between literature and political and national identities in sixteenth-century England. In a sense, this book originated in Ireland, where English identity has always been most searchingly challenged and thrown into crisis as I can testify from

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv

Preface

experience. When revising *Language, Truth and Logic*, ten years after its original publication in 1936, A. J. Ayer remarked that being a 'young man's book', it 'had been written with more passion than most philosophers allowed themselves to show'.³ Whilst Ayer regarded his betrayal of his feelings in a critical light, I would hope that if any reader detects any traces of 'passion' in this book, he or she will try to consider it a strength, as it is still the case that too few academic books reveal or invoke enough feeling.

A pilot article for the book, containing sections of the Introduction and chapters 2 and 3 appeared in *Leeds Studies in English* 23 (1992) and I am grateful to the editor, Dr Andrew Wawn, for permission to reproduce parts from it; another section of chapter 2 appeared in *Notes and Queries* 243 (March, 1994) and I am also grateful to the editors for permission to reproduce that. During the three and a half years it has taken to write I have incurred more debts to colleagues, friends and family than I can possibly repay. I would like to thank Kevin Taylor of Cambridge University Press for his belief in the project and help in getting it to the press. Many colleagues provided helpful comments on sections of the typescript and saved me from numerous errors; in this regard I would like to thank Michael Brennan, John Dickie, Lesley Johnson, Michael Smith, Philip Terry, Tim Woods, Blair Worden, and, especially, Paul Hammond. The encouraging but intelligently critical reports by the anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press provided further fruitful avenues of exploration. It should also be said that without the researches of scholars like David Norbrook, John King and Stephen Greenblatt, with whom I often disagree, this book would certainly have been the poorer and perhaps not even possible at all. All errors, unfortunately, are my own responsibility. Mention too should be made of David and Mary Yarnold who supplied me with many fascinating books and Ken Rowe who helped sort out some tricky problems regarding Latin and Greek translations and amazed me with his successfully dogged pursuit of one or two, unfortunately, unhelpful leads; without the last-minute help of Diane Watt and David Rabey, the typescript might well have

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

xv

disappeared forever. The greatest debt anyone incurs is inevitably to their families so I would like to thank my mother and father for the support they have given me over the years and to Alison, Lucy and Patrick Hadfield for going well beyond the bounds of duty in putting up with my – tortuous and sometimes tortured – intellectual and physical journeys. To them this book is affectionately dedicated.

I have followed the usual practice of leaving spelling unaltered except for modernising i/j and u/v.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Abbreviations*

<i>CL</i>	<i>Comparative Literature</i>
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>EETS</i>	<i>Early English Text Society</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>EIC</i>	<i>Essays in Criticism</i>
<i>ELH</i>	<i>English Literary History</i>
<i>ELN</i>	<i>English Language Notes</i>
<i>ELR</i>	<i>English Literary Renaissance</i>
<i>ES</i>	<i>Essays and Studies</i>
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>HLQ</i>	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
<i>IHS</i>	<i>Irish Historical Studies</i>
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JHI</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
<i>JMRS</i>	<i>Journal of the Medieval and Renaissance Society</i>
<i>JRMMRS</i>	<i>Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Society</i>
<i>JWCI</i>	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
<i>MLN</i>	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
<i>MLQ</i>	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
<i>MLR</i>	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
<i>N. and Q.</i>	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
<i>P. & P.</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
<i>RD</i>	<i>Renaissance Drama</i>

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11885-9 - Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance

Andrew Hadfield

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*List of abbreviations*

xvii

<i>RES</i>	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Renaissance Quarterly</i>
<i>SEL</i>	<i>Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900</i>
<i>S. Litt. I.</i>	<i>Studies in the Literary Imagination</i>
<i>SP</i>	<i>Studies in Philology</i>
<i>Sp. St.</i>	<i>Spenser Studies</i>
<i>STC</i>	<i>Short Title Catalogue</i>
<i>TCBS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society</i>
<i>Te.SLL</i>	<i>Texas Studies in Language and Literature</i>
<i>TP</i>	<i>Textual Practice</i>
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
<i>YES</i>	<i>Yearbook of English Studies</i>