

Abstracts**“Obedience doth not well in parts”:*****The Irish Masque, For the Honour of Wales, and the Meta-Theatrical Native***

Marisa R. Cull, Randolph-Macon College

For most of its scholarly afterlife, Ben Jonson's 1613 *The Irish Masque at Court* was an underappreciated text, not “of the first importance,” according to Herford and Simpson, a short wedding masque for what was a court marriage burdened by controversy. Not surprisingly, the last quarter-century has seen a renewed interest in a text that so directly confronts the politics of Jacobean Ireland, particularly as those politics were reflected in the struggle between the “Old” and “New” English settled there. In the new Cambridge edition of Jonson's works, released this year, *The Irish Masque* is hailed as Jonson's forthright “vindication of James's political aims” in fashioning a British union, a reading that necessarily emphasizes the masque's denouement, in which Irish ambassadors are stripped of their “barbaric” mantles and revealed to be in full court dress—transformed, and thus conformed to the idealized British state. This paper seeks to revisit these conclusions by setting *The Irish Masque* alongside *For the Honour of Wales*, Jonson's 1618 antimasque, a text that has enjoyed a similar critical rejuvenation in recent years. Both texts, I argue, in their assignation of “native” parts and their embedded commentary on the theater itself (in addition to the contemporary politics of their respective moments), suggest that Jonson's depiction of both the Irish and the Welsh can be understood on a broader scale—their obedience (and, sometimes, resistance) becomes part of a larger mechanism through which Jonson explores the efficacy of court performance as a means to political commentary and change.

**Shakespeare's Irish Politics**

Stuart M. Kurland, Duquesne University

This essay will explore the political dimensions of Shakespeare's conception(s) of Ireland in the English history plays written towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth, with a particular focus on questions of political legitimacy. When the Chorus in *Henry V* alludes to the contemporary English project in Ireland (5.0.29-34), he does so in terms of a necessary military reaction to a rebellion against legitimate rule. Yet, however Henry rationalizes his claim on the French crown in dynastic terms, the play itself depicts English military force in an unprovoked attack on a sovereign nation, with Henry's promised unification of the crowns built on conquest. Rebellion, in the play, appears in the form of an assassination plot by English companions of the King, while the tensions inherent in Henry's imperialist project are suggested by the Welsh, Scottish, and Irish captains who quarrel among themselves. When the Irish captain Macmorris angrily asks what Fluellen means by his “nation” (3.2.121-23), his demand invites inquiry into questions of sovereignty and legitimacy as well as national identity and culture. If Elizabeth was the legitimate ruler of Ireland, could her rule incorporate the Irish into the English nation? If not—and this would be the experience of the Scots after James' accession in 1603—what do perceptions of Ireland as distinctly and irremediably foreign suggest about the English and their conception of the English nation and polity?

**'Irish' Cymbeline**

Lucy Munro, Keele University

This paper will explore Irish contexts for Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* from two angles, focusing in each case on the play's disruptive generic and stylistic qualities. First, it will explore the play's formal connections with the Old English writer Richard Stanihurst's iconoclastic 1582 translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, notorious for what Thomas Nashe called its 'foule lumbring boystrous wallowing measures', and its unusual diction. Second, it will look at George Bernard Shaw's rewriting of the play in *Cymbeline Refinished* (1937), which writes out many of the moments in the play which are most connected to the epic tradition represented by Stanihurst. In bringing together this material, I hope to provide a new insight into *Cymbeline*'s negotiations with epic style and its stubborn reluctance to conform to the aesthetic, national and ideological demands of successive generations.

**Holinshed's Ireland (1577 and 1587)**

Barbara Traister, Lehigh University

Ostensibly written to parallel the "Descriptions" and histories of England and Scotland written for *Holinshed's Chronicles*, the "Description of Ireland" and "History of Ireland" included in the *Chronicles*, actually calls attention to their difference from the others, both in the original 1577 edition and its 1587 revision. This difference in Ireland's treatment is obvious despite Holinshed's own claim: "I resolved to make shift to frame a speciall Historie of Ireland, in like maner as I had done of other Regions." Shorter by far than the Scottish history, written after the histories of England and Scotland were completed, given partially to a compiler, Richard Stanyhurst, who seems to have played no other role in the 1577 edition, the Irish materials are bound, like an unwanted stepchild, to the *Chronicles'* other histories. The ambivalence and uncertainty about the place of Ireland so clearly apparent in literary texts of the 1590's and the early years of the Stuart dynasty are already in place in the mid-1570's as the *Chronicles'* compilers struggle with how to acknowledge Ireland.

**"Triumph abroad but ridicule at home":****Sir Henry Sidney's Deputyship and the Limitations of Royal Authority in Ireland**

Jane Wong Yeang Chui, University of Alberta

English representations of Sir Henry Sidney, three-time lord deputy of Ireland, are typically depicted in a positive light. Throughout Holinshed's *Chronicle* (1587), John Hooker asserts the authority of the lord deputy and glorifies his office as one that is not unlike that of the queen of England. His narrative paints a portrait of Sidney as the twin pillars of order and justice, and more importantly, the head of a proxy parliament that is distinctly English that sets great store in making distinctions between the Irish natives, the Anglo-Irish, and the new English. Yet, Hooker's narrative unravels when we turn to Sidney's first hand account of his experience in Ireland in *A Viceroy's Vindication? Sir Henry Sidney's Memoir of Service in Ireland 1556-1578* (1583). Even as he recounts some of his achievements in Ireland, he laments that he was aggressively criticized at the English court and within the Dublin council. His memoir is sometimes regarded as an angry rant of an abused servant of the crown but the *Chronicle* certainly does not present him as such; in fact, he is depicted as one of the most successful and popular lord deputies in Elizabethan Ireland. This paper juxtaposes the Irish section of Holinshed's *Chronicle* with Sidney's *Memoir*, and in doing so expose the tensions between

the queen and her lord deputy. Hooker's "invention" of Sidney proclaims his loyalty and obedience (to the crown) to be absolute and unflinching, but in his memoir, Sidney uses the figure of his enemy, Thomas Butler, the Earl of Ormond, to criticize his queen for the lack of judgment and indirectly holds her responsible for the state of Ireland. My discussion of this subject throws up a few questions, particularly in terms of power and authority in the English governance of Ireland: what are the limitations of the lord deputies' authority and how can readers begin to understand the complexities of their relationships with officials in England?

### **Ireland and bankruptcy**

Andrew J. Power, Trinity College Dublin

"A whole tradition of British and European thought has considered the Irish to be a separate and inferior race, usually unregenerately barbarian, often delinquent and primitive."

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

In a time when Irish fiscal irresponsibility has taken its toll on EU stability, this paper reflects back upon a period when the Irish inflicted similarly huge economic losses upon a European power. Throughout the reign of Elizabeth I, the Irish proved most costly subjects. Irish pirates, at times in league with the Spanish armada, wrought havoc with the English merchant navy. Irish vagabonds wandered the English countryside begging until they were deported at the cost of the coastal county at which they had entered the country. And the wars in Ireland proved a bottomless bog, that swallowed men, arms, and supplies during decades of conflict. While Said's comment may record a more deep-rooted racial prejudice against the Irish, there can be little doubt that Ireland was economically delinquent, at least, for its early modern monarchical overlord. The effects on the English economy were wide-ranging: Elizabeth herself wrote numerous letters to widowed peers and indeed being a widow of the Irish wars became a trade to beg by (like blindness or madness); displaced Irishmen (and women) "returned to plague the inventor" and thieved and begged or became prostitutes on English soil; the expense of exporting them fell to the county authorities where the illegal immigrants had landed; the commons were taxed and peerage borrowed from; and Elizabeth herself is said, by one contemporary, to have even sold some of her own lands and jewellery to help defray the costs. After her reign, Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone, wrote to Phillip III, that "the English were so exhausted from the war in Ireland and so hopeless of being able to maintain themselves with their strength alone that they surrendered to the Scot and chose him for their King, despite the fact that those two nations are great enemies". In this conference paper, I aim to synthesize and advance existing scholarship on the subject of Irish debt and Elizabethan governance.

### **"No Difference But the Irish Sea":**

**Discourses of Colonial Surveillance and Shakespeare's *The Tempest***

John Higgins, American University in Dubai

My essay will be looking at the role that emergent discourses of surveillance played in the shaping of the colonial imaginary, at this point particularly comparing William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to Sir John Davies's *A Discovery of the True Reasons Why Ireland Was Never Entirely Subdued*. I hope, though, to expand my discussion of Irish colonial texts to include other writers and histories that include discussions of the relationship between surveillance and the reform of the colonial subject. Davies rather intriguingly puts forward that one of the prime reasons that Irish subjects were never

"subdued," (as he puts it) is that the colonial system within the country never established rule to the extent that the Irish can be fully monitored. His text consists both of a thorough history of English colonial conquest of Ireland - emphasizing that English monarchs never fully established military control, but instead sent small forces only capable of putting down rebellions and gaining desired rents - and a series of prescriptions for future Irish colonial management that includes a geographical reconstruction of Irish towns (where castles are relocated to drive Irish peasants out into the open) and the establishment of a more thorough spy network. He believes that - taken together - the physical observation of Irish citizens and the establishment of a belief amongst the local population that their actions are being monitored will lead to the wholesale reform of the Irish, transforming them, "As though they had drank from Circe's cup," from Irishmen into Englishmen.

My paper will link this twofold interest in colonial history and the establishment of a surveillance regime to images in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Prospero begins the story with an attempt to establish control over the island historically, telling Miranda and the audience why he has been exiled and why he deserves to rule over Ariel and Caliban, but then moves on to an establishment of a system of surveillance - of Miranda and Ferdinand, Antonio, Sebastian and the rest of their party, and most importantly Caliban. Creating environments where colonial subjects are observed in order to be emotionally manipulated proves a key feature of the play, but unlike Davies - who imagines this process as fully reformatory - Shakespeare imagines these efforts as only partially effective. Miranda and Ferdinand fall in love as Prospero has desired, but seemingly of their own volition, not out of a sense that they are being monitored. Caliban - aware that he's being watched - nevertheless continues to rebel, and only submits verbally at the ending of the play. Shakespeare's contribution to the colonial imaginary thus draws upon the emergent reformatory nature of colonial discourse, but suggests that the logic will be only partially and incompletely effective.

### **Reclaiming Ireland**

Robin Bates, Lynchburg College

My study will be an effort to better understand how land figures into the early English colonial enterprise. Scholarship has well covered the English depiction of both colonized people and land as savage and uncultivated. Yet, scholarly work to date (my own included) has tended to focus on the colonization of people. But what if the colonial enterprise is less about people and more about the acquisition of natural resources?<sup>i</sup> Spenser's depiction of the Irish in the *View* as "evills" that "must first be cut away by a strong hand, before any good can be planted, like as the corrupt branches and unwholesome boughs are first to be pruned,"<sup>ii</sup> depicts the Irish people not as the object of English administration in Ireland, but as a hindrance to the land's true cultivation. Read alongside period documents regarding the administration of Ireland (documents focused on the administrative hang ups of escheated lands and rightful ownership of property), Spenser's depiction of the Irish can be read not as an isolated and particularly harsh approach to administration in Ireland, but rather as an English approach in Ireland that might be more typical than we'd like.

"Reclaiming" is an important concept in ecopoetics because it demonstrates the degree to which humans have historically viewed land as serving its proper purpose once it is developed to serve a human purpose; for example, an empty field turned into a parking lot is considered to have been "reclaimed." This use of the word dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. What we can find in the late-

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Elizabethan and early-Stuart ventures in Ireland and Virginia is a push to "reclaim" land for the crown: occupy, clear, administer, build upon, and develop for the crown's interests. The people found upon the land must be separated from it - not necessarily literally, as they may stay as long as they allow themselves to be cultivated as English - but in terms of ownership and self-identification. The land is "reclaimed" as the property of the crown and all people on it, new and native, become the crown's tenants. Spenser's suggestion of pruning the Irish in order to cultivate the land as a resource is a suggestion to "reclaim" Ireland.

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<sup>i</sup> Some forays into scholarship on early modern Virginia have stunned me into accepting the degree to which that enterprise was a race with the Spanish for natural resources in the new world; first gold, and absent that, commodities that could be converted to gold: timber, minerals, dyes, etc. Not to mention a terrific staging ground for ships aiming to intercept Spanish ships returning home with the gold found further south.

<sup>ii</sup> Ed. Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley, p. 93.