

"Our inland":
Shakespeare's "Henry V"
and the Celtic Fringe

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MORE THAN TWENTY years ago, in an essay entitled "British History: A Plea for a New Subject," J. G. A. Pocock invited historians to construct a less anglocentric history of the British Isles, that is, a "plural history of a group of cultures situated along an Anglo-Celtic frontier and marked by an increasing English political and cultural domination" (605). Although the response has been slow, historians of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Britain and Ireland have answered Pocock's plea, as the plethora of recent work on the "British Problem" attests.¹ If the new British history has led historians to re-evaluate the political history of the period, it has also paved the way for literary historians to glean valuable new perspectives on literary and extra-literary texts in light of the wider British context that informed, indeed enabled, their production. Just as an emphasis on the dynamics of state formation within and across the British Isles has enriched the work of political historians, literary historians of early modernity, or early coloniality, have begun to situate texts that participated in the production of Britain's and Ireland's heterogeneous cultures within a broader British perspective. It is precisely the enduring cultural artefacts and texts of the early modern period that bear ample witness to Pocock's reminder that the "various peoples and nations, ethnic cultures, social structures, and locally defined communities, which have from time to time existed in the area known as 'Great Britain and Ireland,' have not only acted so as to create the conditions of their several existences but have also interacted so as to modify the conditions of one another's existence." ("Limits and Divisions" 317). Drawing upon the new British historiography, I want to place Shakespeare's

“national” history plays, *Henry V* in particular, within the historical context of an expanding English polity that gradually, violently incorporated the “Celtic fringe.” Shakespeare’s “national” histories, of course, have played and continue to play a crucial role in the formation of English national and cultural identity. As “English” histories—that is, as plays written and performed in English (with the exception of the reference in *1 Henry IV* to the exchange in Welsh between Glendower and his daughter) and as plays labelled by critics as dramatizations of “English” historical events—Shakespeare’s history plays have come to symbolize the cultural domination of which Pocock speaks; however, they can be reread to foreground the cultural interaction—the complication of pure, monolithic identities—of which Pocock also speaks. More than any other dramatic form, the history play served as a public forum in which English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh figures were made to speak and act through the bodies and in the material props of London’s all-male players.² To locate questions of English identity (de)formation in *Henry V* within the framework of a plural history of the British Isles is to re-examine early modern Englishness not as a established, originary identity, but as an identity “in the process of being made” (Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* 3).³

The English polity in which Shakespeare produced the majority of his histories, it is important to remember, included the Principality of Wales and the Kingdom of Ireland. With the arrival of King James VI and I in London in 1603, the whole of the British Isles was, for the first time in history, brought under the sovereignty of one king, a self-styled (and much despised) British king. Early modern England never was a self-contained English geopolitical entity. No matter what Shakespeare’s John of Gaunt says, England never was an island unto itself. Perhaps more so than any of Shakespeare’s history plays, *Henry V* invites us to explore inscriptions of English identity in relation to an expanding English polity that included an “incorporated” Wales, an intractable Ireland, and an encroaching Scotland. In his oration to his troops before the walls of Harfleur, King Henry represents his army as distinctly English: “our English,” “you noblest English,” “good yeoman, / Whose limbs were made in

England" are the words the king uses to describe his soldiers (3.2.3, 18, 28-29).⁴ Shortly after Henry's speech, however, the dramatic action gives way to a British army that includes an English, an Irish, a Scottish, and a Welsh captain. Of course, *Henry V* dramatizes past conflict between the English and the French; what I want to consider, however, is the play's symbolic staging of the "British Problem." France is a fitting space for a late-Elizabethan enactment of the "British Problem": with the shameful loss of Calais in 1558, England's last outpost on the Continent, the English were forced to concentrate on consolidating an empire within the British Isles.⁵ As many of the play's recent editors and interpreters have suggested, the anachronistic inclusion of an Irish and a Scottish captain in Henry's army calls attention to the early modern British context informing the play's cultural politics.⁶ Prompted by the fifth-act Chorus's allusion to "the general of our gracious empress . . . from Ireland coming, / Bringing rebellion broached on his sword" (5.Chor.31-33), Shakespeareans have long been aware of the play's concern with the Anglo-Irish war raging in Ireland at the time of the performance.⁷ Given the four direct references to "Ireland," the threat of Scottish invasion voiced in Act 1, scene 2, and Fluellen's disquieting malapropisms,⁸ *Henry V* solicits an interpretation attentive to not just England but also the cultural politics of England's relations with its "giddy [Celtic] neighbor[s]" (1.2.151).

Although recent feminist, new historicist, and cultural materialist work on Elizabethan and Jacobean drama has highlighted the ways in which theatrical representations contested dominant ideologies, Shakespeare's history plays are often still read in a manner that privileges their representations of monarchic power, a privileging of monarchic power that elides the tension in the plays' representation of an imperial Britishness and a national Englishness. Influenced by an early new historicist rhetoric of subversion and containment, Richard Helgerson contends that "Shakespeare's history plays are concerned above all with the consolidation and maintenance of royal power" (296). Arguing that *Henry V* "is premised on the consolidation of national identity through violence against foreign enemies," Jean

Howard and Phyllis Rackin offer a somewhat different perspective by treating the play's production of Englishness as very much bound up with the image of the monarch: "In war, Henry's men whether Irish or English, Scottish or Welsh, yeoman or earl—temporarily become a band of brothers" (4). But what about the non-national characteristics of the play's "English" monarch? To borrow a phrase from Benedict Anderson, Henry's "legitimacy derives from divinity, not from populations." In other words, Henry's rule attempts to contain the play's incipient English nationalism: the play brings together a British army that seems to render intra-British borders "porous and indistinct" (Anderson 19). In a now infamous essay, "Invisible Bullets," Stephen Greenblatt argues that "[b]y yoking together diverse peoples—represented in the play by the Welshman Fluellen, the Irishman Macmorris, and the Scotsman Jamy, who fight at Agincourt alongside the loyal Englishman—Hal symbolically tames the last wild areas in the British Isles." For Greenblatt, Henry is "the charismatic leader who purges the commonwealth of its incorrigibles and forges the martial national state" (56). Does the play imagine a smooth, stable transition from English nation to British state? English cultural imperialism in *Henry V* (and at the time of the play's performance) is far from the smooth "civilizing process" that Greenblatt posits. The Englishries in Wales and Ireland, it is crucial to recall, did not always retain those cultural traits that were viewed as the constitutive elements of Englishness. *1 Henry IV*, for instance, represents a reversal of the "civilizing process" as an effeminate Edmund Mortimer, the earl of March, gives not only his love to a Welsh woman but also his tongue: "But I will never be a truant, love, / Till I have learned thy language" (3.1.213-14). In his *Geography Delineated Forth in Two Bookes* (1625), Nathanael Carpenter writes "people suffer an alteration in respect to their seuerall transplantations . . . [c]olonies transplanted from one region into another, farre remote, retaine a long time their first disposition, though by litle and litle they decline and suffer alteration" (sig Mm*3). It is precisely the threat of "decline" and "alteration" that haunts *Henry V*, a threat evinced in the play's many instances of linguistic corruption and cultural contamination. That Henry himself is

anxiously imagined as culturally hybrid—as we shall see, he is addressed as “*brother Ireland*” (5.2.12; emphasis added); moreover, he woos the French Princess, Katherine, in broken French, and twice he dubs himself a Welshman—suggests that the play’s nascent English nationalism is at odds with the interests of the emergent multi-national British state, a state that was engaged in a brutal war in Ireland. Rather than containing the play’s deep cultural anxiety, I want to draw attention to the question of England’s tenuous borders and the unsettling instances of tainted English tongues and bodies. Described by the Bishop of Canterbury as “Our inland,” England, as imagined in this play, is precariously delimited by “the pilfering borderers,”⁹ “th’ill neighborhood” (1.2.148, 160) circumscribing it.¹⁰ As the king’s imperial, dynastic ambitions force the inland’s inhabitants outwards, however, fears about cultural hybridity begin to surface—this is especially evident in the uneasy inscriptions of a heterogeneous British linguistic community, the various speakers of “broken English” (5.2.255). The king’s body, I am suggesting, serves as a conflicted site upon which anxiety about national and cultural identity is focused.

In a recent, lengthy discussion of *Henry V*, David Baker observes that the play “participate[s] in the attempt to consolidate . . . a polity made up of the four kingdoms of England, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland” (21). What cannot be underestimated is the extent to which the play’s various critics and, more importantly, editors have made this statement possible. The remainder of this essay is given over to explaining what I mean here, but let me first call attention to how editorial emendations have dubiously altered what is arguably the most manifestly, and most disturbing, British scene in all of Shakespeare’s histories. I am referring to Act 3, scene 2, often referred to as the “four captains scene,” which appears in only the First Folio version of *The Life of Henry the Fifth* (F1). In the First Folio, three of the British captains are given ethnically specific speech prefixes: the English captain is designated by his name, “Gower”; however, Fluellen’s speech tag is “Welch,” while Macmorris (“Makmorrice” and “Mackmorrice” in F1) and Jamy are “Irish” and “Scot,” respectively.¹¹ In 1709, Nicholas Rowe replaced

the Folio's ethnically specific speech prefixes ("Welch," "Irish," "Scot") with the captains' names, and subsequent editions have followed Rowe's lead. Although Rowe provides no explanation for the change, his emendations were presumably informed by eighteenth-century editorial protocol that, as Random Cloud (Randall McLeod) puts it, "sought to discipline, tidy, and regulate" (95) Shakespeare's heterogeneous play-texts. Indeed, Rowe's refashioned speech prefixes reflect eighteenth-century "Editing" practices that were committed to "the invention of dramattick character" (Cloud 88). By closing the gap between "Welch" and "Fluellen," "Scot" and "Jamy," and "Irish" and "Macmorris"—that is, the gap between ethnic tag and dramatic character—Rowe's emendations betray a desire to unify, stabilize, fix the identity of these dramatic characters, to render, for instance, a fractured "Irish"/"Macmorris" whole.¹²

One could easily claim, of course, that the Folio's ethnically specific speech tags simply reinforce the play's stereotyping of captains gathered from the "Celtic fringe." In fact, Act 3, scene 2 is often interpreted as an instance of comic stereotyping, so comic as to render "[t]hese Celts . . . united in their service to the English Crown" (Cairns and Richards 10). But to represent the captains merely as "comic ethnic characters" (Hillman 124) is to obscure the dislocation of culture this scene effects.¹³ Commenting on the play's "national stereotypes," Catherine Belsey notes that Macmorris is represented as "an irascible Irishman" (16). In this, Macmorris ostensibly comes to personify the stage Irishman. In his *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil* (1592), Thomas Nashe provides one such representation of the stock Irishman: the "Irishman," he writes, "will draw his dagger, and be ready to kill and slay, if one break wind in his company" (86). Nashe's text nicely intersects with *Henry V*, for Fluellen, represented as a stereotypically verbose Welshman, raises Macmorris's "ire" when he says: "Captain Macmorris . . . there is not many of your nation—" (122-24). Macmorris interjects with "Of my nation? What ish my nation? Ish a villain and a basterd and a knave and a rascal. What ish my nation? Who talks of my nation?" (125-27). Far from a moment of unity, this scene of ethnic conflict opens with Fluellen's "disciplining" of Macmorris for undermining the

war effort, erupts into Macmorris's threat to cut off Fluellen's head, and closes with Gower's warning that the feuding captains will "mistake each other" (137).¹⁴

Mistaken identity—that is, the fluidity of collective identities in the British Isles—is precisely what this scene brings into play.¹⁵ However, critics, not unlike editors, have attempted to map a stable identity onto Macmorris. Eschewing the textual indeterminacy of Macmorris's response to Fluellen, Philip Edwards offers the following gloss: "The paraphrase [of Macmorris's 'What ish my nation' speech] should run something like this. 'What is this separate race you're implying by using the phrase "your nation"? Who are you, a Welshman, to talk of the Irish as though they were a separate nation from you. I belong in this family as much as you do'" (75-76). Through an act of critical ventriloquism, Edwards humanizes Macmorris in an attempt to grant him the integrity and stability of an autonomous, and unproblematically Irish, thinking, speaking subject.¹⁶ However, Edwards's character study of Macmorris inhibits historical and theoretical reflection on the First Folio's gap between "Irish" and "Mackmorrice," a gap that invites us to read Macmorris's lines otherwise. The First Folio, I am arguing, calls into question early modern notions of "mere Irish" and, consequently, "mere English."¹⁷ That historians employ such hyphenated nomenclatures as Anglo-Irish, Old English, and New English to delimit sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ireland's heterogeneous "English" community reminds us that a homogeneous Englishness never existed in England's Irish kingdom. In fact, the name "Macmorris" itself bears witness to early modern Ireland's intricate identities. As Michael Neill points out, "Macmorris" is a "hybrid surname (a Gaelicized version of Anglo-Norman Fitzmaurice)" ("*Henry V: A Modern Perspective*" 272). In a section of his *Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland Was Never Entirely Subdued* (1612), entitled "How the English Colonies Became Degenerate," Sir John Davies censures those colonials that "grew to be ashamed of their very English names . . . and took Irish surnames and nicknames" (172). By way of an example, he points to "the great families of the Geraldines" in Munster, in particular one family that "was called 'MacMorris'" (172).¹⁸

Rather than reading Macmorris's "What is my nation?" as a plea for identity, whether Irish or (Old or New) English, it is crucial to interpret this line as an interrogative that complicates the simplistic identity politics that has served to essentialize the identities of the intermingling inhabitants of the British Isles. In the First Folio's gap between "Irish" and "Mackmorrice" exists a space haunted by misrecognition and mistranslation. Far from Rowe's and Edwards's stable dramatic character, Macmorris, figured in the First Folio as "Irish," serves as a sharp reminder that Irishness in the early modern period was often a disfigured English identity. Although Macmorris makes but one brief appearance in the First Folio, his "hybrid surname"—at once French, English, and Irish—is by no means the only unsettling instance of cultural hybridity in the play.

If Macmorris represents a disturbing element within the expanding Elizabethan polity, Fluellen, another hybrid figure—as his anglicized name and marked patois manifest—is traditionally read as a loyal subject, a product of the English "civilizing process" that led to the "incorporation" of Wales into the English administrative system in 1536.¹⁹ Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that Fluellen goes about "disciplining" Macmorris. Although Fluellen's "correction" (3.2.123) of Macmorris breaks off, he does deliver a humiliating punishment of Pistol: "a Welsh correction" that, in Gower's words, serves to teach Pistol "a good English condition" (5.1.83-4). Can Fluellen's "Welsh correction" be read as not only a disciplining of Pistol but also a displaced disciplining of Macmorris?²⁰ According to one Tudor royal proclamation—"Ordering Arrest of Vagabonds, Deportation of Irishman"—"masterless men" and Irishman can and do inhabit the same discursive space.²¹ If this proclamation couples vagrants and Irishmen, the play too suggests a connection between Pistol and Macmorris. Just as Fluellen mistakes Pistol to be "as valiant a man as Mark Antony," Gower, according to Fluellen, mistakes Macmorris to be "a very valiant gentleman" (3.2.69). Moreover, not unlike Macmorris, who asserts that "there are throats to be cut" (2.2.114), Pistol's motto is "*Couple à gorge*" (2.1.72), a line he reiterates when threatening to cut the French soldier's throat ("I will cut his throat," "*cuppele*

gorge" 4.4.31, 36). There is also Pistol's puzzling line "calmie custure me" (4.4.4). The editors of the New Folger Library Shakespeare edition of *Henry V* perhaps too hastily foreclose interpretation by suggesting that this line as it appears in the Folio is "nonsense" (170). Yet, they do note that many editors have emended this line so that it echoes the refrain of an Irish ballad. In the Oxford Shakespeare edition of *Henry V*, for instance, Pistol is made to speak in broken Irish: "Calin o custure me!" Following Edmond Malone, Gary Taylor observes that "Calin o custure me is an Elizabethan corruption of an Irish refrain, *cailin og a' stor* ('maiden, my treasure'); the corrupt refrain is used in a song . . . printed in Clement Robinson's *Handful of Pleasant Delights* (1584)" (234). Frederick Sternfeld sheds further light on this refrain:

There is no doubt that English audiences considered the line "Callino" as foreign: Davies of Hereford characterizes the burden as "from a foreign land, which English people do not understand"; and Playford dubs the tune "Irish." This fact, in conjunction with the usual vagaries of Elizabethan orthography, accounts for the multiple variations in spelling. Even so, the tune was named thirteen times at least during Shakespeare's lifetime, a frequency that suggests a reasonable amount of general popularity. (152)

If, as I am suggesting, Fluellen's "Welsh correction" functions as a symbolic disciplining of both Pistol and Macmorris, then it would seem that this scene exemplifies what Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield describe as the play's commitment to "the aesthetic colonization of [unruly] elements in Elizabethan culture" (118). But it is also possible to read Pistol's broken Irish as a further instance of cultural contamination in the play. While celebrating "the chief pillars of our English speech" Nashe calls attention to the role a common language plays in the process of national self-definition. For Nashe, linguistic purity is a requisite of nationhood. England's poets, he writes, "have cleansed our language from barbarism and made the vulgar sort here in London, which is the fountain whose rivers flow round about England, to aspire to a richer purity of speech than is communicated with the commonalty of any nation under heaven" (91). In *Henry V*, however, the English language as it is spoken by representatives of the "Celtic fringe" is far from pure; even more

disquieting, one of the play's English soldiers speaks in broken Irish. "Degeneration," Neill points out, "was typically exposed as linguistic corruption" ("Broken English" 17). Pistol may be "purged" from the play-text, but his broken Irish anticipates the linguistic contamination—"broken English"—effeminacy, and degeneracy that plagues the ensuing, final scene. In the closing scene, however, it is the king's body, not a "foreigner's" or a commoner's body, upon which the play's anxiety about cultural identity is focused.

In *Richard II*, John of Gaunt nostalgically looks back to an England imagined as a "fortress built by Nature for herself / Against infection" (2.1.48-49). In *Henry V*, England is not immune from infection. Again, editorial emendations to the First Folio have served to cleanse the text of its contaminating elements. Often overlooked by readers of the play is the moment in Act 5, scene 2 when the Queen of France greets Henry as "brother Ireland" (sig. 16v; TLN 2999; 5.2.12). As the editors of the New Folger Library Shakespeare edition of *Henry V* observe, the First Folio's "Ireland" was changed to "England" in the Second Folio of 1632, and has remained so in all subsequent editions (214).²² Although many theories exist as to why the First Folio includes "brother Ireland," they are all based on the dubious assumption that Shakespeare intended "brother England."²³ According to Gary Taylor, "brother Ireland" is a "revealing textual error," "Shakespeare's own 'Freudian slip'—a slip natural enough in 1599" (7, 18). Following this logic, the change to "brother England" in the Second Folio, we are to understand, "restores" Shakespeare's text to its proper state, disinfecting it, as it were, of "brother Ireland."

I invoke a rhetoric of infection in order to foreground the anxious cultural context in which the Queen's "brother Ireland" was originally voiced. "*Henry V*," Edwards suggests, "was clearly written in the short time when England was excited at the prospect that the young hero [Robert Devereux, earl of Essex] would soon have the Irish licked" (78). While Edwards is correct to describe the line "Bringing rebellion broachèd on his sword" as "powerful," he elides the uneasiness that the preceding line evokes: "As in good time he *may*" (3.2.32; emphasis added).²⁴

Ireland, to be sure, never was cause for excitement during Elizabeth's reign. As Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley remind us, "Ireland was the site both of English identity formation, and of English identity crisis" (8). One of John Donne's verse letters, "H. W. in Hiber. Belligeranti," evinces this sense of loss of identity. Written in 1599 at the height of the Nine Years War, Donne's poem addresses his close friend, Sir Henry Wotton, who at the time was in Ireland as Essex's secretary. "Went you to conquer?," Donne asks, "and have you so much lost / Yourself, that what in you was best and most, / Respective friendship, should so quickly dye?" (1-3). "Lett not your soule," Donne warns, "It self unto the Irish negligence submit" (13, 16). In these lines, Donne touches on a familiar, disturbing lament about identity deformation that surfaces again and again in early modern English discourse on Ireland and the Irish. Troubled by the infectious Irish, Richard Stanyhurst, an Old English resident of the Pale, concludes his contribution to the first edition of "Holinshed's" *Irish Chronicles* (1577) with the lurid figure of the "degenerate" Englishman: "the verie English of birth, conuersant with the sauage sort of that people become degenerat, and as though they had tasted of Circes poisoned cup, are quite altered" (69). Here, Circe metonymically stands in for Ireland, which is represented as a feminized land that not only attracts colonial gentlemen and but also distracts them from the civilizing process, eventually emasculating them and transforming them into beasts.²⁵ In *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1598), Spenser explicitly cites Irish women as the source of "contagion" that causes English colonizers to undergo hibernicization: "the old English in Ireland, which through licentious conversing with the Irish, or marrying and fostering with them . . . have degenerated from their ancient dignities . . ." (66). For Spenser, once potent English landlords have been symbolically castrated, a castration made all the more apparent by Spenser's use of the term "degenerated." An early modern synonym for degenerate, the word "degenerated" reminds us that early modern notions of degeneracy and effeminacy are inextricably intertwined: both entail a decline, or slippage from a desired socio-cultural category (civility/masculinity) to its opposite (savagery/femininity).

When viewed within the context of Elizabethan early modern discourse on Ireland, the Queen of France's greeting of Henry as "brother Ireland" demands to be read as more than just a "textual error." On the one hand, as previously noted, "brother Ireland" acts a possible title for Henry: after all, he offers Katherine England, Ireland, and France (5.2.248-49). On a more subversive level, "brother Ireland" brings to the surface the anxious masculinity and nationality that plagues Shakespeare's history plays and the chronicles that inform them.²⁶ For an Elizabethan audience familiar with the first tetralogy, the Queen's greeting—"So happy be the issue, brother Ireland / Of this good day and this gracious meeting"—would have served as a sharp reminder of the historical Henry and Katherine's "issue": namely, King Henry VI, the "half French, half English" son that the king and the French Princess will "compound" (5.2.215-16).²⁷ Identified in *Henry V's* sobering Epilogue as the king who "lost France and made England bleed" (12), Shakespeare's Henry VI is depicted in the first of the Henry VI plays as an "effeminate Prince" (TLN 44) and in the third as a "degenerate King" (TLN 206).²⁸ Far from a compositor's "misreading" (Gurr 214), "brother Ireland" marks another instance of what Patricia Parker describes as the play's ominous hints at "a translation in the opposite direction of Henry's mastery or dominion" (171). To emend the Queen's "brother Ireland" to "brother England," therefore, is to purge the text of one of its most unsettling moments, a moment in which Henry's Irishness (indeed, his Britishness) serves to remind the (Protestant, nationalist?) London audience of the monarch's non-national character and his extra-national dynastic interests.

The final scene of *Henry V*, as Joel Altman points out, is all too often viewed as "the obligatory coda to a rousing national epic" (32). Although Altman takes issue with critics who read this scene in such a manner, he nevertheless posits Act 4 as the play's climax; the final scene, according to Altman, "functioned rhetorically as an ebbing of the tide" (31). Focusing on Henry's dialogue at the expense of the unsettling female voices, Greenblatt cites Henry's line "Kate, when France is mine and I am yours,

then yours is France and you are mine" (5.2.182-84) to argue for the play's "complete absorption of the other" (69).²⁹ For Neill, the representation of Englishness in terms of "relaxed inclusiveness"—that is, an ostensibly inclusive colonial policy—serves to mask the play's commitment to a colonial policy of "aggressive assimilation" ("Broken English" 20). In light of the Queen's identification of Henry as "brother Ireland," considering the anxiety about hybridity in the play, "absorption" is anything but "complete," and the issue of incorporating other cultures is scarcely "relaxed." To represent Henry's martial victory and dynastic marriage with Katherine as crowning achievements, therefore, precludes analysis of the threat of cultural contamination that haunts the final scene.³⁰ Indeed, the reiteration of "broken English" and "English broken" (254) suggests that the royal betrothal generates not ideological stability, not closure but instead uneasiness about Henry and Katherine's "incorporate league" (378).³¹

NOTES

- 1 The "British Problem," as historians define it, refers to the political upheavals that led to inter- and intra-island conflicts in the 1640s and 1650s, what has come to be termed the "War(s) of the Three Kingdoms," which had its origins in the larger framework of the British Isles: the Scottish invasion of England in 1638, the Ulster Rising of 1641. Increasingly, however, the "British Problem" denotes the uneasy process of state-formation in the early modern period, a process triggered by the Tudor "incorporation" of Wales and Ireland and culminating in the Anglo-Scottish Act of Union. For Alan Smith, the "British Problem" entailed "ensuring that all constituent parts of the British Isles were under firm English control" (57). More generally, and from a less anglocentric perspective, Steven Ellis notes that the new British historiography aims "to construct a British history which reflects what happened beyond the purview of English administration as well as change in the south-east. In this way, the growth of political unity reflected in the establishment of the United Kingdom can be understood as something more than simply an English conquest or domination of 'the Celtic fringe'" (42).
- 2 For a general survey of stock representations of Celts in early modern drama, see Snyder, esp. 162-70. Whereas Snyder merely catalogues English stereotypes of the Irish, Scots, and Welsh, my central concern is the disruptive presence of these figures in *Henry V*.
- 3 Bhabha's work on the (dis)location of culture is important: "What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial," he writes, "is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences" (*The Location of Culture* 1).

- ⁴ Unless noted otherwise, all references to *Henry V* are from Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine's New Folger Library Shakespeare edition. References to Shakespeare's other histories are from either the New Folger editions or the Norton facsimile edition of *The First Folio of Shakespeare*.
- ⁵ "It is one of the paradoxes of English Renaissance culture," Willy Maley writes, "that a period characterized by Europeanization can be viewed as a time in which England virtually turned its back on the continent in order to concentrate on matters 'domestic,' in order, in fact, to domesticate the British Isles in the interests of English sovereignty. The Reformation isolated England from Catholic Europe. The Celtic fringe had to be tamed, brought under English jurisdiction, or it would offer access to Spain, by way of Ireland, or France, through Scotland" ("This Sceptred Isle" 93).
- ⁶ Joel Altman speaks of the "French-cum-Irish" (19). In fact, the play's French characters themselves make this connection: the Dauphin compares a fellow French nobleman to "a kern [i.e., foot soldier] of Ireland" (3.7.55).
- ⁷ Evelyn May Albright describes the Chorus's allusion to "the General . . . from Ireland coming" as "the clearest and most unmistakable personal and topical reference in all [of Shakespeare's] plays" (727). Critics tend to date the performance of *Henry V* between 29 March 1599 (when Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex departed for Ireland) and 28 September 1599 (when he returned). However, Warren D. Smith has suggested that the "General" refers to Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, who succeeded Essex as commander-in-chief of the forces in Ireland in early 1600. Hence, Smith dates the play between 1600 and the time when Mountjoy returned to London shortly after the death of the Queen in 1603.
- ⁸ See Parker 166.
- ⁹ That this reference to the Scots as "pilfering borderers" had topical relevance is supported by a royal proclamation of 1596—"Ordering Peace Kept on Scottish Border"—that notes "of late time there hath been great disorders by incursions into our realm of multitude of Scottishmen dwelling upon the borders of our realm towards Scotland, committing both murders, taking of prisoners, burning of houses, and taking of goods and cattle" (*Tudor Royal Proclamations* 3:166-67).
- ¹⁰ If Canterbury's use of the word "inland" denotes England's (London's?) geographical position, it also carries connotations of superior civility. The *OED*, which cites this line from the play, defines the word "inland" in this way: "The interior part of a country, the parts remote from the sea or the border . . . the inlying districts near the capital and centres of population, as opposed to remote or outlying wild parts." In *As You Like It*, Orlando's use of the word "inland" explicitly denotes superior civility: "The thorny point / Of base distress hath ta'en from me the show / Of smooth civility, yet I am inland bred / And know some nurture" (2.7.99-102).
- ¹¹ This scene marks Macmorris's and Jamy's only appearance, and it is the sole moment in F1 where Fluellen's speech prefix is "Welch." In his "The very names of the Persons": Editing and the Invention of Dramatic Character," Randall McLeod reminds us that "the very names of the Persons in the earliest Shakespeare texts very frequently vary" (88). I confine my reading to the First Folio version of Shakespeare's *The Life of Henry the Fifth* not because I regard *The Chronicle History of Henry the fifth, With his battell fought at Agin Court in France. Together with Auntient Pistoll* (1600) as a "bad" quarto, but because Q1 does not contain the Choruses and the scene with the British captains. In fact, the word "Ireland" never appears in Q1. Annabel Patterson has argued that F1 is more committed "to ideas of national greatness and agreement" (55) than Q1 precisely because Q1 includes less patriotic material (for instance, the Choruses). Following this argument, one could also argue that the absence of the "British Problem" from Q1 renders it a less anxious text.

- ¹² For a fuller account of Restoration and eighteenth-century emendations to the text, see Murphy, "'Tish ill done': *Henry the Fifth* and the Politics of Editing," especially 226-27.
- ¹³ Bhabha's discussion of the colonial stereotype is useful: "The stereotype," he writes, "is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference (which the negation through the Other permits), constitutes a problem for the *representation* of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations" (*The Location of Culture* 75). It is precisely the play of difference that is denied when editors emend the "Irish" speech prefix to "Macmorris."
- ¹⁴ According to Richard Hillman, "by representing those nations of the British Isles whose factiousness runs from Richard II's Irish Wars to Owen Glendower to the Douglas," *Henry V*'s ethnic characters "promote a unity that hardly squares with their disruptive literary heritage" (124-25). Fluellen is no "irregular and wild Glendower" (*1 Henry IV* 1.1.40); however, the scene with the four captains hardly promotes unity.
- ¹⁵ Although he does not mention FI's speech prefixes, nor the reference to "brother Ireland," David Baker provides an intelligent reading of the displacement of identities in *Henry V*.
- ¹⁶ Some critics have embraced Edwards's rephrasing of Macmorris's "What ish my nation" speech: see, for instance, Dollimore and Sinfield 125. In Gary Taylor's Oxford edition of the play, Edwards's dubious paraphrase serves as a gloss on Macmorris's lines.
- ¹⁷ In its early modern denotation "mere" was not a term of abuse; instead, it meant "pure" or "unmixed" (Hadfield and McVeagh 275, n.7). In Edmund Spenser's prose dialogue *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1598), the liminal position of the Gaelicized Old English—that is, the descendants of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman invaders of Ireland—resists ethnic classification: "most of them," one of the interlocutors claims, "are degenerated and grown *almost* mere Irish" (48; emphasis added). This is a disturbing inversion of Bhabha's notion of colonial mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a *subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (*The Location of Culture* 86). As a Protestant planter in Munster, Spenser is representative of the group of English-born colonials that historians now term New Englishmen.
- ¹⁸ "The FitzGerald's of Lixnaw in Kerry," the editor of *The Discovery* notes, "assumed the patronymic MacMorris (from *Maurice*)" (173, n.281).
- ¹⁹ Attentive to the play's many references to "breachs" and "leeks," Parker's reading of *Henry V* offers a less recuperative reading of Fluellen (see esp. 168-71). See also Highley, who notes that "Fluellen's enthusiastic support for the English war obfuscates the widespread intransigence of his compatriots who, rejecting the status of submissive colonial subjects, refused to fight in Ireland" (156).
- ²⁰ A similar instance of substitution occurs in Act 4, scene 8 as Fluellen acts as Henry's stand-in.
- ²¹ *Tudor Royal Proclamations* 3:134-6. In his *A Caueat or Warening, for Commen Cursetors Vulgarely Called Vagabones* (1566), Thomas Harman, in a section entitled "A Palliard," refers to "many Irishmen that go about with counterfeit licences" (104-05).
- ²² Based on the First Folio text, the New Folger Library Shakespeare edition of *Henry V* reinserts "Ireland" into the play. If not for this invaluable edition, I would have been oblivious to "brother Ireland."

- ²³ Mowat and Werstine suggest that the name Ireland could have been used to refer to Henry V on the early modern stage, for Henry was described as “Lord of Ireland” in *All the workes of John Taylor* (1630) and as “*Henricus V, Angliae et Franciae Rex, Dominus Hiberniae* (i.e., Henry V, King of England and France, Lord of Ireland)” in William Martin’s *The Histories and Lives of the Kings of England* (1628); see their longer note on 243. In “‘Is it upon record’: The Reduction of the History Play to History,” Werstine argues that “editors who fashion palaeographical justifications for emending the Folio’s ‘Ireland’ to ‘England’ also invoke the appearance of the word ‘in-land’ in the Folio on sig. h2, TLN 289, 1.2.148.” “They construct this perfectly good word,” he adds, “as an error for ‘England,’ an error into which the compositor was allegedly drawn by a putative ‘England’ manuscript spelling” (79, n.19). Not only is “in-land” a “perfectly good word,” but, as I suggested earlier, it also bears witness to English anxiety about England’s “pilfering borderers” (1.2.148). As Andrew Murphy points out, Canterbury’s “Our inland” is a far cry from John of Gaunt’s imagining of England as an island unto itself, an imagining of England as island-nation that erases Scotland and Wales (“Shakespeare’s Irish History” 51).
- ²⁴ For a wonderfully rich reading of *Henry V* in the context of Essex’s Irish campaign, see Highley 134-63.
- ²⁵ Donne also seems to render Ireland as feminine temptress, for he tells Wotton “I / Would [not] lose your love for Ireland” (4-5). The word “degeneracy,” it is important to point out, first surfaced in the English language at the turn of the sixteenth century, at a time when England’s borderlands, the “Celtic fringe,” were being incorporated by an increasingly centralized state.
- ²⁶ “We know that Shakespeare leaned heavily on Holinshed for the history plays of the 1580s and 1590s. One would expect him to rely therefore on the Irish section of that work for his allusions to ‘Irish’ character” (Maley, “Shakespeare, Holinshed and Ireland” 28). Indeed, Shakespeare borrowed from the English and Scottish sections of “Holinshed’s” *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Irelande*, so there is a strong possibility that he read the Irish section. I am less interested in how Shakespeare reworked his source material than the way in which the *Chronicles*’ concern with the nation’s past, with cultural memory, with contested borders and hostile neighbours plagues *Henry V*.
- ²⁷ The word “issue” is reiterated during the play’s betrothal scene when the King of France says “Take her, fair son, and from her blood raise up / Issue to me” (360-61).
- ²⁸ In *The second Part of Henry the Sixth*, “uncivil kerns of Ireland” threaten the “blood of Englishmen” (TLN 1615-16). Perhaps it is not surprising that the rebellious York discovers Jack Cade, who is compared to a “shag-hayr’d craftie Kerne” (TLN 1673), in Ireland.
- ²⁹ Similarly, Claire McEachern argues that “*Henry V* closes with the containment of the ‘effeminate’” (53).
- ³⁰ Although it says nothing about the textual issues, Dollimore and Sinfield’s reprinted article on *Henry V* includes a wonderful discussion of masculinity and miscegenation in the play: “fear of miscegenation—always a complication in imperialism—has been a major preoccupation all through the play; xenophobia and racism often accompany male homosocial insecurity” (139). They also point out that the betrothal scene “involves contamination of English masculinity with French effeminacy” (140).
- ³¹ I want to thank Elizabeth Harvey and Paul Werstine, as well as *ARIEL*’s anonymous reader, for their invaluable comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

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