

ANTI-SCOTTISH SENTIMENT AND THE RISE OF ENGLISHNESS

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The aim of this paper is to identify and describe the extent of anti-Scottish feeling that existed in England in Elizabethan and Jacobean England through an examination of what we could call mainstream culture. This will lead us closer to an understanding of that brand of national identity which culminated in the English (sic) Revolution. We shall examine the closing lines of *Macbeth*, the impact of *Eastward Ho* and finally, and very briefly, we shall analyse some of Marvell's poetry, where consolidated anti-Scottish feeling is accompanied by a strong sense of English nationhood which manifests itself not only in hostility towards the enemy within, Scotland, but the enemy over the seas, Holland.

Recent years have seen a considerable increase in the number of studies on the rise of Englishness as an ideology, of which Brian Doyle's *English and Englishness* (Doyle: 1989) will serve as a useful example. Doyle traces the parallel between the apotheosis of the British empire and the rise of English as an important academic discipline which becomes the jewel in the crown, capable of irradiating its civilizing influence to the round earth's imagined corners. Thus we reach the point at which:

[...] English was elevated through being imbued with the kind of cultural authority previously invested in the classics, but now with the addition of a powerful national dimension that yet somehow transcended nationality. (Doyle 1989: 27).

Consequently what Doyle calls "the Leavisian project", central to the teaching of literature for many years -possibly from Matthew Arnold down to the Cambridge crisis- encourages insularity while purporting to be universal. Has this project been confined to the rubbish bin of literary history or does the ghost of Frank Raymond still haunt the corridors of English departments? Sisyphus

would probably sympathise with anyone foolish enough to determine the present state of affairs, but what can and must be given full consideration is the way in which "the great tradition" finds its roots in the figure of Shakespeare. This is achieved by neatly avoiding the fact that both Shakespeare and Milton were seen by the Romantics as being powerful anti-establishment figures, sometimes for their aesthetics, sometimes for their politics and sometimes for both. The great bard, then, is universal and English, with a suspicion that the harmless *and* becomes an ideological link as binding as superglue. Doyle touches on the subject:

The Tudor assimilation of diverse public forms of government to centralized administration and control had encouraged the development of the first truly national sense of country and tongue, at least among the governing classes. (Doyle, 1989: 10).

Such analysis goes beyond the well-known adage that Shakespeare is a Tudor propagandist who justifies usurpation; for what he also appears to engineer is the justification of a certain type of state which is unquestionably centralised and anglocentric. Even though Dollimore might tell us to concentrate on the politics of Shakespeare rather than on Shakespeare's politics, if we remove ourselves to the period of Shakespeare's life, we will begin to see that such a separation is neither possible nor necessarily desirable. We are not attempting to answer questions about Shakespeare's personal opinions, but to outline the way in which this ideal of centrality is anglocentric.

If we accept that one of the concerns of the history plays is that England needs strong, centralised, efficient government in order to prevent the disintegration of the sceptred isle, we must also see that strength and efficiency do not exist in a vacuum but in relationship to something else. Thus we can see that the political nature of the history plays turns the political nature of the Roman plays, with their ongoing concern for political stability as an antidote to civil strife, into (English) history plays. Yet if there is a need for national unity, a need for the style of government that is commonly described as being Tudor, it surely cannot simply be for internal purposes only. Rather than continue being cryptic, we will now turn our attention to the most important event of the early years of the seventeenth century: the accession of James VI to the English throne. Previously, relationships between the two countries had quite often been

those of hostility, due to Scotland's preference for links, political, cultural and also religious, with France. Dissension within Scotland led to a situation in which Tudor stability could be contrasted to the awful fate of the northern neighbours who, it was commonly stated, had not let one monarch in two hundred years die peacefully in his bed. The Scots, it seemed, respected neither men, nor women nor children, and the popular imagination could be stirred by gory accounts of the death of Mary Queen of Scots's secretary, Rizzio. None of this material is other than basic general knowledge, yet it must be stressed that it is from this perspective that the accession of James VI should be viewed: that of a major cataclysm which would ruin the achievements of the Tudor monarchy. Christopher Hill succinctly describes the problems that James VI faced on his arrival in London:

James had many disadvantages. He was a foreigner, married to a papist, and son of Mary Queen of Scots who had been the Spanish and papal candidate to replace Elizabeth on the throne. (Hill 1977: 14).

It can therefore be no coincidence that the most damned play of all is *Macbeth*, so fearful an object that it cannot, like the devil, be named. Let us try and contextualise a few remarks from such an authoritative source as the Arden edition. 1603 is a significant date not solely as the date of succession but also because "The play was therefore written, we may assume, between 1603 and 1606". (ed. Muir 1964: xv). Need we add to the comment that "*Macbeth* is Shakespeare's 'most profound and mature vision of evil'" (ed. Muir 1964: xlv) and that its geographical location is barbarous Scotland which Malcolm himself contrasts to "gracious England".

Order is restored at the play's end, and so we should turn our attention to the closing lines:

We shall not spend a large expense of time,
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be Earls; the first that ever Scotland
In such honour nam'd. What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time-

As calling home our exil'd friends abroad,
 That fled the snares of watchful tyranny;
 Producing forth the cruel ministers
 Of this dead butcher, and his fiend-like Queen [...]
 (V. ix. 25-35).

There might not be anything initially surprising that here, at the end of a play which highlights the barbarity of civil war, Malcolm stresses the need for union. Yet there is something curious in Malcolm's decision to rename the thanes who will henceforth be known as earls. The source is easy to track down, it is to be found in Holinshed, but the context in which it is to be fitted is Malcolm's exile in England ("gracious England"). Consequently Malcolm can be seen as striving to remove from political life each and every possible vestige of the "dead butcher, and his fiend-like Queen", but we should not lose sight of the fact that this innovation, which presumably makes for good tactics, is ineluctably anglicization, suggesting that improvements in the political life of the barbarous northern neighbours in eleventh century Scotland originated in the civilising influence of the court of Edward the Confessor. (There is an earl in *Macbeth*, appropriately enough it is the earl of Northumberland, General of the English Forces). Perhaps, we should add a few words about the fiendish queen, the fourth witch. Whatever documentary evidence we may look for and acquire, the Celtic women has a long tradition of being fierce, as both Goscinnny & Uderzo and Ammianus Marcellinus, in their different ways, inform us. The latter tells us:

Nearly all the Gauls are of a lofty stature, fair and of ruddy complexion: terrible from the sternness of their eyes, very quarrelsome, and of great pride and insolence. A whole troupe of foreigners would not be able to withstand a single Gaul if he called his wife to his assistance who is usually very strong and with blue eyes; especially when, swelling her neck, gnashing her teeth, and brandishing her sallow arms of enormous size, she begins to strike blows mingled with kicks, as if they were so many missiles sent from the string of a catapult. (Chadwick, 1970: 50).

The more and more evidence of anti-Scottish feeling we are able to accumulate, the harder it becomes to understand the position of James VI. In other words, if his Scottishness is being attacked, how come Shakespeare did not lose his ears? After all, Verdi used Shakespeare's text as a call for Italian nationhood.

Let us clarify the situation by using a modern example. In Martin Amis' novel *Money*, the anti-hero becomes increasingly bored with *Animal Farm*, simply because he cannot understand how intelligent adults can be interested in a story about farm animals. In a rather similar way, we have suggested that for many generations people have ignored the blindly obvious fact that *Macbeth* is, after all, about Scotland, and not primarily an exercise about the universal condition of man, as the great tradition ideal would have us believe. Whether or not such a proposition is viable or not remains to be seen, but possible solutions can be identified. First of all, there are real historical links between James VI and *Macbeth*. Genealogically, James' ancestors are not Macbeth and his wife, but his victims, the lily-white Banquo and the head of state, Duncan. Indeed, Shakespeare omits from his play the fact that Macbeth, according to Holinshed, did have a legitimate grievance against Duncan, and, significantly enough in the light of the controversy surrounding the succession, the disagreement between the two was about exactly that subject: succession. If the closing lines of *Macbeth* do suggest an axis of Scotland, barbarity, thanes and dissension, as opposed to England, civilisation and earls and unity, James VI is located along the latter axis as being the person capable of bringing together a divided nation. In purely historical terms, north of the border, this was evident in the way that he brought stability, or at least a certain amount of it, to a nation torn apart by the religious and political faction of his mother's reign, and we would propose that south of the Tweed, the closing lines of *Macbeth* appeal to a political concept that would later be called Great Britain, in other words, a nationhood that apparently combines the best of both worlds. The work of the Tudor's would therefore be maintained, and -who knows!- improved. James VI was more interested in the English throne than in the Scottish throne, not simply because London had a milder climate than Edinburgh or Stirling, but because England was a richer country. Many Scotsmen, from the time of James VI down to James Barrie, made deliberate changes in their lifestyle to appear more English and less Scottish. It is in this light that we should view the two eighteenth century attempts to regain the crown. The Stuart "pretenders" were interested in regaining the Scottish throne,

but the authentic jewel in the crown was London and its wealth. The assimilation of English cultural values by Scots started at the very top of the social ladder.

Let us now go on to analyse a play which did cause offence: *Eastward Ho*, first performed and published in 1605, and consequently a play contemporary to *Macbeth*. *Eastward Ho* was co-written by Jonson, Marston and Chapman. Marston, apparently forewarned of the scandal, fled London, Chapman and Jonson, on the other hand, were imprisoned, "the report was that they should then [have] had their ears cut & noses [...]" (ed, R. W. Van Fossen 1979: 4). After some weeks they were released, intact. We know that this form of punishment was inflicted on other people on occasions for similar offenses. Christopher Hill cites Milton's friend, Alexander Gil as an example: he was sentenced to the same fate for having written scurrilous verses about Buckingham and the King: "Gil called on God to say

My sovereign from a Ganymede
Whose whorish breath hath power to lead
His Majesty which way it list. (Hill, 1977: 28).

Although the sentence was not carried out, other people were not so lucky. Yet if we look at *Eastward Ho*, there initially seems to be no reason whatsoever for such Draconian measures, whether just threatened or actually carried out. *Eastward Ho* does not appear to be a Scottish play at all: it is set in London and there are no Scottish characters whatsoever. Indeed, it is based on a story to be found in *The Novellino of Masuccio* (1420?-1480?) which describes how a cunning Catalan merchant manages to outwit an Amalfitan silversmith by asking him for assistance in carrying out the abduction of a woman who has responded to his amorous advances. Genefra manages to secure the silversmith's cooperation, who escorts a disguised woman on board the Catalan's vessel believing that he can thus further cement a good (commercial) relationship between himself and the Catalan. It is only on his return home that he discovers that he has in fact handed his own wife over to Genefra who will by then have set sail for home. Again, the question begs itself, what has all this to do with anti-Scottish feeling? We seem to have identified two plays that are remarkably different from each other. *Macbeth* is set in Scotland but has little to do with Scotland, yet *Eastward Ho*, based on a medieval Italian story, set

in London, offends the king and causes imprisonment and the threat of severe physical punishment.

What exactly are the offending passages, we might be asking ourselves (Chapman puts it down to two clauses). One of the passages is part of the utopian vision of the new world which Captain Seagull tries to sell to two adventurers, Spendall and Scapethrift, it is as pleasant a land

As ever sun shined on, temperate and full of all sorts of excellent viands: wild boar is as common there as our tamest bacon is here; venison, as mutton. And then you shall live freely there, without sergeants, or courtiers, or lawyers, or intelligencers -only a few industrious Scots, perhaps, who, indeed, are dispersed over the face of the whole earth. But as for them, there are no greater friends to Englishmen and England, when they are out on't, in the world, than they are. And for my part, I would a hundred thousand of 'em were there, for we are all one countrymen now, ye know, and we should find ten times more comfort of them there than we do here. (III. iii. 39-52).

The passage does not seem to be particularly virulent in tone, bandying together those kind of interferences that may, at certain moments, impede the expansion of imperialism either by institutionalised regulation, lawyers, courtiers and so on, or by straightforward competition, the Scots. The message is quite clear: Scotsmen are not friends to Englishmen wherever they might be found, and the further away from London taverns the better for all concerned. There are, of course, other references to the Scots' attitude towards money. For example, when trying on a farthingale, a Scottish model, Gertrude asks the tailor "is this a right Scot? Does it clip close, and bear up round? (I. ii. 58-59). On another occasion Scots pronunciation is used, when an anonymous gentleman spying Sir Petronel Flash, comments to another gentleman "I ken the man weel; he's one of my thirty-pound knights" (IV. i. 197-198), referring thus to a financial transaction which secured knighthood and which Sir Petronel has taken advantage of. Anyway, whatever the case, there seems to be little justification for the imprisonment. Consequently, we are left with several possible explanations of the situation. In the first place, it could be that James VI, as

well as being homosexual, Scottish, foreign, Papist etc., was also completely paranoic. Secondly, the controversy that the play aroused was caused by its gibes at the Scots on the make in London, but not only by these. Thirdly, either or both of these situations can only be justified once we make a theoretical approximation to the nature of the theatre itself.

In a wonderful piece of detective work published in *Studies in Philology* in 1931, Joseph Quincy Adams reconstructs the events leading to the remarkably rapid publication of the play, only a few months after its presentation. Due to the fact that copyright was passed on from author to actors, rapid publication of a successful play makes little sense at all. The mystery is further increased by the fact that while the same Aspley published three versions of the play in the third quarter of 1605 and was allowed to do so, not only were Chapman and Jonson imprisoned, but the actors, the Children of her Majesty's Revels lost their patronage and their playhouse at Blackfriars was closed (if only temporarily). Adams therefore suggests that the discrepancy lies in the nature of the printed edition and the original presentation. Even among the printed editions, there are highly significant differences, the most important of all being the eradication of the passage about the industrious Scots -which we quoted earlier- from the second issue of the first edition. Adams also investigates the strange divergences in the number of type-lines. He argues that at several moments the number is reduced from thirty-nine to thirty five, that at others short lines are used to fill out the text, usually at moments when mild satire is being poked at the Scots, which leaves us with the strong probability that what was pasted over was more virulent satire. He concludes that King James' anger was "occasioned by the performance of the play rather than by its publication". (*Studies in Philology*, xxviii, 1931: 701). Jonson complained about being imprisoned as a result of rumour, which would explain his (legitimate?) wish to be judged on the written version.

Although it is impossible to add anything to the detective work which has been so brilliantly undertaken, we would like to suggest that many of the remarks about the Scots, money, and London could and should be related to another theme: social mobility. The gentlemen complain about the "the thirty-pound knights", but this is not only the remark made on the subject of buying honours. The centre of authority of the play is William Touchstone, who marries off his two daughters, Gertrude to Sir Petronel Flash, and Mildred to the hardworking apprentice, Golding. Gertrude is hardly a subtle tactician; her aim is stated explicitly "I must be a lady, and I will be a lady" (I. ii. 21) and

her tactics are equally unequivocal, as when she addresses her future husband: "Sweet knight.. I beseech thee down with me for God's sake". (I. ii. 138 & 142-3). Soon after her marriage, she reminds us that her newly-acquired status demands that her father "must call me daughter no more now, but 'madam'". (III. ii. 70-71). Upwardly-mobile Mildred is shocked when she finds out that her father has married her sister to "a base prentice" (III. ii. 73-74). Mildred's meekness and her marriage to Golding sets off her sister both her sister's brazenness and the showiness of her marriage to Sir Petronel. Golding tells his future father-in-law that he will honour and obey him, there are no puns or double meanings in his solemn vow to Mildred:

How dear an object you are to my desires I cannot express,
 whose fruition would my master's absolute consent and yours
 vouchsafe me, I should be absolutely happy [...]. I will ever
 make your contentment the end of my endeavours; I will love
 you above all; and only your grief shall be my misery, and
 your delight my felicity. (II. i. 79-92).

The split in attitudes manifested in the two marriages is an extension of a difference of opinion between William Touchstone and his wife. To her rebuke that he is an ass and could have been a knight instead had he wanted to, that is to say if he had paid up, Touchstone remains silent. At the play's conclusion it becomes apparent that the methodical, Puritanical, stolid qualities of Touchstone, Mildred and Golding triumph, as the latter becomes an alderman, given the task of judging Sir Petronel Flash. The tables have been turned, whereas as Gertrude insisted that she be addressed by her title, which is only a thirty-pound one, her sister's husband, the base prentice, is now addressed by her father as "Worshipful son" who will be "remembered when the famous fable of Whittington and his puss shall be forgotten" (IV. ii. 82-84). The whole question of social mobility can thus be seen as forming the backbone of the play, and must surely be connected with the scandal the play created. However, the reference to Dick Whittington combined with others to 'real' and 'artificial' gentlemen might tempt us into relocating the issues in the medieval period. However, we could also put forward to other interpretations. In the first place, the rise of the thirty-pound knights is evidence not only of an empty exchequer, but also of the power of money to obtain social position rapidly

without the necessity of saving exotic kingdoms from being overrun by a plague of rats or undertaking any other such similar act of heroism. Money, in itself, is enough, a situation brought home to Londoners -again we must emphasise the centrality of the capital city- by the fact that their city is now being plagued by hordes of *foreign* thirty-pound knights; a rather cheap way to preferment in line with Scottish meanness. In other words, the presence of Scots in London highlighted the fact that a new civil society was well on its way.

A second interpretation stems from the implications of the play's hero: Golding. Golding sounds rather similar to gelding, in line with his lacklustre character. Clearly the Golding\Mildred marriage is Lent rather than Carnival, discreet rather than licentious. Golding thus becomes the supporter of the bourgeois marriage, shown in *Eastward Ho* to be extremely boring but successful. In the theatre, in 1605, the Puritan ethic triumphs over the social pretensions of a knight, yet a few decades later it would sit in judgement over the monarchy itself. However, within the play itself, it should be remembered that all that glitters is not Golding, and there seems little sympathy on behalf of Jonson, Chapman and Marston for the work ethic. So we would suggest that the constant references to the insecurity of social position added to the Scottish angle combine to bring down vengeance on the playwrights, as it is thirty-pound knights -not just the monarch- whose position is questioned, and it comes as no surprise to learn that it was Sir James Murray, a Scottish thirty-pound knight, who denounced the scurrilous nature of the comedy.

Adams' analysis stresses the importance of performance: undoubtedly, the blank page speaks louder than the written page, simply because it is not blank. In a way, he is describing a dialogical relationship between actors and audience which he has gone some length towards reconstructing. At this point of our study, we would like to add a few comments which have a Bakhtinian basis; that is to say which recognise the power of carnival. One of them is a development of an idea which we have just described. The split between the ideology of the Touchstone and his wife and the two sisters can quite easily be seen as the death of carnival and the birth of puritanism. Golding, Touchstone and Mildred are not interesting people at all, and for this reason are more or less excluded from the episode of cuckoldry. Yet Touchstone is given the opportunity to admonish the luckless victim:

If you be a cuckold, it's an argument you have a beautiful woman to your wife [...]. Again, if you be a cuckold and

know it not, you are an innocent, if you know it and endure it, a true martyr. (V. v. 199-208).

There is something grotesque in this judgement which stems from the fact that Touchstone lives in a world far different from the bawdy, which may be corrupt, but is still alive and kicking. The grotesqueness is probably a result of the fact that for the carnival world the Puritan has only the following functions: to sit in judgement, then, later, to shut it down. If the Puritans dislike the theatre it is because its subversiveness was as evident to them as it was to James VI, and would be to the French authorities who decided that Beaumarchais had gone over the top. As Michael Bristol makes clear in his study *Carnival and Theater*:

The subsequent success of the great Elizabethan playwrights and the prestige accorded to their work have made it difficult to appreciate the priority of a heteroglot theater, its capacity to arouse genuine political anxiety, and its impact on social discipline and the structure of authority. (Bristol 1989: 123).

We hope it has become evident that we go along with this kind of reasoning, which purports to explain both the furore the play caused in London -the very centre of English political life- as well as the difficulty we might have in understanding such phenomena, as a result of both subsequent censorship and individualised textual reading. Bristol's analysis of the Renaissance as being a period of change and upheavals rather than just of change confronts us with the old chestnut of Shakespeare's politics and the politics of Shakespeare. To what extent we consider *Macbeth* as a Scottish play or not a Scottish play is something we cannot go into here, but we believe that too much concern for the politics of Shakespeare has led to bypassing the importance of the "heteroglot theater". The timeless, universal but English bard, used carnivalesque features in his drama, but for what purpose? Merely for entertainment seems now as insufficient a reason as suggesting it is a complement to the main plot. What we are presented with is the remains of the medieval world, fitting somehow or other into the transient nature of Renaissance culture, while remaining outside the comprehension and ideology of the great tradition. Perhaps it is the most outstanding example of that rebelliousness, aesthetic as well as political,

which the Romantics identified in Shakespeare but which caused trouble both to the Augustans and the Leavisian project. We should not confuse such analyses as these of Renaissance drama with satire in the modern age of the novel: carnival is subversive, it is collective, the theatre of the West End or Broadway or armchair politics are something else. Time and space require us to leave detailed analysis of Marvell's concept of nationhood for another occasion. Yet we would like to indicate several points of interest which will show to what extent the concept of nationhood has been consolidated. Even though Marvell's portrait of the heroic Fairfax is ambiguous in its acceptance of his decision to retire from public life or encourage a return to arms against the hostile Scots (again), there is no difficulty in locating *this* paradise:

O thou, that dear and happy isle
 The garden of the world ere while,
 The paradise of four seas,
 Which heaven planted us to please,
 But, to exclude the world, did guard
 With watery if not flaming sword;
 What luckless apple did we taste.
 To make us mortal, and thee waste?"

(*Upon Appleton House*, 321-328).

Whether England is paradise or paradise lost, its insularity is well-worth preserving; furthermore, if Fairfax is reluctant to leave perfection for the glory of war, it is quite understandable. But the nature of paradise upon Earth has been transformed through the union of the crowns, as can be seen from a relatively unknown poem, *The Loyal Scot -Upon Occasion of the Death of Captain Douglas Burned in One of His Majesty's Ships at Chatham*. Ignoring the rather ignominious nature of the military action which caused his death, after a few introductory remarks on "the valiant Scot", Marvell then proceeds to specify the need for a new kingdom which will not be too concerned about the importance of the Tweed and other such things which Freud once labelled "the narcissism of minor differences", instead, we will have "One king, one faith, one language, and one isle". This surely confirms the idea that the appeals for unity and union which Malcolm demands in *Macbeth* undergo metamorphosis in the seventeenth century in which Britain/ England emerges as an expanding nation. Marvell's appeal reminds us not only of the advice

Prince Hal receives from his dying father "to busy giddy minds/with foreign quarrels", in this case quarrels against the "undigested vomit of the seas", as Marvell refers to the Dutch in *The Character of Holland*, but also of Captain Seagull when he reminds the adventurers that "we are all one countrymen now". This brings us finally to two conclusions. First, the rise of Englishness is hard to distinguish from the rise of Great Britain, and it seems in the interests of those implicated in the rise of the new nation state that the linguistic, religious and administrative unities be emphasised. It is not ironic that the concept of the new Britain should be so firmly stated in relationship with the Stuart monarchy, but surely paradigmatic of the ideal of Britishness, in which the modern day Malcolm -rather a curious version- Charles II turns two nation states into "gracious Britain". The extent to which this reflects reality is left to the beliefs of each individual reader, but we would argue that the purposefulness of the ideological construct is matched by the impossibility of its application to the history of both countries. The fate of Charles I and James VII demonstrates how shaky an ideology it was at the time of its inception, which the events of the last three hundred years have not dispelled. The second conclusion concerns genre. Carnival is all but dead by the time of Marvell, ironies, ambiguities may remain, for example the supposed nobility of Charles I depicted in "*An Horatian Ode* [...]", but however public a public poem may be, there can no matching the subversiveness of the public performance of such apparently innocent plays as *Eastward Ho* or *Le Mariage de Figaro*.

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