

The Colonization and Representation of Gaelic Culture:

Elizabethans in Sixteenth Century Ireland

by

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ABSTRACT

Culture played an intrinsic role in the conquest of Ireland in the sixteenth century, and the English colonial project, so often described in political and military terms, must be reexamined in this context. By examining sixteenth century spatial and literary representations of Ireland and Irish culture it becomes evident that the process described by Timothy Mitchell, called enframing, was being imposed upon the Irish. Enframing is the convergence of two aspects of power, the metaphysical and the microphysical. Metaphysical power worked through maps and literature to bring order in the conceptual realm, allowing the English to imagine Ireland as they wished it to be. Microphysical power created order in the material world, by physically changing the appearance of the landscape and people to conform to England's laws and norms. The English justified their policy of colonization by representing Ireland and Gaelic culture as wild or barbarous, and hoped to achieve their colonial ambition by physically coercing the Irish into adopting the "superior" English culture.

When the Irish continued to rebel against English rule, the colonizers began employing methods of extreme violence to subdue the Gaelic people. At the same time, they began to practice more extreme forms of cultural colonization by attacking those aspects of Gaelic culture which most resisted conformity to English standards of civility. The Gaelic legal system, called Brehon law, redistributive inheritance, cattle herding and traditional forms of Irish dress were denigrated to assert English authority over the Irish people. English fear of the negative effects of Gaelic culture were exemplified by the Anglo-Irish lords, who

were originally of English descent, but had “degenerated” into Irish barbarians through the use of Gaelic culture. This retrograde process could also occur when an English person practiced marriage, childbirth, wet-nursing or fosterage with Irish persons. These interactions, and the consequences which came from them, were often described in terms of infection and disease. Thus culture, operating on multiple levels, and how that culture was represented, became a powerful site for colonial power to operate.

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INTRODUCTION

Any discussion regarding the historiography of Irish colonization, or cultural representations of the Irish, must begin with David Quinn's *The Elizabethan and the Irish*, published in 1966.¹ His foundational work was the first to discuss sixteenth century English thought regarding the Irish people. English attitudes, which Quinn calls "cultural nationalism," were atypical of European colonizing thought because the Irish were Christian and looked physically similar to the English. Quinn argues that negative attitudes toward the Irish were instead based on their use of Gaelic language and agricultural practices. He concludes that English superiority had less to do with material difference than an Irish refusal; or lack there of; to conform to English standards of cultural practice. Quinn's claims are no longer groundbreaking, but much of his work influenced scholars of the next generation.

Nicholas P. Canny is one such historian. His *Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland*, first published in 1976, is the essential text on Elizabethan colonial policy. Canny argues that the English initially proposed a simple plan of conquest through plantation. However, this plantation plan ultimately failed due to lack of resources and the greed of self-serving English administrators. Despite the failure, Canny concludes that the plantation policy later informed English policy towards New World settlements and had the effect of maintaining stability in England by sending restless second sons out of the country. Ciaran Brady is another highly respected historian of colonial Ireland, focusing on administrative history. In *The Chief Governors*, published in 1993, he makes the controversial claim that historians of

¹ David Quinn, *The Elizabethans and the Irish* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966) 8.

sixteenth century Ireland must focus on the Irish governors rather than the diverse political factions that were then in operation. He contends that a soft policy of legal reform was first implemented to civilize the Irish, but agrees with Canny that when this policy failed, the English felt justified in using violent force to subdue the Irish people.

One other notable historian in conversation with both Canny and Brady is Brendan Bradshaw, who in *The Irish Constitutional Revolution*, written in 1979, focuses on the intellectual and political motivations and implications of the 1541 constitutional change in Ireland. He claims that this event, which changed Ireland into a kingdom, was transformative and has been under appreciated by historians of English colonization. He argues that the revisions were brought about by members of the Anglo-Irish faction, and were not imposed by Henry VIII, as has been previously assumed. Bradshaw explores how the humanist concept of the commonwealth was a major factor in the constitutional revolution and he concludes that the new status of kingdom actually provided the Irish people with a means to resist colonization because they could claim subject-hood under their constitutional status. Additionally, Bradshaw joins Andrew Hadfield and Willy Malley in *Representing Ireland*, published in 1993, in which they examine English representations of the Irish people and argue that Englishness was defined in contrast to others, and “one of the most important ways in which Ireland was read in this period was as a series of negative images of Englishness.”² In this way, they both echo and refine the sentiments of David Quinn, the founder of modern Irish colonial studies.

² Bradshaw, Hadfield and Malley, *Representing Ireland*, 7.

Theoretically, this paper is grounded in the work of *Internal Colonialism* by Michael Hechter.³ He approaches Ireland from an anthropological standpoint and uses the British Isles as a case study to understand national development as a dynamic process, creating change between large groups of people. Hechter refutes the diffusion model of colonial interaction in preference for the core-periphery model, in which the dominant culture emanates outward from a core area. In areas where economic and political integration achieve stability, assimilation is possible. However, full assimilation is unusual because colonialism usually includes stratification of wealth and denigration of the peripheral culture. The situation in Ireland follows this general model; therefore Hechter's theory, that it is necessary for the colonizing force to denigrate the indigenous culture as a form of control, is the cornerstone of this paper.

The work of Robbie McVeigh and Bill Rolston in "Civilizing the Irish" (2009) was also influential to this work. Working from Norbert Elias's definition of civilization, as "the self consciousness of the West"⁴, McVeigh and Rolston identify the ways in which English colonial activity in Ireland was justified by using concepts of "civility" and "barbarism". They cite a variety of uncivil practices such as table manners, improper use of land, and religion as the primary justifications for civilizing the barbaric Irish and making them into Michel Foucault's "docile bodies"⁵. This paper discusses ways in which this concept can be applied to Ireland. When the

³ Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic Fringe in British national Development*. (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers) 1999.

⁴ Robbie McVeigh and Bill Rolston, "Civilising the Irish." *Race and Class* 51 (2009) 4.

⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan. (New York: Random House Inc. 1995) 138.

English attempted to force the Irish to abandon cattle herding in favor of tillage and to wear English style clothing, they were endeavoring to make the Irish “docile and useful”. The third chapter of this paper discusses some of the same concepts of “civility” and “barbarity” as McVeigh and Rolston, though it analyzes them in greater detail. Ultimately, this paper agrees with McVeigh and Rolston that the English perception of civility and barbarity formed a major component in English colonial ideology.

Additionally, Ann Stoler’s *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (2002) provided an indispensable theoretical framework for analyzing Elizabethan literature regarding intermarriage, Irish women, and child rearing practices. Stoler, also using a Foucauldian framework, situates carnal knowledge not as a byproduct of colonial rule, but as one of the many potential, “dense transfer points”⁶ of colonial power over the biopolitic. Stoler’s argument is applicable to any European colonial situation, though she focuses on the Dutch colonies in Java, Indonesia and Deli, North Sumatra during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In her research she finds that “the harnessing of sentiment was a crucial site of political contest; and how children acquired thoughts and feelings was a key to colonial strategies.”⁷ The third chapter of this paper reflects this argument when it examines colonial fears about English children being “infected” with negative characteristics through the breast milk of Irish wet nurses.

⁶ Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) 145.

⁷ Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 139.

Finally, Timothy Mitchell's *Colonising Egypt*⁸, which also engages Foucauldian theory, was essential to the writing of this paper. Mitchell provided much of the language employed in this paper to describe the specific form of colonization that occurred in Ireland. His concept of "enframing," or the notion of colonization taking place in both physical and conceptual space, is used throughout the following chapters. While the entire thesis deals with representational colonization, the second chapter focuses specifically on a spatial analysis of Ireland from the English perspective. It is there that Mitchell's work has been most helpful. Therefore, a more in depth discussion of his theory, and how it can be applied to an earlier time period, has been reserved for the second chapter.

⁸ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, (California: University of California Press 1991) Mitchell's work focuses on the process of orientalizing the east, this paper goes beyond Mitchell by applying his concepts within a western country.

CHAPTER ONE: Historical Background

In order to understand the colonization process that occurred in sixteenth century Ireland, one must understand how culture was employed by the Elizabethans to denigrate and subdue the Irish people. However, culture does not exist inside a vacuum but rather has a reciprocal relationship with politics. Just as it would be remiss to exclude culture from a discussion of colonization, it would be hypocritical to exclude the political context from this thesis. Therefore, this chapter will explain a few of the fundamental differences in legal and societal structure that affected Anglo-Irish relations, differences that often led to disputes over systems of inheritance, succession and legal reform. This chapter will also provide a brief political history of the aspects of Anglo-Irish relations that pertained to the colonial project, making it possible for the reader to understand the historical and intellectual context of the succeeding chapters.

Traditional historiography, including most notably, Edward Gibbon, considers the Roman occupation of Briton to be the defining moment of divergence between the developments of England and Ireland.⁹ Although Ireland was Christianized, it did not support the traditional diocesan model for church government.¹⁰ Instead, “the early Irish church, however, preferred a monastic model in which kinship ties were more important than territorial ones.”¹¹ This system reflected the continued emphasis

⁹ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* Vol I. ed. J.B. Bury. (London: Methuen & Co, 1909) 4. Also see T.J. Sheehy, *Ireland*. (England: Colour Library Books, 1988) 24. And for more information about Irish society in the sixteenth century see chapter one of Nicholas P. Canny, *Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established*. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc., 1976)

¹⁰ P.W. Joyce, *A Social History of Ancient Ireland* Volume I. (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1920) 323.

¹¹ Richard Killeen, *A Timeline of Irish History*. (Dublin: Gill & Macmillam Ltd, 2003) 16.

Gaelic society placed upon tribal organization. English society came to be based upon individual territory, a notion that was encouraged by William the Conqueror in 1066, when he provided land for his men under the feudal system. Conversely, Gaelic society was organized first into family, then sept, clan, and finally, tribe. A tribe occupied the smallest political unit of land, called a *tuath*, which was ruled by an elected member of the tribe. Multiple tuaths made up each of the five provinces of Ireland; called Ulster, Leinster, Munster, Connaught and Meath. The tribes of each province elected their king and succession of the king's progeny was never assumed. Gaelic society practiced *tanistry*, or the election of an heir during the king's lifetime, in order to avoid crises of succession.¹² Irish kings, whether petty or provincial, were "in every sense, limited monarchs,"¹³ subject to the same laws as any tribal member.

Gaelic society also enforced the notion of tribal organization by using systems of communal inheritance. Within each tribe there existed a number of smaller septs that held land separately from each other. Every sept member had an unquestioned right to use the land, but no member had any sense of ownership, as the land could always be broken up and redistributed in a process called gavelkind or gaveling. P.W. Joyce comments that, "In theory the land belonged not to individuals, but to the tribe."¹⁴ Upon the death of a land-holding member of a tribe, that portion of sept land was not given to any heirs, as in the English system, but was reapportioned among all male

¹² For more please see Evelyn Cecil, *Primogeniture: a short history of its development in various countries and its practical effects.* (London: J. Murray, 1895) Source: Yale Law School Library, Gale Group.

¹³ Joyce, *A Social History of Ancient Ireland*, 60.

¹⁴ P. W. Joyce, *A Short History of Gaelic Ireland: From the Earliest Times to 1608.* (Dublin: The Educational Company of Ireland, 1924) 66.

members of the sept.¹⁵ This system of redistribution emphasized the importance of group rights over the individual in Gaelic society, a notion that the English legal system did not support.

In contrast, the English division of land was based upon a unit called a shire, and the shire system was first extended over a large area in the tenth century by the Kings of Wessex.¹⁶ Each shire held a court session twice a year at which judges tried criminal and civil cases and the kings' laws were declared. Shires were broken into smaller land units called "hundreds" which eventually held smaller courts sessions of their own once a month to deal with routine criminal infractions. The importance of this development cannot be overlooked for, "The emergence of shires and their subdivisions, called hundreds, completed the transformation of a tribal monarchy into a territorial monarchy."¹⁷ By establishing regular court sessions and appointing the judges who oversaw them, the kings of England created a standardized system of justice that reinforced individual inheritance by ruling in favor of primogeniture claims.

Conversely, Gaelic law, or *Fenechas*, was commonly called Brehon law after the brehons judges who administered it. Brehon law relied on precedents, rulings made by local judges who made decisions based on the customs of the area. It was not in any sense a legislative body administered by the state because, "the central government was never strong enough to have much influence either in the making of

¹⁵ Cecil, *Primogeniture*, 13.

¹⁶ Clayton Roberts, David Roberts and Douglas R. Bisson, *A History of England: Volume I Prehistory to 1714*. (New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc, 2009) 48.

¹⁷ Roberts, Roberts and Bisson, *A History of England*, 48.

laws or in causing the existing laws to be carried out.”¹⁸ Since there was no “state” there could be no crime committed against the state, instead there existed only offenses against the individual, which were called “torts”. Therefore, Brehon law focused on criminal and civil torts, and often functioned as a mediator between individuals in order to avoid whole septs or tribes becoming involved in conflict. When a crime, such as personal injury or property theft occurred, the victim of the crime had the option of involving his kinsmen in retaliation and that would invoke a similar response from the tribe of the opposing party. Often these situations would escalate until internecine war broke out, unless a brehon was consulted. In such cases, both parties agreed to abide by the brehon’s ruling and war could be avoided. English writers from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries condemned the Brehon legal system for creating chaos and leaving criminals unpunished. However Joyce argues that, “Brehon law was very well suited to the society in which, and for which it grew up.”¹⁹ This claim is supported by evidence that English settlers operating outside the Pale adopted the use of Gaelic law and supported brehons in their retinue, just as Gaelic lords had done for centuries.

The development of the English legal system, known as common law, advanced along with the growing power of the monarchy. Among ancient Britons, land had also practiced gravelkind, a system by which land was divided equally among the male heirs of a landholder. This practice of division between all male heirs, “or the analogous practice of partition among all the children alike, was the rule of

¹⁸ Joyce, *A Social History of Ancient Ireland*, 178.

¹⁹ Joyce, *A Short History of Gaelic Ireland*, 46.

succession before the conquest.”²⁰ After William of Normandy conquered England primogeniture developed for lands held in military tenure as a way to settle the country and establish feudal ties by linking titles to the land, which could not be divided. By the reign of Edward I, land held in civil tenure called “socage” was also being inherited by the eldest son, in imitation of military land practices. As monarchical power increased, English common law reciprocally endorsed the growing practice of primogeniture.

When the English invaded Ireland in the twelfth century, they attempted to impose primogeniture and other aspects of English common law on the Irish people. The Irish resisted, however, and, “tanistry and gravelkind continued to remain the mainstay of an internal link between each of the tribes.”²¹ By the sixteenth century, the twelfth century Anglo-Irish colonizers had adopted Gaelic legal and inheritance customs, while the Elizabethans had become fully convinced of the superiority of their own common law system. This difference in ideology created, as T. W. Moody said, “a confrontation of two different systems of organisation, the centralised system of England and the localised Irish system of family rule, based on different law and a different scheme of land holding.”²² This confrontation formed much of the basis for England’s policy of cultural colonization discussed in the second and third chapters of this thesis.

For the purposes of this paper, Ireland was first invaded by England in 1167 when Diarmait Mac Murchada, the King of Leinster, was deposed from his throne

²⁰ Cecil, *Primogeniture*, 30.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

²² T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin and F.J. Byrne, *A New History of Ireland: Volume III Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976) 50.

and exiled to England. After offering fealty to Henry II, King of England, Mac Murchada was allowed to recruit Norman knights to assist in regaining his territory. Many of these Norman knights, were Welsh marcher lords, recently subdued by Henry II, including Richard fitz Gilbert, the infamous Strongbow. In 1169, a large force of Norman lords landed in Bannow Bay, Wexford in support of Murchada's claim and took Leinster and Dublin in his name.²³ Murchada was restored to the throne of Leinster and Strongbow became his son-in-law and heir. Strongbow's rise to power posed a threat to Henry II, who disliked the establishment of petty kingdoms by ambitious Welsh lords. Henry II invaded Ireland in 1171, designated Dublin as a chartered town and accepted the submission of the Norman knights as his vassals.²⁴ By the end of the twelfth century, Anglo-Norman lords controlled nearly two thirds of Ireland. King Henry II had invaded Ireland under the auspices of religious pretext. Sixteen years earlier, in 1155, Pope Adrian IV had granted him the papal bull *Laudabiliter*, which authorized Henry to make religious reforms in Ireland. Based on this papal bull, Henry claimed the title Lord of Ireland, for his son Prince John, a title English kings would hold until 1541.

Prince John went to Ireland to consolidate Norman claims in 1185. He was accompanied by Giraldus Cambrensis, also known as Gerald of Wales, who wrote the *Topography of Ireland* (1187) and the *Conquest of Ireland* (1189)²⁵. These two works became the authoritative texts on Ireland and the Irish people, and provided a

²³ Art Cosgrove ed. *A New History of Ireland: Volume II Medieval Ireland 1169-1534* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 69.

²⁴ Killeen, *A Timeline of Irish History*, 23.

²⁵ Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, trans. John J. O'Meara (London: Penguin Books, 1982) and Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. Thomas Wright. London: H.G. Bohn. 1863.

justification for conquest that would be continuously referenced throughout the Elizabethan era. Gerald was the first to describe the Irish as barbaric and argued that they needed good English government in order to become civilized. This created, as historian John Gillingham stated, “one of the most fundamental ideological shifts in the History of the British Isles.”²⁶ Although the Norman conquest of Ireland was never completed, the feeling of English superiority remained strong.

The twelfth century invasion established Norman lords over parts of Ireland, but some areas, notably Ulster, remained under Gaelic control. From the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries there followed a resurgence of Gaelic culture and a decline in Anglo-Norman influence. The lords remained in Ireland to mediate between the English crown and Gaelic lords, and to spread the feudal system. However, from the English perspective the Normans degenerated into “Anglo-Irish” people by practicing Gaelic customs and marrying Irish women. Art Cosgrove commented that these settlers caused “Grievances, a sense of oppression, and a natural hostility generated by the attitude of superiority of many of the settlers.”²⁷ This hostility resulted in Gaelic rebellions thereby reducing the area under Anglo-Irish control. Although they retained the Pale area surrounding Dublin, the English crown still held the Anglo-Irish responsible for these losses.²⁸

The Parliament in Dublin made minor attempts to curb the Gaelicization process; in 1297 a statute was passed that forbid English colonists from wearing Gaelic clothing. However, the rising problem of Anglo-Irish “degeneration” was not fully

²⁶ Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield and Willy Malley eds. *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict 1534-1660*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 24.

²⁷ Cosgrove, *A New History of Ireland*, 243.

²⁸ Please see maps in Appendix.

addressed until the mid-fourteenth century. The period was described by one contemporary annalist, John Clyn, who said, “at no previous time had there been such a remarkable and overt division between the English born in England and the English born in Ireland.”²⁹ The 1366 Statutes of Kilkenny, concerned with the declining primacy of English common law, forbidding the use of Brehon law, stated that it was an “evil custom.”³⁰ The statutes also attacked the Anglo-Irish because they,

“live and govern themselves according to the manners, fashion, and language of the Irish enemies; and also have made divers marriages and alliances between themselves and the Irish enemies”³¹

These statutes made it illegal for an English colonist to speak Gaelic, or marry and practice fosterage with an Irish person. Though some historians disagree about the intent of the legislation,³² all agree that it created a system that alienated the Irish people.

By the end of the fifteenth century, real power in Ireland was in the hands of the appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland, Gerald Fitzgerald, eighth Earl of Kildare. The Earl had supported the Yorkist faction in the War of the Roses and supported the pretender Lambert Simnel’s claim to the English throne in 1487, decisions which had not endeared him to the English King. When Kildare was again implicated in conspiracy, this time with Perkin Warbeck, King Henry VII dismissed him from office and sent

²⁹ Cosgrove, *A New History of Ireland*, 371.

³⁰ John Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued nor Brought Under Obedience of the Crown of England Until the Beginning of His Majesty’s Happy Reign,” In *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James the First*, ed. Henry Morley (London: Routledge and Sons, (1890) accessed January 21, 2015 HathiTrust. 272.

³¹ The Statutes of Kilkenny. (2004). In J. S. Donnelly, Jr. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Irish History and Culture* (Vol. 2, pp. 791-799). Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA. Retrieved from GALE GROUP March 12, 2015.

³² Brendan Bradshaw, *The Irish Constitutional Revolution of the Sixteenth Century*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)

Sir Edward Poynings to Ireland to bring the country more fully under English control.³³ In 1494 Sir Edward Poynings established “Poynings Law” which effectively ended the independence of the Irish Parliament because it could no longer meet without permission from the King of England, nor could it discuss any topic not approved by the King.³⁴ Historians often cite Poynings Law as the first attempt by Tudor monarchs to colonize Ireland, but the effect of the law is questionable. Sir John Davies wrote in 1612 that the law placed Ireland only nominally under English control, because two-thirds of Ireland, “were not reduced to shireground, so in them the laws of England could not possibly be put in execution.”³⁵ However, there was not another major disturbance to Anglo-Irish relations until the reign of Henry VIII.

King Henry VIII succeeded his father in 1509 and became head the Church of England by parliamentary statute in 1534. The threat of possible excommunication of Henry VIII by Pope Clement VII in 1534, led the tenth Earl of Kildare, known as Silken Thomas, to justify rebellion against English rule. By 1536, the Kildare rebellion had been subdued and the Irish parliament passed the Act of Supremacy which formally established Henry VIII as the head of the Irish state church.³⁶ It was Thomas Cromwell, the King’s secretary, who implemented a policy of significant reform in Ireland. Brendan Bradshaw wrote that Cromwell’s policy was, “designed to undermine the administrative and jurisdictional integrity of the government of the

³³ “Fitzgerald, Gerald, eighth earl of Kildare (1456?–1513),” Steven G. Ellis in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/view/article/9554> (accessed March 15, 2015).

³⁴ For more see Roberts, Roberts and Bisson *A History of England*, 259.

³⁵ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 320.

³⁶ Killeen, *A Timeline of Irish History*, 37.

Irish Lordship, to shift its centre from Dublin to London.”³⁷ The dissolution of Catholic monasteries began in 1537 under Cromwell’s guidance. Even after his death, Cromwell’s reform policies were influential, and in 1541 Ireland was officially changed from a lordship to a kingdom, making Henry VIII the King of Ireland. That same year, the policy created by Cromwell known as “surrender and regrant” was also instituted.

Prior to this program, outside of the Dublin Pale, which remained under English influence, numerous Gaelic lordships had been operating as independent political units. Each lordship had a traditional brehon judge who tried laws, and employed an amalgam of Irish and English law. The continuing use of Brehon law indicated a rejection of English justice and therefore, English rule. Additionally, Gaelic lords inherited their lands according to the Brehon system, which was deemed barbaric compared to the system of primogeniture supported by English common law. Surrender and regrant was designed to correct these discrepancies.³⁸ The Gaelic lord would surrender his lands to the King of England, and would receive those lands back with a title valid under English law. In surrendering the land, the lord was implicitly agreeing that his land was part of the English system. This meant that the tuath would be converted into a shire, the common law system would be used to adjudicate trials, and that primogeniture would be used as the system of inheritance. The enforcement of these reforms initiated fundamental changes in the relationship between England and Ireland.

³⁷ Bradshaw, *The Irish Constitutional Revolution*, 161.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Tudor interest in Ireland only increased as the sixteenth century progressed. In 1558, Elizabeth I ascended the throne of England, the same year that Mary Queen of Scots married the dauphin of France. France declared Mary the Queen of England since Catholics considered Elizabeth illegitimate. Invasion from France or Spain remained a real threat, and the Elizabethans viewed Ireland as a likely point from which the Catholics would launch an attack on England. Many historians believe that heightened interest in Ireland was not solely based in fear however; some assert that competition with Spain for colonial holdings was a major influencing factor. Historian T. W. Moody considered it imperial conquest and wrote, “England was jealous of the great power of Spain, and she became increasingly preoccupied with the necessity of extending her own dominion- and her trade- overseas.”³⁹ Regardless of the initial intention, by the mid-sixteenth century England had definitively begun a policy of colonization in Ireland.

During Queen Elizabeth I’s reign there were four major Irish rebellions. The first occurred in 1560, in Ulster. The rebellion began as a succession crisis when Conn O’Neill, Earl of Tyrone died. Conn’s elected and declared heir was his illegitimate son, Matthew. Conn’s eldest legitimate son, Shane O’Neill, murdered Matthew to gain possession of the earldom. Brehon law, still used in Ulster, made allowance for illegitimate children to inherit and rule if they were chosen over a legitimate son.⁴⁰ After Matthew’s death, Shane O’Neill tried to establish himself as the Earl of Tyrone. He came into conflict with other branches of the O’Neill family and the crown, who supported Brian Dungannon’s claim to the earldom. Brian was killed in 1562, and the

³⁹ Moody, Martin and Byrne, *A New History of Ireland*, 175.

⁴⁰ S.J. Connolly, *Contested Island: Ireland 1460-1630*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 139.

crown recognized Shane as earl but kept Brian's younger brother Hugh O'Neill (then 11 years old) to be raised by the English as a future ally.⁴¹ Shane O'Neill's rebellion was defeated in 1567, but the incident confirmed the English belief that the Gaelic system of inheritance and law was chaotic and untenable for civil society.

The first Desmond Rebellion began two years later. War had broken out between two Anglo-Irish families, the Desmonds and the Ormonds, in 1565. Both leaders were called to London and imprisoned in the Tower of London for breaking the Queen's peace. Gerald Fitzgerald, leader of the Desmond faction, tried to escape and forfeited his lands in Munster in exchange for his life. These lands were broken up and occupied by English settlers with the idea that peace would not come to Ireland, "till the same land be made shire-ground and your Highness' writ and tongue as current there as in your other countries."⁴² In 1569, Sir Peter Carew, one of the Englishmen who took lands in Munster, led an expedition to gain further territory held by the Ormond faction. The Desmonds joined the Ormonds to defeat the English incursion, an action that forced the crown to send Sir Henry Sidney and Sir John Perrot to retake southern Ireland. Sir Humphrey Gilbert simultaneously took charge of County Kerry and all three men displayed a level of ruthlessness previously unknown in Ireland. Perrot forbade the use of native dress, custom, and law; Richard Berleth suggests, "he may have thought that to suppress Celtic practices was to suppress the crime and violence endemic to Irish life."⁴³ It was during this time that Gilbert implemented his infamous reign of terror, in which he lined the walkway to his tent with decapitated

⁴¹ Connolly, *Contested Island*, 230.

⁴² Richard Berleth, *The Twilight Lords: Elizabeth I and the Plunder of Ireland* (United States: Rinehart, 2002) 44.

⁴³ Berleth, *The Twilight Lords*, 61.

Irish heads.⁴⁴ Sidney carried out a policy of total destruction by decimating farmland and cattle herds. The policy worked, and the starving rebels submitted in 1573.⁴⁵ This rebellion confirmed to the English that violent action, rather than conciliation was needed to control Ireland.

The Second Desmond Rebellion began in 1579, when one of the escaped leaders of the First Desmond Rebellion, returned to Ireland with Papal support. Gerald Fitzgerald, the “Rebel Earl” took up the cause and sacked his own city of Yougal, before retreating into the defensive bogs and woods of his territory.⁴⁶ The lord-lieutenant of Ireland, Sir William Pelham was given the authority to respond, which he did ruthlessly by offering pardons to rebels who brought him the heads of other rebels. The Second Rebellion stood as a watershed for atrocity on both sides. Fear of Spanish or French support for the rebellion encouraged England to provide large amounts of money and troops for the cause. Pelham killed any Irishman he came across, regardless of loyalty, until southern Ireland seemed empty of people.⁴⁷ In 1580, Lord Grey de Wilton arrived with English reinforcements and besieged the Papal forces in Smerwick. Grey offered no conditions of surrender and everyone occupying the fort was executed. An estimated six hundred people were killed in a single day. Berleth remarks that, “Smerwick was undoubtedly a turning point in the relations between the realm and its rebellious Irish subjects.”⁴⁸ The rebellion ended in

⁴⁴ Connolly, *Contested Island*, 160. and David Quinn, *Voyages and Colonising Enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert: Volume I*. (Surrey: Hakluyt Society, 2010) 17.

⁴⁵ Henry Sidney, *A Viceroy's Vindication?: Sir Henry Sidney's Memoir of Service in Ireland 1556-1578* ed. Ciaran Brady (Cork University Press, 2002)

⁴⁶ Berleth, *The Twilight Lords*, 124.

⁴⁷ For a full description of the campaign see Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* ed. W.L. Renwick. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1970.

⁴⁸ Berleth, *The Twilight Lords*, 75.

1583 with the Desmond lands resettled by English colonizers. Many Irish residents of the area were forced out and English law and customs were imposed upon those who remained.

The final rebellion, known as the Nine Years' War, was led by Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone. The Earl was the younger brother of Shane O'Neil's rival claimant, who had been raised by the English and was therefore considered an ally in Ulster. The assumption was incorrect, for Hugh's early association had not made him an Anglo sympathizer. Instead, Hugh's education had taught him English military tactics, which he used to effectively evade the English throughout the course of the war. The Earl of Tyrone united Ulster under his person, with demands that lands taken by the English be restored to their true Irish owners. Much of Tyrone's success is attributed to his position in Ulster,⁴⁹ an area so remote and defensible that the rebels were able, "to organise themselves for war within an enclave free from English interference and [was] capable of supporting their efforts."⁵⁰ English forces, suffered their worst defeat in 1598 at the Battle of Yellow Ford, where the leader of the English army, Sir Hugh Bagenal, was killed. Sir Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, was sent to Ireland as his replacement. The campaign proved too difficult for the number of troops at his disposal however, and Essex sued Tyrone for peace and returned to England against the orders of the Queen, a treasonable act.⁵¹ Charles Blount, the eighth Baron of Mountjoy, was sent to replace Essex in 1600, routed the

⁴⁹ Canny, *Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland*, 2.

⁵⁰ Moody, Martin and Byrne, *A New History of Ireland*, 125.

⁵¹ "Devereux, Robert, second earl of Essex (1565–1601)," Paul E. J. Hammer in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/view/article/7565> (accessed March 15, 2015).

Ulster forces at the Battle of Kinsale a year later, and finally accepted Tyrone's submission in 1603, six days after the death of Queen Elizabeth.

To conclude, the differences in Gaelic and English societal structure; including their legal systems, division of land units, and inheritance patterns, created societies that were fundamentally incompatible. These differences became sources of tension between the two cultures when the English attempted to colonize Gaelic society. The political history of the two islands is long and complex; this chapter has provided only an overview of events relevant to the topic under discussion. The twelfth century invasion did little to establish real control over Ireland, but descendants of those settlers and the work of Gerald of Wales provided ideological justification for future invasions. Henry VIII favored "soft" policies of negotiation and legislation to control Ireland. However, a series of rebellions during Elizabeth I's reign convinced the English that only violent action would subdue the Irish. Simultaneously, the Elizabethans attacked Gaelic customs in an attempt to force the Irish to adopt their own cultural norms. Thus, culture formed an integral part of the larger colonial project in sixteenth century Ireland.

CHAPTER TWO: Irish Space through Colonial Representation

The topic of this paper, the English colonial representation of Ireland during the late sixteenth century, seeks to understand and explain a specific form of colonization that was practiced upon the Irish. The Elizabethans exploited the Irish for economic and political reasons and these processes are generally explained by scholars in economic or military terms. However, the language used to justify colonial activity included ideologies of morality and geography, in which each system of belief effused the other with heightened symbolic meaning. These ideologies of morality and geography are intimately connected to one another in that descriptions of the landscape were conflated with negative perceptions of the Irish people, which in turn often justified colonization of the land. Similarly, cartographic advances into Ireland's unknown space were indispensable to colonial efforts of mapping and controlling the landscape of Ireland. At the same time, however, the landscape provided sites of resistance for the Irish people. Thus, the exploration of colonial Ireland through spatial terms is a worthwhile endeavor as it will provide a richer understanding of the overall colonial project.

This chapter argues that a spatial analysis of how the English represented the landscape of Ireland through descriptions and maps will illustrate a system of colonial power over Ireland. This demands a focus on representational colonization, defined here as the act of portraying a land and its people for two purposes; the first in order to justify violent appropriation and the second to demonstrate control that did not yet exist in actuality. This representation occurred on two levels, the first being letters, books and descriptions, written by a few administrators who saw the real Ireland and

described it to the government in London and the English people. The second representation can be found in maps of Ireland. At the beginning of the colonial effort, Elizabethan maps of Ireland were wildly inaccurate and contained numerous blank spaces. This paper will demonstrate that as the Irish used the landscape as a means of resistance, the English created more precise maps in order to learn the landscape and better dominate the people.

An examination of these representations, both descriptive and cartographic, in the Elizabethan colonial project is something that is largely absent from historical literature. Previous authors, such as Bernhard Klein in *Maps and the Writing of Space*, William J. Smyth in *Map-making, Landscape and Memory*, and J.B. Harley in “Meaning and Ambiguity in Tudor Cartography” have uncovered and analyzed the process of map-making in Ireland. Each, in his own way, added something to our understanding of how the English perceived Ireland through cartography.

Unfortunately, many scholars believe that their work falls under the category of ‘geography’, and is separate from the discipline of history. This paper concurs with arguments of all three writers, who assert that geography and the study of maps add invaluable understanding to historical studies. Harley states, ““In many contexts maps would have articulated symbolic values as part of a visual language by which specific interests, doctrines, and even world views were communicated.”⁵² This spatial analysis provides a greater understanding of historical events, the locations where they took place and the physical manifestations of dominant ideologies.

⁵² J. B. Harley, “Meaning and Ambiguity in Tudor Cartography” in *English Map-Making 1500-1650* ed. Sarah Tyacke (London: British Library Board 1983) 22.

Other authors, notably David Quinn in *The Elizabethans and the Irish* and Andrew Hadfield in *Strangers to that Land* have scrutinized archival sources and compiled primary material revealing the English perception of Ireland. Hadfield stresses that this colonial perspective was a matter of identity formation; the differences between the two islands created a sense of self, and therefore, a sense of other. In contrast, Quinn claims that Anglo-Irish relations were guided by an already established notion of English superiority and that conformity from other cultures was expected, “Consequently, their [the Irish] willingness to accept English rule, and all the major socio-agricultural customs that went with it, was the main criterion for acceptance or rejection...”⁵³ It is because of this mentality that English representations of the Irish were weighed so negatively against the specific aspects of Irish culture that differed from English standards.

Finally, the main monographs regarding Irish political history are Nicholas Canny’s *Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established*, Brendan Bradshaw’s *The Irish Constitutional Revolution of the Sixteenth Century*, and Ciaran Brady’s *The Chief Governors*⁵⁴. These historians have greatly enhanced our understanding of governmental policy and plantation formation in Ireland.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the categories of Irish intellectual and political history, and the study of the island’s geography, have remained discrete. As a result, no one has analyzed the connections between colonization, spatial geographies and moralized descriptions of the people. This paper intends to address this gap in the historical literature. It is

⁵³ Quinn, *The Elizabethans and the Irish*, 8.

⁵⁴ Canny, *Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland*. Bradshaw, *The Irish Constitutional Revolution*. Ciaran Brady *The Chief Governors: The Rise and Fall of reform government in Tudor Ireland: 1536-1588*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

⁵⁵ Please see first chapter for more detail.

necessary to study these distinct types of evidence in order to understand how they frequently influenced one another.

For example, in *Maps and the Writing of Space*, Bernhard Klein explains that for the Elizabethan colonizer, there was little difference between the land and the people and that, “[t]his metonymic identification grounds historical and cultural arguments about Irish savagery firmly in geographical space...”⁵⁶ Klein provides an intriguing starting point for spatial analysis of early modern Ireland. However, Klein’s focus on the development of a universal (western) cosmography and Ireland’s incorporation into the English nation departs from the thesis of this paper, which intends to take the discussion of metonymic ideology further by applying Foucault’s discussion of panoptic power systems⁵⁷. Any discussion of Foucault’s theory as applied to pre-modern society must be done carefully, as he himself argued that his concepts were applicable to modern societies and inherently contradictory to the type of power demonstrated by pre-modern sovereignty.

In order to invert this argument, Timothy Mitchell’s *Colonising Egypt* has been most helpful. Mitchell suggests that both colonial representations (metaphysical power) and Foucault’s disciplinary power (microphysical power) are, “two aspects of the same novel strategies of power, linked by the notion of enframing.”⁵⁸ Enframing, for Mitchell, being the colonial process of creating order in both the physical world and the conceptual or moral realm. The colonized land is thus forced

⁵⁶ Bernhard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space n Early Modern England and Ireland*, (New York: Palgrave 2001) 174.

⁵⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

⁵⁸ Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 176.

into an object, “rendered available to political and economic calculation.”⁵⁹ Hence the English colonial perception of Irish landscape can be read as the enframement of pre-modern society. This process of Irish enframement cannot be properly identified as a total strategy, as the English were just beginning to form colonial ideology and lacked both the resources and technology to undertake the kind of large scale colonial project discussed by Mitchell. It should not, however, be dismissed, because it is in early modern Irish space that one can see the beginning of colonial ideology and enframement through representation.

Descriptions of the Irish people, their customs and landscape, appeared in the form of tracts, pamphlets, surveys and ‘discourses’ written by the few administrators and soldiers who actually visited the island. Widely read in England, this group of texts established a colonial representation or discourse that enframed the Irish and allowed them to be viewed from the superior (English) position. In addition to establishing military and economic dominance over the island, these texts are another form of control and colonial power over the Irish people by a foreign power. It was necessary to denigrate Irish customs and landscapes to justify colonial efforts and to prove the advantages of the moral society the English would impose on the Irish by ‘civilizing’ them. McGurk concurs with this discussion noting that, “...those who wrote on sixteenth century Anglo-Irish relations very often uncritically repeated contemporary and justificatory commentaries which in themselves have a historiographical pedigree stretching back to the strictures of Gerald of Wales in the

⁵⁹ Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 33.

twelfth century.”⁶⁰ To understand these writings on Irish landscape and spatial culture it is first necessary to establish the influence of the twelfth century writer Gerald of Wales on the topic.

Gerald of Wales wrote two foundational texts on Irish culture and customs, *The History and Topography of Ireland* in 1188 and *The Conquest of Ireland* in 1189. After this period there occurred a gap in Anglo-Irish cultural relations and travel, during which time Irish high culture flourished and England developed its own definitive cultural norms. When the two islands resumed interaction, the disparity of understanding between the two cultures was substantial. Many Elizabethan travelers relied considerably on Gerald of Wales as the authority on Ireland, using his dated, biased descriptions to navigate an actual physical landscape and interact with local inhabitants. Hadfield remarks, “Giraldus’s representations of Irish characteristics and culture were the most widely circulated pre-Renaissance accounts available to Tudor and Stuart readers and it is remarkable how frequently the topics and features he considered to be recognizably Irish are followed by those who claimed the authority of writing from experience.”⁶¹ This paper then will begin with a discussion of those Elizabethan ‘authorities’ whose writings were used to enframe the Irish landscape.

The representations of the land found in *The Topography* are two fold and contradictory. First, the land is described as beautiful, fertile and empty. Many colonial propaganda tracts hypothesize that the land would be profitable if only the English could properly cultivate it. The anonymous ‘Discourse’ written in 1599

⁶⁰ John McGurk, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: The 1590’s Crisis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1997) 10.

⁶¹ Andrew Hadfield and John McVeagh, ed., *Strangers to That Land: British Perceptions of Ireland from the Reformation to the Famine* (Great Britain: Colin Smith Ltd. 1994) 25.

describes Ireland as, “the land of opportunity; fertile, relatively empty, full of rich pickings for the adventurous ‘undertakers’ with its people either helpful or quiescent.”⁶² However, just as the Irish people could be barbarous, so too could the land be wild and untamed. The second type of spatial representation describes the land as terrible, wrapped in savagery and magic, “Alternatively, there is the Ireland of bogs, fog, impenetrable forests and guerrilla warfare, barring the march of civilization.”⁶³ Which facet of the dichotomy writers chose to endorse depended largely on their purpose in writing about Ireland. Those who wished to encourage colonization inevitably portrayed the land as good, but in need of help. Conversely, those who wrote of actual experiences subduing the Irish people wrote of the land as a site of fear and hostility.

Beginning with Gerald of Wales, Ireland is praised for its fertility, “The land is fruitful and rich in its fertile soil and plentiful harvests. Crops abound in the fields...”⁶⁴ However the people are unwilling to tend these crops, “this people despises work on the land... The wealth of the soil is lost, not through the fault of the soil, but because there are no farmers to cultivate even the best land...”⁶⁵ It was this lack of cultivation that formed a major justification for conquering Ireland. The English practiced what they believed to be a more sophisticated form of agriculture: tillage. This method produced an excess of grain and yielded substantial profit. The Irish relied largely on grazing of herds on land held in common by traditional Gaelic septs, or tribes. In England this type of land, called ‘waste’ land, had been slowly

⁶² Hadfield and Mcveagh, *Strangers to That Land*, 63.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, 34.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

diminishing over the last century. The Irish also appeared to be uninterested in profit, indicating to the English laziness or barbarism.

Edmund Spenser also wrote of the fertility of Ireland. In his *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, the forests were, “adorned with goodly woods fit for building of houses and ships so commodiously, so that if some princes in the world had them, they would soon hope to be lords of all the seas and ere long of all the world...”⁶⁶ Given the importance of the English fleet for maritime defense and discovery of colonial holdings, Spenser could not have referenced a more important commodity than timber. He also describes the ports on the eastern coast of Ireland, “as inviting us to come unto them, to see what excellent commodities that country can afford, besides the soil itself most fertile, fit to yield all kind of fruit that shall be committed thereinto...”⁶⁷ These passages serve as justification for the colonization and production of the Irish land. The ports ‘invite’ the English to invade, the timber trees could be useful to the English national interests. However, they remained untouched by the Irish, who, according to the English, had little interest in such production.

Historians have remarked upon the religious influence on this English perception of fertility. Howe discusses John Locke’s epitomization of the concept over a century later, “Labor both reflected divine grace and created value: only by mixing his labor with the soil could a man justly claim right to ownership of the soil.”⁶⁸ However, it is clear that this system of belief regarding land ownership was also present in the sixteenth century. Canny agrees that the English justified their

⁶⁶ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 19.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Stephen Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*, (Oxford University Press 2000) 24.

colonial activity by citing Sir John Davies, “Therefore it stands neither with Christian policy nor conscience to suffer so good and fruitful a country to lie waste like a wilderness.”⁶⁹ This waste can be seen as empty space; a land uncultivated must therefore be unpopulated, allowing the English free reign to occupy Ireland as they wished.

Empty space can also be viewed as imaginative or blank space. Much as an empty map can be filled with whatever the viewer wishes to see, so can descriptions of empty space be filled with the imaginings of the English people with little regard for Irish concepts of space or culture. In 1516 Thomas More published *Utopia*⁷⁰, a book which was well received and widely read throughout the century. This work was one of the first to reintroduce the word ‘colony’ from its Roman origins. The concept of a utopia, or imaginary and mythical place wherein the citizens exist in perfect peace with one another and their government. The formation of this type of society would assumedly require a blank slate to start, hence the preoccupation with an empty Ireland. Quinn also believes Ireland was seen as a Utopia, “Ireland could be thought of as unspoiled by the complexity and sophistication of urban England; its landscape primitive, its people barbarous, perhaps, but simple in their ways of living, the whole removed from daily life and from the usual problems of existence.”⁷¹ This removal or separateness from England or even all of Europe, can be read in both descriptions and maps, where it exists in a void, ready to be dominated and cultivated.

In contrast, the land was also represented by the English colonizer as bad, a

⁶⁹ Canny, *Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland*, 119.

⁷⁰ Thomas More, *Utopia* ed. George M. Logan, Robert M. Adams and Clarence H. Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995)

⁷¹ Quinn, *The Elizabethans and the Irish*, 59.

shelter for Irish rebels. Bog and thick forest covered much of the land prior to extensive drainage and deforestation in the seventeenth century. Hadfield and McVeagh quote Thomas Gainsford in *Strangers to that Land* who described the land as, "...divided into such fastnes of mountaine, bogg, and wood that it hath emboldened the inhabitants to presume an hereditary securitie, as if disobedience had a protection."⁷² Bogs form in wet areas when rushes grow and then break down into peat deposits. Desmond Gillmor, a geographer of Ireland writes that, "The bogs are also an inherent part of Irish culture, having formed a barrier to exploitation of the land but a natural defense against enemies, a hiding place for treasures and bodies, and a source of fuel."⁷³ These bogs, so well integrated into Irish ways of life were regarded by the English as treacherous areas of resistance to colonial conquest.

In the eighteenth century, Walter Bouchier Devereux, a descendant of the Earls of Essex, compiled and published many of the letters written to and from Walter Devereux I, first Earl of Essex, to the Privy Council in London and Queen Elizabeth about the colonization of Ulster in the 1570s. Essex was aware of the dangers the landscape presented to the English colonizers. He wrote to the Privy Council that his initial force into Ulster was small, about 1300 men, "all new to the country and its inhabitants; certainly not in numbers or experience calculated to strike much terror into the wild denizens of the bogs and forests of Ulster."⁷⁴ Due to the small force under his command and the wildness of the area, Essex initially attempted to

⁷² Hadfield and Mcveagh, *Strangers to That Land*, 70.

⁷³ Desmond Gillmor, *The Irish Countryside: Landscape, Wildlife, History, People* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1989) 55.

⁷⁴ Walter Bouchier Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex*, in the Reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. 1540-1646 ed. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street 1853) 37.

negotiate a peaceful surrender with the local Irish lords. At first, several agreed to peace with the Queen, but once the number of English troops was known many defaulted on their oaths and joined the burgeoning rebellion in the province.

To counter this action, Essex launched a series of violent expeditions which he later described to the Privy Council in London. These letters demonstrate a keen awareness of the landscape and its importance for an English victory or defeat in battle. In describing one night campaign Essex writes, “The night was extreme dark by means of foul weather, whereby the guide led me very near the woods; so at the first coming out of the cattle, part of my company was discovered...”⁷⁵ It is assumed that had the weather not been so dark he would have avoided the woods and the dangers known to be lurking in them. English knowledge of Irish use of such topographical features is indisputable, for Essex further describes one of his encampments, “which place such as was greatly advantageous for the enemy, being both boggy and woody; which I did foresee, and appointed my watch accordingly... that if at any time the rebels would do anything, that was the most commodious ...”⁷⁶ This passage provides evidence that not only did the Irish use the landscape as a site of resistance, but also that the English were aware of this use. From these military encounters in the 1570s the idea of the Irish land as ‘bad’ calcified into rhetoric and influenced later military policy.

In attempting to establish military control of an area, English soldiers were often attacked by bands of guerrilla fighters. Quinn quotes Fynes Moryson, an avid traveler who served in Ireland as the personal secretary to Lord Mountjoy from 1599

⁷⁵ Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux*, 40.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

to 1603, during the Tyrone Rebellion. Moryson notes the Irish inclination for hit and run tactics, pointing out that the rebels were successful due to differing standards of honor in battle, “Because they are only trained to skirmish upon bogs and difficult passes or passages of woods, and not to stand or fight in a firm body upon plains, they think it no shame to fly or run off from fighting, as they have the advantage.”⁷⁷ The experience of such an attack was quite frightening for the English soldier, who grew to fear the land itself. Extensive knowledge of the area allowed the Irish to appear out of the bogs, attack and then melt away into obscurity, following safe paths unknown to English soldiers.

The ability of the Irish to use the landscape in this way was a major concern for Essex, who was concerned with the safe movement of troops around the province. The Irish rebels had the advantage of small, secret footpaths through the bogs and mountain passes. In contrast, English soldiers had no such knowledge of the land. Walter Bouchier Devereux wrote that,

“In the beginning of 1575 Essex occupied himself in opening ways or passes through the woods which covered the country into Tyrone, Farney, the Brenny, and Mac Mahon’s country; these he cut so wide that ten horsemen might ride abreast.”⁷⁸

This is another example of the process of land enfranchisement, in that the English physically changed the landscape, the passageways, to facilitate the movement of their forces. However, the ideological foundation for these tactics began much earlier than the sixteenth century.

It was Gerald of Wales who first established the need to gain control of the

⁷⁷ Quinn, *The Elizabethans and the Irish*, 41.

⁷⁸ Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux*, 90.

land as a means of subduing the Irish. In *The Conquest of Ireland*, he lamented the failure of the twelfth century invasion for failing to gain control of the landscape,

“there are no inroads into the enemy’s country, no great fortresses erected, no felling of trees, and clearing and widening the roads through the woods, commonly called “bad passes,” for the greater ease and security of convoys.”⁷⁹

English governors of sixteenth century Ireland read Gerald’s work and began implementing his suggestions. By creating larger roads, and clearing the “bad passes” English soldiers were able to quickly reach sites of rebel resistance and they had more room to maneuver should they be attacked from the woods and bogs en route.

Spenser also wrote of the dangers for traveling units of soldiers. Due to comprehensive knowledge of the land the Irish could cause a great deal of damage through careful consideration of their attacks. He cautions that the English should not go directly after the enemy, “for it is well known that he is a flying enemy, hiding himself in woods and bogs, from whence he will not draw forth but into some strait passage or perilous ford where he knows the army must needs pass...”⁸⁰ The safe passage of soldiers then was of tantamount importance, as the Irish were more likely to attack on the roads that were the most dangerous for colonizing forces. Therefore, it was advantageous for the English to alter the landscape as much as possible to create a safe network of routes for quick travel.

The concept of the Irish using natural topographical features for resistance was not new and it was not only the bogs that posed a serious topographical threat to maintaining control of the population, but also mountains and woods. Gerald of

⁷⁹ Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis*, 317.

⁸⁰ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 98.

Wales wrote in 1188 that, the people of Ireland have no use for castles, “Woods are their forts and swamps are their trenches.”⁸¹ Irish use of the landscape and the subsequent importance of these defensive features can be seen into the Elizabethan era. One 1580 map of Munster was particularly concerned with trees and their corresponding military significance, Kenneth Nicholls, an Irish geographer writes, “These are the forests which were regarded as being of strategic importance, large enough to give effective shelter to rebel forces...”⁸² The most resistant province, Ulster, and its difficult terrain occupied large portions of Elizabethan texts. McGurk, in his discussion of the Nine Years War writes, “It was mountainous and then much afforested; all its southern approaches were through wood, bog and lough, so it must have presented the appearance of an impenetrable fortress.”⁸³ Indeed, in order to conquer the natural fortress of Ireland the English were forced to adapt and innovate their methods of subjugation.

Such was the fear of the English over these surprise attacks from the surrounding forests and bogs that they altered their traditional campaign season. Spenser advises that the best time to invade was during the winter because the rebels could be more easily seen, “the trees are bare and naked, which use both to clothe and house the kerne, the ground is cold and wet which useth to be his bedding...”⁸⁴ The English believed they would have greater success in subduing the Irish if they worked under these typically less favorable conditions. Nicholls, when writing about woodland cover, suggests that this idea had validity, “Degraded or shrubby woodland

⁸¹ Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, 119.

⁸² Patrick J. Duffy, David Edwards, and Elizabeth FitzPatrick, eds. *Gaelic Ireland c.1250-c.1650: Land, Lordship and Settlement* (Dublin: Four Courts Press Ltd. 2001) 191.

⁸³ McGurk, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland*, 7.

⁸⁴ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 101.

could in fact pose a much greater obstacle to invaders, and afford much greater shelter to native resisters, than stands of tall timber trees.”⁸⁵ While many historians of Irish landscape have focused on the numerous timber trees in Ireland, Nicholls establishes that a large portion of the trees were in fact of the smaller shrubby variety. This paper argues that the existence of this topographical feature made it imperative for the English to alter the methodology of their subjugation and begin to use the landscape to their advantage just as the Irish had been doing to resist them.

One of the primary ways the English responded to these natural defenses was to survey the land and obtain maps with increasing detail about the territory they were attempting to conquer. The process of mapping unknown terrain was vital for the English to know the land and, therefore, control the people. Duffy argues, “The Tudor surveyors set out to recover this intricate geography from the oral tradition and local memory. Maps and surveys by inquisition were the tools of the colonisers who came from Britain in increasing numbers in the sixteenth century.”⁸⁶ These colonizers were aware of the importance of maps in systematic subjugation, making it inevitable that the demand for accurate maps increased as the colonial project expanded. Spatial control could not be won in battle and could not be retained in the form of colonies without intimate knowledge of the land.

To begin an analysis of English maps of Ireland it is necessary to first study the map of Europe produced by Gerald of Wales in the twelfth century.⁸⁷ As discussed previously, Gerald was considered an expert on Ireland and formed the basis of

⁸⁵ Duffy, Edwards and FitzPatrick, *Gaelic Ireland*, 187.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁸⁷ Please see maps in Appendix.

Elizabethan knowledge of the island. To the modern eye Gerald's map appears as a hastily drawn sketch created by someone with only the slightest knowledge of Europe. It was drawn in the mappaemundi style with the eastern portion oriented at the top of the page. The OT configuration fits with other maps of its time, in which the earth is round (inside the O) and the landmasses of Asia, Europe and Africa are divided by water in the shape of a T. Asia sits at the top with Europe residing in the bottom left portion.

The continent surrounds both England and Ireland, as if with outstretched arms. The key points of the map, Rome and the islands of Britain and Ireland, are irregularly large, with Britain equaling the size of France. One analysis of Gerald's map notes, "It is an established feature of mental maps that the more significant a place is in the mind of the mapmaker, the larger it is represented in proportion to other places."⁸⁸ If we understand this map to speak about the core-periphery mentality of the drawer, it is clear that England is the core and Ireland sits on the edge of the world. Without the close association with England the smaller island would have almost no connection to the rest of the world.

The next known extant English map of Ireland, called the 'Cotton' map, from the 1520s, has been reoriented with the eastern coast on the right but the length of the island and its connection to England has been lost. The map shows a land of blank whiteness thus creating the image of an egg, floating in a blue sea, which alludes to More's idea of a Utopia or empty space. This blankness provides an exemplar of how little was known about Ireland despite Henry VIII's declaration of kingship over the

⁸⁸ Thomas O'Loughlin, "An Early Thirteenth-Century Map in Dublin: A Window into the World of Giraldus Cambrensis," *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 51 (1999) 28.

land a mere twenty years later. William J. Smyth notes, “The map, therefore, illustrates the chasm between England’s dream of ruling all Ireland in early Tudor times and its current capacity to realize such an objective.”⁸⁹ Despite this blankness, one can still read the map as indicative of a colonial enframing process.

This paper argues that the blankness of the Cotton map is indicative of the English mentality towards Ireland and its people. This map, and the land it represents, is vacant and untouched. In addition to the blank spaces, only a few notable clans appear on the largely empty landscape. It appears as a *tabula rasa*, with open ports facing England and large rivers providing passage inland. This politicized, largely inaccurate image of Ireland is an imaginary space in which the English were able to envision easy conquest, a land open for exploitative farming, and a supply depot for the larger, better island next door. The Cotton map does not depict the mountains, thick forests and large bog systems, all of which would work against the imposition of English power over the land. More importantly, the map denies the existence of a people with an entire culture and dense system of clan association which would later combine resources and unite to fight the English colonists.

Several historians and geographers of Irish colonial history have recognized the landscape as a site of native resistance. Fitzpatrick quotes McCracken in *Irish Demons*, who stated that the Irish landscape, “had been a serious obstacle to the Tudor conquest and colonization of Ireland. The Irish resisted the invaders from the shelter

⁸⁹ William J. Smyth *Map-making, Landscape and Memory: A Geography of Colonial and Early Modern Ireland c.1530-1750* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2006) 23.

of the bogs and the woods whenever possible.”⁹⁰ The development of mapping in Ireland occurred in such a slow and haphazard way in part because the Irish persistently resisted survey efforts. Recognizing mapping for what it was, a colonial establishment of power over a people who used the uncharted landscape as protection, native Irish often reacted to English surveyors with violence.

Robert Lythe for example, was able to so successfully map the southern portions of Ireland because he travelled under the protection of Henry Sidney, but attempts to chart the northern region were deemed too dangerous to continue the project. Richard Bartlett, though working in Ulster in 1609, after the area was considered subdued, “when he came into Tyrconnell the inhabitants took off his head, because they would not have their country discovered.”⁹¹ The province map of Connacht was started in 1591 by John Browne I, but finished by his son John Browne II, when the elder was killed in a local war during survey work. In this example, it is not clear if Browne was killed because of his colonial position or simply because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time, but the example demonstrates the dangers inherent in cartographic survey of a land unwilling to be mapped. Unfortunately for the Irish, this resistance perpetuated within the English a desire to know the land as a way to control the people. Thus, cartographic efforts only intensified over the course of the sixteenth century.

By jumping forward forty years, to 1564, Laurence Nowell’s map from *A General Description of England and Ireland* provides a striking difference in colonial

⁹⁰ Joan Fitzpatrick, *Irish Demons: English Writings on Ireland, the Irish, and Gender by Spenser and his Contemporaries*, (Maryland: University Press of America: 2000) 79.

⁹¹ William J. Smyth, *Map-making, Landscape and Memory*, 54.

knowledge. Both countries are shown, with England possessively curling around Ireland. The accuracy of the Irish coast is greatly improved and extends around the northern side, although the western coast north of Galway is still misshapen and empty. The dense markings of cities, natural landmarks and Irish lords in the south show the extension of colonial control into that area. This is especially true when one considers the portrayal of the heavily annotated England, analyzed below. The greater the control imposed upon Ireland the more it resembles the colonizing 'parent' country on the map, in that areas of production and local lords allied with the crown are portrayed with greater frequency.

It is in Nowell's map that we first see a representation of Ireland that has been enframed by English power. Five (presumably English) ships of various size surround Ireland. The seal of England in bright color dominates the top left of the map and is matched by the decorative cartouche on the right. In the bottom corners are two male figures, "these are images of Nowell and Cecil, [William Cecil, the supporter of mapping effort in Ireland] with the cartographer on the left in a state of despair and an impatient Cecil on the right censuring his work."⁹² Nowell is being attacked by a wild dog, representing the Irish people, while Cecil sits impatiently on an hourglass, possibly waiting for the colonial project to be finished. Total control is still lacking, and as William Smyth notes, in this map, "Ireland is revealed as mainly a green wilderness area of forests and bogs, dominated by an array of lordships and families in various states of disobedience to the crown."⁹³ However, with this map one can

⁹² Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space*, 98.

⁹³ William J. Smyth, *Map-making, Landscape and Memory*, 31.

read Ireland as a known space, no longer blank, but visible and ripe for further colonial expansion.

In order to offer a comparison of what a well-mapped land would look like to the English cartographer, an examination of one of Christopher Saxton's county maps is helpful. Saxton worked in the 1570's to produce the world's first atlas which was published in 1579 as *Atlas of the Counties of England and Wales*. The thirty-five maps produced therein were considered to be the standard for future cartographic efforts and is read here as the idealized representation of Tudor control. The map under study, the county of Essex, is one of five county maps that portray how the country or shire was divided into smaller administrative units known as hundreds. The administrative unit of the hundred was essential to the English system of legal governance by providing monthly court sessions. The map is dense with knowledge of the area, not only are the division of hundreds represented, but all the small towns, trees and rivers are also shown.

Most importantly, county Essex has been thoroughly enframed. The bottom right portion of the map is devoted to the Queen's seal, placed atop decorative architecture. This plinth like construction is held up by naked caryatids and holds the smaller seal of Thomas Seckford, the financier of the atlas. These decorations were not for mere aesthetics; J. B. Harley agrees that the symbols had power, "the decoration qualified the images of landscape or territory and added value to the literal geographical statement in a variety of ways."⁹⁴ In reading the Essex map, one is in no doubt of who controlled the land and how much was known about the land. This paper argues that

⁹⁴ Harley, "Meaning and Ambiguity in Tudor Cartography" 36.

the map represented the ideal representation of a land, with every area available to the reader. This is the kind of cartographic order the English were attempting to apply to Ireland. To that end, the English began creating a series of province maps, all produced after 1570 and by differing cartographers allow the reader to view the culmination of colonial representation in mapping.

Robert Lythe, the famous cartographer, was ordered by the crown to produce a series of provincial maps of Ireland, which would depict a, “land Elizabeth could then ‘see’, command and rule properly.”⁹⁵ Lythe worked under the command and protection of the Lord Deputy Sir Henry Sidney, the driving force behind the transformation of common tribal land into a system of English shires, which undoubtedly influenced Lythe’s work. The map of Munster is crowded with the lands of greater and lesser lords, which would have been indispensable as the English worked to detach the lesser lords from their feudal ties and place them directly under crown control. Similarly, John Browne’s map of Connacht from 1591 names the newly established baronies, confirming the positive (for the English) outcomes of Sidney’s colonial efforts in Connacht. These lesser lords, formerly invisible to the English government through their allegiance to various great Gaelic lords, such as the Burkes of Clanricarde, were enframed into the English colonial system and acquired a new state of visibility.

The province most resistant to English control and survey was Ulster. This was true to such an extent that a detailed map of the land was not available until 1602 when the Irish were almost completely subdued. Created by Richard Bartlett, the

⁹⁵ William J. Smyth, *Map-making, Landscape and Memory*, 37.

most celebrated of all Elizabethan cartographers, the map charted the successful drive of Lord Mountjoy against the forces of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone. On this map, more than any other, one can read the subjugation of the Irish people through the depictions of numerous English forts, marked across the landscape in red. To defeat the rebels, it was necessary for the English to enclose Ulster with ever tightening strings of forts as they moved northward. Control of the region is obliquely read in the placements of numerous strongholds in previously inaccessible territory. But control can also be implicitly seen in the accurate and well shaped coastline. Prior to Bartlett's work, the northern coast had been invisible and unrepresented to the English government. The process of spatial enframement can therefore be read as completed in Ulster with this dual reading of power. The physical forts are exemplars of Foucault's microphysical power, in that they managed the physical movements and bodies of the Irish. Conversely, one can also read meta-physical power, which for Mitchell, "worked by creating an appearance of order, an appearance of structure as some sort of separate, non-material realm."⁹⁶ The appearance of order is viewed in the exact representation of the formerly unknown coast of Ulster.

Edmund Spenser endorsed the establishment of garrisons to control the land as a logical response to the Irish use of natural defenses. The use of garrisons to complete the conquest had been first suggested by Sir Henry Sidney in the 1570's, but due to financial concerns the policy was not applied on a large scale until Spenser's time. Spenser endorsed the strategy after he had seen the campaigns of the 1580s. He writes that the garrisons would hinder the rebel, "he shall find nowhere safe to keep his creet

⁹⁶ Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 94.

nor hide himself, but flying from the fire shall fall into water, and out of one danger into another...”⁹⁷ Instead of English armies chasing the rebels around the countryside, a small force would become a permanent fixture of the local area, able to control their portion of the landscape. These small forces, “shall perforce bring in all that rebellious rout of loose people which either do now stand out in open arms or in wandering companies do keep the woods spoiling and infesting the good subject.”⁹⁸ These garrisons, as argued above in the analysis of Bartlett’s 1602 Ulster map, were a powerful method of enframing the land and controlling the people by limiting movement.

The English response to Irish resistance did however extend beyond mapping the land and building garrisons. When negotiations to bring Ireland under English control failed, administrators also turned to violence in order to subdue the people. Edmund Spenser, writing in 1591, considered violent action to be the only remaining option, given that, “for it is in vain to prescribe laws where no man careth for keeping them, nor feareth the danger of breaking them, but all the realm is first to be reformed and laws afterward to be made...”⁹⁹ Therefore, the reform of the Irish must begin with, “the sword, for all those evils must first be cut away with a strong hand before any good can be planted...”¹⁰⁰ This argument also served as further justification for English colonization, shifting the blame for armed conflict onto the villainous Irish who disobeyed the law, creating disorder and evil. As a result, the English felt fully

⁹⁷ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 100.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

exculpated in their use of violent action in order to bring about a civil and obedient society.

Since Irish rebels hid in the landscape and were so hard to find and defeat in decisive battle, colonial armies were ordered to destroy the very land they were attempting to conquer. As early as 1573, a policy of destruction was employed by the first Earl of Essex, in Ulster. Walter Bouchier, the descendant of Essex, writes that with the letters from the first Earl of Essex to the Privy Council, “We learn from it the barbarous mode of warfare which was adopted by the most humane generals against the Irish; who being always able to evade the English in the woods and morasses the latter wreaked their vengeance on the crops, and endeavoured by wasting and burning the corn to starve the rebels.”¹⁰¹ The policy of total destruction was employed so that townspeople and farmers could not covertly help feed rebel forces. The resulting starvation of non-combatants was considered more desirable than the prospect of those same people offering nourishment to the hunted rebels.

Devereux wrote to the Privy Council about the use of this policy in specific military encounters. For example, when he was out on campaign chasing after the rebel Lenoghe, a rebel group attacked his encampment at night. He wrote of his response, “I marched that day towards Omagh, putting out my horsemen to spoil and burn, without having any sight of the enemy.”¹⁰² From this one can understand that the next best alternative to actually fighting the rebels was to destroy the land containing any potential food supplies. Devereux did not find the rebel Lenoghe and was forced to turn back, but he writes,

¹⁰¹ Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux*, 79.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 83.

“So I left, and, on my way homewards, I gave order to burn as much corn as could be, which I assure your LL. [Lords] was exceeding much, not less by estimation than to the value of 5000l.; for so I ordered my marching as I might most annoy him [the rebel Lenoghe] by spoiling of the country, where was most plenty of corn, both coming and going.”¹⁰³

This quotation demonstrates both a pride in his men’s destructive behavior but also assumes support for the policy from his superiors. Devereux ‘assures’ the lords of the Privy council that he is indeed working hard by placing emphasis on the numerical value of crop destroyed in order to prove the value of his day’s work.

Due to the Irish practice of hiding in woods and bogs, and the English army’s inability to follow the rebels into those dangerous landscapes, conquest of the land took on greater meaning. If the people could not be subdued it was of tantamount importance of pacifying the land in place of the people. After his destructive campaign in Ulster, Essex wrote to Queen Elizabeth to say,

“In my return from Clandeboye, having left all the country desolate and without people, I offered Brian Ertagh to be farmer of that country. His answer was, that his people were few, his cattle less, and that striving to defend it from me, his husbandmen were starved, dead, or run out of the country.”¹⁰⁴

With no Irish left to farm, an empty land had been created, cleared of inhabitants, rebel and farmer alike. The newly emptied space could then be used for colonial plantation and considered English property: “And at this time there is neither he nor any man in Clandeboye claimeth property in anything, whereby your Majesty may see what this people are when roughly handled.”¹⁰⁵ This last statement to the Queen can be read as an act of enfranchisement, as the land was then believed to be controlled. It also served as

¹⁰³ Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux*, 87.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

justification for future destruction, to achieve similar colonial results where other, more lenient policies had failed.

Nearly twenty years later, Edmund Spenser would advocate this same destructive policy on a larger scale. He writes in *A View of the Present State of Ireland* that total control of the land could be achieved through garrisons. The garrisons would destroy the country so the rebels could not receive relief from the towns and farms, “the open enemy having all his country wasted, what by himself and what by the soldier, findeth then succor in no place, towns there are none of which he may get spoil, they are all burnt, country houses and farmers there are none, they be all fled...”¹⁰⁶ By destroying the productive land, the woods and bogs which were formerly advantageous to the Irish gradually became in-hospitable, and the rebels would be, “starved for want of pasture in the woods, and he himself brought so low that he shall have no heart nor ability to endure his wretchedness...”¹⁰⁷ In this way, the English began to use the landscape itself as an avenue of colonial suppression, in reaction to the Irish use of the land as a site of resistance.

By the 1580's, English administrators were suggesting a policy of active starvation in order to gain control of Ireland. Spenser supported this brutal strategy and saw its employment in the county of Munster during the Second Desmond Rebellion. He wrote of the ruin of Munster, which had been fertile, “in a short space there were none almost left and a most populous and plentiful country suddenly left void of man or beast...”¹⁰⁸ This incident also contained one of his more famous

¹⁰⁶ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 101.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

quotations about the starving Irish people, who were seen on campaign, “Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them. They looked anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves...”¹⁰⁹ This passage is all description, with little sympathy for the plight of so many starving people. Indeed, it contains intimations that because the Irish could not walk as men, they had degenerated into a beast like state. Far from taking responsibility for the famine, English colonizers used it as further proof that they should be in charge of Ireland instead of the barbarous Irish.

Spenser is very clear that the practice of starvation was justified because the Irish refused to negotiate and continued to rebel. Therefore the English had no choice but to reduce the population in such a way. The destruction of the land was necessary, and even those areas surrounding rebellious activity had to be emptied, “also all those subjects which border upon those parts are either to be removed and drawn away or likewise to be spoiled, that the enemy may find no succor thereby, for what the soldier spares the rebel will surely spoil.”¹¹⁰ The rebels could have used the land for production, but because they instead used the harvest to sustain fighting, the English colonizer believed themselves justified in ruining the crop first. Furthermore, since many of the Irish were not killed directly by English hands, blame for the deaths could be further removed from the English conscience. Spenser assures the reader, “Yet sure in all that war there perished not many by the sword, but all by the extremity of famine, which they themselves had wrought.”¹¹¹ Hence, the Irish

¹⁰⁹ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 104

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

themselves were actually to blame for their own deprivation and death. With so few of the Irish people left, the English could justifiably take advantage of the empty space, now available for plantation.

Spenser concludes his proscription for subduing the Irish by stating that after the conquest was completed, the native people must be forcibly moved and, “dispersed wide from their acquaintances, and scattered far abroad through all the country.”¹¹² This measure would stop the, “evil which I now find in Ireland, that the Irish dwell all together by their septs and several nations, so as they may practise or conspire together what they will, whereas if there were English shed amongst them and placed over them they should not be able once to stir or murmur...”¹¹³ This was the final act of enframing. Not only would the traditional network of kinship be broken, but the colonizers would quite literally surround the native population, violently subjugating both the land and its people.

To conclude, this chapter has introduced the necessity of understanding the colonization of Ireland through spatial analysis. Colonization was a process that encompassed representations of the Irish people and the landscape. One form of these representations were English written descriptions, in which moral judgments of the landscape and the Irish people were expressed by the English administrators and adventurers who lived there. The land was seen as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ from the colonial perspective. The land was good when it was portrayed as fertile and empty, awaiting a more civil society to make it productive. The land was bad when it was

¹¹² Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 125.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

seen as aiding the Irish people in rebellion. In those instances, the land was unknown and a site of fear for the colonizers.

Maps make up the other category of representation. They have been treated here as historical documents with the understanding that geographical evidence can increase the body of historical knowledge. As geographer Harley writes, “Accordingly they [maps] can be considered to form part of intellectual history rather than standing as documents apart from the development of thought in early modern England.”¹¹⁴ These maps can be read to demonstrate the mentality of the English towards Ireland. Early maps demonstrated that the English had little accurate knowledge of the land and viewed Ireland as mostly empty space, ready for conquest. Later maps served to portray a control or metaphysical power over the land that the English hoped would one day exist in physical form. As rebels continued to use the land and its secret passageways, it became imperative for the English to acquire more detailed maps of the areas they wished to subdue. However, meticulously correct maps at the provincial level were not available until 1602, when the cartographer Bartlett was able to map Ulster by traveling with Lord Mountjoy’s invading force.

The English responded to Irish use of the land as a site of resistance with policies of total destruction. Garrisons and roads were built to facilitate the destruction of the land and to confine the movement of people around the countryside. This paper understands these acts of colonization as the application of Foucault’s microphysical power upon the Irish people. The maps produced by cartographers depicting English symbols of power and ownership over the land are examples of metaphysical power

¹¹⁴ Harley, “Meaning and Ambiguity in Tudor Cartography” 22.

being enforced by the English colonizer. When combined, these two types of power form the final stages of enframing, in which the landscape was made visible and knowable to the English and the Irish people were starved, killed, or scattered into compliance with early modern English notions of land production and civil society.

CHAPTER THREE: The Colonization of Gaelic Culture

Throughout the Elizabethan era, English descriptions of Irish people created and justified an agenda of cultural colonization against the Irish. While the numerous tracts, pamphlets and essays published on this topic touched upon a variety of issues, they all contained a common overall theme. In particular, English authors strongly believed that the “barbarian” Irish would benefit immensely from the civilizing influence of a superior (i.e. English) civilization. In their opinion, this beneficial transformation of the retrograde Irish could only be accomplished through a colonial conquest. Moreover, many of these writers decided by the mid-sixteenth century that Irish resistance to English military rule was a result of some innate deficiency of the Irish, some custom, habit, or mode of living that made them particularly unyielding to reform. In response, English colonizers and administrators in Ireland developed an ideology which expressed contempt for Irish habits, customs and cultural achievements. This ideology worked in tandem with larger political processes, such as the spatial politics discussed above, and served as a powerful justification for the conquest and exploitation of Ireland and its people. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the process of English cultural colonization and by so doing to gain an understanding of how the complex processes of colonial power unfolded during the mid-sixteenth century in this last western outpost of the European continent.

The discussion begins with understanding English notions of Irish incivility. According to this worldview, the inhabitants of Ireland constituted a barbarous “other”, while the English considered their own culture to be not only normative, but

also unmistakably superior. They also viewed themselves as members of a civil society and expected their colonial subjects to aspire to reach their high level of sociopolitical development. This imperialist literature described the allegedly “barbarous” Irish in rather generalized terms. These vague descriptions have not been fully investigated by other historians. Indeed, it is that very lack of specificity that interests the author, as it is indicative of an accepted discourse within English culture, one that would have influenced their colonial project. The imprecise literary representation of the barbarous Irish began in 1188 when Gerald of Wales in *The History and Topography of Ireland* stated, “This people is, then, a barbarous people, literally barbarous... All their habits are the habits of barbarians.”¹¹⁵ Barnaby Rich, an English military captain, writing nearly five hundred years after Gerald agreed with his assessment saying the Irish were “more uncivill, more uncleanly, more barbarous and more brutish in their customs and demeanures, then in any other part of the world that is known.”¹¹⁶ It is because these nebulous complaints were not tied to a particular behavior or trait that the reader can find evidence that the Elizabethan colonizer found the Irish person generally distasteful, unknowable, and ultimately “other”.

In order to make this intangible “other” more concrete, the English began to focus on Irish habits and customs that were most dissimilar to themselves, or those that aided the Irish in resisting colonial control. Reform prescriptions focused on four primary Irish customs; the Gaelic legal system, traditional patterns of inheritance, land usage and herding practices, and finally traditional Irish appearance. This paper then will demonstrate how distaste for “uncivil” behavior was pervasive among

¹¹⁵ Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, 102.

¹¹⁶ Canny *Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland*, 127.

sixteenth century Elizabethan colonial writers by analyzing their justification for altering native habits and the reforms that they recommended. The analysis will definitively address the need to understand systems of cultural colonial ideology in conjunction with political and military actions.

The English believed that the way to civilize the Irish was to force them to adopt the habits and customs of the metropole.¹¹⁷ Davies notes that under King Henry VIII a statute was passed to curtail Irish customs, “the English apparel, language, and manner of living should be used by all such as would acknowledge themselves the King’s subjects.”¹¹⁸ Here is a clear indication of the first step to civilizing the Irish; they must become willing subjects of the crown and embrace the English “manner of living”. Essentially, they must become English in order to gain the rights afforded a legitimate subject of the King. The project of making the Irish more like the English, of changing them from barbarians into a civil people, formed a major theme in English colonial writing.

Robert Payne was one of the English undertakers who went to Ireland when Parliament passed the 1586 Act of Attainder, which granted the crown large portions of the Munster province, as punishment for the Fitzgerald rebellion. At the time, Payne expressed some positive assessments of the Irish, with the goal of encouraging more Englishmen to settle in the area. For example, his *A Brief Description of Ireland: 1590*, includes several passages that attempt to redeem the Irish reputation. He began by informing the reader that the Irish are not so bad as many would believe, and that of the three types of Irish, the best are civil because, “They reforme

¹¹⁷ Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 64.

¹¹⁸ Sir John Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 322.

them selves dayly more and more after the English manners...”¹¹⁹ The idea that Englishness and civility were synonymous and were desirable traits for people to possess was a reflexive cultural assumption. For Payne, the Irish were good *because* they were changing themselves, willingly emulating a more advanced civilization.

However, many colonial tracts were not nearly as kind. While they retained the assumption that civility was desirable, most writers focused on the ways in which the Irish were barbarous and therefore different from the English. A lack of proper diet was particularly vexing for Fynes Moryson, the secretary to Lord Mountjoy from 1600 to 1603. Their diet was repugnant to him generally, “The wild and (as I may say) mere Irish... are barbarous and most filthy in their diet.”¹²⁰ He wrote more specifically that, “Many of these wild Irish eat no flesh but that which dies of disease or otherwise of itself, neither can it scape [escape] them for stinking.”¹²¹ Moryson also considered it uncivilized that, “Neither have they any beer made of malt or hops”¹²² but instead ate as a meal milk mixed with broth, or else shamrock herbs. While, the reason for eating old meat and herbs was likely due to food scarcity caused by the Nine Years war, Moryson detailed these dishes in a manner that suggested the Irish preferred to eat them.

Another English writer, Sir John Davies, in *A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued*, was unwilling to discuss in depth all the customs which made the Irish barbarous by saying, “I omit [from the description]

¹¹⁹ Sir Robert Payne, “A Brife description of Ireland,” In *Tracts Relating to Ireland: Printed for the Irish Archaeological Society vol. I.* (Dublin: Dublin University Press, 1841) accessed January 21, 2015 HathiTrust. 3.

¹²⁰ Fynes Moryson, “A Description of Ireland,” In *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James the First*, ed. Henry Morley (London: Routledge and Sons, 1890) accessed January 21, 2015 HathiTrust. 426.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 428.

¹²² Fynes Moryson, “A Description of Ireland,” 428.

their common repudiation of their wives; their promiscuous generation of children; their neglect of lawful matrimony; their uncleanness in apparel, diet, and lodging; and their contempt and scorn of all things necessary for the civil life of man.”¹²³ When writing about political or military matters Davies discussed the Irish with fairness and understanding, but with regard to Irish culture, each item on the list was the opposite of contemporary English custom, which was clearly unacceptable for civil society (as the English conceived it).

It was widely believed that the Irish had been given ample opportunity to become civil like the English, but had rejected it out of hand. Gerald of Wales, in his *Conquest of Ireland*, provided the intellectual foundation for this ideology when he wrote,

“Fortunate would this island have been, and it would long have been firmly and completely subjugated from one end to the other, and brought without difficulty under order and good government...”¹²⁴

However, the Irish had rejected the “order and good government” and therefore the English believed themselves justified in the harsh punishment of recalcitrant individuals who had been exposed to a superior civilization but knowingly persisted in their “barbarous” ways.

Camden wrote of the medieval invasion of Ireland¹²⁵ which created the English Pale, the people who had settled there were, “defective in no point of civility, or breeding; which they owe to the English Conquest”¹²⁶ Camden argued that the whole

¹²³ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 297.

¹²⁴ Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis*, 311.

¹²⁵ Please see Background.

¹²⁶ William Camden, *Britannia: or, a Chorographical Description of Great Britain and Ireland, Together with the Adjacent Islands*, revised Edmund Gibson vol. 1, 3rd edition. (London: 1753) accessed September 20, 2014 Eighteenth Century Collections Online. 1048.

island could have been civil like this except the Irish, “possessed their hearts with a mad and stubborn conceit of their own country fashions, in opposition to better manners.”¹²⁷ This rejection of a “better” mode of living was particularly offensive to the English and proved to them that the Irish would not willingly submit to reform.

Since the Irish would not accept civil society willingly, English reform writers began suggesting it should be introduced by force. To accomplish this goal, they advocated two methods; superior English management or coercion. With regards to English management, Robert Payne provided an interesting anecdote. He described an English colonizer, Phane Beecher, who administered his lands in Munster so well that soon, “those partes wilbe more like a civell citie in England, then a rude countrie (as late it was) in Ireland.”¹²⁸ So an Englishman was capable, through superior management, to bring the Irish people and land into civility. However many Elizabethan writers anticipated resistance from the Irish and suggested that violent force would have to be employed. Frequently, the two strategies would be employed alternately as support from the metropole fluctuated; first supporting a “soft” policy of peaceful management, then endorsing a “hard” policy of coercion when the first policy appeared to be failing.

Walter Devereux, first Earl of Essex, employed a policy of violence to subdue the Desmond Rebellion.¹²⁹ After Essex received submission from the Earl of Desmond, the Queen wrote to Essex that she preferred good management in Ireland, “you do rather allure and bring in that rude and barbarous nation to civility, and

¹²⁷ Camden, *Britannia*, 1048.

¹²⁸ Payne, “A Brife description of Ireland,” 11.

¹²⁹ Described in Chapter Two.

acknowledging of their duty to God and to us, by wisdom and discreet handling, than by force and shedding of blood;”¹³⁰ However, in the case of the rebellion, she praised his violent action because, “when necessity requireth, you are ready also to oppose yourself and your forces to them whom reason and duty cannot bridle.”¹³¹ Force of arms was not the English government’s first choice because of the high cost of military occupation. Therefore, as soon as the rebellion had been put down Essex wrote to Lord Burghley, while he waited for the Irish Governor (Sir Henry Sidney) to arrive, asking God to send Ireland a good Governor, “one as is fit for Ireland, not Ireland fit for him. This people wax proud, yea, the best might be amended; all need correction.”¹³² While the passage asks for a good administrator, no mention is made of a forceful soldier. This is indicative of policy pattern, in times of peace, the English preferred to colonize the Irish using the most cost effective strategy of superior management. However, there were some instances, especially open rebellion, when the use of force was considered the only viable option for subduing and civilizing the Irish.

Sir John Davies, writing after his experience in the Nine Years War was particularly convinced that the Irish would not have been reformed without the proper application of violence. The Irish, especially in Ulster, had presented a great challenge for the English to defeat. Davies wrote that the Irish were finally conquered, “being brayed, as it were, in a mortar with the sword, famine and

¹³⁰ Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux*, 74.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, 75.

pestilence...”¹³³ It was only the combination of these brutal strategies that assured an English victory. He argued that just as a farmer had to break up the soil in order to plant good seed,

“So a barbarous country must be first broken by a war before it will be capable of good government; and when it is fully subdued and conquered, if it be not well planted and governed after the conquest, it will eftsoons return to the former barbarism.”¹³⁴

Here is justification for war, as well as a recognition that English management after the conquest would be vital for the success of Irish reform.

From the indefinable “incivility” we move to the specific aspects of Irish culture which incurred colonial dislike. The Irish custom that produced the largest body of reform literature was the traditional Irish legal system, called Brehon law¹³⁵. It was generally agreed among the colonizers that English common law was vastly superior to the Brehon legal system. Brehon law lacked the systematic organization and punitive justice that underpinned civil society for the Elizabethans. Spenser considered the Brehon meetings to be unruly events, not only because they met outside, on a hill, but also because, “in these meetings many mischiefs have been both practised and wrought.”¹³⁶ Rather than being an effective medium for taming misbehavior, Edmund Spenser believed that Brehon meetings actively encouraged “bad” or un-English behavior.

The choice of meeting location caused Spenser consternation. He recognized this meeting on a hill as an ancient custom which used to have a good purpose, allowing for a large number of people to assemble in the open and discuss issues of common

¹³³ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 248.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 219.

¹³⁵ Refer to Chapter One for further information.

¹³⁶ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 77.

importance. Though the English had at one time engaged in similar meeting practices, they had since “civilized” and so Spenser wrote, “yet things being since altered and now Ireland much differing from that state of England, the good use that then was of them is now turned to abuse...”¹³⁷ Once the English had created a newer, better legal system, the Irish were expected to recognize the advantages of English common law and abandon their ancient customs, as the English had done.

Sir John Davies also disliked Brehon law, his major grievance being the lack of punitive measures for criminals,

“For, whereas by the just and honorable law of England, and by the laws of all other well-governed kingdoms and commonweals, murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery and theft are punished by death, by the Irish custom, or Brehon Law, the highest of these offences was punished only by fine, which they called an ericke,”¹³⁸

Setting aside modern notions of just punishment, one can analyze this passage with interest. English law is portrayed as just and honorable, with the weight of precedent from all other civilized kingdoms serving as its foundation. In addition the “normative” culture demanded capital punishment for high crimes. Brehon law, by refusing to meet this standard was considered barbarous and unjust. Payment of an ‘ericke’ allowed those who had committed the worst crimes to remain in society, and to the Elizabethans it implied a willingness to allow chaos and criminality to flourish in Ireland.

The English legal system had been nominally instituted in Ireland during the reign of Henry VIII. However, due to the peculiarities of English common law, legal jurisdiction could not be applied to Ireland until the land was organized into the

¹³⁷ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 77.

¹³⁸ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 290.

English system of shires.¹³⁹ Munster had been shired under Henry VIII, but the result was only a partial success because, “the people were so degenerate as no justice of assize [judge] durst execute his commission amongst them.”¹⁴⁰ So even in areas where the land had been shired and given legal jurisdiction, the obstinate Irish impeded the process of English justice and civility. Spenser reflected on this failed attempt fifty years later by noting that in those areas which had adopted English law, the people, “should have been reduced to perpetual civility and contained in continual duty...” because legal reform was better than Brehon law.¹⁴¹ However, the Irish in those areas had been left alone, without continual English management, and so had relapsed into their wild ways.

With even greater alarm Spenser described those places in Ireland which never recognized English rule of law at all. He wrote that these were wild areas, where criminals remained unpunished, largely due to the Brehon system,

“Brehon law is privily practised amongst themselves, by reason that dwelling as they do whole nations and septs of the Irish together without any Englishman amongst them, they may do what they list, and compound or altogether conceal amongst themselves their own crimes...”¹⁴²

Here is the convergence of two colonial ideologies; the first that Brehon law created incivility because it did not properly punish crime, the second that an English presence was required to ensure that the Irish did not use their corrupt system. The English would have to police criminal activity, since the Irish could not be trusted to do so on their own. These suggestions, written by Spenser and other colonial writers, confirm that the process of enfranchisement extended to legal and cultural measures. The

¹³⁹ For more information please see Background.

¹⁴⁰ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 325.

¹⁴¹ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 6.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 5.

English would have to be physically present among the Irish to enforce the use of English common law.

Ideologically, English colonizers placed great faith in their beloved legal system. Between the end of the Second Desmond Rebellion (1583) and the beginning of Tyrone's Rebellion (1594) serious efforts were made to encourage English colonists to settle permanently in Ireland. In order to encourage this population migration, Robert Payne wrote that Ireland was not as bad as one might think it had English laws and governors, "Over every part is an Englishman liefetenant which hath authoritie as fully as the Marshall, to execute Marshall lawes upon the Irish offenders at all times."¹⁴³ This was only partially true, as some areas of Ireland had submitted to English law and administration, but others were only nominally under English control. The passage was written as propaganda, to convince English settlers that Ireland was safe for them to inhabit. In reality, a larger English presence was needed to monitor Irish behavior, protect the colonists from Gaelic influence, and enforce English notions of legality and civil culture.

In areas that did not accept English law, such as Ulster, the colonizers believed it should be forced upon them. Gerald of Wales provided precedent for this action when he wrote about invasion generally, "you will find that no nation was ever conquered which did not bring down punishment on themselves for their sins and wickedness."¹⁴⁴ More specifically, he stated that though the Irish had not been fully conquered in the twelfth century they merited violent action, as, "the Irish people did

¹⁴³ Payne, "A Brief description of Ireland," 4

¹⁴⁴ Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis*, 312.

well deserve, for their grievous offences and filthy lives...”¹⁴⁵ Gerald of Wales was not alone in suggesting violence. While reflecting upon the Nine Years War, Sir John Davies expressed satisfaction that once the Irish had been thoroughly subdued by force, they had embraced English government and laws, “which made, indeed, an entire, perfect and final conquest of Ireland.”¹⁴⁶ This particular passage expresses Davies contentment that the English had finally been proven correct in believing that the Irish could be coerced into reform and civility.

Davies also expounded on the benefits of forcing the Irish to adopt the English common law system. He wrote that the replacement of Brehon law with English law had reduced crime levels and provided proper punishment to offenders. Also, the establishment of assize sessions,

“have reclaimed the Irish from their wildness, caused them to cut off their glib and long hair, to convert their mantles into cloaks, to conform themselves to the manner of England in all their behavior and outward forms.”¹⁴⁷

From Davies’ point of view, this alleged improvement completely vindicated the English system of cultural colonization. In fact, he argued that the English legal system could even change the physical appearance of Irish people, allowing them to both inwardly and outwardly adopt the norms of the metropole.

Finally, and most compellingly, Davies provided unassailable evidence that the English colonizers believed their common law to be an integral part of the system of enfranchisement discussed in the first chapter. Before the extension of English jurisdiction, when Irish rebellion occurred, the English had been ignorant of their

¹⁴⁵ Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis*, 313.

¹⁴⁶ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 248.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 335.

enemies' lands and movements. However, once the assize courts were effective everywhere, a change occurred,

“since the law and her ministers have had passage among them [the Irish], all their places of fastness have been discovered and laid open, all their paces cleared... It is known not only how they live and what they do, but it is foreseen what they purpose or intend to do,”¹⁴⁸

Once in place, the legal system placed the English in a position of control by providing the ability to monitor the intentions and physically control the bodies of the colonized Irish people. The Irish could no longer hide, therefore, the English believed they had finally gained control over them.

One reason the English believed the Irish should be forced to adopt their legal system, was the implications this change would have on land ownership. Gaelic septs held their land communally, and periodically redistributed it through processes called gravelkind and tanistry. To the English, who practiced primogeniture, this system was confusing and chaotic. Davies argued that a lack of definite possession created such a degree of psychological uncertainty that gravelkind could be largely blamed for the state of Ireland, “which uncertainty of estates hath been the true cause of such desolation and barbarism in this land as the like was never seen in any country that professed the name of Christ.”¹⁴⁹ Davies argued that because of the legal exclusion of the Irish from the protection of English common law, the Irish were not *allowed* to practice inheritance in accordance with English legal custom. Therefore Davies asked the reader, “must they not continue their custom of tanistry, which makes all their possessions uncertain, and brings confusion, barbarism and incivility?” Irish

¹⁴⁸ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 335.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 291.

exclusion from the common law system of inheritance guaranteed that the Irish would continue to rely on their traditional methods of organization and property distribution. Davies was the only colonial author who remarked upon this contradictory situation.

Perhaps Davies was able to provide a more balanced view because he wrote at a later date than the other authors. Edmund Spenser, writing in the middle of the Nine Years War, also pointed out the defects in Irish landholding. He focused on lands rented by a husbandman from a lord. The usual length of these rental contracts was for one year, much briefer than the English standard. Spenser argued that husbandmen would not agree to a longer contract for fear of abuse from the landlord, “he thinketh by his continual liberty of change to keep his landlord the rather in awe from wronging him...”¹⁵⁰ The search for a new landlord created large numbers of poor, transient peoples every year, a phenomenon the English thought too unstable for the creation of civil society. Greater migration also implied that the Irish could not be easily documented or monitored by the colonizers. Creating a stationary, agrarian class, was thus vital to the process of enfranchisement.

Not only would a settled class be easier to monitor, but it would also be better for the land. A man was more likely to improve his property if he knew it would be the same land he would work on all his life, and even pass on to his children. As it was, the Irish husbandmen had not enclosed their fields, built stone structures, or settled in established towns. This as Davies explained, “must needs be imputed to those unreasonable customs which made their estates so uncertain and transitory in their

¹⁵⁰ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 81.

possessions.”¹⁵¹ Hence, Davies argued that the flawed Irish system of tanistry and gravelkind resulted in a backwards culture with societal and agricultural deficiencies. Indeed, Spenser agreed with this assessment, when he stated that a tenant with a long-term rent was more likely to, “build himself some handsome habitation thereon, to ditch and enclose his ground, to manure and husband it as good farmers use...”¹⁵² All of these activities were desirable from the English perspective because enclosure and fertilization could increase the annual yield of a field, providing more taxes for the landlord and the crown.

Spenser goes so far as to say that the lack of improvement in farming was a direct cause of Irish incivility. If the Irish husbandman cared for his land like his own, and built a permanent structure to live in, then he would,

“delight to keep his said house neat and cleanly, which now, being as they commonly are rather swinesteads than houses, is the chiefest cause of his so beastly manner of life and savage condition, lying and living together with his beast in one house...”¹⁵³

So, if the vagabond Irish reformed their lifestyle and learned to live like the English, in a settled manner, then they would practice cleaner habits and become more civil. However, it was not just itinerant farmers that worried the English, but also another population of wandering Irish, the herdsmen.

Herding cattle, or “bollying” was a long established tradition in Gaelic life. It contributed significantly to the Irish economy and provided the dietary staple of milk, which could be turned into curd, cheese, and butter. Herding occurred most often in the mountains and hills, those areas unsuitable for plow farming, but ideal for

¹⁵¹ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 292.

¹⁵² Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 82.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 83.

sustaining cattle. Irish shepherds necessarily led a nomadic lifestyle, constantly moving with their herds to fresh pasture as the season demanded. It was because of their transience and elusiveness that nomadic herders became inextricably linked to ideas of barbarity, chaos, and rebellion in English colonial literature.

The Earl of Essex wrote of this issue when he was made Governor of Ulster in 1573. Upon his arrival to Ireland he took stock of the land and people he was to govern. He found that the Irish around the Pale settlement were somewhat civilized, but the inhabitants of the outlying areas, "...were complete savages. They lived almost a nomadic life, driving their great herds from pasture to pasture: even the Chiefs rarely had fixed residences."¹⁵⁴ Through this observation, Essex reveals another essential requirement for English civility - fixed residence. He believed the Irish, even the Irish elite, to be savage simply because they participated in nomadic herding. Instances of nomadic Gaelic elite became a particular concern because Gaelic lords had enough wealth to obtain fixed property, but obviously lacked the desire to do so. This conscious continuation of a the nomadic lifestyle by Irish elites was unfathomable to the English mentality of landed wealth.

The English not only failed to understand the desire for a traditional, nomadic way of life, but they also linked herding to a number of negative consequences. Edmund Spenser conflated the nomadic lifestyle with barbarity by saying,

"Moreover, the people that live thus in these Bollies [nomadic herds] grow thereby the more barbarous and live more licentious than they could in towns... for there they think themselves half exempted from law and obedience..."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux*, 22.

¹⁵⁵ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 51.

Due to the lack of English legal enforcement, the Irish people had clearly grown wild. To the colonizer, any situation that allowed the Irish to live outside imperial control was viewed as highly negative. To remedy this situation, the Irish would need to be coaxed or coerced into living in settled communities where they would be easier to control and govern.

Over time the image of the Irish herder changed from merely negative to actively abhorrent. This change occurred as herding became linked to rebellion. Spenser remarked on the connection, saying outlaws, “are ever more succoured and find relief only in these Bollies being upon the waste places; where else they should be driven shortly to starve...”¹⁵⁶ Not only did cattle herders reside in mountainous areas that were notoriously difficult to control, but the cattle also served as a mobile food supply that could not easily be destroyed. Reflecting back on the Nine Years War, Fynes Moryson noted that, “the last rebellion the very vagabond rebels had great multitudes of cows, which they still, like the nomades, drove with them whithersoever themselves were driven...”¹⁵⁷ Given the English policy of total destruction and starvation to subdue the Irish rebels, this moveable feast would have been particularly frustrating. As rebellions continued to occur, the image of the Irish herder became increasingly linked with treachery.

In all these instances of English rhetoric regarding “problems” of Irish inheritance and land usage, it is important to note that the problem was not the Irish themselves. The problem was the flawed legal system and barbaric cattle economy, not some innate characteristic which made the Irish uncivil. This is a prominent feature of

¹⁵⁶ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 49.

¹⁵⁷ Moryson, “A Description of Ireland,” 421.

English colonial prescriptive literature. Despite problems with the Irish, the English believed these problems were impermanent, and thus viewed the Irish as redeemable. There was hope that as a result of the introduction to a new legal and cultural system, the Irish would gradually become civil, settled laborers of a productive land.

Ireland was indeed productive, and colonial literature reflected the belief that the Irish had failed to make full use of this potential. Moryson, probably writing to justify the military activity he participated in to subdue Ireland, was particularly aggrandizing. In his opinion the seas and rivers had abundant fish that could be sold for profit, “if the fishermen were not so possessed with the natural fault of slothfulness...”¹⁵⁸ and he argued that the mountains contain metals which could be mined if, “this public good were not hindered by the inhabitants’ barbarousness, making them apt to seditions... and their slothfulness, which is so singular as they hold it baseness to labour,”¹⁵⁹ In these descriptions, one can easily perceive the justification for seizing the land and a clear advocacy for placing these virgin territories under English management. If the Irish stood in the way of the “public good” and societal progress then the English has a duty to manage the land for them.

Moryson was not alone in citing the potential fertility of Ireland as reason for English conquest. Elizabethan colonial writers made it clear that access to such fertility would only exist for a certain kind of colonized person. Moryson defined which kind of person that would be when he wrote, “I freely profess that Ireland in general would yield abundance of all things to civil and industrious inhabitants.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Moryson, “A Description of Ireland,” 423.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 422.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 424.

Of course, civil and industrious were adjectives determined by English standards. One can assume that the Gaelic Irish who refused to become civil, as the English defined it, would not have been allowed access to the land's abundance. Similarly, Robert Payne found the land to be very fertile, with many woods, "Also there is great store of Lead Ore, & Wood sufficiente to mayntayne diuers Iron and lead works (with good husbandrie) for ever."¹⁶¹ Here is a land so fertile that its resources would last ad infinitum, if only they were managed well, something the English believed the Irish incapable of doing. Hence, proper land management became yet another justification for the seizure of Ireland. According to this argument, the appropriation of Irish land was not only desirable, but morally correct. The Irish, in lacking cultivation, had broken the laws of nature and were morally wrong for resisting the occupation of people who would use the land better.

Finally, there was one additional problem with the Irish cultivation of productive land; namely that rebels could use the fertile land as a resource to resist the English. Moryson writes that Ulster was full of woods, which would have been beneficial to the colonizers, but the rebels were, "cutting up trees and casting them on heaps used to stop the passages, and therein, as also in fenny and boggy places, to fight the English."¹⁶² As noted in the first chapter, Irish insurgents often used the landscape as a site of resistance. However, this was a specific instance in which productive land was used to hinder the English, thus making the actions of the rebels doubly offensive. Sir John Davies noted that this situation was actually the responsibility of the English. When the Irish were excluded from citizenship, it became unsafe for

¹⁶¹ Payne, "A Brife description of Ireland," 6.

¹⁶² Moryson, "A Description of Ireland," 423.

them to enter towns or cities, therefore Davies asks, “wither should they fly but into the woods and mountains, and there live in a wild and barbarous manner?”¹⁶³ It was, essentially, the fault of the English that the Irish had retreated into the thick and fertile groves.

Davies concludes that the initial English planters had created the whole situation in Ireland by settling in the wrong areas. They had chosen the fertile plains with the most productive land, “and turned the Irish into the woods and mountains, which as they were proper place for outlaws and theives, so were they their natural castles and fortifications... there they lurked and lay in wait to do mischief.”¹⁶⁴ These remote places provided Irish rebels safe haven, prompted guerrilla style warfare tactics, and encouraged them to engage in herding as a means of sustenance. Hence, the English had unintentionally encouraged the very behaviors they would later try so hard to eradicate. Davies goes on to argue that had the initial English colonists taken the mountains first,

“and had driven the Irish into the plains and open countries, where they might have had an eye and observation upon them, the Irish had been easily kept in order and in a short time reclaimed from their wildness.”¹⁶⁵

Here again are intimations of an English mentality to enframe the Irish. If the Irish could be watched, monitored, and kept in order they would quickly become just as civil as the English. Colonizing literature believed that it was only because the Irish survived outside of English control that they continued living in their traditional, “barbaric” ways.

¹⁶³ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 268.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 288.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

The Irish also defied English colonial culture through their dress and appearance. The Irish continued to use traditional forms of dress and hairstyle by wearing the mantle and the glib. These forms of dress became targets for colonial attack and provided evidence of Irish incivility. Camden described the Irish form of dress,

“They wear linen shifts, very large, with wide sleeves down to their knees, which they generally stain with saffron. They have woolen jackets, but short; plain breeches, close to their thighs, and over these they cast their mantles or shag-rugs... in which they wrap themselves up, and sleep sound upon the bare ground.”¹⁶⁶

The saffron color of the Irish mantle was of particular interest to colonial writers, and several tracts specify that exact shade and explain it as further evidence of uncouthness. The Earl of Essex explained that the mantle was, stained saffron color, “for avoiding of that evil which cometh by much sweating, and long wearing of linen;”¹⁶⁷ Fynes Moryson agreed that the Irish dyed their clothing saffron to hide stains; the mantles were, “washed in saffron, because they never put them off till they are worn out.”¹⁶⁸ From these disparate texts comes evidence of a belief that the mantle and its saffron color were evidence of a barbarous lifestyle; lack of proper sleeping arrangements, personal hygiene, and clothes washing all made the color a necessity.

Of all the English writers of this period, Edmund Spenser wrote the most scathing critiques against Irish appearance. He begins by describing the barbaric origins of the glib, a customs the Irish had retained from the Scythians, and describes the glib as, “a thick curled bush of hair, hanging down over their eyes, and monstrously disguising

¹⁶⁶ Camden, *Britannia*, 1048.

¹⁶⁷ Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux*, 23.

¹⁶⁸ Moryson, “A Description of Ireland,” 422.

them, which are both very bad and hurtful.”¹⁶⁹ Spenser was most concerned about the Gaelic Irish being able to disguise their identity with the use of a glib, especially in cases of wrongdoing. He goes on to say, “but for the Irish glibs I say that besides their savage brutishness and loathly filthiness, which is not to be named, they are fit masks as a mantle is for a thief...”¹⁷⁰ This concern for hidden identity, constitutes further evidence of an enframement discourse, in which the English strove not only to control Irish behavior, but to also regulate Irish appearance.

The English believed that this clothing reform would facilitate control of Irish behavior. Without the “mask” of mantle and glib, the Irish would be easier to identify when a crime had been committed. Spenser was aware of the way in which this type of clothing could be used to hide appearance, and described the garment as, “a fit house for an outlaw, a meet bed for a rebel, and an apt cloak for a thief.”¹⁷¹ When a criminal was forced to flee settled areas, he would often (according to Spenser) seek refuge in the wild places of Ireland where the English had little jurisdiction. The criminal, “wandering in waste places far from danger of law, maketh his mantle his house, and under it covereth himself from the wrath of heaven.”¹⁷² Hence, the mantle and the glib could be used to evade English attempts to impose to common law system and civil society.

While Irish men used the mantle to defy English law, Irish women could use it to defy English notions of morality. Spenser believed the mantle was used by “bad” women who did not dress properly in summer, “ye shall find her arrayed commonly

¹⁶⁹ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 50.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

but in her smock and mantle to be more ready for her light services;”¹⁷³ Here “light services” refers to illicit sexual activity, a notion reinforced by the next line of text which stated that in the winter the mantle was, “also a coverlet for her lewd exercise.”¹⁷⁴ If the mantle aided in the execution of immoral activity, it could also hide the consequences of that activity. For, “when she hath filled her vessel, under it she can hide both her burden and her blame”¹⁷⁵ Thus the theme of hidden appearance is repeated again and again, and in negative terms. The mantle’s ability to hide the appearance of an immoral woman, to shield her from the shame and punishment that would have accompanied her condition, was unacceptable. Overall the evasion of punishment for crimes legal or moral did not conform to the system of enframement that the English wished to impose.

Finally, the mantle was used by rebel fighters against English colonial forces. Here the concept of landscape as a site for resistance has been tied to the mantle, since it facilitated outdoor living. According to Spenser, the mantle was an indispensable item during rebellion. For when the rebel, “flyeth from his foe and lurketh in the thick woodstand straight passages (waiting for advantages), it is his bed [the mantle]... For the wood is his house against all weathers, and his mantle is his cave to sleep in.”¹⁷⁶ Spenser described at length how the mantle protected the rebel from the cold, rain, gnats, and even from the sword, when it was wrapped around his arm like a shield. The mantle was, in essence, an indispensable tool of rebellion.

¹⁷³ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 53.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

The importance of the mantle and glib worked on multiple levels. The traditional Gaelic form of dress defied English notions of hygiene. It covered sexual activity and pregnancy which the English held to be morally taboo. It also concealed the identity of criminals wanted by the English legal system, and aided rebel fighters who continued to resist the colonial project. Essentially, Irish used the mantle to reject English enframing on multiple levels. It was because of this resistance that the English identified the mantle and glib as two of the major customs that had to be altered in order to force the Irish into civility.

As discussed above, the English disliked Irish culture and sought to change the habits and customs they believed helped the Irish resist colonial control. However, the English colonizer also feared and hated Gaelic customs because they appeared to have the power to corrupt an English person. The English who had settled Ireland in the twelfth century had degenerated into what was termed the “Anglo-Irish.” Originally of English extraction, these families were so heavily influenced by the surrounding Gaelic culture that they had almost become Irish themselves. Elizabethan colonial literature describes the Anglo-Irish either with hostility, as a threat to the new English settlers; or else with pity, as a people infected with an illness. Spenser described the Anglo-Irish as worse than the Irish, “the English that were are now much more lawless and licentious than the very wild Irish...”¹⁷⁷ He described their conduct as, “very bad and barbarous, being borrowed from the Irish: as their apparel, their language, their riding, and many more like.”¹⁷⁸ These families, the descendants

¹⁷⁷ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 63.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

of Anglo-Irish lords, were often presented as an example of the danger of Irish culture. If the colonizers were not careful, they too might degenerate into Anglo-Irish.

Most accounts describe Irish culture as a dangerous agent of corruption, employing imagery of disease and immorality which could easily infect other English persons. Speaking the Irish language was considered an immoral custom of the Anglo-Irish for, “it is unnatural that any people should love another’s language more than their own, so is it very inconvenient and the cause of many other evils.”¹⁷⁹ Spenser believed it was the right of the colonizers to impose the English language on the Irish people because it was the right, “of the conquerer to despise the language of the conquered, and to force him by all means to learn his.”¹⁸⁰ Clearly English lords speaking the Irish language did not fit into English notions of superiority and enfranchisement. Language, when imposed on another people, acts as a tool of power, a tool the English had failed to effectively employ when they did not force the Gaelic lords to learn English.

Adaptation of Irish language and custom was described as a disease because many writers believed that degeneracy sprang from the practice of marrying Irish women, fostering children, and allowing the Irish to wet-nurse their babies. These were described by Spenser as, “the most dangerous infections...”¹⁸¹ Marriage between an English lord and Irish woman was considered perilous to the Elizabethan colonizer because, “how can such matching but bring forth an evil race, seeing that commonly the child taketh most of his nature of the mother, besides speech, manners,

¹⁷⁹ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 67.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

inclination... for by them they are first framed and fashioned”¹⁸² Marriage to a Gaelic woman had the perilous potential to create children who possessed Irish beliefs and culture, and at the same time English title and power. Sir John Davies agreed with the reality of this danger, saying the fourteenth century English had married the Irish and practiced fosterage with them,

“so as within one age the English, both lords and freeholders, became degenerate and mere Irish in their language, in their apparel, in their arms and manner of fight, and all other customs of life whatsoever.”¹⁸³

The process of degeneration had occurred again in the fifteenth century, when the English lords then living in Ireland had grown greedy and, “did ally themselves with the Irish, and drew them in to dwell among them, gave their children to be fostered by them”¹⁸⁴ Some of these English were later forced to leave Ireland, but, “the rest which remained became degenerate and mere Irish...”¹⁸⁵ These remaining Anglo-Irish may have degenerated into “mere Irish” but they continued to hold large amounts of land and power in Ireland. Thus, Elizabethan administrators were forced to deal with the Anglo-Irish. Although these individuals could potentially be powerful allies against the Gaelic Irish, their loyalty to the English crown was not always assured.

Fosterage was often blamed for the contamination of English children. It was a common custom, practiced by both English lords at home and Gaelic lords in Ireland, to send their children to be raised in another lord’s household, as a sign of good faith and commitment. English lords living in Ireland began to send their children to Irish lords where they learned Irish culture by, “taking on Irish habits and customs which

¹⁸² Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 68.

¹⁸³ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 229.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 284.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

could never be clean wiped away, but the contagion thereof hath remained still amongst their posterities”¹⁸⁶ The Irish also practiced “gospired” or co-paternity, which formed a strong bond between the child and the extra parent. Davies believed this practice was peculiar to the Irish and, “do tend to the utter ruin of the commonwealth;”¹⁸⁷ because the bond formed caused them, “to maintain one another in all causes lawful and unlawful...”¹⁸⁸ Fostering of an English child, then, encouraged loyalty to a native Irish family or sept, which could lead to unlawful action or even rebellion against the English government.

One other custom often mentioned by colonial literature, which was believed to contribute to Anglo-Irish degeneracy, was wet-nursing. This, like fostering, was commonly practiced by the English. However, Camden believed that allowing the Irish to wet-nurse English children had caused the problem of Anglo-Irish degeneracy. He wrote, “Nay, the corruption and debauchery of Ireland are, tis believed, to be imputed to no other cause than this method of nursing.”¹⁸⁹ Spenser explains why this corruption would pass from wet-nurse to child, “They moreover draw into themselves together with their suck, even the nature and disposition of their nurses...”¹⁹⁰ These explanations also described the breast milk of native women as a liquid pathogen, capable of infecting an English child with the illness of Irish culture and language.¹⁹¹ It was not just the milk that had the ability to spread disease, but the simple presence of Irish nurses around the children could cause cultural degeneration.

¹⁸⁶ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 66.

¹⁸⁷ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 296.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 297.

¹⁸⁹ Camden, *Britannia*, 1044.

¹⁹⁰ Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 68.

¹⁹¹ For more on the negative influence caused by native servants and mothers on European children in the colonial context, see Ann Stoler’s *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*.

Camden was convinced of the danger Irish nurses presented when he wrote, “And not only the sons, but the daughters are spoil’d too; for their nurses bring them up to all manner of lewdness.”¹⁹² Wet-nursing then, joined marriage and fostering as very real threats to the English people who were attempting to colonize and reform Ireland.

This chapter has described how the English believed the Irish people to be generally uncivil, but indicated that reform literature focused contempt on four Irish customs; the Brehon legal system, non-primogeniture inheritance, lack of agricultural productivity, and traditional Gaelic appearance. The Gaelic legal system was considered inferior to the English common law, largely because high crimes were not treated with punitive justice but also because crown administration could not operate effectively without the shire system. The English disliked the Gaelic system of communally held and distributed land, believing that it led to chaos and petty war. Irish land usage, herding, and transhumance were all indicative of a barbarous society and resisted English attempts to enframe the Irish people. Finally, the English found Irish habits of personal hygiene and appearance distasteful. The English attempted to reform all these customs, either by peaceful means or by coercion. They did so because the English believed these customs aided the Irish in resisting colonial control, and only by conquering Irish culture would the English gain total control of the Irish people.

The English imbued their rhetoric of cultural colonization in terms of civility versus barbarity, and their program of reform was justified because it would improve

¹⁹² Camden, *Britannia*, 1044.

the Irish land and populace. Sir John Davies wrote that after the Nine Years War the most rebellious people of Ulster were,

“in some places transplanted from the woods and mountains into the plains and open countries, that, being removed, like wild fruit trees, they might grow the milder and bear the better and sweeter fruit.”¹⁹³

So the Irish were to be remade into the English image, to become sweeter, more civilized. This was necessary to reach political and economic goals, but also because the English believed that Gaelic culture had the power to corrupt them. The Anglo-Irish, described in terms of illness and disease, served as a warning to the Elizabethan colonizers. The Irish were forced to conform to English standards in part because the English feared that they themselves could become like the Irish, and degenerate into a wild and barbarous society. In order to avoid such a fate, the English used colonial literature to create and justify a complete system of colonial enfranchisement; a system which would conquer, control, and ultimately civilize the “barbarous” Irish.

¹⁹³ Davies, “A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued,” 340.

CONCLUSION

Culture played an intrinsic role in the conquest of Ireland in the sixteenth century, and the English colonial project, so often described in political and military terms, must be reexamined in this context. Even in the premodern era, English ruling circles endeavored to impose the normative culture of the metropole on the imperial periphery. As Michael Hechter argues, “A defining characteristic of imperial expansion is that the center must disparage the indigenous culture of the peripheral groups.”¹⁹⁴ This disparagement took the form of derogatory and biased representations of Ireland and the Irish people that were used as “dense transfer points”¹⁹⁵ in the often violent application of colonial power. By examining spatial and literary representations of Ireland and Irish culture it becomes evident that the process described by Timothy Mitchell, called enframement, was being imposed upon the Irish. Enframement is the convergence of two aspects of power, the metaphysical and the microphysical. Metaphysical power worked through maps and literature to bring order in the conceptual realm, allowing the English to imagine Ireland as they wished it to be. Microphysical power created order in the material world, by physically changing the appearance of the landscape and people to conform to the core’s laws and norms. The English justified their policy of colonization by representing Ireland and Gaelic culture as wild or barbarous, and hoped to achieve their colonial ambition by physically coercing the Irish into adopting the “superior” English culture.

¹⁹⁴ Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 64.

¹⁹⁵ Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 145.

Despite the physical proximity of Ireland and England, the two countries developed differing structures of societal organization that made them fundamentally incompatible. Emphasis on tribal organization in Gaelic society was supported by Brehon law and redistributive inheritance, markers of Gaelic culture that the English found chaotic and greatly inferior to the enclosure movement occurring in their own country. Moreover, English society was organized around the shire system, which provided the basis of monarchical power by holding regular court sessions. Primogeniture, established in England after William the Conqueror, was believed to be the key to the proper transfer of property among the upper classes and the preservation of large landed estates. When the English invaded Ireland in the twelfth century, they attempted to impose their societal structure and legal system on the Gaelic people, but ultimately failed. Gerald of Wales, who chronicled the invasion, provided the ideological foundation for the denigration of Irish culture to justify a colonial policy when he described the Irish as wild, uncivil, barbarous and occupying a fertile, but underdeveloped, land. The Elizabethans, “very often uncritically repeated”¹⁹⁶ the assumptions he set out when they embarked on a renewed conquest of the Green Isle.

The second chapter of this paper examined the manner in which a spatial analysis of Ireland can be used to ascertain the degree and extent of English colonial enframing of the landscape. While spatial descriptions often came in multiple, and occasionally contradictory forms, they usually provided justification for occupation through these representation, an argument echoed by Andrew Hadfield, who said,

¹⁹⁶ McGurk, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland*, 10.

“Apart from the people, Ireland is portrayed as a fairyland, a bogland, a wasteland, a land of potential wealth neglected by its inhabitants, *a land asking to be taken over* [my emphasis].”¹⁹⁷ Ireland was often described as fertile, but completely underdeveloped due to the steadfast refusal of the Irish to cultivate and exploit the riches of their own land. Ireland was also described as empty, a blank space upon which the English imagination could impose a utopian society of their own making. Conversely, Ireland was also often described as wild and dangerous since the Irish people used the landscape to resist colonization, making the untamed forests and bogs of this country doubly terrifying to the English traveler. In response to this tactic, the English enframed the landscape by physically changing its appearance. They drained bogs, cut down forests, and widened mountain passes, all in an effort to impose control upon the land.

Additionally, the English used cartography to impose control over the Irish landscape. Prior to the sixteenth century, Ireland had remained largely unmapped, and therefore, unknown. The series of maps analyzed in this paper demonstrated that cartography operated as a tool of the colonizer, by imposing order on Ireland in the conceptual realm. A comparison of Saxton’s county of Essex map and Lythe’s county of Munster map indicates that as the colonial project progressed, Ireland was made to appear similar to England. The cartographic portrayal of the broken tribal system, and its replacement by land units held under English title serve as an especially vivid example of this process. Finally, metaphysical power joined with microphysical power in the map of Ulster, by portraying a series of English garrisons in the region,

¹⁹⁷ Hadfield and McVeagh, *Strangers to That Land*, 16.

which exerted both physical and conceptual control, and represented the colonial domination of the isle as a powerful and immutable force.

When “soft” policies of negotiation and legal reform failed to colonize the Irish, the English turned to violent action against both the land and its people. They ruthlessly destroyed agriculture and food sources, thereby forcing the starving Irish to succumb to their rule. However, the English justified this extreme violence by blaming the Irish for creating disorder. Once again, Hechter’s argument that, “the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order.”¹⁹⁸ is applicable to Ireland. The “legitimate” use of force formed an essential component of England’s justification for their colonial policy. Elizabethan authors often wrote that the Irish deserved harsh treatment because they were rejecting the superior, civilizing English culture.

The concept of civility in diametric opposition to barbarity is a theme that runs obliquely throughout Elizabethan colonial literature. These biased representations must be analyzed not as mere description, but as colonial representations working within a process of enframement to justify English conquest. In particular, the English represented as barbaric those aspects of Irish culture which were particularly resistant to the colonial project. They were particularly disparaging towards the Gaelic legal system which they regarded, “with the utmost disdain, as the work of mere barbarians.”¹⁹⁹ Attacks on Brehon law were so vitriolic not only because the English believed that the legal system allowed criminals to remain in civil society, creating disorder, but also because Brehon law upheld the system of tribal land distribution

¹⁹⁸ Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 60.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

which was antithetical to England's preferred method of inheritance, primogeniture. The English believed that primogeniture would correct many of the aspects of Irish society they deemed problematic; the Irish would cease their nomadic lifestyles, create a settled population and improve their lands.

The English attempted to force the Irish into civility by attacking traditional Gaelic styles of dress and appearance. The mantle and the glib allowed the Irish to disguise their identity, thereby thwarting English attempts to monitor and persecute rebels. Also, the mantle allowed women to participate in, and hide the consequences of, sexual activity, which was deemed immoral by the English. The English were aware that the Irish used the mantle and glib to reject their authority and therefore attempted to force the Irish people to change their appearance to conform to English standards of civil dress.

The degeneration of the Anglo-Irish confirmed that participation in Gaelic customs had a negative or degenerative effect on civil English persons. The Anglo-Irish used Brehon law, made treaties with Gaelic lords, and spoke the Gaelic language. This confirmed to the English that Gaelic culture kept the Irish in a state of incivility, and even had the power to gradually degenerate civil English families. This retrograde process also occurred when an English person practiced marriage, childbirth, wet-nursing or fosterage with Irish persons. These interactions, and the consequences which came from them, were often described in terms of infection and disease. Irish incivility could be "transmitted" through intimate or sustained contact, and particularly through the breast milk of Irish wet-nurses. That the English believed a wet-nurse, employed to keep a child alive, might be at the same time be infecting

the baby with disease, indicates that the English viewed the inferior servant as only tenuously under English control. This was reflective of the dubious control England held over Gaelic culture generally, which resisted English colonization on every front and ultimately resisted the total authority that England sought.

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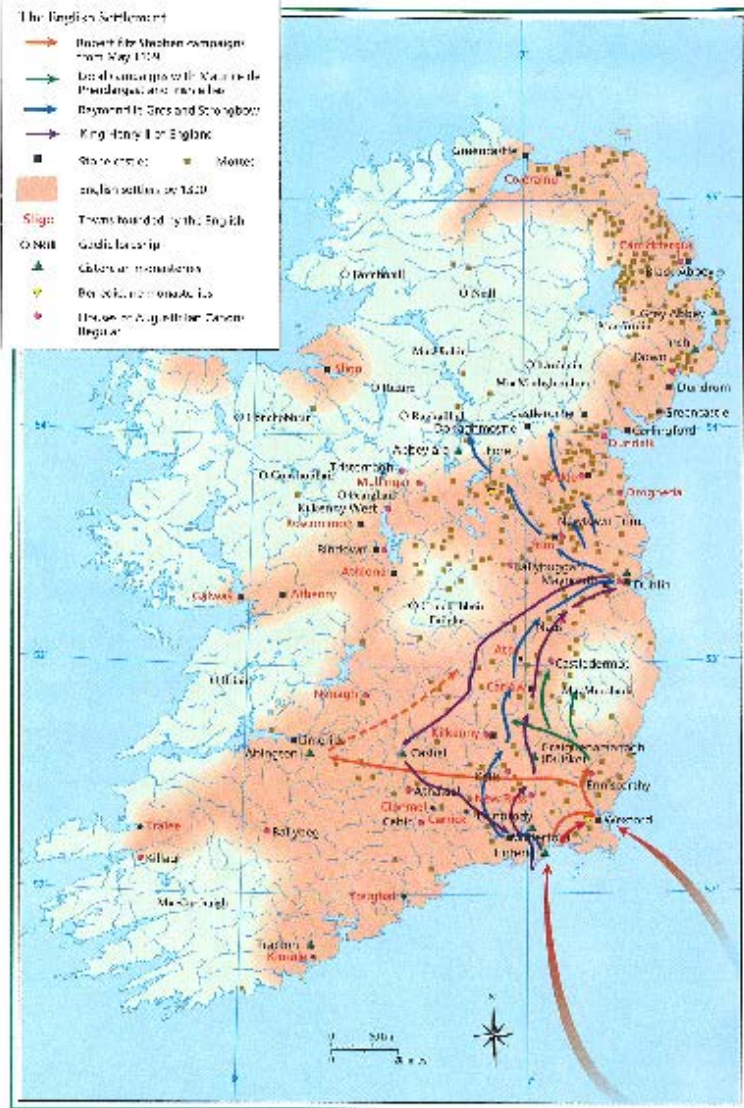
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APPENDIX A
MAPS OF IRELAND

Ireland after the twelfth century invasion.

MEDIEVAL IRELAND

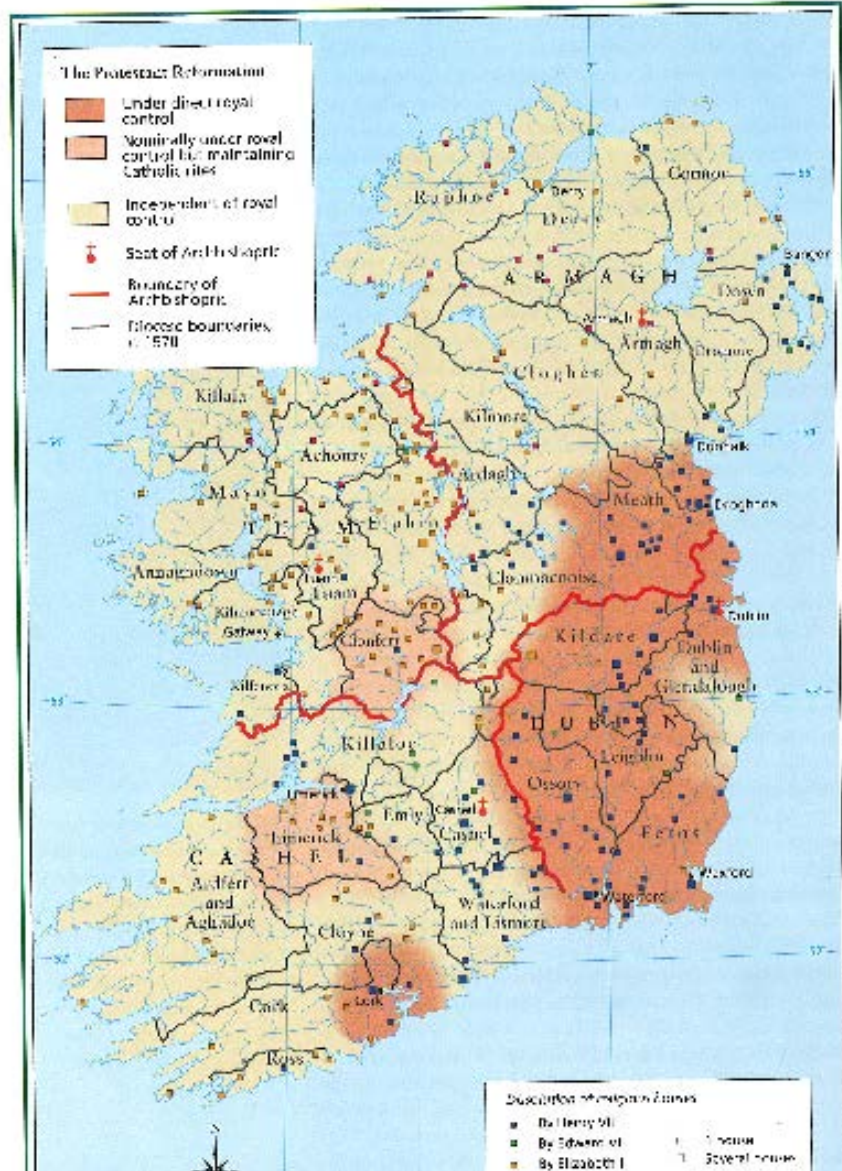


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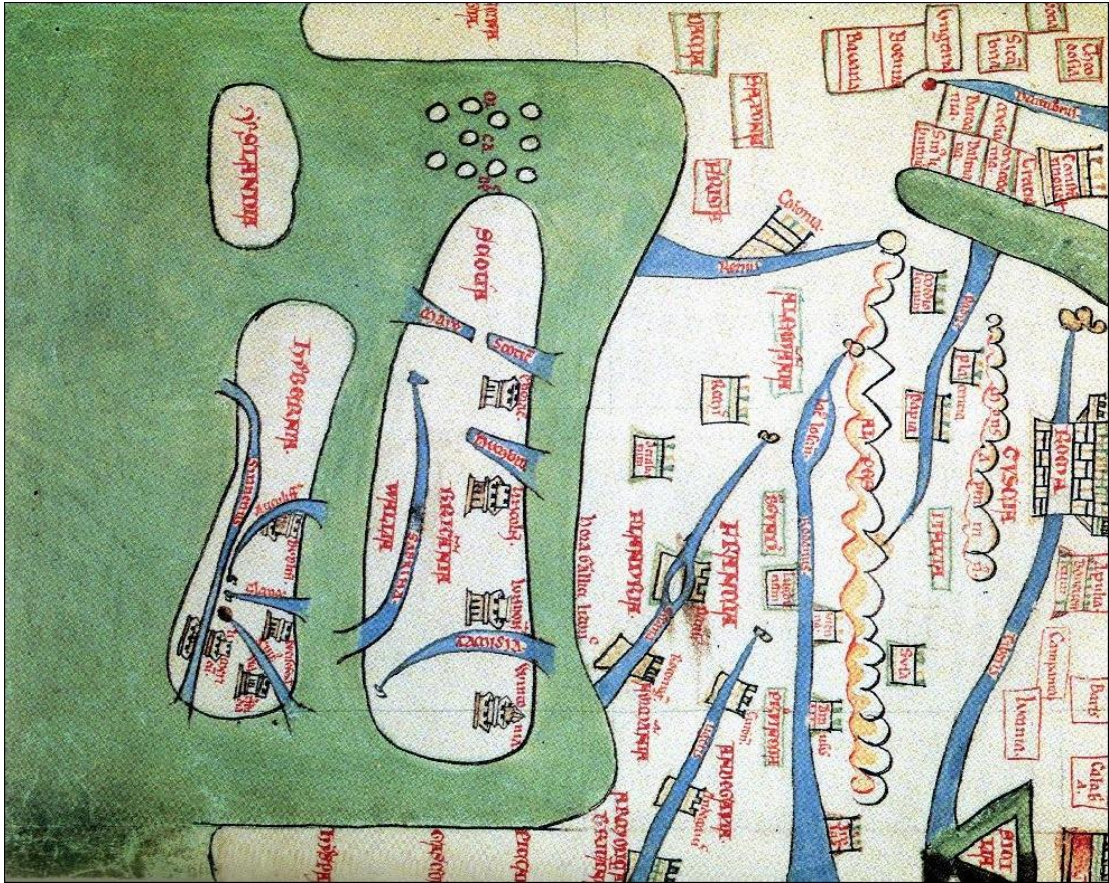
Ireland in 1535

A THIRTIETH OF THE HUNDRED

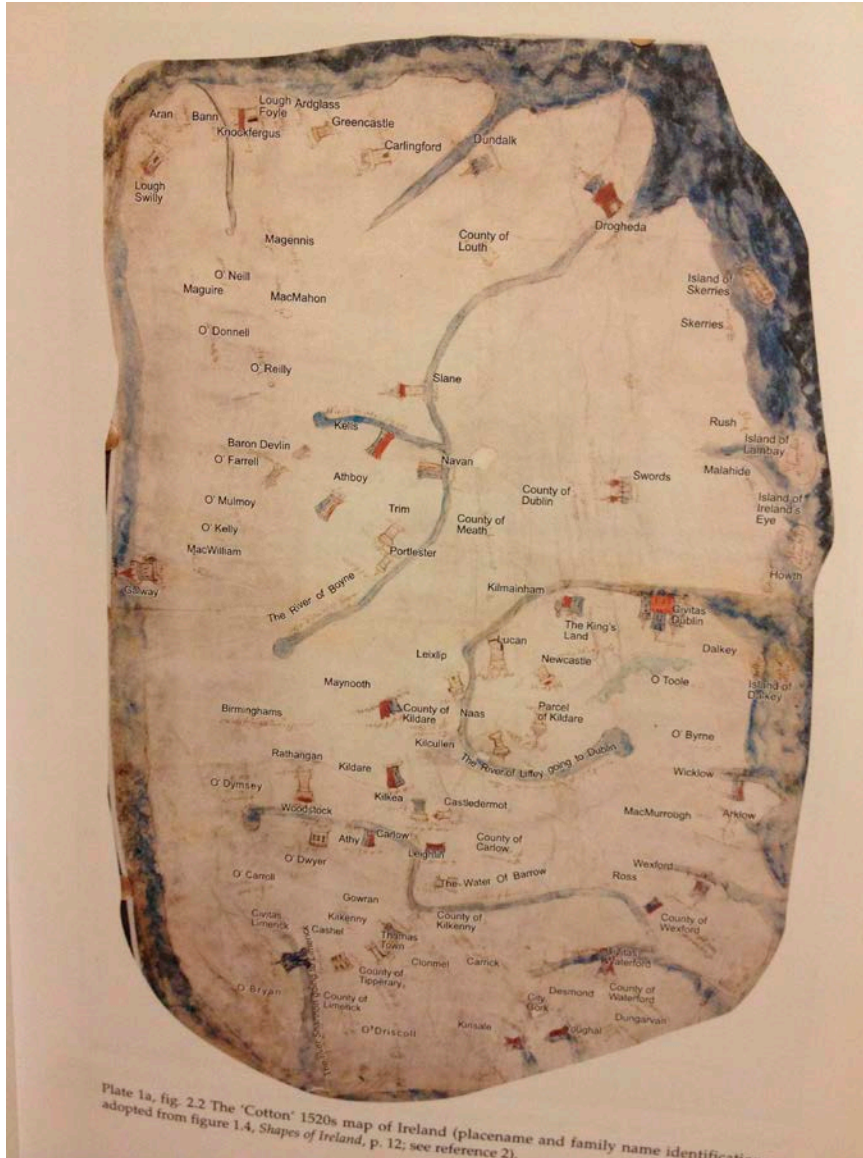
1535



Gerald of Wales, Map of Europe, 1188



Cotton Map of Ireland, 1520s



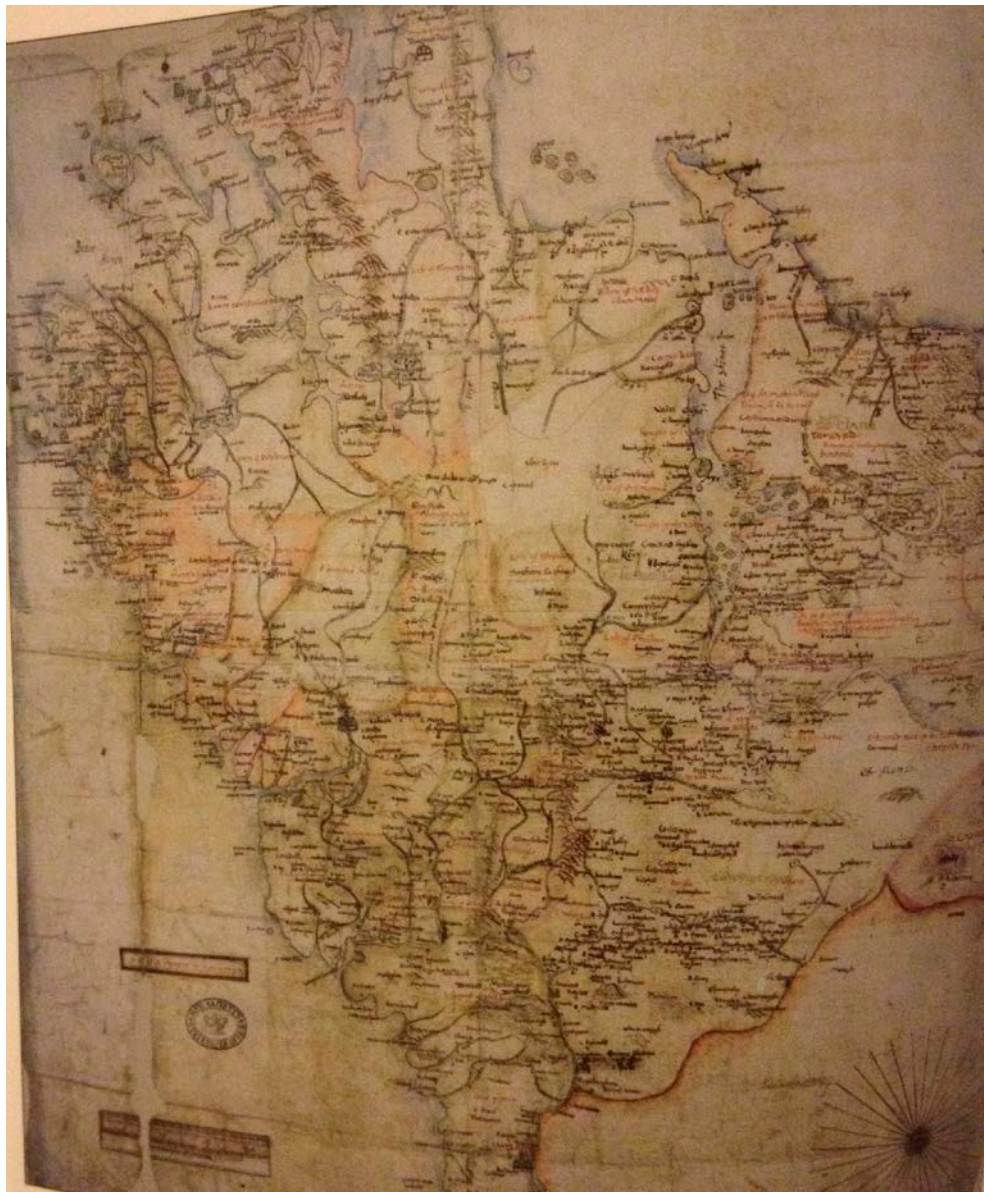
Nowell's map of England and Ireland, 1564



Christopher Saxton, County of Essex, 1576



Robert Lythe, County of Munster, 1571



Richard Bartlett, County of Ulster, 1602

