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"A geography to humor as to morals": Bordering Macklin's Natural Characters and National Caricatures[1]

By
Madeleine Saidenberg

Abstract

When Charles Macklin first played Shylock as a raging avenger instead of a stock comic stereotype, audience members fainted. How did the artist who interpreted the Jewish antihero with unprecedented humanity go on to write plays full of caricatured Jewish, Scottish, and Irish characters? This essay engages with Ragussis' and Goring's work on "outlandish" Englishmen onstage to tease out the borders between character and caricature in Macklin's plays. I argue that the comic strategy of his plays generates a new, troubled paradigm of integrated and contrasting national characters that pushes the boundaries between stereotype and true representation. This essay attempts to contextualize Macklin's work as a playwright within his successful acting career, from his early typecast as Irish "Teagues" to his artistic choices once a star in Shakespearean roles and self-written characters, which critics often overlook when parsing the logic of his plays. Using Macklin's own philosophies of "natural acting" complicates readings of his "true-born" Scottish, Jewish, and Irishmen as either stereotype or realism. Macklin's stage reflects and generates a London booming with sudden diversity and fraught with political upheaval. An Irish thespian once desperate to lose his brogue, he writes plays that trouble notions of national pride and passing. Tracking the different treatment of "outlandish" characters across plays, political eras, and London and Dublin audiences highlights the ambiguous ethics and aesthetics of representing national and ethnic character.

Keywords: Georgian theatre, Macklin, caricature, stage Irishman

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December 12th, 1759: Stalking offstage, Charles Macklin peeled off Shylock's fake red beard and cap and hurried into his next costume for the afterpiece—his own new play, *Love a la Mode*. From backstage, his accent shifted from the Jewish intonation he picked up in the Exchange to a (by all accounts terrible) Scottish brogue for his first line as scheming, opportunistic Archy Macsarcasm.[2] "Ha ha ha! My cheeld of circumcision," he greets Mordecai, a Jewish dandy, "gee us a wag of thy loofe!"[3] The laughter occasioned by image of the broad Scot hugging the beau Mordecai (whose character gains most of his comic traction by the supposed irony of an outsider Jew affecting "in" fashions and manners) must have been increased by the double image of Macklin as the fabled, threatening Jew embracing the silly new image of London Jewishness.

Michael Ragussis, in his insightful essay and his subsequent book, *Theatrical Nation,* investigates how this double bill creates a prism of Jewish characters who both subvert stock representations and re-inscribe Jews as figures of comic otherness. *Love a la Mode* makes an appropriate coda to *Merchant of Venice*: its basic plot mimics the early scenes of Shakespeare's play, in which Portia privately mocks and publicly humors her suitors from Morocco and Aragon. In *Love a la Mode*, British Charlotte giggles over her "outlandish" suitors and pits them against one another to win her favor in a modernized fairytale of otherness. Alongside Scottish Archy Macsarcasm, Irish Callahan O'Brallaghan, and horse-mad Squire Groom, Mordecai is allowed to be an insider in the game for heiress Charlotte's hand. Ragussis calls this onstage congregation of non-English Britons a "multi-ethnic spectacle:" the sheer volume of othered characters onstage reflects the growing diversity of London and Great Britain.[4] By representing more than one type of Jew, the Drury Lane Theatre gave that audience a more varied

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[2] Appleton, after Kirkman, cites Macklin's well-researched Venetian costume, his commonplace book entries on ancient Judaic characters, and his visits to the Exchange to converse with London Jews. William W. Appleton, *Charles Macklin: an Actor's Life* (Harvard: Oxford University Press, 1961), 46.

[3] Charles Macklin. "Love a la Mode." 1759. (London: John Bell, British Library, Strand, 1793), 10. Hereafter LALM.

[4] Michael Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2010), 43.

view than the typical one-sided stock character. Yet, while Mordecai as modern dandy differs from a stereotypical Jew, the comedy relies on the discrepancy between his outsider status and his attempt to be an insider. Squire Groom and Callaghan O'Brallaghan also have contemporary careers that shade what would otherwise be sketched stereotypes. Only Sir Archy remains fully circumscribed within his Scottish caricature—except, perhaps, in the playing of him.

Paul Goring also parses the social and political effects of Macklin's multi-ethnic spectacle, though he disagrees with Ragussis on the success of Macklin's "project" to challenge stereotypes on the London stage. Both critics measure the success or failure of the `the text of his plays. The questions they bring up cut to the heart of eighteenth-century studies of British anxieties about the changing demographics of London (just as Macklin's plays did): is Macklin salvaging the stage Irishman by generating more derogatory stereotypes of others, or by reclaiming all non-English Britons? Did his attempt to stage more realistic Irish Britons succeed or fail? Does his multi-ethnic spectacle reflect an off-stage reality, or merely reframe old prejudices? But while these essays brilliantly parse the relationship between the Macklin's texts and his audience, they largely disregard his long career as an actor, navigating tumultuous political and theatrical upheavals by writing parts for himself. In this essay, I aim to show that placing Macklin's written work within his acting career significantly influences this argument, and that these texts should not be taken without a view to performance history. Bridging his simultaneous acting and writing careers will complicate arguments of authorial intent for three main reasons: first, because Macklin was a star actor before and during his writing career, and often wrote parts that pulled on or played off of his own persona (often in order to create work for himself); second, that the trajectory of his stardom, full of great performances and infamous scandals, influenced and changed his opportunities, his opinions, and the audiences' image of his characters across decades; and third, that his own theories of natural acting—formulated, taught, and refigured over the span of time when he wrote and performed his three most famous plays—directly answer and also complicate Ragussis and Goring's binary questions about his anti-caricature "project." Just as

noting how his performance as Shylock immediately before *Love a la Mode* influenced the audience's understanding of his original characters Macsarcasm and Mordecai gives us a new appreciation for the "success" of those characters, revisiting Macklin's questionable caricatures with his performing career in mind gives us a clearer and more incisive view into his comedic strategy across his plays and how it worked onstage.

I.

Macklin was a performer long before he began writing, working as a character actor at the major London theatres of Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Though he Anglicized his name from McLaughlin, he struggled to rid himself of his Irish accent, so throughout the late 1730s he played stage Irishmen and other "outlandish" figures—silly servants, wild Irishmen, and scheming priests alongside a Mad Welshman in Pilgrim, a Moroccan servant in *The Fall of Phaeton*, and several comic drag roles.[5] But not all outsider roles were minor. In 1741, he finally got his big break as the titular Merchant when Drury Lane produced Shakespeare's play for the first time in over a century. Since 1701, Granville's "improved" comic version *The Jew of Venice* held the stage, which emphasized romance, cut Portia's various wooers, and reduced Shylock's role into a clownish Pantaloon. Macklin guarded his breakout performance carefully from the cast until opening night, so when he burst into the green room with "my red hat on my head… and with a confidence which I never before assumed, the performers all stared at one another."[6] He aligns his authentic costume with his "confidence" in his new performance style, an unprecedented move towards humanizing Shylock and a turn from gestural, formalistic acting to behavioral, naturalistic acting.

Macklin's "science of acting," according to his contemporary John Hill, relied on outer and inner research: accurate costumes,

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[5] *The London stage, 1660-1800 : a calendar of plays, entertainments & afterpieces together with casts, box-receipts and contemporary comment : compiled from the playbills, newspapers and theatrical diaries of the period. Part 3, 1729-1747*, ed. Arthur H. Scouten. (Southern Illinois University Press, 1961.)

[6] William Cooke, *Memoirs of Charles Macklin, comedian*. (London, 1804) 94-95

accents, and manners, and authentic behavior, responses, and stage business.[7] His required his pupils to bring their own behavioral reality to even the most outcast characters—he instructed Hill to "speak [each] passage as he would in common life, if he had occasion to pronounce the same words," before heightening his performance for the demands of the playhouse.[8] His move away from the formal acting of Cibber and Quinn coincided with Garrick's supremely realized *Richard III* later that year, anticipating and generating a popular demand for naturalistic characters. As well as making him a star, Macklin's philosophy must have allowed him to escape the formal requirements of the stock clowns he had been playing. Indeed, this humanization of his characters subverts a precedent of caricature and cartoon. His biographer Appleton points out that Macklin's exceptionally human Shylock was by no means a wronged martyr; he struck a balance between sympathetic man and inhuman villain in a way that made Shylock all the more monstrous and memorable.[9] His commonplace book entry on "Jewes," (and, scribbled in, "hints for acting"), in which he lays out a plan to research and "go through the history" of the Jewish people, "act the great characters," and borrow a bible from a Jewish acquaintance, makes a compelling argument that he wanted his performance of Jewishness to be based on a human story of a person whose identity was deeply connected to real Judaism, rather than on the stock Jewish clown that had been recycled onstage in *The Jew of Venice*.

Macklin played the Merchant for the next fifty years, and "Shylock" became a soubriquet for Macklin by his fans (for his masterful performance) and enemies (after the villainous outsider he played). This reveals the dual nature of a character, and a man, that audiences loved to hate; it also points out that audiences after 1741 always associated Macklin with Shylock. His performance as a kilted *Macbeth*[10] in 1772 occasioned a cartoon titled "Shylock turn'd

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[7] Appleton, *Charles Macklin*, 153

[8] John Hill, *The Actor*, revised ed. (London, 1755), 239-40. In Appleton, 67.

[9] Appleton, *Charles Macklin*, 48-50

[10] Much like his Shylock, Macklin took pains to make sure his costumes for *Macbeth* were (mostly) historically accurate—though contested, it may have been the first version of the

Macbeth,"[11] depicting the aging actor stuffed into a Scottish costume and clutching the dagger in the famous Act II vision scene. "I see thee yet, in form as palpable,/ as that which now I draw," the caption reads, a punning paraphrase of Macbeth's line that projects one image on another: Macbeth's imaginary dagger is as present as the one he draws, and Macklin's Shylock is present within the portrayal of Macbeth that the cartoonist "draws." By 1759, he (and Garrick, as manager of Drury Lane) knew he could draw a crowd before his new afterpiece.[12] He would have been seen as a counterpoint to Mordecai's modern beau but also as the mythic Shylock transformed into—and never absent within—a performance of Scottishness.

II.

Macklin had no great love for Scots.[13] During his career, political sentiment maligned Scots during the Jacobite Rising of the 1740s and Lord Bute's tenure in the 1760s. And yet Macklin's portrayal of Archy Macsarcasm, played for laughs, was not played broadly. Archy was rated among his best-played characters, alongside his dread Shylock; it is difficult to imagine he exempted his own creations from his humanizing acting philosophy, and equally difficult to imagine them then—though undoubtedly funny—looking like stale, unrealistic stock clowns. Indeed, unlike the Jewish and Irish characters, who escape or undercut their caricature with contemporary employment, there were few Scottish stock figures onstage before the 1750s on which to build a character.[14] Instead, precisely because he refuses to attempt to pass as

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Scottish play performed in Scottish dress. For more, see Kristina Straub, "The Newspaper 'Trial' of Charles Macklin's *Macbeth* and the Theatre as Juridical Public Sphere" *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 27, no. 3-4 (Spring-Summer 2015) and Appleton, 168-94.

[11] "Shylock turnd Macbeth," The Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library. TS 941.5f., vol. 2. In Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation*, 47, and Appleton, *Charles Macklin*, 183.

[12] This is especially noteworthy since his first attempts at playwriting, especially *King Henry* VII, were flops. Appleton, *Charles Macklin*, 117.

[13] "That Macklin disliked the Scots is indisputable, and even his most ardent admirers admitted that his accent was often at fault," Appleton, *Charles Macklin*, 119.

[14] on the creation of stock Scottish characters, 1750-1800: "the stock character only begins to reach the third stage of his development; indeed, the conventional stage Scotsman did not actually become fully developed until after the popular dramatizations of the Waverley novels" J. O. Bartley, 'The Development of a Stock Character II. The Stage

English or view himself as part of British society, Archy will not escape caricature —and, in doing so, crafts one for himself. Rather than being a stock character, Archy is a meta-stereotype: a national caricature because he harps on his nationality, at the expense of the association with and assimilation into British culture that allows Callaghan and Mordecai to develop their characters beyond the stock.

Yet comic, conniving Archy, being the only Scotsman onstage, still bears the weight of representing Scotland. Outraged Scots attempted to riot in the theatre and produced pamphlets against the prejudiced play. "Propriety of characters may be divided into two sorts," one insists. "The one to make them act… untainted by any peculiarly vicious manner of country or education. – The other is, when the character is made to result intirely [sic] from a provincial dialect, and local manners."[15] The anonymous "Scotsman" obviously imagines Archy as the latter. Goring, in his response to Ragussis, interprets the *Scotsman's Remarks*: "a proper character must either transcend nation, or be engulfed entirely by what are thought to be a nation's markings… the Scotsman finds 'the mongrel characters of this farce' to be a 'monstrous compound.'" Citing contemporary critics that disbelieved the "dire inconsistency" of a "compound… universal [and] local man," Goring argues that Callaghan fails to subvert stage Irish caricature.[16] Perhaps, though, we ought to unpick the intentions that Goring ascribes to Macklin before we agree that Macklin failed.[17]

Ragussis asserts that "as an Irishman himself, Macklin aimed to fight anti-Irish prejudice… crystallized in the blundering, fortune-hunting stage Irishman, and combatted that prejudice by presenting

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Scotsman; III. The Stage Welshman (To 1800)', *Modern Language Review*, no. 38.4 (1943), 279–88

[15] "A Scotsman's remarks on the farce of Love a la mode, scene by scene. As it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. London, 1760." *Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale.* (Trinity College Dublin. 5 Dec. 2016), 3-4.

[16] Paul Goring, "'John Bull, pit, box, and gallery, said No!': Charles Macklin and the Limits of Ethnic Resistance on the Eighteenth-Century London Stage," *Representations*, Vol. 79 No. 1 (Summer 2002), 72.

[17] Kinservik reminds us "satire is not encompassed by the author's intentions," (63) and that but I think it worthwhile to examine Macklin's intent here in the context of Ragussis' and Goring's reading of his body of work as a "project."

"detheatricalized" Irishmen like Callaghan.[18] Goring questions the success of Macklin's venture in emancipating the stage Irishman and pushes back on Ragussis' progressive outlook. Instead, he proposes Macklin's "project of representing the Irish" produced self-hating Irishmen, and only in his later years did Macklin attempt to reclaim the eponymous *True-Born Irishman,* which then failed dismally on the London stage. [19] Both of these readings are based in the belief that, as an Irishman, Macklin's intent in all his plays is to rescue the Irish character from stereotype, to better or worse success. Yet it might be worthwhile, especially considering his acting philosophies (developed and used before and during the period he was writing), to view Macklin's intentions as more ambiguous, and read his plays as being *about* that ambiguity. Rather than simply advancing a pro-Irish agenda with a parade of subverted Irish stereotypes who best stock Scots, Jews, and Englishmen, I propose that his plays tease out the difference between character and caricature and the line between claiming nationality onstage and falling into stage character.

III.

J. O. Bartley, in his survey of stock characters, divides the decades-long creation of a stage type into three steps. The first is realistic, when performance is based on some observable quality or fact about a group (such as costume or accent). In the second "indifferent" stage, character is based only on earlier representations, which writers "tend to accept uncritically."[20] Though "new facts may be coming in… the writers' attitude is one of indifference to realism."[21] By the third stage, false

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[18] Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation*, 48.

[19] Goring, "John Bull," 70; Goring asserts throughout his essay that *True-Born Irishman* failed not only critically and commercially (it ran for only one night and closed after being booed down by a raucous London audience), but also failed in a grander way because it did not get across Macklin's true intentions. Certainly that was the line Macklin himself took in his apology to the crowd, but I would like to further unpick the assumptions that Macklin intended simply to reverse an Irish stereotype or please his audience.

[20] J. O. Bartley, "The Development of a Stock Character I. The Stage Irishman to 1800," *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 37 No. 4 (Oct. 1942), 438.

[21] Ibid.

generalities replace any observable quality, even those "which experience could easily deny. Facts," in this stage, "are unwelcome unless they fit easily into the conventional framework."[22] That third stage, in which tropes are so popular they drown out reality, was thoroughly in force for Irish characters on the Georgian stage. While the stages "shade or overlap into one another," Bartley marks 1759 as the shift between "indifference to realism" and the reign of false generalities for Irish characters, which Macklin the actor would have seen firsthand.[23] The wording of Bartley's first stage strangely echoes Macklin's acting tenets, privileging observable human behavior over replicated gesture. Writing and acting out that philosophy within a theatre world that championed Irish tropes and imitations, Macklin creates hybrid characters that combine the first and the third stages: popular, recognizable figures who also have a basis in characteristic reality.

The cartoonish characters in *Love a la Mode,* for example, are remarkable for their recognizability and modernity. In an anecdote in Cooke's *Memoirs,* Macklin and fellow Irish thespian Spranger Barry met a charming Irish soldier in a Covent Garden tavern. Appleton suggests that he inspired Macklin to write "a new type of Irishman as a relief from the conventional Teagues and Captain O'Blunders… an agreeably comic, but recognizable Irishman, might prove an attractive novelty."[24] So even at inception Callaghan fits Bartley's first stage—realism and observable quality—not of a twice-removed Irishman, but a worldly Irish-English soldier living in London.

Ragussis and Goring both read Callaghan as a direct refusal on the part of the author to engage with stereotype. After Archy

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Bartley's description of the creation of stock Scottish characters, 1750-1800, points out the different representative "steps" of Scots and Irishmen onstage in the late 1700s: "the stock character only begins to reach the third stage of his development; indeed, the conventional stage Scotsman did not actually become fully developed until after the popular dramatizations of the Waverley novels" (published between 1814 and 1832), while portrayals of Irishmen were already nearly "fully developed" by 1759. J. O. Bartley, "The Development of a Stock Character: II, The Stage Scotsman," *The Modern Language Review,* Vol. 38. No. 4 (Oct. 1943), 279.

[24] Appleton, *Charles Macklin,* 116-117.

introduces him in the manner of a stage Irishman, Callaghan disappoints the other characters' (and the audience's) anticipated laughter. As Ragussis argues, he "fails to make a fool of himself…. The discrepancy between his actual behaviour and the expected blunders of the stereotypical wild Irishman exposes the stage Irishman as a theatrical construct."[25] In addition to exploding the stage Irishman stereotype, Macklin leaves a new character in its place: Callaghan is not simply an inverse device choosing not to act, but a modern wit and a noble British soldier. In a self-conscious moment of detheatricizing, Macklin has Mordecai attempt to expose Callaghan's bull:

> Sir Callaghan: Danger, madam, is a soldier's greatest glory, and death his best reward.
>
> `Mordecai: Ha ha ha! that is an excellent bull!— how do you make death being a reward?...
>
> Sir Callaghan: Why, a soldier's death in the field of battle is a monument of fame, that makes him as much alive as Caesar, or Alexander, or any dead hero of them all.
>
> Omnes: Ha ha ha!
>
> Charlotte. Very well explain'd, Sir Callghan.[26]

The bait-and-switch here is not just Sir Callaghan's refusal to make a bull, but its replacement with a self-aware, noble, and logical epigram. The joke is on the onstage spectators, who laugh in shock despite themselves. But rather than allowing the anti-stage Irishman getting the better of his English audience, Macklin's new British Irishman and the English heiress turn this conversation out to contemporary propaganda for the Empire. "Why, madam, when the history of the English campaigns in America comes to be written," continues Sir Callaghan, "there is your own brave young general that died the other day… [who] will be alive to the end of the world."[27] This highly contemporary detail—three months before the first run of *Love a la Mode*, the British won a decisive victory at the Siege of Quebec as part of the ongoing Seven Years War (which Callaghan fought on the Prussian front)—was sure to appeal to the British audience's sympathy, and Charlotte's:

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[25] Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation*, 48
[26] Macklin, *LALM*, 18
[27] Macklin, *LALM*, 19

"You are right, Sir Callaghan: his virtues, and those of his fellow soldiers in that action…will be remember'd by their country, while Britain or British gratitude has a being." This appeal for gratitude for British servicemen reflects on Callaghan's lieutenancy too, and reinscribes his implied status in the scene as a Briton rather than a (stage) Irishman, thus completing the jest about expected bulls. With "the construction of a new national entity named Great Britain," Ragussis explains, "a crisis of acculturation and assimilation occurred." The eighteenth century saw "the fabrication of the (Scottish or Jewish or Irish) Briton."[28] Ragussis frames the century starting with the Scottish union: "The Act of Union with Scotland opened the century, the Act of Union with Ireland [in 1801] closed it." One could, however, begin the trajectory of Great Britain's creation with the Williamite victory in 1691 (and Molyneux's arguments in 1698), which opened the door for a century-long dispute about the relationship between Ireland, England, and Great Britain. This precise negotiation sets up Macklin—an Irishman in England himself, whose life spanned nearly the whole century—to question notions of national character, even more than to reclaim national caricature.

Callaghan's exploded Irish caricature is replaced by a British character with the acknowledgement of his service to the Empire; but in order to keep this status, he must lose his Irish bulls as well as his assertion of Irishness. Interrupting the propaganda, Archy insists "the Highlanders did as guid service in that action," and sets up the next joke. Left alone, Callaghan and Archy argue about their respective countries, and Callaghan slips into stage Irish tropes. Back come the bulls and logical gaffes ("I do not think it would be conshisting vid a man of honour to behave like a scoundrel"), the brogue, and the insistence on an honorable Irish heritage all beginning with O.[29] This comparably tame joke (even when likened to Macklin's own earlier

[28] Ragussis, "Jews and Other 'Outlandish Englishmen': Ethnic Performance and the Invention of British Identity under the Georges" (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 775.

[29] Though these play texts should not be taken as a map for performance, it is compelling that all of Archy's lines are written phonetically while most of Callaghan's are in standard spelling—with notable exceptions, like this one.

play, *A Will and No Will*, which features an Irishman named Laughlinbullruderrymackshoughlinbulldowny) leads to a comic near-duel that reconfigures Callaghan briefly as a wild Irishman. The list contains Macklin's own family name, "Mac Laughlin," listed among the "true old Melesian[s]." The fact that Callaghan prizes this Irish name—which Macklin himself chose to Anglicize—at the instant he slips into stereotype betrays both pride and anxiety about claiming nationality. As Charlotte returns and the audience sees the contest of nationalities as ridiculous through her eyes ("What is this all about?... his great grandmother!"), both men become othered caricatures once again. By claiming his Irishness, then, Callaghan loses that status of Britishness he previously won. [30]

Callaghan wins Charlotte's hand by subverting the Irish fortune-hunting stereotype precisely because he made his fortune—or at least "enough to maintain a couple of honest hearts, and have something to spare"—in his British service. [31] His final song, which Sir Archy expects will be "sic a song as has nai been penn'd sin the time… of the wild Irish," instead includes references to classic Roman myth and contemporary style. [32] Like Beau Mordecai's fashion, Callaghan's interests give his character a facet beyond his caricature, and while his warlike ways are the butt of some jokes, they also make him sympathetic to British audiences. Yet his Irishness presents a problem to his place on the English stage—as soon as he claims it, his comic caricature overtakes his sympathetic character.

IV.

If Irish characters were a problem on the English stage, what happened on an Anglo-Irish stage? The Dublin Macklin returned to in the 1760s had a bustling and competitive theatre life, which drew a large, primarily Anglo-Irish audience. [33] They loved *Love a la Mode,* and

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[30] Macklin, *LALM,* 21-3.
[31] Macklin ,*LALM,* 40.
[32] Macklin, *LALM,* 34.
[33] It is worth noting that the term Anglo-Irish is coined at the end of the century; the Oxford English Dictionary first cites Burke in 1792 and then the political discussion leading up to the 1801 Act of Union, after Macklin had (finally) retired from stage and

Macklin set about to write another hit: *The True-Born Irishman*. Upright, moral O'Dogherty is disconcerted that his anglophilic, status-obsessed wife not only gambles away his fortune and anglicizes her name to Diggerty, but also catches the attention of "Count" Mushroom, a lascivious English upstart. Intercepting his letters to her, he and his brother Councillor Hamilton set up a trick to chasten Mrs. Diggerty and humiliate Count Mushroom.

Whereas *Love a la Mode*'s multi-ethnic strategy sets various "outlandish" characters against one another, *The True-Born Irishman*'s intra-national one pits the anglophiles who pass as English against those who claim their Irish nationality. Here, Macklin aligns moral and societal rectitude with proudly Irish O'Dogherty, who is interested in such unfashionable things as "draining bogs, planting trees, establishing manufactories, setting the common people to work, and saving money."[34] The irony of his anti-local wife's frustration is compounded because these duties are specifically meritorious in Irish landowners, who all too often neglected their bogs, trees, and workers in favor of London's charms. In contrast, Mrs. Diggerty and her anglophilic clique—and, by association, the English they imitate—are linked with gambling, gossip, luxury, and lust. O'Dogherty repudiates Englishness and a more international sense of Britishness (by refusing to take a seat in Parliament, for example, a trope Macklin revives later in *Man of the World*) in favor of Irishness. In him Macklin pushes the possibilities of national character to the extreme; O'Dogherty is the unabashed Irishman that Callaghan cannot sustain and Macklin himself attempted to conceal. Though he is not a deep character, the steps of Bartley's caricature creation guide do not apply to O'Dogherty; he reflects the realities of Dublin before an Irish audience, and is not modeled on other stage Irishmen. With such a staid hero, much of the comedy comes at the expense of Mrs. Diggerty's failed attempts to pass

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page. So Macklin's career spanned a time when new forms of international Great British character were being created, changed, and renamed. "Anglo-Irish, n. and adj.". OED Online. December 2016. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/7588 (accessed February 10, 2017).

[34] Charles Macklin, "The True-born Irishman; or, Irish Fine Lady. A comedy of Two Acts." 1762 (Dublin, 1783), 11.

as English. Her arc, from her obsession with Englishness to repentance and recognition of her "true-born" Irishness, directly denounces the modish, troubled British-Irish characters like Callaghan. So Macklin presents his audience with an Irish national character— completing the "project of representing the Irish" Ragussis and Goring ascribe to him—with the caveat that he or she must not identify as English or British.

Though popular in Dublin, Goring points out that the 1767 London version, *An Irish Fine Lady*, was a total disaster and cannot be considered the successful subversion Ragussis supposes.[35] It is perhaps unsurprising that the play ran only once in London—full of references to Dublin local culture, politics, and morals, it has as its cathartic coda a punishment scheme in which the sole Englishman is dressed in drag, shoved into a trunk, covered in snuff, ridiculed and exposed before his Irish companions. Yet in parsing Macklin's interests as a playwright, the play demonstrates a wish fulfillment of national character that works only outside of (and in opposition to) the multi-ethnic spectacle of London.

V.

While *Love a la Mode* reveals the complications of being "Irish-English" and "Scottish-English,"[36] and *The True-Born Irishman* creates a *sui generis* but failed Irish character, *The True-Born Scotchman*—the first title of *Man of the World,* which clearly points out its notional heritage—presents Egerton, who is at once Scottish and British. Just as the *Merchant* and *Love a la Mode* double-bill created a spectrum of Jewish characters, *Man of the World* (renamed and finally produced in London in 1781) presents contrasting Scottish images. While Shylock and Mordecai are each villains, though, Sir Pertinax and Egerton represent the right and

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[35] *An Irish Fine Lady* was even popular among the Anglo-Irish it mocks in Dublin; O'Keefe recalls the hilarity opening night when "a gentleman in a box impulsively cried out, 'why that's me! But what sort of a rascally coat have they dressed me in?" at Fitzmungrel's entrance, and threw his own jacket to the actor. John O'Keefe, *Recollections* vol. I (London: Colburn, 1826), 61.

[36] "Why I am an Irish-englishman, and you are a Scotch-englishman, and so by the rule you know Sir Archy we are both outlandish Englishmen. Ha! ha! ha!" Macklin, *LALM,* 121

wrong kind of Scot (more like O'Dogherty and Mrs. Diggerty *True-Born Irishman*). The pun holds truer here; the play questions whether behavior or birth nation defines character, and which man is the true-born Scot.

Patriarch Sir Pertinax's cartoonish corruption in his quest for parliamentary power pronounces him a Scottish villain, while his son Egerton represents a liberal (and more specifically Whiggish) hero. Egerton rebuffs his father's persuasions: "I own I do wish… English, Irish, and Scotch might never more be brought into contest…he is the true Scot, and the true citizen, who wishes equal justice to…every subject of Great Britain."[37] The argument is between the older generation, who would retain their "true-born" Scottishness, and the younger, who reject notions of nationality in favor of Britishness (with more success than Callaghan had) but still claim to be "true Scots." Matthew Kinservik, in his enlightening essay on political censorship, insists that "the political venality [Macklin] attacks is specifically Scottish," but the prism of Scottishness here suggests the attack is aimed at one specific political understanding of Scottish and British subjecthood rather than on people of Scottish birth.[38]

Macklin's timing was either very bad or too good. In 1770, with tensions still high over Scottish Lord Bute's Toryist policies and extraordinary clout over King George III from the previous decade, the censor turned away *Man of the Times*; in 1779, it was renamed *Man of the World* but rejected once again. Macklin defended his intentions in a letter, saying that his "chief end… was to ridicule and by that means to explode the reciprocal national prejudices" of the English and Scottish "against their fellow subjects."[39] This suggests a united British subject, spanning nationalities while eliminating national caricatures. To what extent national character is also eliminated in this equation alarms

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[37] Charles Macklin. "The Man of the World. Love a la Mode. As performed at the Theatres-Royal, Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden." (London: John Bell, British Library, Strand, 1793), 16. Hereafter *MOTW*.

[38] Matthew Kinservik, "New Light on the Censorship of Macklin's 'The Man of the World.'" Huntington Library Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1/2 (1999), 45.

[39] Larpent Collection MS. 500, Huntington Library, Appleton p. 212; this and more on the politics of *MOTW* in Kinservik, "New Light on the Censorship of Macklin's 'The Man of the World,'" 63.

villainous Sir Pertinax. "The true Scot" is swallowed into "the true citizen" and the "subject of Great Britain." *True-Born Scotchman*, with its dual vision of Scottishness, disrupts the notions that Macklin stereotyped Scots and that his project of ethnic reclamation included solely stage Irishmen; his statement of intent suggests he would shatter all caricatures in favor of a Great British character. Rather than writing with a pro-Irish or anti-Scottish agenda (there are no Irish characters to advance, and hero Egerton's Scottish pride balances the villainous Scot stereotype of his father), Macklin seems to be advocating a British character to sublimate the two.

Macklin wrote this letter to appeal to the censor; while the sentiment may be true, his intentions probably reach further than he admits. Indeed, we can see him prying at the question of how much national character must be sacrificed to Britishness with the character of Lady Rodolpha. An Englishwoman raised in Scotland, she appears for the first two acts to be a new stage Scot—her imitation of popular romance heroines and her "droll" frankness prove her an outsider attempting to get in—and the young Britons treat her with uncomfortable disgust. Eloquent Egerton becomes unusually inarticulate when determining what offends him: "I think [her accent] entertaining in her—but were it otherwise—in decency—and indeed in national affection (being a Scotchman myself), I can have no objection to her on that account…"[40] Her inability to fuse her Scottishness with her Britishness (as he insists he can, "being a Scotchman [him]self") disturbs Egerton, who would conflate the two. This troubled discomfort burbling beneath the patriotic surface of Egerton's rhetoric is dismissed in Act III, when Rodolpha reveals the stock image of Scottishness was an act to repulse him. Though Egerton's polite horror at Rodolpha is resolved when she reveals her act—the threat of Scottishness sans Britishness is returned to villainy in the form of Pertinax—the tension between moral disgust at a national caricature and desire to retain nationality remains. Underneath her caricature is a character who cannily employs discomfort and presumptions about stereotypes to her own ends. Thus Macklin exposes an apprehension—

[40] Macklin, *MOTW*, 5.

uncomfortable and troubling to his London-British audience, who, by 1779, thought themselves as open-minded as their hero Egerton—that a hybrid-English, British character might abolish stage caricatures, but in doing so he might abolish national British character, too.
Macklin sets up this young, united British patriotism as a solution to the problems incurred by the outdated but still powerful partisanship divided along borderlines. The young sets of lovers master the prejudices and partisan ambitions of their parents (and occasionally themselves), and end the play like a classic comedy, with marriages.

Yet instead of the happy tableau common to comedy endings, Macklin gives each of his actors a solitary exit, so that the company is fragmented; though the happy ending concludes in favor of unions, marital and political, the play's very structure casts doubt on the possibility of true unity. A happy ending for Lady MacSyphocant concludes not in a classic reconciliation but a mutual separation with her husband, as Sir Pertinax storms offstage cursing the company. The final moment onstage, a new union of father and son-in-law which might replace the manipulative relationship between tyrannical Sir Pertinax and rebellious Egerton, is tainted with melancholy. "I cannot help feeling some regret," broods Melville, "that my misfortunes should by the cause of any disagreement between a father and [a] man." Egerton responds that it is not his fault, because even if they hadn't met, "some other cause of…resentment must have happen'd."[41] The spectre of an unrepentant and unappeased villain haunting a would-be happy ending recalls Shakespearean villains that darken the problem plays—Malvolio, Iago, and Shylock, all of whom Macklin played during his long career. Envisioning Macklin's plays not as failed comedies but as problem plays, prying at complex issues, opens them up as experiments that pushed the boundaries of British borderlines, at a time when the new forms of Britishness itself were being enacted and played out, onstage and off.

[41] MOTW, 45

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