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Publics and Participation: England, Britain, and Europe in the "Post-Reformation"

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Abstract This article responds to the pieces collected in this special issue of the *Journal of British Studies*, all of which seek to take some notion of the politics of the public sphere and either apply it to, or break it upon the wheel of, various versions of British history during the post-Reformation period. It seeks to bring the other articles into conversation both with one another as well as with existing work on the topic.

In a book of essays edited with Steve Pincus, in subsequent articles, and in two books, I have made an attempt to use different notions of the public sphere, of public politics, and appeals to, and in some circumstances attempts to mobilize, various publics as a way of thinking about the dynamics of English post-Reformation politics.[1] That project initially turned on the appropriation of a phrase, perhaps even a concept, culled from the work of Jürgen Habermas. But it also turned on an extended endeavor both to rid the term "public sphere" of much of its Habermasian baggage and to apply it, thus purged, to the particularities of the post reformation in England. The resulting analysis was predicated on a variety of particular, and in some cases highly contingent, features of English history in the post-Reformation.

As a variety of historians of the late medieval period have observed, by the standards of the Christian west, England was a peculiarly centralized and compact monarchical polity. Even the basic unit upon which the most extreme versions of English particularism rested—the shire or county—was itself a product of the emergence of a centralized legal and administrative system. Many of the local institutions around which the alleged localism of English society was organized could just as easily be regarded as emanations of what one might term the local state: institutions and crown offices through which private power could be transmuted into the

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[1] Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2007); Peter Lake, "Post Reformation Politics, or, On Not Looking for the Long-Term Causes of the English Civil War," in *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*, ed. Michael J. Braddick (Oxford, 2015), 21–39; idem, "The Theatre and the 'Post Reformation Public Sphere,'" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. Malcolm Smuts (Oxford, 2016), 179–99; idem, *Bad Queen Bess? Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 2016); idem, *How Shakespeare Put Politics on the Stage: Power and Succession in the Histories* (London, 2016).

effective exercise of public office, local interests protected, disputes resolved, and "order" maintained. As Tim Harris has reiterated, processes of politicization begin not with print but with subjection to government.[2]

More importantly, the post-Reformation public sphere, or the style of public politicking produced by the post reformation in England, was a function of two differently contingent events or outcomes: the partial "but halfly reformed" nature of the English national church; and the dynastic "crisis" *in potentia*, which Patrick Collinson famously described as "the Elizabethan exclusion crisis," and which other scholars have extended to include another "crisis" *in potentia* but not in fact, the succession crisis of the 1590s.[3] The increasingly confessionalized political scene, not only in England and Scotland but] throughout the Christian West, served to convert these dynastic tensions and anxieties into something much more threatening: as many contemporaries conceived it, the prospect of a version of the Wars of the Roses crossed with the French wars of religion. Arguably it was the combination of these dynastic/confessional imperatives with the ideological and practical dynamics of the relatively centralized English participatory state that produced the conjuncture that Collinson termed the "monarchical republic of Elizabeth I." And it was the conduct of public politics, by a number of different interest groups, factions, and individuals that constituted the post-Reformation public sphere in England. That is to say, repeated pitches made to appeal to, call into being, and mobilize, different publics in order to bring about certain outcomes, or to avert others, acted to create a certain sort of public political arena or sphere—readers can substitute whatever metaphor, spatial or otherwise, they like. The result was a nexus of practices whose existence was acknowledged, and indeed used, by almost everyone, but whose propriety was (formally) admitted by almost no one.

PUBLIC POLITICKING AND PITCH MAKING

The repeated recourse to public politicking never became normative or licit, but arguably it did become, though repetition, something like normal; that is to say, it became one of a range practices, techniques, moves, and counter-moves that a variety of political actors learned how to use and to which they had serial recourse as they struggled to bend events to their own purposes. Over time, a term was coined (initially used entirely pejoratively) to characterize such practices: "popularity." Various persons began to claim peculiar expertise in their exercise, pushing themselves forward to some of the leading political players of the day as adepts in these emergent dark arts of politics. Here the names of Anthony Bacon—and, more famously, his brother Francis—and of Bishop John Williams spring most immediately to mind.[4]

[2] Tim Harris, "Publics and Participation in the Three Kingdoms: Was There Such a Thing as 'British Public Opinion?,'" *Journal of British Studies* 56, no. 4 (October 2017): 731–53.

[3] Patrick Collinson, "The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I," in *Elizabethan Essays* (London, 1994), 31–57. See also idem, "The Elizabethan Exclusion Crisis and the Elizabethan Polity," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 84 (1994): 51–92, reprinted in idem, *This England* (Manchester, 2011), 61–97. On the succession crisis, see Susan Doran and Paulina Kewes, eds., *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England* (Manchester, 2014).

[4] Sandeep Kauchik of Princeton University began and substantially completed, but never submitted, an outstanding thesis in the 1990s on John Williams as a purveyor of the politics of popularity.

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The nature and efficacy of those moves were in turn contingent upon certain wider social, economic, and cultural changes, none of which on their own would have been sufficient to cause the developments under discussion here but without which they arguably would have been very different. The increase in literacy, the proliferation of print, the (increasing) prominence and prevalence of a godly preaching ministry, the spread of the commercial theater, the rise of scribal news and circulating manuscript: all of those changes enabled by the increase in disposable income, the shifting patterns of consumption, and the credit relations described by, among others, Craig Muldrew, starting in the period after 1550 and accelerating after 1580.[5] Here the prominence, if not dominance, of London in the cultural and economic life of England and the increasing integration of the localities into national networks of trade and information were both crucial. Recently, Noah Millstone has made a similar point in relation to the rise of the manuscript "separate" in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, insisting that that increasingly pervasive phenomenon was rooted in, even produced by, the increasing scribal capacity required by a society drenched in various sorts of litigation and credit relations.[6]

It is perhaps worth remarking that these changes were anything but limited to London but that they were at their most intense there, and that the capital—or perhaps, we should say, some of the more spectacular and obnoxious aspects of metropolitan life—became a symbol or a synecdoche for some of the more threatening aspects of these changes. This is not metropolitan prejudice, simply the (social and cultural) facts of the matter.

Central to these debates is a new sensitivity to the ways in which, across a range of contemporary media (performance in the pulpit, on the stage, and on the scaffold; print; manuscript; and, of course, word of mouth), a variety of different groups, contended in public for the attention, support, and, in certain cases, the money and patronage of a wide range of differently constituted but also overlapping publics. The groups involved included different sorts of Catholics, and various sorts of Protestants, most notably Puritans and their more aggressively conformist opponents, It was an account rooted in certain versions of socioeconomic change that suggested that the sum total of this cacophony of serial pitch-making produced something that one might want to designate as "a public sphere."[7]

Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean's seminal book on the Queen's Men and their plays makes the point perfectly. Here was a company formed by the earl of Leicester and Sir Francis Walsingham, at the height of the Elizabethan exclusion crisis, designed to disseminate around the kingdom a certain hot protestant, anti-popish, but non-Puritan view of the world. A touring company, they split into two smaller groups to maximize their profits and penetrate into many of the dark corners of the land as well as appearing at Court. For a long time the best connected, most widely traveled, and most profitable of the commercial theater companies, their

[5] Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation* (Basingstoke, 1998).

[6] Noah Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation and the Invention of Politics in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 2016). Millstone's text is a seminal work whose impact on this field will be transformative, although I think that "politics" in the sense intended had already been "invented" in the late sixteenth century.

[7] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post Reformation England* (London, 2002).

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viability did not only depend on their conciliar origins or royal patronage but rather on their capacity to reach deep into the kingdom and the willingness of the paying punters located there to spend a few pence in order to watch plays.[8]

While the spread of print and literacy was of the essence, the analysis at no point turns on the predominance of print. What was at stake were a range of media—performance, rumor, print and circulating manuscript, and the social connections and gossip networks that were, at least in part, generated thereby. The crucial effects were worked by the interactions between those different communicative modes and overlapping networks. As the research of both Alastair Bellany and Noah Millstone has shown, it may well be possible to trace the progress of certain manuscript tracts or libelous verses along discrete social networks. But that alone is not enough. It is also necessary to be attentive to the ways in which the chat generated by these media interacted with texts, discourses, and memes in circulation at the time, but derived from other sources and disseminated by other means—and here, of course, word of mouth remained of paramount importance. For it was that combination between different modes and media that made the ultimate effect, that created something public out of a series of what otherwise might appear to have been largely discrete, "private" acts of communication or interaction.

The discursive scene thus conjured involved a variety of social actors in search of audiences, influence, and profit. It was most definitely not the product of a top-down series of moves and maneuvers, of interventions and suppressions, on the part of the good and the great. But equally, many of the most pointed—we might say explicitly political, most overtly public, pitches for support—emanated from groups or factions located somewhere near the center of the Elizabethan regime, or from their most coherent and determined (very often Catholic, but sometimes also radical Puritan) critics. Again these pitches used the full gamut of contemporary media in order to appeal to, to call into being, and to mobilize various strands of opinion, actual or notional publics, at moments of actual, incipient, or perceived crisis. Such outbreaks of pitch making were intermittent, but repeated.

Post-Reformation religious fragmentation and the emergence not merely of two sides in the great confessional struggle of the age between Protestantism and Catholicism but also of various subgroups within the two opposing confessional blocs were of crucial significance. In England, on the Protestant side, the prime example was the Puritans, but there also emerged personal, factional, and ideological tensions among English Catholics, tensions that reached their first apogee in the Archpriest Controversy but that continued to afflict the English Catholic community in disputes over the propriety or utility of a Catholic episcopal hierarchy in England and on the proper relation between English Catholics and the claims on their allegiance exerted by a heretical monarch. The result was a number of what we might term "private publics": networks and audiences within and before which a variety of intra-Protestant and intra-Catholic disputes were conducted and appeals made for support. At stake were not merely the claims to orthodoxy or probity of particular individuals or groups—although very often the central issues either were or became intensely personal—but also basic issues about the nature of true religion and who could best claim to personify, defend, and propagate it. Couched in terms of the highest

[8] Scott McMillin and Mary-Beth MacClean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge, 1998).

principle, such disputes could also involve the exchange of the crudest and most visceral of personal attacks and allegations of moral and spiritual depravity.

At this point, it is useful to revisit what might be meant by the term "publics," for the contributors to this forum do not all agree on how it should be used. It seems to me that there is, or ought to be, more involved here than the mere existence of groups of people with opinions, religious identities, or commitments in common. What was required to make a public was an appeal, launched through various media, in terms of known criteria of truth and common interest, in order to induce people to adjudicate a certain issue, endorse one set of opinions or proposals as against another, and, often on the basis of having made that decision, to take one course of action rather than another. Thus what rendered the notion of a public operative in the accounts of the internal workings of the English Puritan and Catholic communities being discussed here was not the mere existence of a community or a series of networks of persons of like mind or common identity or interest but rather the attempts, by various groups or individuals within those groups, to win over either godly or Catholic opinion to one (highly controversial) position or another and to do so through processes of formal argument, the spreading of their view of the situation through news and rumor, and sometimes libelous and, nearly always, intensely *parti pris* accounts of the beliefs or actions of their opponents. Hence, either Catholic or Puritan opinion was being called upon actively to consider and adjudicate certain disputes and debates.

Ideally such exchanges were conducted as in-house affairs, to be decided far away from the prying eyes of what was regarded as a hostile monarchical or episcopal authority and, if not overtly hostile, then certainly a skeptically or derisively prurient "general public." But very often such disputes could not be thus contained. By bursting the banks of discretion and secrecy that the participants and their primary audiences erected around them, these disputes were exposed to audiences no longer composed of insiders. This rendered them available for polemical distortion and deployment not merely by the hostile (alternately conformist or protestant) authorities in church and state but by a range of freelancing commentators and polemicists out to put their own spin on the current conjuncture and sometimes to turn an honest penny in the process.

Work on the Puritan underground, in London and elsewhere, has demonstrated that one of the effects of the crisis of the 1640s was to accelerate both the frequency of such disputes and the speed with which they were brought to more general audiences through almost immediate recourse to print.[9] One might see similar forces in operation among English Catholics. In the Margaret Clitherow affair, tensions and divisions internal to the English Catholic community in York were initially brought to the surface and broadcast through the hostile intervention of the Protestant authorities. With the stakes then raised by the extraordinary spunk and pertinacity that brought Margaret Clitherow to a martyr's end, her supporters and admirers

[9] Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy, and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (Manchester, 2001); David Como and Peter Lake, "Puritans, Antinomians and Laudians in Caroline London: The Strange Case of Peter Shaw in Contexts," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 50, no. 4 (October 1999): 684–715; idem, "'Orthodoxy' and Its Discontents: Dispute Settlement and Production of 'Consensus' in the London (Puritan) Underground," *Journal of British Studies* 39, no. 1 (January 2000): 34–70.

deployed the spiritual and polemical energies thus released to further prosecute their side of the debate about conformity then dividing Catholic opinion.[10]

Because these exchanges were taking place between and among Catholics who lacked direct access to the printing press, the resulting, often very bitter, altercations were conducted, for the most part, through circulating manuscript and rumor and most intensely canvassed in the north of England, where the activities of the notorious Thomas Bell—Catholic evangelist turned Protestant polemicist—kept church popery a hot topic well into the 1590s. Other equally bitter intra-Catholic disputes made the transition into the public far more readily. Indeed, it was the dispute between the Jesuits and their enemies amongst the secular clergy, in what became known as the Archpriest Controversy, that provides perhaps the best example (before the 1640s) of how disputes canvassed before such private publics could be brought, through (in this instance unofficially licensed) print, to a more general, less explicitly confessional version of the public.[11]

The Archpriest controversy reveals debates within a comparatively contained community spilling out into other arenas, as participants sought ways to influence English Catholic opinion, to gain the ear of the Protestant authorities, and to secure the support of the Papacy. One feature of the controversy is that it forces us to integrate events in England into the dynamics of a European political scene. Not only were appeals to the pope central to the affair, but the anti-appellant side of the dispute was only able to enter the public domain defined by print because of the access enjoyed by exiles like Robert Parsons to printing presses located abroad. The same is true, of course, of various disputes central to the confrontation between the most vocal advocates of the Elizabethan Puritan movement and their conformist opponents. While the infamous Marprelate tracts and other seminal Puritan texts like the *Admonition to the parliament* were printed illicitly in England, a good many of the central texts that underpinned the presbyterian movement were printed abroad in the Low Countries. The same can be said of the various books through which the Catholic assault on the legitimacy of the Elizabethan regime was sustained throughout Elizabeth's reign. If we take that assault, and the texts sustaining it, as seriously as did central elements within the Elizabethan state, and see it as absolutely constitutive of the running dialogue, conducted across the full range of contemporary media, by the regime, its supporters, hangers-on and agents, with a range of Catholic polemicists, then the full extent of the integration of the post-Reformation English public sphere with the confessional and dynastic geopolitics of western Europe becomes clear.

Such outbreaks of public politics often clustered around moments of actual or threatened dynastic change, prospective royal marriages (those between Mary Stuart and Norfolk, and Elizabeth and Anjou, spring to mind), or the prospect of regime change consequent upon the always inevitable, and increasingly incipient, falsification of Elizabeth's motto *semper eadem* by the grim reaper; or, to put the matter in the language of Patrick Collinson, by the Elizabethan exclusion and succession crises. Of course, the impact of confessional conflict and latterly of war with the

[10] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Trials of Margaret Clitherow* (London, 2012).

[11] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "Taking it to the Street? The Archpriest Controversy and the Issue of the Succession," in Doran and Kewes, eds., *Doubtful and Dangerous*, 71–91.

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greatest (Catholic) power in Europe very significantly compounded those tensions. The same impulses continued to drive the public politics of the early Stuart period with various projected royal matches disturbing the force field of domestic politics and opening up the public sphere to a variety of contending factions and forces.

Here the dispute over the Spanish match might be taken as paradigmatic. Again, the tight interrelation between events in England and European politics and powers is self-evident. Not only did the match take on a particularly obnoxious and threatening aspect because of events in central Europe, but, as he sought to conclude the marriage, James was forced to relax restrictions on his Catholic subjects in order to prove to the papacy (which had to issue a dispensation to allow the marriage to proceed) that Catholics in England were not now the subjects of persecution. The result was an increase in public demonstrations of Catholic allegiance and identity, which in turn alarmed hot protestant opinion and provoked a spate of semi-public disputations between various champions of Catholicism and either self-appointed or semiofficial defenders of the national church, accounts of which then circulated in manuscript and, sometimes, even in print. All of this merely added fuel to the fire of anti-popish alarm that the prospect of the Match had ignited among the Puritans, some of whom had already gone public, in the pulpit and even in print, most notoriously in *Vox populi,* a tract that spread as much through manuscript circulation as through the original print. Chased into exile, the author, Thomas Scott, used foreign presses and the support of English churches in the Low Countries to maintain a steady stream of commentary on events into the mid-1620s.[12] The resulting cacophony, and in particular the vocal "puritan" opposition to the Match, in turn elicited and licensed the Arminian challenge to the Calvinist dominance of the English church, spearheaded by the tracts of Richard Montague in the mid-1620s. Such disputes were subsequently canvassed in public, in the pulpit, in print, and in parliamentary debates and became intertwined with recent events in the Low Countries and divergent attitudes to the Protestant cause in Western Europe.

Thus, the emergence of a post-Reformation public sphere in England, while predicated upon a series of political and socio-economic factors, the confluence of which might be thought to have been peculiar to England, was anything but a purely English affair. We might be dealing here with various pitches for different strands of English opinion, but these English exchanges could not have taken place outside of, and are only fully intelligible when analyzed within, a multi-polar, transnational political system that stretched from Madrid to Rome, Paris, and Brussels. As Freddy Dominuez has demonstrated with respect to Sander's *De origine ac progessu schismatis Anglicani*, and later to Parsons's *Conference about the next succession*, not only could the same text, translated from one language to another, be used to appeal to or mobilize a variety of different publics in a variety of different political arenas, but it could also serve a number of distinct functions. The English version of *The Conference* operated, in England, as popular propaganda, but the version in Latin, which remained in manuscript, operated in Rome as a lobbying document, intended primarily for the eyes of an inner circle of popes, princes, or policy

[12] Peter Lake, "Constitutional Consensus and Puritan Opposition during the 1620s: Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match," *Historical Journal* 25, no. 4 (December 1982): 805–25.

makers.[13] The (accidental) leakage of one such document—Parson's *Memorial about the reformation of England*—from one such limited locale into wider circulation among English Catholics played a central role in fueling the Archpriest controversy. In both its English and (now lost) Spanish versions, *The memorial*, which (until 1690) circulated only in manuscript, was intended for the eyes of a certain sort of Catholic exile and insider as well as their Spanish patrons. But once *The memorial*, along with the *Conference about the next succession*, fell into the wrong hands, both provided the appellant party with proof of the Hispanophile and papalist malignancy of their Jesuited opponents, upon which topic, with the backing of their sponsors within the Elizabethan regime, they immediately went public.

The association between religious beliefs identified as deviant or unorthodox and the politics of conspiracy fed a vision of politics—defined, for the most part, as the maneuvers of the good and the great—as something to be decoded, as a series of gestures of indirection and deceit, while, behind a veil of false or hypocritical claims to be serving the common good and the maintenance of Christian orthodoxy and virtue, various individuals and groups sought to do down their enemies and seize power for themselves, their allies, and their hangers on. As Noah Millstone has shown, at times, for at least some contemporaries, that view of the matter could operate as a reductively all-encompassing version of political reality.[14] Viewed from this perspective, politics became a sort of spectator sport and the capacity to interpret and comment upon the course of events with the right combination of worldly wisdom and outraged virtue a crucial characteristic of the properly accoutered man of the world or commonwealthsman. As Andras Kisary and Noah Millstone have shown, by the late sixteenth century and throughout the early Stuart period, a variety of different sorts of texts were available, in print and in manuscript, to anyone wishing to master at least the appearance of this sort of worldly wisdom and political and moral insight. Prominent among these were play books. On this argument, we must include at least some of the outpourings of the public theatre, both on the stage and on the page, as crucial agents in the dissemination of such a politick, if not paranoid, political hermeneutic.[15]

The three conspiracy theories—centered on popery, Puritanism, and the corruptions of a certain sort of politician, courtier, or evil counselor—that arguably framed the conduct of and commentary upon English politics, throughout the next century or so, were available, more or less fully formed, by the end of the sixteenth century. They can certainly be traced through the alarums and excursions of the late 1590s, the political crisis of the 1620s, the civil wars of mid-century, the various political crises of the post-Restoration period. Indeed, they stretched into, if not beyond, the Glorious Revolution, a period dominated by precisely the same mixture of media—various sorts of performance, different modalities of print, circulating manuscript, and rumor—as had been operative in the later sixteenth century. To make this observation is not, however, to argue for anything like simple continuity.

[13] Freddy Cristobal Dominguez, "'We Must Fight with Paper and Pens': Spanish Elizabethan Politics, 1585–1598" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2011).

[14] Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation*. See also Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions* (London, 2000).

[15] Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation*; Andras Kisery, *Hamlet's Moment: Drama and Political Knowledge in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2016).

TRANSITIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

The balance between the various media and genre in play could vary widely and change very considerably over time. Each communicative mode would see the emergence of new forms: the explosion of cheap print during the 1640s and later during the Exclusion crisis; the rise of the news book or the newspaper;[16] mass petitions as both a genre of manuscript and print and a form of public performance; later still, the emergence, in the post-Restoration period, of the pope-burning procession[17] and an intensified popular politics of show trials and executions, enabled, as Michael Mendle has shown, by the spread of shorthand and the circulation, both in print and manuscript, of versions of the crucial events.[18] Encompassing the media of performance and of print, manuscript circulation and oral transmission was a politics of fame or celebrity. This involved a sort of cult of personality, based on the vicissitudes, indeed, on the alleged persecution and even martyrdom, of certain individuals, whose travails could be seen as a synecdoche for wider political struggles or principles, and whose life stories could then be told and retold, indeed sold and resold, as the organizing themes for various sorts of popular agitation or even of more sustained movements. This was an emergent political form that links Puritan polemicists such as Henry Burton, John Bastwick, and William Prynne, to the Leveller John Lilburne, the "popish plotter" Titus Oates, and beyond them, to Dr. Sacheverell[19] and even John Wilkes. Longstanding tropes of martyrdom and persecution, the release of emotional and cultural energy attendant upon the exemplary punishment of notorious malefactors, and the financial gain to be made from retailing such stories to a popular audience were all being taken up and appropriated for new purposes: more expressly political, often largely "secular," and sometimes frankly commercial. Indeed, the emergence, from the mid-seventeenth century, of a sort of politicized martyrdom seems a subject worthy of further study, although, as the figure of Sacheverell shows, there is no smooth story of secularization to be told here.

These features, as Harris has observed, make the nature and pace of change over time difficult to calibrate.[20] Change was anything but unidirectional. There were peaks and troughs of public politicking just as there were of cheap political print. Equally, while the mix of genres and media in play might vary over time and from one crisis to the next, there remained long-term continuities that make definitive claims about step changes, transformations, or decisive transitions hard to pin down. It has been suggested that the English Revolution represented a step change, the consequences of which could not be reversed, although it was only

[16] Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda during the English Civil War and Interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004); idem, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2013); Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the News Book: English News Books, 1641–1649* (Oxford, 1996); idem, ed., *The Newspaper, Public Opinion and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1999); idem, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteers in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003); Jayne Boys, *London's News Press and the Thirty Years War* (Woodbridge, 2011).

[17] Tim Harris, *The Politics of the London Crowd in the Reign of Charles II* (Cambridge, 1984).

[18] Michael Mendle, "The 'Prints' of the Trial: The Nexus of Politics, Religion, Law and Information in Late Seventeenth Century England," in *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s*, ed. Jason McElligott (Aldershot, 2006), 123–37.

[19] Brian Cowan's ongoing research on the Sacheverell affair will prove of the greatest significance here. I thank him for the many discussions upon which this paragraph draws heavily.

[20] Harris, "Publics and Participation."

after the Glorious Revolution that the full impact of those changes became instantiated in a range of assumptions and practices fully characteristic of what we termed the post-Revolutionary public sphere.

But it is possible to argue that, in and beyond the 1690s, many of the features of the previous period remained in evidence. The alternation between propaganda and constraint that continued to characterize debates within the regime about how both to manage and to appeal to opinion; the sense that "competitive debate between ideologies and interests" was not desirable in itself but ought to be directed at achieving stability and consensus; the continuing dynamic relationship between print and manuscript; the meld of different media involved in the Sacheverell affair; the prominent role played in public politics by the explosive mixture of dynastic and confessional issues and identities; the relationship between various private publics and more general public debate—phenomena conventionally organized under the familiar signs of non-juring, Jacobitism and dissent, of High and Low churchmen—were all reminiscent of earlier periods. They militate against any notion of a definitive triumph of "the public" or the final arrival of "the public sphere."[21]

Such observations should under no circumstances be taken as an argument for "continuity" over "change," on which topic we should perhaps refer the reader to Steve Pincus's exemplarily caustic comments on what he takes to be Patrick Collinson's equation of the Elizabethan with the later Stuart exclusion crises and in particular of the bond of association with the association oath of the 1690s.[22] For all of the continuities involved, it would be absurd to argue that the 1590s were the same or even very similar to the 1690s. Indeed, paradoxically, the extent to which contemporaries thought that they were, or rather believed that the previous history of public politics had a direct bearing on the problems and challenges of the post-Revolutionary present, provides us with one of the crucial arguments for change. For the ways in which contemporaries thought that viewing present quandaries and practices in terms of various versions of the recent past—accounts of how previous regimes, or particular political agents, had managed an emergent public or publics—could operate as a guide to how to proceed in the very different, but also decidedly similar, circumstances of the present ensured that, however great the (apparent) similarities, the second or third time around things *would* be different, if only because the participants' actions would now be framed, at least in part, by a heightened sense of what had happened the first, or even the second, time.

PUBLICS AND THE PECULIARITIES OF ENGLISH HISTORY

The notions of the post-Reformation and postrevolutionary public spheres were necessarily derived from English history. Even when the local and the contingent intersected with what might be thought of as more structural forces, whose operation transcended the realms of political exigency, happenstance, and choice, they did so in ways that were peculiar to situations and conjunctures in England. Even the

[21] This paragraph is based on long discussions with, and forthcoming work by, Alex Barber. See also Brian Cowan, "Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, no. 3 (Spring 2004): 345–66, at 351.

[22] Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, 2009), 461–71.

intensifying events that might be taken to have transformed the post-Reformation public sphere in the civil-war era were English, centered, as they were, on the impact of the *English* Revolution, an event conceptually and, to some extent, actually, distinct from the British civil wars that enabled it and helped to shape its course. The same, of course, could equally be said of the Scottish Revolution, whose dynamics Laura Stewart has recently subjected to rigorous analysis,[23] and the Confederate cause in Ireland. That is to say, while none of these events could have happened, or can be understood, outside of a British context, the (actually or potentially revolutionary) events that convulsed each kingdom had an internal logic and a divergent course all of their own.

Publics predicated on the particularities of early modern England were never intended to become "normative" for places in which such circumstances and contingencies did not pertain. This is precisely not a Habermasian version of the public sphere, one tied to a unidirectional Marxisant notion of economic or social development, or to the rise of the bourgeoisie, or to any other univocal (prescriptive) notion of modernity. As Harris argues, there is no reason to believe that anything resembling a "British public sphere" could or should have existed in this period.[24] I would go further; there is little reason to assume that the developments evidenced in England in the post reformation should have been replicated in, or even have much resembled, what was going on in the other kingdoms. This is not to gainsay the point that historians need to be sensitive to the effects on public discourse elsewhere of London's increasing dominance, both as a political center and a transnational information hub. It does not suggest that key features of post-Reformation, as well as post-Revolutionary, publics were either exclusive to England or absent from other parts of Europe.

There is, then, no warrant here for an assimilative approach to these matters, no reason either to expect the developments in one kingdom to replicate those in another or to believe that a failure to do so, in one place, in some way "tests" or falsifies claims about another. When dealing with societies as different as these—even when their fates were so tightly bound together as those of the three kingdoms after the reformation, and more particularly after 1603—we cannot expect there to be a common pattern of development or chronology. To do so would be to cede a primacy, indeed a normative status, to the English narrative, to which it can have no legitimate or logical claim. Indeed, this is to indulge in a sort of (inverted) Anglo-centricity that can only have the most deleterious effects on any attempt to do genuinely "British" history, or indeed to conduct effective comparative history within and among the three kingdoms.

The point emerges with crystal clarity in Laura Stewart's account of how a covenanted public was called into being in Scotland through a variety of media and means, including the collective action of the crowd and the public rituals of covenant signing.[25] Here popular and public politics meet, but the resultant public, having been called into being, produced nothing like the ideological cacophony and political fragmentation that similar acts of mobilization and pitch making produced in

[23] Laura Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland, 1637–1651* (Oxford, 2016).
[24] Harris, "Publics and Participation."
[25] Stewart, *Rethinking*, esp. chaps. 1–2.

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England. Despite the emergence in the 1630s and 1640s of a set of common interests that transcended "national" political considerations,[26] Scotland and England—and Wales and Ireland—continued to manifest differences in the way in which public discourse was conducted. Even when the Restoration brought the three kingdoms closer together than at any moment before 1637,[27] the maintenance of distinct and separate religious and political institutions made the development of shared publics, or greater consistency in the practice of public politics, highly problematic.[28]

In producing the genuinely covenanted public (described by Laura Stewart), the covenanters had (fleetingly) achieved that state to which virtually every attempt to mobilize a public in early modern England ultimately aspired: a position of dominance in which the newly ascendant grouping making the pitch got to achieve a certain ideological and discursive hegemony, a position which, if it did not confer a monopoly of legitimate public speech on certain topics, at least allowed them to control the parameters within which permissible speech might take place.

As has been argued elsewhere, the achievement and maintenance of precisely such an hegemony over certain realms of religious discourse, by one (broadly Calvinist) strand of opinion, and the, at first subtle and later insurgent, disruption thereof by another (Arminian) grouping, played a crucial role in England's religio-political ructions of the 1620s and 1630s.[29] These ructions had major repercussions for Scotland and Ireland. It was certainly true that, while the initial aim of both the Puritans and the Catholics was to vanquish their immediate religious opponents, both parties ultimately wanted to engineer a situation in which—with England having been either returned to the Catholic fold or having achieved the nirvana of a properly complete reformation—one faction of rigorist Christians or another would be able to call the tune. In the interim, a range of different Catholic groups talked the talk of toleration, and Puritans of mitigated terms of conformity. However, in neither case was mere coexistence the ultimate end.

To take an admittedly stark example, there were few operatives more skilled at the destabilizing arts of public politics and black propaganda than Robert Parsons. In certain situations and at certain times, Parsons could make a good case for various sorts of toleration: for toleration for a certain sort of (loyal) Catholic, but not, of course, for Puritans, whose suppression was the necessary consequence of the sort of toleration for Catholics for which he was advocating. The same caveat applied to appellant pleas for toleration, which were similarly predicated on the suppression, not only of the Puritans, but also of those of their co-religionists (like Parsons himself) whose Jesuited and Hispanophile opinions put them beyond the pale. As for Puritan pleas for mitigated conformity, they were, in practice, predicated upon the adoption of uniformly draconian measures toward not only full-blown papists but also whatever strands of opinion appeared to the godly to be tantamount to

[26] Jason Peacey, "Print Culture, State Formation, and an Anglo-Scottish Public, 1640–1648," *Journal of British Studies* 56, no. 4 (October 2017): 816–35.

[27] Harris, "Publics and Participation."

[28] Karin Bowie and Alasdair Raffe, "Politics, the People, and Extra-Institutional Participation in Scotland, c. 1603–1712," *Journal of British Studies* 56, no. 4 (October 2017): 797–815.

[29] The seminal work is Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590–1640* (Oxford, 1987). For the notion of hegemony, see Peter Lake, "Calvinism and the English Church, 1570–1635," *Past and Present*, no. 114 (February 1987): 32–76.

"popery," a group capacious enough to contain, at different times, those quintessentially "Anglican" and solidly Protestant figures, Richard Hooker and William Laud.

Thus, when Parsons revealed in the *Memorial* what he would really like to do with England if the Catholics ever finally won back control, he produced a vision of spiritual discipline and secular power inextricably intertwined in the service of religious reformation easily as draconian as that harbored by the sternest Presbyterian. The resulting "contradiction" between his minimal, tolerationist position and the maximalist utopianism of the *Memorial* was not a function of Parsons's status as the Machiavellian hypocrite of his enemies' fevered imaginings but rather of his repeated attempts to square a conventionally totalizing vision of true Christianity with the recalcitrant political and religious realities of the age. For Parsons was no mere fantasist but also a realist who felt duty-bound to deal with the world as it actually was, in order to make the best of a bad job for English Catholics currently groaning, to Parson's way of thinking, under the heel of heretical tyranny and persecution. Hence, the contradictions in both his theory and practice, which his enemies took as proof positive of his Jesuitical hypocrisy, were, in fact, a product of the clash between a conscience informed by a rigorist style of reformed Catholicism and the basic structures of the post-Reformation condition in England.

And here we arrive at the central paradox of the public sphere, post-Reformation style. None of the individuals or groups centrally involved in these developments envisioned a situation in which recurrent attempts to mobilize various publics would become normal, still less normative. The desired endpoint was not an arena for the conduct of rational debate about either religious truth or the interests of the commonweal. Such rigorous disputation had its place in the vindication of true religion from heresy, but there was no sense in which such debate was intended to continue after the truth of the matter had been vindicated and instantiated as official policy. Both the English Presbyterians and Edmund Campion demanded the right to untrammeled debate with their direct ideological opponents, but thereafter, once the truth had won out, further discussion would simply no longer be necessary: thereafter, as the example of covenanted Scotland demonstrates, the role of print and pulpit was to prevent the people "back-sliding" into error.[30] In the *Memorial*, Parsons envisioned an initial period in which disputation both in person and in print would be necessary to vindicate the truth, and establish that Catholics were not afraid of having the central tenets of their faith tested in the most rigorous of scholarly arenas. But, thereafter, heresy was to be consigned to the collective memory hole. Disputation was to be deprecated, and polemic suppressed. The church's efforts were to be poured instead into the inculcation, through the full range of means and media, of the central saving truths of (Catholic) Christianity. Similarly, while an initial period of consultation, admonition, and counsel was to be allowed to even the most notorious or recalcitrant heretics, thereafter those who proved obstinate in their error or (depending on your perspective) resolute in their faith, were to be handed over to the secular arm and justice allowed to take its traditional course. Insofar as public debate and intellectual exchange were to take place, in and through institutions like parliament or various ecclesiastical synods or convocations, they represented the members of the (newly) dominant or hegemonic group talking

[30] Stewart, *Rethinking*, chap. 6.

to themselves about how best to manage affairs through the exercise of the various forms of public power over which that group and its supporters had come to exercise a monopoly.

One of the major differences between what we might term the pre- and postrevolutionary situations was the fact that, during the English Revolution, a variety of individuals and groups came to see both "toleration" and "free speech" as positive goods, not only as things to be valued in and of themselves but also as the only basis for stability, order, and peace in the cacophonous and fragmented world created by the revolution itself. On this account, it may not be an accident that the period from the 1650s to the 1690s saw a series of experiments in which, on the basis of various exercises in toleration or indulgence, a variety of different regimes—that of Cromwell, somewhat episodically that of Charles II and finally, catastrophically, that of James II—sought to establish themselves on the support of a range of religious groupings, many of them formerly repressed or persecuted and traditionally at daggers drawn each with the other. On this account, as Bill Bulman has suggested, rather than seeing "post bellum religious politics" as "a struggle for and against religious freedom," we might conceive of it as "a series of competing attempts to reconcile the demands of political stability and divine truth." As Bulman mordantly concludes, "in later Stuart England, toleration was not just consistently used as a political tactic; it was generally assumed to be one."[31]

Insofar as certain teleological, normative assumptions remain indelibly attached to any notion of "the public sphere," it may be time to jettison that *particular* term altogether. Here a general observation, made years ago by Clifford Geertz, seems apposite:

> Certain ideas burst upon the intellectual landscape with a tremendous force. They resolve so many fundamental problems at once that they seem also to promise that they will resolve all fundamental problems, clarify all obscure issues. … After we have become familiar with the new idea, however, after it has become part of our general stock of theoretical concepts, our expectations are brought more into balance with its actual uses, and its excessive popularity is ended. A few zealots persist in the key-to-the-universe view of it; but less driven thinkers settle down after a while to the problems the idea has really generated.[32]

And that seems to me to be the spirit in which historians of the early modern period might best regard notions of the public sphere, and indeed in which the essays collected here might best be read: as attempts to investigate the problematics generated, in part, during debates about the "public sphere," or perhaps (more usefully) about the nature of public politics and the processes and practices whereby various political actors sought to call upon, call into being, or mobilize various publics during the post-Reformation.

[31] Bill Bulman, *Anglican Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2015), 219, 251. Cf. Scott Sowerby, *Making Toleration* (Cambridge, MA, 2013).

[32] Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books, 1973), 3–30, at 3. I owe this reference to David Magliocco.

COMPARISONS AND INTERACTIONS

How do we go about moving these problematics from an English to a British locale? A comparative approach might get us quite a long way. Studies of how the exercise of public politics worked within either Scotland or Ireland, viewed as autonomous or semiautonomous polities, have an obvious intrinsic value, and, once accomplished, open up the possibility of various comparisons, perhaps with events in England but also with other places as well. Seeing how different versions of public politics—differently constituted attempts to mobilize and deploy various publics in the three kingdoms—turned out might well yield results. Here Lloyd Bowen's observation that there were similarities in the rhetoric used to mobilize speakers of Welsh and Irish Gaelic may be instructive. And, in fact, comparisons between Wales and Ireland have already yielded considerable fruit in what I have always thought a seminal, albeit strangely under-appreciated, essay by Brendan Bradshaw.[33]

For Scotland and Ireland, the fact that, at least after 1603, the ultimate source of political authority whose decisions or policies such moves and maneuvers were designed to alter resided in England—that is to say, not merely in another kingdom, but in a very different cultural and (sometimes) linguistic universe—surely matters. And so, viewing such activities in a "British" context, one located between the politics (and polities) of the three kingdoms, is, at least in certain instances, advisable.[34]

At certain political moments, however, as Jason Peacey suggests,[35] the distinction between one kingdom and another appears to have dissolved almost into nothing. The emergence of an "Anglo-Scottish public" in the 1640s is surely another example of an ideologically defined, transnational, in this instance, "puritan" or Reformed public. Or perhaps, more properly, we are witnessing a network moving into fully public mode, as politico-religious groupings in England and Scotland sought to bring events and policy decisions in all three kingdoms into line with their own aspirations for the establishment of Presbyterian churches guaranteed in perpetuity by parliamentary constitutional settlements.

As two of the essays suggest,[36] the interactions generated between kingdoms that shared a ruler after 1603 inevitably resulted in (both actual and potential) "British" moments. This calls to mind the "recusancy riots" of 1603, which combined a variety of local grievances with the hope—predicated upon the genuinely "British" prospect of James VI's accession to the thrones of England and Ireland—of a new deal for (Irish) Catholics. Parallel hopes for renegotiated terms of allegiance, consequent upon James's accession, existed amongst English Catholics, based on similar rumors that James had promised (and intended) to offer some sort of "toleration" to Catholics, in return for their support of his claim to the throne. In England, Puritans entertained similar hopes for a change in religious policy consequent upon the new king's accession, hopes that provoked them into various forms of public

[33] Brendan Bradshaw, "The Tudor Reformation and Revolution in Wales and Ireland: The Origins of the British Problem," in *The British Problem, c. 1535–1707*, ed. Brendan Bradshaw and John Morrill (Basingstoke, 1996), 39–65.

[34] Harris, "Publics and Participation."

[35] Peacey, "Print Culture, State Formation."

[36] Ibid.; Harris, "Publics and Participation."

agitation and petitioning. A properly "British" approach would put those hopes, and the various means adopted to realize them, into some sort of, either substantive or comparative, contact with one another.

When these efforts not merely failed but, early in James's reign, provoked renewed attempts by the authorities in Dublin to enforce church attendance on the Catholic population, there ensued a variety of shows of defiance in Ireland combined with direct lobbying of James in England. Eamon Darcy shows here how government policy helped to bring publics into being in Ireland, not least because competition *between* Catholic groupings drove some to seek to "sell" a "policy of accommodation" with the monarchy as the best of the available options.[37] One might say something similar about the crackdown on English Puritans after the Hampton Court Conference and the passage and enforcement of the canons of 1604. What was at stake was no longer merely the integrity of the godly conscience or the proper conduct of disagreement and debate about the controverted ceremonies and the nature of idolatry and will-worship between and among self-described godly professors or "puritans." Rather, the crucial task was publicly to respond to, and effectively to refute aggressively, the conformist constructions of this issue in terms of Puritan disloyalty, disobedience, division, and even schism. Now intra-Puritan tensions and disputes spilt into the genuinely public domain described by the pulpit, print, petitioning, and parliamentary debate, as well as circulating manuscript and rumor, in a classic instance of oppositional public politicking, designed to mobilize bodies of opinion far wider than the non-conformist ministers and their immediate supporters, in order to persuade the king to change his mind, and mitigate, if not wholly to abandon, his current policies towards Puritan nonconformity.

All of which leaves us with Wales, which seems something of an outlier. As Brendan Bradshaw argued years ago in a groundbreaking (if not always pellucid) article, the very circumstances under which Wales and Ireland underwent the Henrician revolution in government and then the uneven progress of the Tudor reformations brought forth very different outcomes. In particular, the structures of lordship—on Bradshaw's account, one might almost say the vacuum of magnate power—that the events of the late Middle Ages bequeathed to Wales ensured that the political initiative lay almost entirely with the gentry. They had a great deal to gain from full incorporation into the Tudor monarchy.[38] But if in legal, administrative, and political terms Wales became part of England far more readily than Ireland ever did (or could, as a separate kingdom), that did not, of course, mean that Wales became English. Far from it. Members of the Welsh clerical and landed elites became bilingual, thereby very considerably bolstering their positions of power in local Welsh society, by acting as the only available brokers between power centers that operated in English and a population that remained overwhelmingly monoglot Welsh-speaking. Possibilities for full integration were undermined not only by the fact that the translation of the Bible and the Prayer Book into Welsh sustained the language but also, as Bowen shows, by the advocacy of this project in explicitly "national" terms. On that basis, the majority of the Welsh became Protestants with an alacrity not to be found

[37] Eamon Darcy, "Political Participation in Early Stuart Ireland," *Journal of British Studies* 56, no. 4 (October 2017): 773–96, at 788.

[38] Bradshaw, "Tudor Reformation."

among the Gaelic- speaking Irish—or, indeed, the Gaelic-speaking Scots, whose experience of reformation was distinct from both that of the Welsh and that of the Irish Gaels with whom they shared cultural affinities.[39]

The impact of the reformation in Wales undoubtedly threatened to provoke a confessional conflict between Catholics and Protestants, similar to that which played so central a role in defining the post-Reformation public sphere in many parts of England. But in marked contrast to Ireland, Welsh Catholics could not gain access to printing presses abroad, which might have enabled them to sustain some sort of propaganda campaign in the language that the vast majority of the Welsh population could understand. The production in Welsh of *The Christian's monitor* on a press located in a cave in north Wales did not herald a new era of Welsh-language printing and "the output of printed Catholic literature in Welsh was miniscule." This, of course, was in marked contrast to England, where, as both the Campion and the Marprelate affairs show, both Catholic and Puritan tracts were also produced on secret presses. But, in the Welsh case, what followed was not the sort of public fuss—the sustained exchange of printed polemic, rumor, and manuscript, circulating both formal theological arguments and counter-narratives about what had happened and what it all meant—that ensued in England. In Wales, by contrast, there appears to have been a retreat into "a Welsh language Catholic subculture," which was "sustained partly through clandestine networks of verbal exchange and manuscript circulation."[40]

In the Irish case, things were very different. Vibrant connections linked Irish Catholics to the continental counter-reformation and to foreign Catholic powers—most notably Spain, Flanders, and Rome. Printing presses capable of producing a range of texts in Irish, Latin, and English played a central role in sustaining the Catholic cause in Ireland. It may also be worth observing that, in the eyes of the Papacy and the Continental Catholic powers, Ireland possessed far greater disruptive potential vis-à-vis the English state than Wales. Similarly, Gaelic-speaking Highlanders were not considered sufficiently threatening to the future of the archipelago's post-1603 protestant regimes to make it worth the Papacy and Catholic powers investing very much in a Scottish counter-reformation, at least before the Jacobite era. In short, Irish Catholics got more of a hearing because they could make more noise.

Similar limitations appear to have prevented the penetration into Wales of the sort of aggressively godly Protestantism that produced Puritanism in many parts of the rest of England. Wales, then, remained protected from the sorts of religious divisions and debates that permeated the rest of the country as well as from the means and media through which those debates were prosecuted. While many of the bilingual members of the Welsh gentry and clerical elites appear to have been enthusiastic consumers of news culture, their monopoly position as the only connective tissue linking the vast majority of a mostly illiterate Welsh-speaking population and the rest of the country meant that many of the modes of communication, and the sorts of news and

[39] Lloyd Bowen, "Structuring Particularist Publics: Logistics, Language, and Early Modern Wales," *Journal of British Studies* 56, no. 4 (October 2017): 754–72; Laura A. M. Stewart, "Introduction: Publics and Participation in Early Modern Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 56, no. 4 (October 2017): 709–30.

[40] Lloyd Bowen, "Information, Language and Political Culture in Early Modern Wales," *Past and Present*, no. 228 (August 2015): 125–58, at 150.

opinions spread thereby (that were increasingly typical of the rest of England) did not readily penetrate the bulk of the population of Wales.

Perhaps because of the completeness of the administrative, legal, and political integration of Wales into the monarchical English state, and thus the very effectiveness of the gentry and clergy as "brokers" between the two spheres, the Welsh case seems completely innocent of the sorts of appeals to various strands of Welsh opinion, made in order to bring issues or grievances to the attention of the central government or to force changes in royal policy, which drove the development of a politics of publicity in England—and, moreover, which were increasingly prevalent in Ireland. Whether Wales can, as an area where 90% of the population did not speak English, offer insights comparable to the English regions remains open to very considerable doubt.[41]

What seems interesting, then, is how the issue of language difference played into the successful assimilation of the Welsh elite into England's ecclesiastical and administrative frameworks. Instruction from London does not seem to have become a major source of division amongst gentry or clerical groupings, although there were attempts to articulate responses to policies and initiatives in terms of the common good of the Welsh people. And if such divisions did occur (which sometimes, one presumes, they must have done), the affected parties did not see profit in making public appeals to a population that was almost entirely Welsh-speaking. Here we might agree with Bowen that Scotland and Ireland differed from Wales because they possessed legislative and ecclesiastical institutions that constituted themselves, and claimed legitimacy, as national bodies. In both Ireland and Scotland, as the events of the 1640s demonstrate, public appeals by groups positioning themselves in opposition to the Stuart regime were staged in order to capture institutions of governance and render them capable of resisting control by the British monarchy.

There clearly was public discussion in early modern Wales. But we might ask whether there was a sufficient degree of critically engaged debate and pitch making in Wales to bring the sort of post-Reformation publics I have been discussing here into being. It is striking that, when the Welsh were mobilized to take the king's side in the civil war, the defense of the king and the national church of England from a Puritan and parliamentarian threat does not seem to have been countered by an explicitly Welsh alternative. Royalist polemic certainly spoke to certain particularities of the Welsh experience with peculiar force, giving us a fuller understanding of why Wales did not see the successful mobilization of an oppositionist rhetoric in the vein of the Scottish Covenanters or the Irish Confederates.[42] My sense is that the difference in Wales was that the particular institutions and structures through which loyalty to royal government and religious conformity were fostered—and enforced—in all the kingdoms did not create the resources for constructing alternative discourses of the common good. The discourses that did emerge served to bind the Welsh gentry and clerical elites to the royalist cause.

On this basis, then, it may come as small surprise that, as Bowen remarks, the Welsh case fits rather well with the revisionist paradigm. But then again, the fact that revisionism works best for an area where 90 percent of the population did not

[41] Bowen, "Structuring Particularist Publics"; Darcy, "Political Participation."
[42] Ibid.; Stewart, "Publics and Participation."

speak English surely speaks rather more to the limitations of the revisionist version of "localism" than to the applicability of the Welsh model even to even to regions of England as notionally "peripheral" as Cheshire , where, as new research is showing, by the early seventeenth century, the gentry were defining themselves in terms of a range of claims about the particularities of local history, genealogy, and lineage. They remained, however, remarkably well integrated into emergent national, political, religious, and news, cultures. Thus when the civil war arrived, Cheshire opinion split into a variety of groupings, all defined in terms of different takes on the relationship between national events and allegiances and local interests and solidarities.[43] There was no monovocal rallying to the cause of the king and the church evident in Wales. But then everyone in Cheshire could speak English. Ethnic, cultural, and linguistic barriers, at least as explored by in the articles contributed to this issue, were often much harder to penetrate than the political and territorial boundaries of kingdoms and nations.

[43] Richard Cust, ed., *The Papers of Sir Richard Grosvenor, 1st Bart. (1585–1645)* (Lancashire and Cheshire, 1996); Peter Lake, "Puritans, Petitions and Popularity: Local Politics and National Contexts, Cheshire, 1641," in *Politics, Religion and Popularity*, ed. Tom Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake (Cambridge, 2002), 259–89.