

## **Empire, Exile, and England's 'British Problem': Recent Approaches to Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* as a Colonial and Postcolonial Text**

### **Review**

In general, I congratulate the author for anticipating most of my bibliographical suggestions—as in, I would be reading one page, thinking “Hmm, Patrick Cheney would be of use here” and on the next page Cheney would be cited; same for Helgerson et alia. Very nicely done.

Some bibliographical suggestions, in the spirit of the Literature Compass goal that an article provide the fullest overview of recent scholarship; I guess it's telling that they are all from the American side of the Atlantic:

\* Andrew Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss* (Cornell 2004) has an early chapter on the figure of Brutus that would be useful to cite p. 12; and Spenser is discussed throughout this study (making an argument for a sense of 'belatedness' that might help some of the claims here about the relationship to Virgil) [Harry Berger, Jr's introduction (*Revisionary Play* 1988) to a reading of *Shepherd's Calendar* also examines lostness, in this case of paradise—might inform the ambivalent relationship to Virgil and exile]

\* David Read's *Temperate Conquests* (Wayne State 2000) might be added to the catalog on page 2, as it details England's relationship to Spain via a reading of Spenser.

\* in the States, Greenblatt's chapter on the Bower of Bliss in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* has often been cited as an early postcolonial reading of Spenser

page 3: My main and most critical suggestion: I think there needs to be a much more sophisticated way in which to describe the relationship between English and British identities—here the rather overly MODEST (even self-abnegating) claim is made instead of that they simply are “stand[ing] apart” from one another. Aren't they instead rather complicatedly complementary? Or disjunctive? or some other antagonistic description that indicates less distance and more proximity? (I am even thinking of something like a MAP that would have superimposed territorial lines, of some sort – perhaps contested lines) In short, I feel that this is the only real downfall of the essay: that it's too modest in not wanting to challenge the current orthodoxy about the 'British'ness of the 16th c. England. I'd look forward to seeing a bolder vision articulated for how Englishness can be at odds with Britishness, rather than merely “stands apart”—and would want to see this kind of a claim threaded throughout the entire essay, much more contentiously.

page 5: wouldn't some good old Raymond Williams Keywords-style OED/EEBO tracking of “empire” be of use here for the 1520s/30s? Seems like a potentially rich way to explore this notion . . .

part I is rather brief – brief enough to make me wonder whether it should actually be a part (apart) or not? or whether part II should be split further into two separate parts?

page 12: “translation” of empire from Troy to Rome, and from Rome to England:  
David Quint and Thomas Greene are crucial to cite here

Finally, for a piece that devotes such extensive critical effort to recovering Virgilian aspects of Spenser, it’s quite strange that Virgil is not mentioned in either the abstract or the introduction! Surely this needs to be asserted much earlier as a key claim made by the essay.