

Echoes from the Isle of Erin: Navigating Transatlantic Nationhood in Adam Kidd's "Preface" and "The Fairy-Boat"

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Abstract

This paper explores the development of literary Irish nationhood during the mid-nineteenth century by comparing selected entries from Adam Kidd's *The Huron chief, and other poems* (1830). Through close, critical readings of "Preface" and "The Fairy-Boat," this paper examines Britain's subjugation of Canada's indigenous peoples, and compares the process to the historic plight of cultural and political oppression in Kidd's native Ireland. Kidd's Romantic, early modern poetry engenders an ethic of empathy for coeval colonial subjects, and expresses an unrequited desire for national reconciliation and Irish emancipation.

Keywords

Kidd; Ireland; England; Canada; nationhood; indigenous; poetry; early modern era; colonization

Erin Adası'ndan Yankılar: Adam Kidd'in "Preface" ve "Fairy Boat"unda Transatlantik Milliyeti Yönlendirmek

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Özet

Bu makale, Adam Kidd'in *The Huron chief, and other poems* (1830) adlı eserinden seçme yazıları kıyaslayarak 19. Yüzyılın ortaları itibarı ile İrlanda milliyetinin edebi gelişimini incelemektedir. Eserdeki "Önsöz" ve "The Fairy Boat" kısımlarının eleştirel ve yakın bir okumasıyla, Britanya'nın Kanada'nın yerli nüfusunu kontrol altına alması incelenerek bu süreç Kidd'in İrlanda'sındaki siyasi ve kültürel baskının tarihsel acı yüzü ile karşılaştırılmaktadır. Kidd'in Romantik, erken dönem şiiri çağdaş sömürge biryeleri için empati etiği yaratmakta ve İrlanda özgürlüğü ve ulusal uzlaşya yönelik karşılıksız bir arzuyu ifade etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Kidd, İrlanda, İngiltere, Kanada, milliyet, yerli, şiir, erken modern dönem, sömürgeleştirme

In his discussion of English and Irish nationhood in the early modern period, Neill (1994) contends, productively, that "nationality can only be imagined as a dimension of difference" (p. 3). The Romantic poetry of Irishman, Adam Kidd, however, while still characterizing nationhood as inherently relational, problematizes the writing of difference by introducing a narrative of shared dispossession and colonization that showcases cultural hybridity and solidarity among the emigrant Irish and the native Indians of the American continent. Although Kidd, in *The Huron chief, and other poems* (1831), praises Britain's occupation of the Canadas, he simultaneously criticizes the British rule in his native Erin by comparing the subjugation of its indigenous peoples to a historic plight of cultural and political oppression in Ireland. Kidd's approach,

which engenders an ethic of empathy for coeval colonial subjects, expresses an unrequited desire for national reconciliation and Irish emancipation. Working with Kidd's texts, the "Preface" and "The Fairy-Boat," I explore how the conflicting commendation and condemnation of British territorial growth and conquest, furthered by the Act of Union in 1800, complicates Kidd's verse which, imbued with nostalgia for the rural, Irish landscape, traverses both time and space to articulate a regrettable departure from the Atlantic Archipelago and, consequently, from the prospect of Irish reform and independence. Kidd, who eulogizes Ireland's countryside and cultural customs, couples the bodies of place and poet and, in so doing, interrogates notions of liberty to, I argue, frame the Irish nationalist in the foreign yet familiar New World as both a freeman settler and enchained victim of Britain's Empire. Kidd's texts, then, situated within a discourse of British imperialism, literarily construct early nineteenth-century Ireland not in opposition to an inferior Other but, rather, mutually with the displaced Indians who, in Canada, seek dissociation from the United States. These Indians do so in a manner akin to the allegedly united people of a politically amalgamated Erin, who aspire to restorative deliverance from the threat of further encroachment by the dominant parliamentary order of the Romantic period instituted by Great Britain.¹

In 1818, Kidd, born in Tullynagee, immigrated to Canada at the age of sixteen and, once in Québec, began to write and publish when the Irish populace, according to Whelan (2005), yearned for a "reminder of the country's place in the wider British colonial world" (p. 266). It is not surprising, then, that Kidd, after having explored both Upper and Lower Canada in the late 1820s, composes *The Huron chief, and other poems*: a compilation of both long and short poetry which, King (2007) contends, embraces the Native American Other through a "simultaneous retrieval and relinquishment of [Kidd's] own cultural heritage" (p. 86). The word "own," which repeatedly appears in the "Preface" and "The Fairy-Boat," bespeaks Kidd's both physical

¹ In 1801, under the Act of Union, England and Ireland merged to become The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Linda Colley suggests that following the 1707 Act of Union, Britain, and its people, the Britons, constructed a national identity of "Britishness" instead of the dominant form of "Englishness" against which Ireland was defined. For more scholarship on the formation of Great Britain, see Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (1992).

and metaphysical attachment to his Irish landscape that he, through the act of writing, wistfully reimagines vis-à-vis the Indians' diminishing sense of place in the Americas. Kidd's collection, which King (2007) describes as a "political allegory about the integration of Great Britain and Ireland after the Act of Union" (p. 83), aims, through the focalization of comparable dispossession, to recuperate, rather than efface, both the authorial voice and national identity of a beleaguered Ireland following the failed endeavour to achieve sovereignty through the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Consequently, Kidd, writing both of and within the Canadas which, according to Cabajsky (2010), had become "[a] colonial possession" of Britain in 1763 (p. 186), expresses, in his "Preface" to *The Huron chief, and other poems*, his cross-cultural empathy for the mistreated Indians, a process which marks not only the Romantic aesthetic of sensibility, but also Kidd's effort to convey, symbolically, the precarity of Irish nationhood in the British colonial world. Lamenting the "melancholy recital of the deep wrongs" endured by the Indians, Kidd censures the "boasted freemen of the United States" (Sauer & Wright, 2010, pp. 115-116) and, in so doing, forges a discursive space in which he articulates his anxiety concerning the loss of autonomy at the hands of political suppression. "[O]nce powerful Tribes," Kidd (2010) emblematically writes, "have now become totally extinct—while the remaining Nations are daily dwindling away, and in a few years hence will scarcely leave a memorial to perpetuate their names, as the once mighty rulers" (p. 116). Although Kidd, here, undoubtedly illuminates the grim fates of the Indian Nations, both his hope for and unwavering loyalty to a freed Ireland in his selected, short poetry, as I will explore, constitute a consistent thematic sentiment and plea for the emancipation of Erin: a "Nation" whose indigenous people, governmentally aligned with the Kingdom of Great Britain, risk cultural-political assimilation and erasure within a land increasingly defined by its Britishness.

Both the "Preface" and "The Fairy-Boat" display Kidd's passionate, affective connection to his homeland and, through their condemnation of Britain's rule in Ireland, simultaneously create and appeal to the textual community of Irish emigrant sympathizers and nationalists. Kidd's texts, then, act as eulogistic memorials that seek to both perpetuate the name of Erin and its people, and maintain a poignant, though often repressed, political discourse which strengthens the optimistic foresight of independent Irish governance. In the opening line of the "Preface," Kidd (2010) addresses himself as a "youthful bard" after expressing his indebtedness to those "master

hands" of Poetry's esteemed figures, George Gordon, Lord Byron, and Thomas Moore (p. 115). Though Kidd, here, participates in a customary, humbling practice of demonstrating one's gratitude for the acclaimed works of the era's prominent, contemporary writers, his mention of a British and Irish poet, in which the Briton is firstly introduced, anticipates the text's acknowledgement and treatment of the documented, political turmoil in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. When Kidd, on a trip from his homeland, reaches the shores of the Canadas as a migrant nomad, much like the Indians about whom he writes, he tells of "a little birch canoe" in which he "safely glided through the tranquil lakes of the Canadas" (2010, p. 115). The calmness of the Canadian waters generates a scene of serenity which, in "The Fairy-Boat," echoes to invoke the speaker's affective bond with nature, an attachment, I will argue, that works to define and portray, discursively, Irish nationhood.

Though Kidd articulates his initial interactions with the untamed, Canadian wilderness, his political affiliation with Great Britain problematizes and, arguably, compromises his role as a mere visitor to the Canadas. "In a New World setting," King (2007) contends, "[there is] no simple retrieval of ancestral narrative forms for the purposes of cultural nationalism because in a colonial environment every act of settlement implies a simultaneous material or symbolic dispossession of the territory's aboriginal inhabitants" (p. 84). Kidd's long poem, which draws extensively from Moore's Orientalist critique of religious intolerance and empire-building, *Lalla Rookh* (1817), demonstrates the desire to revisit and model the formal and thematic facets of Moore's narrative poetry to, as King (2007) notes, create "an elusive affinity for the mistreated native peoples of North America" (p. 82) that underscores the historical repression of Erin's citizenry. The "Preface," then, although successful at illuminating the Americans' cruel treatment of the abused Indians, simultaneously exploits the trauma of their displacement to encourage Irish sympathies. Written in the language of the oppressors, rather than in Kidd's native tongue,² the work introduces the Romantic ideal of

² Colley (1994) notes that, following the Act of Union, Irish poetry, which had been previously composed mostly in Irish (or a dialect thereof) began to be increasingly written and published in English: the dominant language of both the newly, politically formed United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the United States of America. In addition, Sauer and Wright, in *Reading the Nation in English Literature, A Critical Reader*, write of the "Gaelic Literary

empathetic identification for colonial subjects but, by so doing, also occupies—and settles into—a symbolic, discursive space in the literature of the New World. The publication, in other words, reaffirms Kidd's arrival to Canada wherein, from a nuanced, voyeuristic vantage, he observes the Indian body politic and, essentially, speaks *for* it in writing that is both read and understood by the indigenous peoples' own colonizers. In an "Introduction" to his edited, scholarly edition of Kidd's compilation, Bentley (1989) notes that the emigrant writer became, while in Canada, the "unofficial voice" of both Indian welfare and Irish radicalism. That most of Kidd's prominent poetic works, including *The Huron chief, and other poems* and *The tales and traditions of the Indians*, from which excerpts were published posthumously, appeared in such print venues as the *Canadian freeman* and *The Irish vindicator* is telling as, according to Bentley (1989), both newspapers exhibited explicit radical and Irish sympathies. Consequently, while Kidd's prose, which redefines the ancestral, pastoral poetry as literature of the Canadian hinterland and landscape, sheds light on and evokes empathy for the mistreated Indians, the very process of doing so purposefully constructs a narrative of shared dispossession: an effectual framework through which Kidd, as both a marginal, colonized subject of Britain and a symbolic, freeman colonizer of the Indians in the Canadas, acknowledges the loss of Ireland's independence and, as I will examine in my close reading of "The Fairy-Boat," professes its prospective return.

Within the "Preface," Kidd's description of his interactions with the indigenous peoples is demonstrative of his sensibility for cultural groups, including the Indians, which endure adversity and disenfranchisement in the face of increased imperial conquest and encroachment. When Kidd (2010) writes of his treatment "among the Indians," he describes it as "innocent, and unassuming, friendly" (p. 115). The use of three consecutive adjectives, all of which, in tandem, reveal the Indians' naivety, docility, and humility, works not to empower the victimized group but, instead, intensify the degree of sympathy that the Indians' affectionate conduct evokes. While Kidd, here, endeavours to frame the Indian community as a wounded victim, the poet's own position remains, at least textually, central to

Revival" which, after 1780, spread across Ireland, Scotland, and Wales and was "heralded as the true foundation of national identity that must be defended and rejuvenated for the nation to survive as such" (p. 12).

this suffering. In Kidd's comment, "[the] treatment that I experienced among the Indians, together with the melancholy recital of the deep wrongs which they received from those calling themselves '*Christians*,' induced me to undertake this dramatic poem" (p. 115), the poet, through personal pronouns, aligns himself with and, both figuratively and literally, places himself between the ailing Indians. The interspersions of connective terms, including "among" and "together," facilitates a momentary departure from the paragraph's subjective focus, Kidd himself, and promotes an implicit fellowship between Kidd and the indigenous peoples of America's north. Inspired by the "deep wrongs" that the Indians had received from the irreverent "*Christians*" of the United States, Kidd, who, in his collection's selected poetry, laments his own reluctant leave from a colonial homeland, writes a dramatic poem, a redemptive, cathartic narrative that heals the poet's own wounds suffered not through cultural dissociation but, rather, via political alignment. The "Preface," accordingly, anticipates and actively constructs an intertextual, allegorical tale of Irish repression imbedded within and read through the vicarious precarity of the Indians. Kidd's work is not a surrogate but, rather, a discursive incubator, a frame narrative within which the poet fosters sensibility and sympathy for the radical Irish through an empathic connection to displaced Indians.

Kidd, through his poignant texts, the "Preface" and "The Fairy-Boat," aspires to "induce" the reader in a similar way that he, upon observing and interacting with the Indians, had himself been moved. Kidd's first-person point of view, which, in the "Preface," entraps readers in a gaze indicative of the arrival to the New World, shifts direction in "The Fairy-Boat" and glances away from the Canadas, towards a seemingly indivisible Irish birthplace. On the subject of transatlantic nationhood, Cole (1971) argues: "[t]here are no definitions, no analytic descriptions, no models, no ideal-types appropriate to nationalism in settlement colonies. Instead, there is a contained, even an increased, amount of semantic and conceptual confusion" (p. 161). It is precisely within and through this space of confusion, however, that Kidd, in "The Fairy-Boat," concretizes the imagined Irish and British nationhood by further defining the "manly protection of the British Government" (Sauer & Wright, 2010, p. 116) in Canada, under which the relocated Indians indeed happily prosper, as a praiseworthy system of the defence, rather than the dispossession, of colonial subjects. Kidd's poem, King (2007) would agree, is a model of "trans-Atlantic Irish romanticism" (p. 83), which chronicles Kidd's

(1989) melancholic journey "Through time's extended vista" (11) from the Isle of Ireland to an unnamed, yet unquestionably North American, "here" (35). The voyager's sentiments sway, like "[t]hat little bark" (10), amid the ocean's waves, between joy and sadness, as he looks "o'er the water's brim" (9) to a defeated Ireland which, although enchained by Britain's rule, retains, at least in the speaker's positive view, the occasion to "proudly break" free of its reign (42). The "little bark," which moves across foreign, unchartered waters, parallels Kidd's "little birch canoe" and, together, underscore the speaker's transatlantic nomadism that is documented, not coincidentally, on the "inner rind of birch bark" (Sauer & Wright, 2010, p. 115). The texts' emphasis on relocation and attachment to nature instantiate Wright's (2010) investigation of Romantic nationalism and, accordingly, illuminate the stirring "national spirit" (p. 164) inherent in Kidd's "The Fairy-Boat." The work's opening line, "The winds are hushed, the waves are still" (1), (re)produces a familiar scene of both silence and serenity in which the speaker, whose solitary, personal perspective is characteristic of the Romantic aesthetic, experiences a moment of clarity that inspires not a vision of the New World but, rather, an ambivalent, retrospective gaze of his colonial homeland. In the subsequent lines, Kidd (1989) writes:

All nature seems to catch the tone,
And calmly list the Clar'net's thrill,
And notes of days that now are gone.
Yes – I have heard in happier hours,
That sweet, that fairy breath of song,
While yet my path was strewed with flowers,
My own, my native hills among. (2-8)

Wright (2010), on the subject of Romantic nationalism, discusses a conflation of the natural world and the symbiotic relationship between citizenry and countryside: "The people belong to the land and the land belongs to the people, a sense of belonging rooted in affection that is emotionally powerful, intrinsic, and embedded in their daily lives through language" (p. 164). It is not surprising, then, that Kidd describes the listening abilities of "*All nature*" [emphasis mine]; the inclusive word, which also includes the pensive speaker, does not simply work to align the poetic figure with nature but, instead, positions him as an active component *of* nature. The "Clar'net's thrill" recalls notes from a geographical and temporal

distance which have, now, vanished like the once powerful Indian "Tribes" of America's north. The phrase "fairy breath of song" bespeaks a euphoric melody that, coupled with the presence of familiar, flattering flora, constructs a fond, albeit transient, image which contrasts the present condition of Kidd's Ireland, whereby "peace no longer crowns her hills / No shell of gladness cheers her hall" (21-22). Moreover, the mention of a discernible, favourable "path," in addition to contrasting the uncertain course of the fairy-boat's own expedition, suggests a passageway that grants both exit and prospective re-entry upon return to what the speaker claims is invariably his: "My own, my native hills" (8). The repetition of possessive, personal pronouns, both within this line and throughout the poem, emphasizes the notion of one's ownership of, and belonging to, the land during a colonial period wherein Erin's territory is property of Great Britain. The word "native," in addition to further merging the poet figure and his place of birth, echoes the plight of North America's Indians who, later in the poem, are described in their new terrain. Wright (2010), who explains that textual representations of rural and sublime wildernesses are tropes that, within Romantic literature, idealize the interdependent relationship between nationhood and landscape, suggests that one's separation from his homeland would be a violation of his "sense of self" (p. 164). Kidd's pronouns, then, define individuality and nationhood as a mutually, organically constructed entity which, intrinsically rooted in nature, writes "the nation as organism" (Sauer & Wright, 2010, p. 11).

After recalling the melodious notes both sung and heard at the banks of Loughneagh (32), the poet's speaker momentarily directs his attention toward the New World, the foreign "here":

But I have left my own dear lakes,
 My cottage maid and humble home,
 To wander here, through woods and brakes,
 Where free as air the Indians roam. (33-36)

The phrase "my own dear lakes" continues to develop the trope of nation as body and, in doing so, articulates the speaker's adoration for Erin's nature: a self-reflexive gesture that frames the earthly environment as restorative as the very process of reimagining it through poesy. Kidd (1989) writes of his own departure when, Smith

(2004) notes, "an estimated one and three-quarter million Irish people left Ireland of their own accord" (p. 219).³ Though the phrase "I have left" does not provide an indication of either voluntariness or obligation, the preposition "But," which begins the poem's ninth stanza, suggests that the speaker's arguably regrettable decision to leave from the European continent despite all of Ireland's described natural and cultural beauty must be motivated by grave, immeasurable factors that the poet himself will not and, perhaps, cannot express in words. Kidd (2010), in the "Preface," however, explains that "From the days of the American Revolution until this very hour, the poor Indians have been so cruelly treated, and driven from their homes" (p. 115); the contemporary moment, marked by "this very hour," complements the described "here" and, consequently, situates the Indians' ongoing suffering in immediate time and place. That the Indians, according to Kidd, have been "driven from their homes" suggests not a point of contrast but, rather, an occurrence of potential similarity whereby the Irish, too, are compelled to abandon their dwellings. Kidd's journey, then, whether induced by opportunity or coercion, is not without sacrifice, as the speaker must leave behind his "cottage maid and humble home" (34) in search of resettlement. Though the word "home," here, marks the speaker's private abode, his unavoidable bond with nature extends the definition to encompass the whole of Ireland: a defeated, humble Isle of the United Kingdom which, as Kidd's texts demonstrate, seeks national restoration and independence.

Though, in the "The Fairy-Boat," the speaker's approach to the New World does, indeed, shape the present "Now" when "memory's page unfolds again" (14), the word "wander" (35) implies not a projected, permanent stay but, rather, an uncertain, indirect voyage, a meandering of sorts which invites the reader to, "through woods and brakes" (35), both map and navigate Kidd's poesy in a communal, transatlantic search for an indefinite "here." Kidd's Romantic figure of the foreign, lone wanderer, though distinguished from the Indians in birthplace, shares the precarity of being a nomadic, colonial subject for whom nationhood is delineated through legislation but, as Wright (2010) would contend, both known and experienced within the sensory connection to the natural landscape (p. 164). The point of arrival in the New World, in contrast to Ireland's repression, boasts Indians who, under Britain's rule and protection, may freely roam.

³ Smith's calculations include emigrations between the years 1780 and 1845.

The simile "free as air" likens the indigenous peoples to a vital element of their shared surroundings and, moreover, portrays an observed image of liberty which reaffirms Kidd's (2010) claim in his "Preface": "I can fairly and honestly plead the *correctness* of my observations. Many of the Indian Tribes have emigrated into Canada—and are now prospering, and happily enjoying the manly protection of the British Government" (p. 116). Through an expedient discussion of emigration, Kidd describes the British occupation of the Canadas as beneficial to the Indians who, under new rule, may avoid the threat of "dwindling away" and, once again, reinforce their personal ties to the land on which they roam. Kidd's allegedly just, truthful, and accurate representation of the Indians endeavours to establish a necessary degree of credibility for the Irishman who, in Canada, defends, rather than criticizes, Britain's magnanimous colonization. The portrayal of the British Government's guard as "manly," however, identifies the British nation in masculine terms, thus constituting the dependent colonized group as effeminate—an identity from which Kidd, despite Erin's female name, desires to distance Ireland's fate. The word "air," whose vernacular pronunciation is uncannily similar to the Old Irish word "Éire," the female, Gaelic goddess from whom the national identity of "Erin" derives, further promotes the solidarity of cross-cultural narratives and encourages the notion that Ireland, despite British encroachment can, too, be free. Kidd's description, which explicitly names and draws attention to the liberally roaming Indians in the Canadas, offers an image that is both hopeful and painful: a reminder of what the Irish nationalists, under British rule, have yet to achieve. The scene that the speaker portrays, therefore, is not merely one of prosperity, but of prospectiveness, as well.

Wright (2010), in her discussion of the "national spirit," contends that, in Romantic literature, the members of a nation are "organically connected as parts of a larger whole and naturally similar" to, in turn, promote an "authentic nationality" (p. 164). Accordingly, in the poem's (1989) penultimate stanza,

Yet, ERIN! though we sadly part,
 My soul's devotion bends to thee,
 With all the fervour of a heart
 That pants to know that thou art free. (37-4)

The speaker, who explicitly and passionately addresses the Isle of "ERIN," expresses a parting of intense regret that reaffirms his

faithfulness and indissoluble connection to his homeland. Kidd's description of the yielding, devoted "soul" suggests a profound, intrinsic, and unshakable loyalty not to the United Kingdom but, rather, to a sovereign Ireland, whose nationalist sympathizers are, ironically, united in their desire for dissociation from Britain. The speaker's unwavering fidelity, Cole (1971) would argue, expresses a degree of patriotism, which he defines as a "loyalty [to] a political state and the geographic territory circumscribed by the state. It expresses itself in affection for the state, [and] its geography" (p. 165). The speaker's rootedness in Erin's physical landscape, in addition to his exclamatory apostrophe to the nation, certainly frames Kidd's texts as works, Cole (1971) would describe, of patriotism developed alongside the storied oppression of America's Indians. The writing of one's "soul", moreover, the central or innermost part of a person's being, became a distinctive characteristic of Romanticism poetry. That the devotion of the speaker's *soul* bends to Erin suggests a metaphysical experience which seems to transcend Kidd's corporeal departure from the land. With all the fervour of a panting heart, the poet figure yearns to know of and experience Erin's freedom: a momentous event which, in Kidd's own lifetime, remained merely a restorative, textual reverie of the melodious, "happier hours" (5). The speaker's unquestionable attachment to and affection for his land, however, are precisely what, in the poem's final stanza, imprison Kidd as a lifelong subject and victim of British colonial rule.

Kidd (1989), in his literary perception of relational Irish nationhood, expresses a fondness for his land which he, through his selected poetry, envisions to be free of Britain's occupation and order:

And when that foul, unholy chain
The patriot-hand shall proudly break,
I'll string my native harp again,
And all its former songs awake. (41-44)

The tainted, unholy chain, linked to the irreverent conduct of the "*Christians*" who cruelly treated the Indians in the United States, demarcates an implicit connection between the shared narratives of dispossession and colonization and, moreover, identifies the weight which still shackles Kidd, despite his emigration to the New World. The poet's symbiotic relationship with Erin's geography strengthens the symbolic sequence which extends across the Atlantic to fetter the alleged freeman. Kidd's tie to Ireland, however, also reinforces the

speaker's optimistic vision that the chain will not simply loosen but, instead, "break" from the "patriot-hand." The word "patriot" incites a nationalist approach which, echoing Cole's (1971) descriptions, expresses loyalty to and pride for the occupied state. That the patriot-hand "proudly" fractures the binding chain connotes a powerful, confident, and, above all, awaited severance for Ireland's emancipation. The word "native," which reverberates from the poem's second stanza, marks the speaker's delineation of a nationhood that is both physically and spiritually known. Though the literary "harp" is characteristic of Irish poetry, Kidd's (2010) homage to Moore in the "Preface" permeates the collection as a whole and, here, revives Moore's "lyrical expressions of patriotic feeling that constitute *Irish Melodies*" (Bentley, 1989). King (2007) argues, moreover, that "images of the unstrung harp [and] the fleeting bard" are "reconfigured from the iconography of Irish nationalism into emblems of animism and symbols of reciprocity" (p. 86). That the speaker vows to string his harp upon Ireland's eventual independence to, once more, "awake" all its former songs indicates a spiritual resurrection, a melodious rebirth through which Kidd, the poetic figure, New World colonizer, Indian sympathizer, and Irish radical, becomes a prophet of ERIN's future.

Following the scholarship of Peter Sahlins, Connors and Falconer (2001) contend that national identities "are necessarily perceived, some suggest constructed, out of dichotomous relationships between 'us' and 'them'" (p. 96). Though Kidd's nineteenth-century texts demonstrate that nationhood is, indeed, culturally and discursively constructed, both the "Preface" of Kidd's collection, *The Huron chief, and other poems*, and "The Fairy-Boat" therein, seem to contest the dichotomy of the relational formation of nation. Kidd's deep sympathy for the mistreated Indians of North America who, displaced at the hands of the United States' "boasted freemen," forcibly retreated to and relocated in the Canadas, engenders a frame narrative through which Kidd equally discusses the historic plight of socio-political Irish suppression. The allegorical framework, which parallels the "deep wrongs" received by America's Indians to those received by the people of Erin, promotes a narrative account of shared, transatlantic colonization that privileges patriotism to an Irish homeland. Though Kidd praises Britain's occupation of the Canadas, his censure of British rule in Ireland draws the attention of Irish emigrants and sympathizers who, like Kidd, yearn for national restoration and prospective emancipation. The poet's consistent return to the unfavourable fate of Indian Tribes works to ensure that the cultural

identity of comparable colonial subjects in Ireland does not dwindle or fade. Kidd's attempt to generate empathy for both Irish and Indigenous peoples suggests, contra Connors and Falconer (2001), that notions of nationhood and national identity are not necessarily perceived in opposition to another cultural group but, rather, with and alongside it. Although Kidd does demarcate an inherent sense of Irishness vehemently against Britishness, his chosen texts, imbued with nostalgia for an Irish landscape, travel the distance of the Atlantic, and reach the colonial New World to connect the Irish and Indians, in an effort to demonstrate that nationhood, though discursively formed in a relational manner, can reveal a spectrum of identity, rather than simply a dichotomy. The nationhood of the Romantic poetic figure and lone nomad, emblematic of the community of radical, Irish nationalist sympathizers, is not, in Kidd's selected texts, defined in opposition to an inferior Other but, rather, in conjunction with that of the Indian within a colonized land whose immigrants both suffer and celebrate echoes from the Isle of Erin.

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