An Ghaoth a Chriofidh an Eorna: The Moral Economy of Ireland’s Whiteboys, 1761-1787.

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Abstract/Artist’s Statement
In 1761, the peasantry of Ireland rose in insurrection against enclosure and tithes. The initial wave of protesters were known as ‘Whiteboys,’ and their insurrection came to be a model for subsequent Irish agrarian redresser movements throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Applying E.P. Thompson’s theory of moral economy to the practice of Whiteboyism reveals the sophisticated motives which lay behind the Whiteboy’s 18th century protests against enclosure, tithes, and middlemen in rural Ireland. Senior Project submitted to The Division of Social Studies of Bard College.

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They also gave Ireland its name, a combination of the Gaelic word Eire and the Viking word land. In time the Vikings settled down. They intermarried with the Irish and accepted Christianity. However Henry did not immediately invade Ireland. Instead Dermait MacMurrough, the king of Leinster, brought events to a head. In 1166, another king, Tiernan O’Rourke forced MacMurrough to flee from Ireland. However MacMurrough appealed to the English king Henry II for help. Henry gave him permission to recruit in England. MacMurrough enlisted the support of a man named Richard FitzGilbert de Clare (better known as Strongbow) to help him regain his kingdom.