
Martin Harries. *Scare Quotes from Shakespeare: Marx, Keynes, and the Language of Reenchantment*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000. Pp. 209. \$69.50.

In *Scare Quotes from Shakespeare: Marx, Keynes, and the Language of Reenchantment*, Martin Harries argues “that a particular aspect of modernity, reenchantment, discovers its image in appropriations of supernatural aspects in Shakespeare’s plays” (9). As evidence for this contention, he points to the covertly reenchanting elements of “The Eighteenth Brumaire” and *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* by analyzing their use of “scare quotes” (simultaneously acknowledging and distancing allusions to supernatural moments) from *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, respectively. Following the logic of allusion in each case, Harries begins with the more recent text and proceeds backwards to the source text, using the insights gained from his analysis of Marx and Keynes to read the supernatural elements of the Shakespeare plays.

His basic argument takes two forms. The first is that Marx and Keynes allude to the supernatural at moments when their analyses falter in the face of the seemingly irrational course of events. Confronted with the inexplicable, Harries contends, Marx and Keynes appeal to culturally-authoritative instances of the supernatural not as explanations for, but as markers of, the irrationality lurking behind the ostensibly rational (and rationalized) processes of modernity. The second, and more interesting, component of Harries’s argument concerns the subversion of this simultaneously acknowledging and distancing tactic. Harries argues that Marx’s use of supernatural imagery to describe the coming revolution and Keynes’s use of it to characterise his prophetic capabilities radically undercut their demystifying projects.

The strongest part of Harries’s discussion is his excellent textual analysis and close reading. His argument that Marx’s scare quotes from *Hamlet* capture, prefigure, and embody “the coexistence of the archaic and the future, the residual and the emergent” (92) is both convincing and illuminating. In particular, his reading and (re-)translation of the phrase, “Well said, old mole! Canst work i’ th’earth so fast?” (80) as it appears in Schlegel, Marx, and Hegel is fascinating. Harries’s attention to the ways in which the various translations rework the original to serve particular political and philosophical ends is one of the book’s highlights.

The subsequent discussion of *Hamlet* partakes of the same critical rigour, using a brand of “historical allegory” (9) to characterize the play as a dramatic conflict between the residual and the emergent. His reading of the scene in which Hamlet encounters the Ghost is spectacular. Bringing together the lan-

guage of mining with that of military conflict, coinage, and wealth-generation, this part of Harries's book shows him at his best. His linguistic assiduousness meets his awareness of the play's central themes and its cultural context in a manner that both illuminates the play and reinforces his claim that "it is precisely *Hamlet's* figuring a modernity inextricably linked to ghostly injunctions that makes the play so telling an icon of modernity" (118).

The second half of *Scare Quotes from Shakespeare* begins by analyzing Keynes's reliance upon *Macbeth* as a source for images of witches and witchcraft. Harries argues that in both works there is a tension between endorsing a supernatural power if it appears to reinforce the "natural" state of things, and vilifying it if it appears to reinforce an "unnatural" state of affairs. Keynes participates in this activity by calling the designers of the Treaty of Versailles witches even as he claims clairvoyant power for his critique of the Treaty. Harries extends his discussion to the question of whether a prophesy merely predicts an event or if it has some power to cause it by relating Keynes's belief that his ostensibly disenchanting book foresaw the rise of the Nazi party to Banquo's simultaneous rejection of the prophesy which guarantees Macbeth's success and endorsement of the prophesy which guarantees his own.

In his reading of *Macbeth*, Harries argues that the play's construction of history not only illuminates Keynes's use of the supernatural, but also ratifies his larger argument. By setting the witches' supernatural predictions for Macbeth off against their prophesy of the future success of Banquo's line (leading up to James I in 1603 [171]), Harries demonstrates precisely how supernatural authority can simultaneously be evoked to delegitimize one version of history and to legitimize an alternative history. Coming after his incisive discussion of the same strategies in "The Eighteenth Brumaire," *Hamlet*, and *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, this chapter sums up the book's thesis and provides a definitive example of the kind of historical consciousness Harries illuminates throughout.

In his final chapter Harries argues that the scare quote from Shakespeare is no longer possible. Citing the extinction of a monologic cultural tradition in which rote knowledge of Shakespeare is a given, he insists on the historical specificity of the scare quote from Shakespeare. He suggests that at most its presence in works by Marx and Keynes sets the stage for a more sophisticated cycle of demystification and reenchantment in the remainder of the twentieth century and into the twenty first. His study provides an exemplary response to this cycle, reading against the grain of historical narratives to reveal the regressive tendencies concealed beneath their progressive formulations. The true measure of its success is that, in addition to providing us with an insightful look at the cycle of demystification and reenchantment in promi-

ment works of modern political economy, *Scare Quotes from Shakespeare* also furnishes a basis for reading through the less clearly marked mystifications of contemporary culture.

Stephen Ross

Naqi Husain Jafri, ed. *Critical Theory: Perspectives from Asia*. New Delhi: Jamia Millia Islamia / Creative Books, 2004. Pp. 405. Rs. 700 hardback.

This book comprises sixteen essays and is the second volume in the series, *Studies in Literature and Ideas*. The book seeks to create a position for poetics of the once-colonized peoples in English. The objective of the book is a reappraisal of Sanskrit, Tamil, Arabic, Persian and Urdu poetics which have been studied separately but perhaps not as offering vistas from Asia. The scope of the book may sound grand at first sight, but it manages to do an excellent job.

Though the book apparently seeks to showcase Asian poetic traditions, it focuses primarily on the Muslim world. This is no shortcoming and is actually a boon in disguise. Muslims have made immense contributions to these traditions as well as to the cultural sphere. *Critical Theory* fulfils a major lack. The first essay, Al-Baqillani's "A Tenth Century Document of Arabic Literary Theory and Criticism," is a rare find. It discusses the eloquence, rhetorical characteristics, succinct style, and the metaphors of the Holy *Qur'ān*. The essay is a brilliant example of scholarly, hermeneutical exegesis and interpretation. Its style is lucid and clear. Baqillani gives excellent examples to illustrate various literary aspects of the Holy Book. In one such example, he quotes: "Generosity does not wipe out a fortune as long as luck is favourable; nor does stinginess conserve a fortune as long as luck is unfavourable" (41). One must also praise the detailed and comprehensive footnotes to this essay.

There are two essays by the well-known Urdu critic and stalwart, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, "A Stranger in the City: The Poetics of Sabk-i-Hindi" and "Khusrau's Poetics," which make for interesting reading. The first essay strikes one as being written on a grand scale as it runs into well over a hundred pages. Other important essays include Asloob Ahmad Ansari's "Poetics of Urdu *Ghazal*" and Shikoh Mohsin Mirza's "Poetics of Oriental Prose Narrative: *Alf Laylah wa-Laylah* as Template." They make for informative and enlightening reading. Naqi Husain Jafri and Shikoh Mohsin Mirza have translated Ansari's essay into English. The only complaint here is that Ansari's