

specificity of Leavisism, specifically its nationalism, was overlooked, and its universalism subsequently reinforced. By connecting “true” Australian culture with the idealized version of English literature and culture built into this set of values, critics could also overlook the violence of Australian history, particularly its convict origins and the treatment of aboriginal people. Additionally, because “the English nationalism that energized the discipline in its early years had been overwritten with a (hi)story of universal values, nationalist arguments for the study of Australian literature were easily discredited, as self-evidently partisan, political, and theoretically unsophisticated.”

In this light, the final chapter describes and analyzes the institution-ization of Australian literature after the 1950s. The prevailing view of Australian literature as of only local relevance was a logical outcome of the imperial ideology and Leavisite ideals that informed English departments in Australia. Debate about the introduction of the local literature tended to be framed as a contest between nationalist discourse and anglophile universalism, and great Australian writing was seen as that which transcended its locale. While English studies in Australia have changed such that contemporary academics in the discipline would probably position themselves as oppositional, rather than as carriers of tradition, Dale argues that the 1950s vision of Australian literature remains current in many areas of public literary culture.

With this in mind, Dale concludes with a trenchant criticism of the terms in which debate about the teaching, funding, and media profile of literature is conducted in contemporary Australia. She condemns the fear of cultural diversity and the suspicion of academic expertise currently expressed in the media, and ends with a resounding call for the study of literature, media, and culture to be deployed in the interests of the discipline itself.

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Thomas Cartelli. *Repositioning Shakespeare: National Formations, Postcolonial Appropriations*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Pp. xi, 233. \$26.99.

When Thomas Cartelli's essay entitled “Prospero in Africa” was published in 1986, it was highly influential in giving a new direction to Shakespeare studies. While Anglo-American critics generally recognized that Shakespeare's *The Tempest* had as its sources New World travel writings, few had examined African and Caribbean appropriations which showed the play's “capacity to make significant interventions in the formation of colonialist discourse and in the development of colonialist practices” (99). Reprinted in this volume in a revised version, the essay's methodology informs the book's project as a whole, whereby Cartelli shows how Shakespeare is appropriated “outside the

national boundaries of British culture and society 'in the image' of cultures and societies seeking either to establish their independence from imperial influence or to identify, define, and assert their own national values and priorities" (2). Hence, as the writer states at the outset, this book is "about what becomes of Shakespeare's work in its translation from early modern playtext to colonialist pretext to postcolonial target, preoccupation, or objective" (2).

Thus, *Repositioning Shakespeare* transforms the autonomous, canonical bard into "Shakespeare" the "author-function," whose trajectory follows multiple histories and ideologies — ranging from 19th-century America to postcolonial Africa. One of the strengths of this book is the richness of the cultural archive upon which Cartelli draws, showing us how Shakespeare's works have been appropriated within a variety of social and political contexts, as reflected in a diverse body of texts. Furthermore, in a work centered on appropriation, the writer offers an inventory of "different shapes appropriation may take" as follows: *satiric* appropriation that renders the works absurd; *confrontational* appropriation which offers an alternative agenda in anticolonial or feminist rewritings of the plays; a less confrontational, *transpositional* appropriation that highlights a specific theme to underpin a similar thesis or objective; and *dialogic* appropriation, "which involves the careful integration into a work of allusions, identifications, and quotations that complicate and 'thicken' the work . . . [so that] each partner . . . may be said to enter into the other's frame of reference" (18).

The writer examines these appropriative strategies in three discrete sections and a coda: the opening section, entitled *Democratic Vistas*, charts U.S. transactions with Shakespeare from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, ranging over approximately ninety years. Texts and events that "position themselves in relation or response to Shakespeare" (2) include essays by Walt Whitman, a play, *Jack Cade*, commissioned and staged by celebrated Shakespearean actor and nationalist Edwin Forrest, the 1849 Astor place riot, an essay by social activist Jane Addams that contextualizes *King Lear* within contemporary debates about labour-management reform, and Percy MacKaye's Shakespeare tercentenary masque, entitled *Caliban By the Yellow Sands* (1916). Reading these works in their *local* contexts, the author demonstrates Shakespeare was "a site of cultural contest" (30) rather than of consensus in 19th-century America. Thus, topical issues such as relations between labor and capital and between immigrant communities, among others, vividly delineate the early American national formation, which the writer views in terms of a "recognizably colonial model of human relations" (30).

Less convincing, however, is the writer's definition of nineteenth-century America as a "postcolonial" nation, in which Shakespeare as a

mediator, enabled “a self-consciously postcolonial society [to] address and construct its differences from the society [namely England] that produced it” (30). While straining to include America in postcolonial studies, he represses the history of Anglo-European colonizing policies toward the natives of America. This further weakens his claim that the “19th-century U.S. struggle for social, cultural, and political self-definition serves . . . as a proving ground for more recent [struggles for independence] in postcolonies such as Nigeria and Kenya . . . Australia and New Zealand ” (6).

Such a historical elision of wide-ranging postcolonial paradigms, I believe, blurs Cartelli’s segue to the remaining two, excellent sections of the book. Part II, entitled *Prospero’s Books*, offers nuanced readings of *confrontational*, postcolonial appropriations of *The Tempest* in Kenyan author Ngugi’s *A Grain of Wheat* (1968) — mentioned at the outset — and West Indian author Michelle Cliff’s *No Telephone to Heaven* (1989). The first novel, the writer notes, explicitly identifies Prospero with an English administrator, John Thompson, in order to expose “white paternalism exercising its prerogatives on and against its colonial subjects” (97). And Cliff’s novel, of which Cartelli offers an illuminating reading, extends her appropriation of *The Tempest* into “contemporary social history, especially with . . . concerns [such] as underclass deracination, dissident sexualities, and feminist self-assertion” (114). Thus, we can see how “Cliff’s rewritings of the roles of Caliban, Ariel, and Miranda move beyond the meanings of both Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and the often predictable . . . rewritings . . . of Retamar, Lamming, Césaire” (114) — all first generation postcolonial writers.

Section III, entitled *The Othello Complex*, charts *dialogic* appropriations of the play in the context of “evolving racial paradigms of the seventeenth, eighteenth centuries” in Aphra Behn’s *Oronooko* and of the twentieth century in Tayib Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* (1969). Thus, while making a strong case for Behn’s modeling of Oronooko “on Shakespeare’s superficially Europeanized Moor” (129), and Salih’s re-creation of the Othello complex in his protagonist, Mustapha Said, Cartelli offers an illuminating account of the colonial and postcolonial manifestations of Othello’s self-divided identity.

In the conclusion or coda, the writer shifts ground seemingly to depoliticize Shakespearean appropriation. Choosing two works that either present self-validating images of the West or show Shakespeare as irrelevant in the new South Africa, Cartelli in effect “decolonizes” Shakespeare, freeing his plays from “postcolonial rage” (4). Overall, the book is a promising study of Shakespearean appropriation in its many forms, but its conflicting political stands detract from its intellectual impact.

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