

dramaturgical traditions" (2). Moreover, the "style" of the contributions is just as varied; interview, creative work (William S. Yellow Robe, Jr.; Sistren; Chin Woon Ping), self-reflexive "lecture" intermix with the more traditional critical essay. As might be expected, some of the pieces are more successful than others; some hold more interest for an individual reader according to her/his own interests, knowledges, and location.

(*Post*)*Colonial Stages* has all the faults and all the joys of such eclecticism. The unevenness of the contributions can make it, at times, a laborious read; at other times, the connections that arise out of such a rich range of commissions are no less than exciting. There is probably no way of getting an ambitious volume such as this one "right" — everyone, I suspect, will think of a key postcolonial stage that is missing from these pages. With that inevitability in mind, this book represents an important opening-outwards from Gilbert's discussions in *Sightlines*. In short, she makes the responsibilities so carefully outlined in the monograph the work of a worldwide network of theatre and performance scholars.

Taken together, Gilbert's two volumes represent a leap forward in both what we know of the postcolonial theatre, as well as how we know or might come to know it.

SUSAN BENNETT

Ian Baucom. *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999. Pp. x, 249. \$18.95 pb.

Original, ambitious, meticulous and elegant, *Out of Place* is unquestionably one of the more important books to emerge in English postcolonial studies in recent years. The question of how colonialism "messes" with the identity not only of the colonized but also of the colonists, of how Englishness — the national and cultural identity or self-imagining of the imperial "center" — itself came to be shaped, contested and transformed by the experience of empire, is one that several scholars (e.g. Linda Colley, Simon Gikandi, Michael Gorra, Robert Young) have crucially begun to explore. Baucom's book extends and recasts this endeavour by locating identity in multiple "places" — literal and figurative — as sites of national (de)formation and (re)formation, and by charting the shifting contours of this "localist conception of English identity" (20) over the last two centuries. One main strand of Baucom's argument is that instead of being a stable entity as often nostalgically or conservatively imagined, Englishness, increasingly under crisis, was constantly reformulated both "here" and "there," both within and beyond the boundaries of the British Isles, and that empire became the place where England "lost command" of its own self-definitions. But another strand charts the continuing discourse of identity as produced by place — and not *race*

— a “localist discourse” that, he argues, coexisted and even predominated over any racialist understanding of Englishness as genealogical or inborn.

Baucom’s innovation is to identify and read several sites of this identity formation, which he terms “authentic and auratic places,” dispersed geographically across the British empire and temporally over two centuries and which he places in startling but persuasive conjunction with more well-known literary or cultural texts. He traces first how Victorian critics used local place in England to buttress Englishness against the threat of imperial contagion, then how imperial administrators exported this idea to the colonies, reproducing “English” sites to control the fraught identities of both the English abroad and the people they governed, and finally how postcolonial writers drew upon this tradition to re-form English identities. One of the stakes of such a study is to demonstrate that the history of Englishness cannot be isolated within domestic boundaries but must be understood as global and imbricated in imperial contexts. Another is to show how, over time, the colonized have actively reshaped, transformed and become part of what may be understood as Englishness.

In postcolonial and cultural studies, if the problem of defining cultural identity is caught in the opposition between either an essential inborn “being,” a “one true self,” or, something acquired, subject to historical transformation, a process of “becoming,” a “positioning” (Hall), then perhaps Baucom’s most useful contribution is to provide a fresh alternative. In the localist conception of identity that he describes (beginning with Wordsworth’s “spots of time” and Ruskin’s neo-Gothic architecture) he locates an English tradition (later displaced by Enoch Powell’s racialism) that saw identity as both inherited and acquired through place, so that Englishness could be passed on or preserved through *contact* with places that became the repositories of memory and symbolic significance, “*lieux de mémoire*,” overdetermined sites that would enable the building of cultural and national identities by purportedly connecting past, present and future.

Yet Baucom’s argument is even more ambitious and complex. He goes on to consider how these constructions always boomerang upon their makers, how they are riddled with contradictions and transformed by colonial mimicry or hybridization, how Englishness, located in sites varying from the Victoria railway terminus in Bombay to Rushdie’s riotous London, is estranged from itself and reappropriated by “others.” Most exemplarily, Baucom insists on the necessary doubleness of readings produced by such colonial revision. The Bombay terminus, for example, he argues, designed self-consciously by Sir Bartle Frere as a neo-Gothic structure to establish the dominion of Englishness abroad, incorporates the hybridity of Indian motifs and designs; but emblematically, it both contains that Indianness and inevitably becomes itself transformed out of its purported Englishness into something else.

Drawing upon the work on ambivalence of Bhabha, Suleri and others, Baucom insists rightly that we as postcolonial critical readers must recognize the doubleness of colonial contact, and resist choosing between readings that either proclaim the victory of hybridity or bemoan the demise of the indigenous.

In a tightly interwoven series of six chapters, Baucom proceeds by ingeniously and aptly juxtaposing a cultural space as a site of Englishness (the Jamaican rebellion, the Victoria terminus, Indian mutiny tourism, the cricket field, the country house, and the postimperial race riot) with a relatively well-known text (Ruskin, Kipling, Forster, James, Naipaul, and Rushdie) to read each contrapuntally and freshly anew. The introduction sets up the main argument in relation to legal and cultural histories of *ius soli* (the law of the soil), the permutations of Britishness vs. Englishness, localism and its displacement. The first chapter provides a powerful reading of Ruskin's self-contradictory turn to architectural sites as saviours of cultural unity and identity and lays the groundwork for the rest of the book. The second examines colonial architectural policy (influenced by Ruskin) together with Kipling's *Kim* as contact zones, fundamentally torn over what becomes the problem of English hybridity. The third considers Forster's Indian travel writings as a counter-example to the dominant discourse of Englishness offered by turn of the century Mutiny tourism. The fourth reads C.L.R. James on the cricket field and the Victorian cult of boyhood, while the fifth diagnoses postimperial melancholy by connecting Prince Charles's nostalgia for a lost English tradition of the country house (which Baucom beautifully historicizes), with V. S. Naipaul's reading of his own arrival and lost identity, sadly staked upon that tradition. The sixth offers a sophisticated, sensitive reading of *The Satanic Verses* and the space of the riot in the city, which Baucom identifies as the final space of Englishness both reclaimed and recrafted, and which, he argues, Rushdie presents, unlike Naipaul, as always multiplicitous and changing, both "as it is" and "should be" (189).

Some readers might disagree with the arguments of individual chapters, and occasionally with methodology. I find the chapter on Naipaul the most compelling, but am least persuaded by the one on Forster, which seems to underplay Forster's anti-imperialism and resistance to what he took to be Englishness, and in which the broader argument of the book recedes, subordinated to another argument about Forster's effort and eventual failure to replace war with friendship. While presenting him as opposing the discourse of Englishness exhibited in the "Mutiny pilgrimage," Baucom also reads Forster as typifying an Englishness that remains to be established. Methodologically, I am uneasy about reading each instance as a synecdoche for a whole when that instance may prove atypical.

My main reservation pertains however to the bizarre absence of women's writing or cultural participation from this otherwise im-

mensely rich, wide-ranging account (except for two insightful pages on Jean Rhys's last novel). Are women to be understood as altogether exempt from the changing constructions of Englishness over two centuries? What are the costs of such an occlusion? How might gender considerations enrich the readings of the discursive or material texts that are discussed? Some discussion of nineteenth-century English women's travel writings (Emily Eden, Mary Kingsley) or twentieth-century fiction (Woolf, Mansfield) might have been apt, as would some justification of why these particular six male writers were chosen. My second concern is that while *Out of Place* most valuably draws attention to how place was central to the construction of English identities, it omits a consideration of the interplay between discourses of place and race in the period that it charts. If, as Baucom concedes in the introduction, the idea of race as a determinant of identity coexisted with the localist one even in the nineteenth century (or perhaps even predominated, as Robert Young's work suggests), and if race became more important than place after postcolonial immigration to the metropolis, then a clearer account throughout the book of these two concurrent ways of defining identity might be more enlightening.

Such caveats apart, *Out of Place* is nonetheless an astonishing feat — for its creative and important argument, subtle readings, breadth of reference and research, historical grounding, judicious critiques of earlier critics, imaginative use of theory, and polish and elegance of each sentence, unhampered by the mechanistic jargon or clutter that frequently beleaguers contemporary academic prose. It should prove — substantively, methodologically and stylistically — a valuable and timely model for contemporary postcolonial scholarship.

AMBREEN HAI

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Kwame Dawes. *Natural Mysticism: Towards a New Reggae Aesthetic*. Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 1999. Pp. 280. £12.99.

Reggae is one of the most influential musical forms in the Caribbean Basin, both because of the way it speaks to a specific cultural, economic, and political history, and because of the way it has framed the challenge of cultural identity in what is popular in the international