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PROFOUND KINSHIPS: MODERNIST APPROPRIATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE AND THE EXPANSION OF BRITISH NATIONAL IDENTITY, 1906-1922

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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2000

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation analyzes appropriations of Shakespearean drama by four modernist writers—W.B. Yeats, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and T.S. Eliot—and applies the methodology of postcolonial theory to examine the connections between Shakespearean appropriation and the politics of national identity formation. Despite a wealth of scholarship which has identified nearly every modernist Shakespearean allusion, there has been no satisfying attempt to assess how engagements with Shakespeare influence our reading of early twentieth-century British culture as a whole. My dissertation addresses the rampant appropriation of Shakespeare in now-canonical modernist texts and why this literary borrowing occurs with such intensity at this particular historical moment.

In the years before, during, and after World War I, literature was seen as a potential agent of social cohesion, uniquely capable of unifying a fracturing class system complicated by the emergence of newly-liberated women as members of the work force. There was a simultaneous desire to unify a national culture increasingly hybridized by the presence of English-speaking voices from the colonial world. Although England was of heterogeneous parentage—a mingling of Celts, Saxons, Normans, and others—many
government leaders relied on a myth of purity of origins. As a result, Shakespeare became increasingly important as a locus of the national tradition—a site for national pride, but also a highly-contested figure for writers from the margins who sought to articulate the complexity of British national identity. Although the four writers in question may not seem to be the most obvious candidates for a colonial discourse analysis, they were either non-English or female, which placed them outside the main current of an emerging national literature at this stage in their respective careers. For this reason, the unique responses of Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot to Shakespeare can be re-examined productively in the light of postcolonial theory, which reveals how colonial power relations are mirrored in literary culture. This understanding has provided an original framework with which to read the modernist appropriations of Shakespeare as a politicized response to narrowly-conceived definitions of British national identity in the Great War era.
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In his essay "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry" (1919), T.S. Eliot describes the intimacy which modernist writers must establish with the writers of a distant literary past:

There is a kind of stimulus for a writer which is more important than the stimulus of admiring another writer. . . . This relation is a feeling of profound kinship, or rather of a peculiar personal intimacy, with another, probably a dead author. . . . The imperative intimacy arouses for the first time a real, an unshakeable confidence. That you possess this secret knowledge, this intimacy, with the dead man, that after few or many years or centuries you should have appeared, with this indubitable claim to distinction; who can penetrate at once the thick and dusty circumlocutions about his reputation, can call yourself alone his friend; it is something more than encouragement to you. It is a case of development, like personal relations in life. (39)

Such an intimacy with the dead is something that all four writers discussed here share.

And although perhaps not all of them would join Eliot in describing such a relationship as
a friendship (since, as we shall see, the alliance can be quite contentious), Eliot, W.B.
Yeats, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf possess a common “peculiar personal intimacy”
with at least one dead author in particular: William Shakespeare.

The modernists, as a group, were obsessed with tradition. The fiction, poetry, and
drama of Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot frequently weave fragments of the literary past
into their own works, producing a seamless fabric of past and present. Although
modernist writers heeded Ezra Pound’s advice to “make it new”—casting aside many of
the literary stylings of their Victorian predecessors—the modernists did so with what Eliot
once described as an “historical sense,” thus recognizing, simultaneously, the “pastness”
of the past as well as its “presence.” In other words, for Eliot, great literature was not
only part of the past as the product of a specific historical era, but also “present” insofar
as the works from the Western European literary tradition form an ideal order which is
also atemporal. As a result, Eliot concluded that “we shall often find that not only the
best, but the most individual parts of [the poet’s] work may be those in which the dead
poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously” (Essays 4). As a result, the
experimental works of the modernists became, at once, a break with the literary past and a
celebration of that past.

This is all very familiar ground, as any good survey of modernist literary practice
will attest. And no single figure from the Western literary canon has been more central
to the works of the modernists than William Shakespeare. Even though Eliot once
speculated that “not one man in each generation is great enough to be intimate with
Shakespeare” ("Reflections" 19), Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot all demonstrate a "profound kinship" with Shakespeare. There are numerous articles on the subject which catalogue the connections between individual modernist texts and the Shakespearean plays which provide some sort of subtext in them. But my dissertation is no such exercise in tracing textual allusions. We already know, for instance, the location of nearly every Shakespearean allusion in the pages of novels such as *Ulysses* (1922) and *The Waves* (1931); or, that Eliot was particularly enamored of placing allusions to Shakespearean romances such as *Pericles* or *The Tempest* throughout his poems, while Yeats was partial to the tragedies *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. So is there anything new to be said about the relationship of these writers to Shakespeare? Despite an abundance of scholarly excavation, there has been no satisfying attempt to bring this critical apparatus together to answer the question of what the recurrent recourse to Shakespeare in novels, poetry, and drama means to those of us interested in early twentieth-century British culture as a whole. The appropriation of Shakespeare in these now-canonical modernist texts illustrates the contested nature of British national identity during the modernist period. The obsession with Shakespeare needs to be understood in terms of power relations between *the* icon of Englishness and writers potentially marginalized within the English literary tradition by virtue of either gender (Woolf) or ethnicity (Yeats, Joyce, and Eliot). To begin to analyze this subject, my study provides a more general overview of the appropriation of Shakespeare during the first two decades of the century and suggests
that the modernist ambivalence toward Shakespeare was conditioned by the intensity with which Shakespeare was brandished as an emblem of the national culture at this time.

Despite the promise of titles such as Hugh Grady's *The Modernist Shakespeare* (1991) or Richard Halpern's *Shakespeare Among the Moderns* (1997)—works which focus on modernist *criticism* of Shakespeare—a comprehensive work has yet to be written on the relationship between Shakespeare and the fiction, poetry, and drama of literary modernism. Grady's is a more traditional history of Shakespeare criticism in the modernist era, in which the author perceptively argues that the major line of Shakespeare interpretation in the twentieth century was shaped and structured by the new movements in art and literature which originated in the modernist era. Grady's theoretical framework is primarily Marxist, owing a great debt to the tradition of ideology critique, a critical orientation shared by Halpern's later study. In *Shakespeare Among the Moderns*, Halpern is similarly interested in the critical reception of Shakespeare after the modernist period, but he also examines the ways in which stage performance and cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare have been influenced by modernist criticism. In addition, there have also been excellent book-length studies on the relationship between *individual* modernist authors and Shakespeare, works which have included both the creative work and critical essays of the modernists, namely William Schutte's *Joyce and Shakespeare* (1957) and Rupin Desai's *Yeats's Shakespeare* (1971). But neither of these works could view the relationship through the more recent lens of postcolonial theory, which is essential for understanding the politically-charged nature of modernist appropriations of Shakespeare.
The work of postcolonial scholars such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak (all of whom figure prominently in the individual chapters which follow) has helped us to think in new ways about the power relations which underpin every aspect of life in the colonial era, including historical and literary discourses. Feminist criticism has also absorbed the thinking of postcolonial critics, articulating the ways in which gender relations during the same era are frequently analogous to the power relations between the colonizer and colonized. Without the framework provided by postcolonial theory, a study which explores such wide-ranging encounters between Shakespeare and the modernists would not have been possible. After all, these writers present a diverse range of ethnicities from within and without Great Britain, not to mention the complications which arise when the gendering of national identity discourses is explored in the essays and fiction of Woolf. By adopting a postcolonial framework, my dissertation sheds new light on literary modernism, providing a view of writers immersed in gender and national identity politics while engaged with Shakespeare, the most canonical figure within the national literary tradition they sought to expand.
NOTES

1. There are numerous surveys which document the indebtedness of modernist poetics to the literary past, such as Hugh Kenner’s *The Pound Era* (1971). A more recent, and quite convincing account, appears in James Longenbach’s *Modernist Poetics of History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987). The latter study focuses on the works of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, who shared a predisposition for juxtaposing fragments of the literary past (especially Shakespeare and Dante) with their own verse as a way to demonstrate that the past and present were not distinct entities but part of, in Eliot’s words, an “organic whole,” in which the present literary work can only derive its significance in relation to the works which preceded it. Eliot makes this very argument in his essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” but Longenbach shows us just how Eliot and Pound put this theory into literary practice.

2. In the case of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the sleuthing for Shakespearean allusions (indeed most any literary allusions) has been facilitated by works such as Don Gifford’s *Ulysses Annotated* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), a work whose scholarship makes it possible to sift for traces of dozens of Shakespeare plays which work their way into the fabric of Joyce’s narrative.

3. In two of the chapters that follow, I avoid these familiar lines of inquiry. My chapter on Eliot focuses not on the “romances,” but on the tragedy *Antony and Cleopatra*, while my chapter on Yeats places Yeats’ drama within the context of a Shakespearean history cycle (The “Henriad”) rather than in the more typical context of Yeatsian drama’s relationship to *Hamlet* and *King Lear*.

4. The influence of modernist criticism on cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare has also been an interest of mine. In particular, I have analyzed the influence of both Eliot’s essay “Hamlet and His Problems” and later psychoanalytic Shakespeare criticism on the subsequent film versions of *Hamlet* directed by Laurence Olivier (1948) and Franco Zeffirelli (1990). See my essay “Toward an Objective Correlative: The Problem of Desire in Franco Zeffirelli’s *Hamlet,*” *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 25 (1997): 125-131.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

ENGLISH STUDIES AND THE NATION-STATE:
A CONTEXT FOR THE APPROPRIATION OF SHAKESPEARE
IN BRITAIN, 1906-1922

I - The Rise of English Studies

The short answer to the question “Why Shakespeare?” could be simply “World War I.” Although this over-simplifies matters, it is undeniable that the Great War, and the international tensions which immediately preceded it, directly contributed to both the growth of English Studies as we know it today and Shakespeare’s privileged position within the field. Without the Great War, Shakespeare may not have been held up as such a powerful token of Englishness, and English might have assumed its place of academic prominence far more slowly. After all, the growth of English studies is far from the self-perpetuating process that it might seem at first glance. A number of complex and overlapping cultural forces set it in motion, and may have been initiated as early as the
Hyde Park Riots of 1866 which inspired Matthew Arnold to write *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). Chris Baldick’s *The Social Mission of English Criticism* (1983) is particularly convincing in tracing the development of English as an academic discipline beginning with Arnold’s seminal appeal to the civilizing and humanizing potential of culture, or what Arnold refers to as “the best that has been thought and known in the world” (70). Although Arnold has subsequently been cast in the role of a near-reactionary by Marxist critics such as Terry Eagleton, Arnold was indeed reform-minded. Arnold understood that British society was in the midst of profound social changes and that provisions had to be made for the education of those previously unprovided for: namely a growing underclass and women. Culture could no longer be a “smatering of Greek and Latin” (54) for the Philistines (i.e., upper classes); instead, the steady promulgation of the best that is thought and known could actually work “to do away with classes” (70). This all sounds a bit more revolutionary in theory than Arnold perhaps envisioned in practice, but Arnold’s ideas did take root in the decades that followed. Prior to 1880, classics was *the* masculine academic pursuit, but by 1893 the Oxford School of English Language and Literature was founded, and English was on the road to respectability within the academy, and ultimately a position of prestige. But we have not yet arrived at that point in the narrative.

From the closing years of the nineteenth century, language and literature seemed to be the ideal means by which to create the community and reconciliation necessary to ease the social tensions which had carried over from Arnold’s mid-Victorian perspective,
tensions found both at home and abroad in the colonies. In part, such tensions included the increasing demands to extend the vote to women and the disenfranchised underclass, but the proliferation of English was also sought to further Britain’s expanding imperial aims. English became an important component of the civil service exams taken by prospective colonial administrators; colonial schools were required to include English literature in their curriculums since its “civilizing” aspects could foster a more cultivated (and tractable, it was believed) colonial subject. Whether applied to British subjects at home or colonial subjects abroad, many believed that English possessed a unique humanizing influence which helped to impose an orderly nature necessary to “protect” society from potential forces of anarchy. But as we move closer to the twentieth century, there is an increasing importance attached to disseminating English Studies among everyone at home in Britain, not just the disenfranchised; even university-educated men would soon enroll in English course work. According to Brian Doyle’s English and Englishness (1989), prior to the Great War nearly all of the students enrolled in English Studies programs were female (3). As a means of spreading morality on the domestic front, literature had become the domain of women; the Victorian “angel in the house” could not only be the guardian of the language and the social improvement it fostered in the home, but the teaching of English also seemed to be a suitable occupation for women increasingly likely to venture into the work force. However, in just a few short decades from the advent of the Oxford School of English in 1893 to the outbreak of war, English studies transformed itself from a relatively lower-status discipline to something
resembling a social initiative; when it was only a means of spreading morality, literature was “women’s work,” but when national interests were at stake, the boys took over, and took over quickly.

An important part of my argument, however, is that the position of English as essential to the health of the British nation did not occur overnight when the guns first fired in August 1914. A number of forces which eventually implemented a mission of national renewal through literary education were already in place in the decade which preceded the outbreak of war. One need only consider the formation of the English Association, which was established in 1906, the year with which my own study commences. In addition to discussions of pedagogy and the desire to facilitate university-level study of English, the Association hoped to “promote the due recognition of English as an essential element in the national education” (Origin 5 - emphasis mine). From a period nearly a decade removed from the start of the war, English had already been enlisted to serve the interests of the nation-state, as part of a more general anxiety in Britain relating to various aspects of the deterioration of the national body.² The twenty-year period from 1895-1915 was the great age of movements to prevent such national degeneration. The National Trust was established in 1895 to preserve the architecture central to English culture; the Tate Gallery, a national museum of modern art, arrived in 1897 to showcase the contributions of contemporary British artists, and the National Board of Education originated in 1899 as a guardian for the nation’s schools (Doyle 23). And within this context, the English Association assumed a responsibility for advancing
the specific role of English Studies within the national culture. As the war years approached and English was viewed as increasingly essential to the national culture, the gender distribution of enrollment in English programs became more equitable; at Oxford, for example, under the tenure of Walter Raleigh, the university's first chair of English literature, the number of students reading for English degrees shifted from five men and fifteen women in 1904 to eighteen men and seventeen women by 1913 (Palmer 136, 148). By the standards of the late twentieth century, this may still seem like a small number of students preparing for the degree, but one must remember that the curricular proliferation of English was occurring at every level of the British school system, and that the university degree in English had not even existed two decades earlier. Consequently, as English became viewed as vital to national interests, it was less likely to be entrusted to the care of women. This eventual place of privilege accorded to English within the university was somewhat unique in Europe at the time. As Brian Doyle reports, "in some other European countries...more formally theoretical disciplines came to be placed at the curricular core of the nation" (39). But the study of English language and literature was rapidly becoming the central (and masculine) British academic discipline.

As Anglo-German tensions increased, there was a sincere desire to make English studies distinct from the far more "Teutonic" field of philology. To many of the early and influential professors of English (many of whom served as English Association members), a national consciousness and pride in English language and literature could
provide the basis for a more lasting national unity. Ernest de Sélincourt, Professor of English at Birmingham University, describes just such a vision in his “Shakespeare” lecture in *English Poets and the National Ideal* (1916):

A time like the present, when we are in the throes of a great national crisis, affecting the lives of the most callous and indifferent of us, affords a clear test of the value that we really attach to literature, and, in particular, to poetry, the highest form of literature. Do we lay it aside as a pleasant pastime suitable enough for less hustling days but remote from our present practical needs and purposes, or do we turn to it with a keener spiritual hunger, feeling that it can give us not merely a

*pastime*, but in the true sense *recreation*? (7)

Sélincourt’s rhetorical question was not the only example of a call for the proliferation of literature as *the* means to “recreate” the nation at this time.³ By the time of the outbreak of war, Germany, too, had begun to recognize the important role that literature could play in helping to forge a stronger sense of national identity. In addition to an obvious pride in the poetry of Heine and Goethe, a surprisingly contested figure on the literary “front” became none other than William Shakespeare. *English Poets and the National Ideal* begins with a discussion of Shakespeare because Sélincourt believed that the nation could “justify our democracy on national grounds. . .by applying to ourselves and our position in the state the lessons that he writes large in the characters and fates of his kings and statesmen” (15-16). But Shakespeare seems to have been uniquely susceptible to
appropriation from outside of Britain. In Sélincourt’s view, the Germans had misunderstood the “anti-democratic conception of national life” found in Shakespeare’s plays and co-opted him for their own malevolent designs:

[The Germans] see in his Politik something that corresponds with their present ideal of government, which we regard as now three centuries out of date. And so their poet Hauptmann roundly asserts that Shakespeare was in truth a German. . . . Poor Shakespeare! If you want to crystallize the pathetic situation in a phrase you might call it 'Shakespeare interned’. . . and that his capture by the enemy has as yet no better authority than an official wireless communication from Berlin. (12-13)

As the war ground to a near stalemate in the trenches of Flanders and France, the political importance of the relationship between English Studies and Britain’s national destiny seemed to intensify. Not content to have wrested Shakespeare back from the Germans, the powers-that-be who had formed the English Association in the decade before the war were now a majority of the participants charged with drafting a formal report on the state of the teaching of English in Great Britain. Named to head the committee which eventually carried his name was Henry Newbolt. Newbolt was the imperialist poet who had coined the famous lines “Play up! play up! and play the game” in a war verse designed to rally the troops at the front with a sporting metaphor, and which proved inspiring to many on the home front but ludicrous to those actually fighting the war.⁴

As I mentioned earlier, the membership of the fourteen member Newbolt Committee included many of the charter members of the English Association (9 of 14, to
be exact - Smith 6) and included such figures as Caroline Spurgeon, Sidney Lee and John Dover Wilson (all of whom will make appearances in the chapter on Joyce which follows). The task of these seminal figures in the growth of English Studies was to extend the work of the English Association and rebuild the entire “arch” of national education around the “keystone” of English (Great Britain 5). In the committee’s published report on The Teaching of English in England (1922), the Newbolt members noted both a new sense of “national pride” (for which literature could claim part of the credit) and that England now had a renewed appreciation for the importance of education in the nation’s overall well-being. Not by coincidence, the Newbolt Report, which committee member John Dover Wilson claims “sold...like a ‘best seller’” (99), at times crosses discursive boundaries into the rhetoric of the pulpit (“literature...is one of the chief temples of the human spirit” - 259) and just as frequently invokes the often related discourse of colonialism:

But the enormous changes in the social life and industrial occupations of the vast majority of our people, changes begun in the sixteenth century and greatly accentuated by the so-called Industrial Revolution, have created a gulf between the world of poetry and that world of everyday life from which we receive our ‘habitual impressions’. Here too lies our hope; since the time cannot be far distant when the poet...will invade this vast new territory and so once more bring satisfaction and joy into the sphere of common life. (258 - emphasis mine)
The suggestions here appear analogous to an academic’s version of Kipling’s “white man’s burden”: English studies seeks to make inroads into a territory as yet unexplored, which carries a special resonance given that the period from 1880-1920 is one of arrested colonial expansion. That “teeming population” outside the academy become the surrogate colonial subjects and were some of the very same potential forces of “anarchy” which had troubled Matthew Arnold back in 1866. This is where postcolonial theory, which is essentially a study of power relations, becomes of central importance: the writers at the heart of this dissertation all potentially occupy positions at the margins of the national culture. Two Irish writers, an expatriate American, and a female writer thereby engage with Shakespeare as a means of expanding the very sense of the nation whose national culture is in need of preservation at this time of national crisis.

Whether teaching colonial subjects or Britain’s own multi-cultural population, the mission was essentially the same: to bring culture to the masses. To be fair, the drafters of the Newbolt Report, like Arnold in the hands of Terry Eagleton, have been treated a bit roughly in retrospect. The overall goal of the committee was actually to make the national educational system more socially inclusive. Rather than have English merely replace classics as a means of providing access to a social aristocracy, the Newbolt Committee hoped to promote national cultural unity, now believed to be needed more than ever due to shifting economic practices in commerce and industry. The drafters of the report believed that English literature, as art, could transcend narrow state or class interests and was thus beyond the influence of so-called “majority cultures.” Then, as
now, Britain was a multi-ethnic society and, in theory, Newbolt recognized the
imperatives of a corresponding multi-cultural education. As Patrick Scott suggests,
despite the stress repeatedly placed on “correct” or standard spoken English, the Newbolt
Report also acknowledges the social and literary value of regional dialect (221).
However, despite the insistence on multi-cultural sensitivity within the report (“We
believe it to be in the highest interests of English culture that local patriotism. . .should be
encouraged” - 144-45), such marginal cultures as discussed in the report (including the
Welsh and Yorkshire dialects and cultures) could never hope to escape the hegemony of
the dominant (read: “English”) culture, a culture epitomized by the works of William
Shakespeare.

II - “Englishness” and National Identity

What continues to be ripe for examination in the pages that follow will be the
ways in which national identity and Englishness (as opposed to Britishness) are
continually conflated throughout the more than 300 pages of the committee’s report. As
Shakespeare becomes the token of Englishness in the first two decades of the century,
modernist writers removed from the center of the English tradition use the Shakespearean
text to foreground each writer’s unique perspective on the nation. W.B. Yeats uses his
Cuchulain cycle of plays, beginning with On Baile’s Strand (1906), to construct his own
Irish version of Shakespeare’s “Henriad,” while significantly revising the trope of the
feminized and ineffectual Celtic warrior who figures prominently in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*. James Joyce uses Stephen Dedalus’s polemical *Hamlet* critique in “Scylla and Charybdis” as a means of resisting the formalist Shakespeare criticism which currently dominated the English and Irish academies. For Joyce, English critics, such as A.C. Bradley, who disseminated their literary views from Oxford and Cambridge should not be the only voices speaking for the whole of British literary criticism. In *The Voyage Out* (1915), Virginia Woolf recasts the story of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, but shifts the emphasis to the story of her heroine Rachel Vinrace, a Miranda-like innocent whose education has rendered her as a near-absence in her own culture and has ill-prepared her for a “romance” with Terence Hewet, Woolf’s ironic version of Shakespeare’s dashing Ferdinand. Finally, T.S. Eliot’s critical and poetic obsession with Cleopatra, Shakespeare’s Orientalized Other, offers him the opportunity to exchange his self-described “metic” status (a resident alien without the full privileges of citizenship) for a position closer to the center of British culture.

At the time of these modernist appropriations of Shakespeare, the Nation and England were not synonymous, but one would never suspect this from reading the conclusions of the Newbolt Report:

> It remains for us to consider the actual and the possible position of English in the highest sense, that is as the channel of formative culture for all English people, and the medium of the creative art by which all English writers of distinction,
whether poets, historians, philosophers, or men of science, have secured for us the power of realizing some part of their own experience of life. (Great Britain 12)

The report thus proposes English literature as the pure and natural source for the most valid sense of national identity, even though a significant portion of the nation was not English. Even though the report ostensibly recognizes the validity of regional cultures, there is nevertheless the problem of conflating the interests of the entire British nation with the cultural glories of England: in the context of Newbolt, English thus equals “Englishness.” And this was not an isolated historical anomaly. Throughout England’s history, as Willy Maley suggests, “England was of uncertain parentage but relied on a myth of purity of origins” (84), and as a consequence, the cultural contributions and experiences of non-English peoples were too often elided from the equation. To some extent, this tendency persists today; many are guilty of identifying economic and political institutions as “British,” while reserving “English” for all-things-cultural and for the glories of the past. But in the context in which I use the term in the chapters which follow, “British” refers to “a group of cultures situated along an Anglo-Celtic frontier and marked by an English political and cultural domination” (J.G.A. Pocock quoted in Maley 85), and the nation in question in texts such as the Newbolt Report should be Britain, and not merely England.

In a similar vein, the campaign for “English for the English” (to borrow the title of a popular post-war book by George Sampson) promised to make little room for an expatriate like T.S. Eliot. In this period of near-hysteria over the nation’s educational
and linguistic health, the Society of Pure English (founded in 1913) was not as keen to recognize the validity of regional dialects (as the Newbolt Committee would later be) and took an even less sanguine view of “American English,” declaring it a “mongrel tongue” and believing it to have taxed the strength of the “pure” English tongue. If Yeats and Joyce, as Irishmen, were painfully aware of their marginal position within British culture, how could a non-native like Eliot hope to contribute to the national culture? As we shall see later, Eliot’s appropriation of Shakespeare plays an important role in the process of bringing him out of the margins and into the center of the British tradition.

This period of pre-war and wartime Anglo-Irish tensions coincides with an additional conflict in which securing a voice in the affairs of the British nation is central: an intensifying suffrage movement which gained momentum in the first two decades of the century. Women were understandably hesitant to relinquish the political and economic advances gained as the war effort brought them into the workforce and into relationships with other like-minded women anxious to consolidate their social gains with the right to vote. Much like the temporary deferral of the Irish Home Rule movement initiated by the onset of war, women were asked by the government to relinquish their struggle for equality in the interests of the national well-being. But women were also asked to staff hospitals and munitions factories, work in fields and drive trucks due to the absence of the men fighting at the front. As traumatic as the events of the Great War were for the entire population of Britain, there was also a sense of liberation among many of the women who truly felt like full-fledged citizens for the first time, thanks to newly
established economic and social freedoms. And like the Irish, who demanded repayment for the sacrifices engendered by the deferred Home Rule struggle, British women saw themselves as the potential benefactors of a new post-war British order. In the words of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, “most women now began to see themselves as coextensive with the state, and with a female state at that, a Britannia [that glorious female figure with her shield, helmet, and trident], not a Union Jack” (318). Thus, it becomes clear that more than one half of the English population (i.e., English women) considered themselves poised to claim a greater stake in the future governance of Britain in this turbulent era, a period marked by the war that Virginia Woolf once referred to as “that amazing outburst in August 1914” (Three Guineas 39). And it is at this “splendid” moment (again, Woolf’s word) in history for British women that Woolf begins to rethink her very conception of “history” in the pages of her first novel, The Voyage Out. She does so, in part, through a fictional recreation of Shakespeare’s The Tempest, focusing on the parts of Shakespeare’s story dealing with the education, courtship, and ultimate fate of a young woman who, in many ways, resembles a young Virginia Woolf.

Such is the context in which my study is set. Could the celebration of a literary and cultural heritage which had marginalized the contributions of women and the non-English really foster an increasing sense of British national unity? After all, what really is the nation in question within the national discourse on English Studies: England or
Britain? It is no wonder that within this cultural climate, generally speaking, so many modernist writers looked toward the past and to Shakespeare in particular. As Philip Dodd suggests:

> The past tense is important, for what is clear is that during 1880-1920 the conviction that English culture was to be found in the past was stabilized. The past cultural activities and attributes of the people were edited and then acknowledged, as contributing to the evolution of the English national culture which had produced the present. Nowhere was this more evident than through the establishment of a national literary tradition within the emergent discipline of English literature. (22)

As a consequence, all Britons were to have a secure place within the national culture, and groups such as the Newbolt Committee were ostensibly tasked with helping to secure a place for even the most marginalized of cultures. But to a great extent, the diverse population of the British Isles were, more accurately, “spectators of a culture already complete and represented for them by its trustees” (Dodd 22). As a measure of the extent to which this cultural context was waged through the figure of William Shakespeare, we should now turn to Shakespeare’s more general role within the emerging national culture before examining the individual responses of Yeats, Woolf, Joyce, and Eliot.
It almost seems redundant to begin to establish the centrality of Shakespeare to the British literary canon during any period. After all, it may seem that Shakespeare was never anything but the icon of British culture since the seventeenth century. My intention, however, is to document the absolute intensity with which this token of national identity is brandished during the period from 1906-1922. As we have seen in our discussion of the war years, Shakespeare could function as a true marker of cultural authority, as a contested figure in the battle to establish a national literature at the core of national identity. As I have noted, even the Germans tried to claim the Bard as their own, not only attempting to appropriate a Teutonic Shakespeare during the war, but also by establishing a nineteenth-century Shakespeare Society years before Britain did (much to the chagrin of the Victorian man of letters Frederick James Furnivall, who eventually founded Britain’s New Shakespeare Society in 1873 - Grady 43). [Britain did have one advantage over Germany, however, in that Shakespeare was indeed a native son.] Nevertheless, Shakespeare could also be a figure contested from within Britain. In the first decade of the century, critics such as Walter Raleigh were calling for a more active critical engagement with Shakespeare and a halt to what George Bernard once referred to as “Bardolatry”: “We are idolaters born and bred. Our sin is not indifference, but
superstition - which is another kind of ignorance. . . . His poetry has been cut up into minute digestible fragments, and used like wedding cake, not to eat, but to dream upon” (3-4). As one of the first Oxford professors of literature, Raleigh was at the forefront of making Shakespeare’s plays central to the canon of English literature but lamented that Shakespeare criticism had not kept pace, and that in its current state, it was little more than a tepid form of Shakespeare “appreciation.” Raleigh insisted that critics keep Shakespeare central to the English tradition, but that they not treat him quite so reverently. There were a handful of popular British playwrights who seemed to agree, apparently possessing no such reservations about a more active engagement with Shakespeare. Maurice Baring, a playwright and prolific man of letters, published Dead Letters (1910) which included parodies of Shakespeare’s characters speaking in a contemporary Edwardian tone and setting. And George Bernard Shaw, an outspoken critic of Shakespeare (no idolater he), was prone to Shakespearean revisions of his own, dramatizing some of the very same characters as Shakespeare in his plays Caesar and Cleopatra (1906) and The Dark Lady of the Sonnets (1910), but doing so without Shakespearean verse and with a greater reliance upon the brand of dramatic naturalism advocated by Ibsen, Strindberg and other more “continental” dramatists. Shaw and Baring worked diligently to ensure that Shakespearean drama was not the only form of drama near the center of the national tradition. In a similar spirit, the critic William Archer and playwright Harley Granville-Barker drafted Scheme and Estimates for a
National Theatre (1904) (successfully enlisting Shaw's public support of the cause) which sought to dislodge the predominance of Shakespearean dramatic style. But these attempts would soon prove to be futile.

Ironically, though the anti-Bardolators hoped to resist Shakespeare's hegemony over the national theater, as Gary Taylor reports, by 1908 the Shaw/Archer/Barker campaign for a British National Theatre "had formed an unlikely alliance with the campaign for a Shakespeare memorial, creating the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee" (235). Eventually, this committee would help to found the first permanent Shakespeare repertory theater in Stratford, ultimately evolving into the Royal Shakespeare company. As one can see, as we progress from the earliest years of the century into the decade before the war, and then to the wartime and post-war period, Shakespeare gradually strengthens his hold on the literary tradition and becomes a largely unchallenged representative of the "national ideal." However much Shaw, Baring and the others had hoped to reposition Shakespeare's place within the canon at the turn of the century, as the war years grew near, that prospect seemed less likely, at least as far as the most influential forces of the English academy were concerned. And this is why the often polemical appropriations of Shakespeare by Woolf, Joyce, Yeats, and Eliot strike us as so clearly against the grain and worthy of analysis within this context of hyper-sensitivity to national identity.

Shakespeare is invoked everywhere in this period, and almost always with the due reverence we might expect. A review of the titles of the English Association's popular
series of pamphlets reveals the predominance of the Bard, beginning with the second
Association pamphlet entitled “The Teaching of Shakespeare in Secondary Schools”
(1907) (the first title, *Types of English Curricula in Boys’ Secondary Schools* (1907),
serving as a more general survey of the proposed educational program). In fact, of the
first twenty titles, all published in the decade prior to the war, four were exclusively
devoted to different aspects of Shakespeare’s role in the education of the nation, while no
other author merits more than a single title; the Bard even plays a prominent role in
several other pamphlets, even when the work is principally devoted to the works of
another great (English) author.10

Shakespeare and “Englishness” are synonymous to so many of the leading lights
of literary criticism. Unlike those beastly Germans who needed to proclaim their
patriotism from the rooftops, Shakespeare possessed a more English brand of subtlety to a
critic such as Arthur Quiller-Couch:

...the body of Shakespeare’s work is a whole school in itself of patriotic thought
and feeling, [and] more than nine-tenths of it is implicit; after *King Henry the
Fifth* almost the *whole* of it is implicit. . . . Certainly if we turn to the body of
English poetry we shall find explicit, loud-mouthed patriotism even worse-
represented than is our pride in sea-power, that particular glory of our birth and
state. (298)

Quiller-Couch proceeds to lament the fact that some would claim that the spirit of
Shakespeare has left the state and “migrated to a nation [Germany] whose exploits it
benevolently watches in the sack of Louvain, the bestialities of Aerschot, the shelling of Rheims cathedral” (317). Understandably, the desperation with which Quiller-Couch wants to reclaim Shakespeare for Britain is part and parcel of the 1918 context in which he is writing, when the war had endured into its fifth year, far longer than anyone could ever have expected back in the autumn of 1914. But perhaps more surprising is that this type of inflated rhetoric regarding Shakespeare’s essential importance to the nation persists from the years preceding the conflict until years after the fighting had ceased. When Ernest de Sélincourt wrote in 1914 that Shakespeare’s “first lesson that he read in past history was the imperative need for national unity” and that the “house divided against itself cannot stand” (20), Sélincourt adopts a tone consistent with the language of both the earliest pamphlets of the English Association, works which pre-date the war, as well as the tone of the Newbolt Report when it appeared after the war in 1922.

Perhaps the title of an early English Association pamphlet says it best: *The Bearing of English Studies upon the National Life* (1910). Four years before the war erupts, there is already a sense of a desperate imperative in the attempt to remedy a fragmenting national identity with the study of English:

If, then, literature is the clue to an understanding of the national life of a unique kind, and if our national life is, as, without any blustering patriotism, we must admit it to be, of great and enduring significance in the history of civilization and of mankind, the claim of the study of English literature to be reckoned as an
indispensable part of what are called in education the *Humanities*, standing on at least equal terms with any other class of *Literaiae Humaniores*, must surely be allowed. (14)

The writer, C.H. Herford, proceeds to argue that, to some extent, literature remains a “slighted Cinderella” at the academic ball, but that the vitality of the national culture depends upon a rethinking of the nation’s educational priorities. When English literature is interpreted by the proper authority (and Herford nominates A.C. Bradley as one candidate), then English literature “becomes the explicit mind of England, seen in its most luminous and most pregnant moments [and] no subject...worthily handled [can] mean more” (2). Herford, in this practical-minded essay (as most Association pamphlets were), specifies the type of curriculum that would best illuminate the mind of the nation, beginning with Chaucer and culminating with the Romantics. But as it so often occurs in the era’s appeals for a greater engagement with English literature, Herford believes that it is when we turn to the Elizabethans that “we seem to be in the presence of an exulted and exultant national life” (10). Quite naturally, Shakespeare is held up for his particular significance among Elizabethans:

...Hamlet or Lear, apparently detached from all local or national significance [after all, Hamlet was a Dane]. ...are more potent [than even Shakespeare’s English kings] by their wider range and deeper reach, to build us up in the humanity which is not a negation of citizenship, but its crown and flower, that without which citizenship itself becomes merely an expanded parochialism. (10)
For Herford, as with so many other members of the academy at this time, the bond between literature and nationality could not be overemphasized, and Shakespeare figures as the writer best entrusted with articulating the essence of Englishness. And in the process, a more inclusive notion of “Britishness” is simply elided.

By the time the Newbolt Report appeared in 1922, its drafters could claim, to the surprise of no one, that Shakespeare is “our greatest English writer” (312). In a report which advocated the teaching of both literature and composition, studying the latter becomes essential because students were writing “the language of Bacon and Shakespeare” (54). Shakespeare’s literature proved appropriate for students from elementary through university education not only because “it contains the story of the English people” (206) but because of its timelessness:

Shakespeare and Pope tell us what Englishman were like at the beginning of the 17th and at the beginning of the 18th centuries. On the other hand they tell us what all men are like in all countries and at all times. (205)

Because of this familiar appeal to a poet, “not of an age,” but “for all time” (to cite Ben Jonson), there were genuine concerns about the qualifications of teachers who accepted the vocation of English studies, or to phrase it as the Newbolt Report does, the type of teacher “who can be safely trusted with Shakespeare” (315). Shakespeare has clearly assumed the role of the treasure of the British literary tradition and a writer who uniquely embodies the best of both the national literary tradition and the national character. In fact, Shakespeare is so central to the aims of the Newbolt Report that one member, Sir
Israel Gollancz, seems to have limited his participation in the committee to a campaign “to institute an annual ‘Shakespeare Day’ on the 23rd April (unless this fell during the Easter holidays) as a bond between English-speaking children in the United Kingdom, the dominions and the United States of America” (319). This note appears near the end of the more than 300-page report and suggests how by 1922 Shakespeare, unique among all English writers, has been tasked by British government-sanctioned forces to preserve or strengthen the bond among all who speak English, whether they be English or not. It is also noted in passing, as a warning to those who might underestimate Shakespeare’s potential power to consolidate the nation, that “Shakespeare Day” has already been officially recognized in France (319). Shakespeare is once again under siege from other European powers. However, the present study demonstrates that the figure of Shakespeare had been undergoing a simultaneous form of contestation back home in Britain, beginning more than a decade prior to the war in the earliest works of Eliot, Joyce, Woolf, and Yeats. These modernists were implicitly asking whether Shakespeare belonged only to the English, as too many members of the English academy seemed to imply, or whether a more British, and less English, Shakespeare was indeed discernible in the revisionist novels, poetry, and drama of these four central figures of literary modernism.
And though thou hadst small Latin, and less Greek,
From thence to honour thee, I would not seek
For names; but call forth thundering Aeschylus,
Euripides, and Sophocles to us,
Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
To life again, to hear thy buskin tread
And shake a stage: or, when thy socks were on,
Leave thee alone, for the comparison
Of all that insolent Greece, or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe. (Jonson 264 - emphasis mine)

Although this verse was written by Shakespeare's contemporary, Ben Jonson, for the first folio of 1623, consider how the words must have registered during World War I. In a climate where powerful academic forces had shifted the emphasis in British education from Classics to English Studies, it must have gratified many that even Shakespeare got by with "small Latin, and less Greek." More important for my purposes, however, are the words in italics. Willy Maley, in "'This sceptred isle': Shakespeare and
the British Problem,” first drew my attention to this passage and to the ways in which we can read Shakespeare’s works themselves in a British, rather than English, context. Maley reminds us that, in his elegy, Jonson appeals to all of Britain to grant the homage due to Shakespeare and that, in Shakespeare’s day, Britain was already a multi-ethnic state. After all, Shakespeare began his career as a dramatist under the rule of a Welsh royal house (The Tudors), died in Stratford during the reign of a Scottish King (James I), and repeatedly dramatized the clashes of cultures along an often-contested Anglo-Celtic border, a struggle borne out most clearly in 1 Henry IV. Although plays such as this present the other countries of Britain as a potential threat to England’s imperial ambitions (as I discuss more fully in my chapter on Yeats and 1 Henry IV), those very Celtic nations were a product of such imperial ambitions. Wales had been a colony since the thirteenth century, Ireland had been granted to King Henry II by a papal bull a century earlier, and Scotland had first been joined to England with the accession of James I in 1603, and then more permanently through the Act of Union of 1707.

Because Shakespeare’s plays display an apparent sensitivity to Britain’s very heterogeneous ethnic composition and its corresponding tensions, it seems only natural that non-English Britons should try to reclaim Shakespeare in the modernist era, or at least draw attention to the fact that only the rise of English Studies made him exclusively English. In the late twentieth century, we have entered an age in which “the break-up of Britain” is frequently invoked, but the British nation was still viable from 1906-1922. If not as culturally unified at this time as other European nations such as Germany or
France, significant numbers of Britons nevertheless felt a bond through a more inclusive, pan-Britannic cultural legacy which, particularly by the nineteenth century, included Scots (Robert Burns, Walter Scott), the Irish and Anglo-Irish (Maria Edgeworth, Oscar Wilde), and even the occasional transplanted American (the painter James Whistler, Henry James).

This cultural heterogeneity, as we have seen, was under siege by the forces in the English academy during the war and in the years which immediately preceded it. Yet somehow this seemingly diffuse collection of ethnicities did coalesce into a unified British national identity. The best account of the origins of British national identity appears in Linda Colley’s *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (1992). Colley argues that the Act of Union with Scotland was the formative moment in Briton’s status as a modern nation, and that two components sustained and expanded the sense of collective national identity: the Protestantism practiced by a majority of Britons (Ireland is not treated as part of Britain during this period by Colley) and a prolonged war with a Catholic enemy, France. As early as the Napoleonic War-era, Colley points to several key components of the British nation: the establishment of a trans-national British fiscal system, the establishment of a massive military machine, and a subsequent wave of patriotism exhibited by residents across the British Isles. A much broader access to citizenship was one of the consequences of the wars, since the struggle with France "brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves
collectively against it” (5). To many of the British, Catholic France was superstitious, militant and decadent, and to be British was, in Colley’s analysis, the antithesis of all of these things.12

The practice of conferring national identity through the process of defining oneself against an ethnic, racial, and/or religious Other is clearly crucial (as I also argue in my Eliot chapter, where the would-be British Eliot uses Shakespeare’s “tawny” and “black” Cleopatra in just such a fashion). However, Colley claims that with the end of the Napoleonic Wars, this sense of a collective British national identity was weakened or even lost completely; the Catholic enemy Other, against which Britons had defined themselves, was no longer available to them. Colley ends her study with the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837, but I disagree with the assertion that a multi-ethnic British national identity withered with the advent of the next phase of Britain’s imperial expansion; it simply possesses a source other than religion. It is true that Protestantism failed to be the glue that held together the nations of the British Isles from the middle of the nineteenth century until World War I; this was, after all, an age when Darwinism began to cast serious doubts upon some of the most deeply-held tenets of Christianity, not to mention the fact that we cannot elide Ireland from the equation after 1837 (as Colley does in the period from 1707-1837). In 1801 a second Act of Union this time bound a Catholic Ireland to Britain for more than a century, so obviously a shared Protestantism cannot constitute the driving force behind a British national identity. Nor can a sustained war with a common enemy Other be enlisted. Britons did indeed go to war in this period,
but never for the duration of the Napoleonic wars. And Britain never battled such a conveniently ideologically-opposed enemy as France, at least until World War I, when another true enemy was once again clearly in sight. But since Germany was a Protestant nation of even longer standing than Britain, cultural distinctions (of the type discussed previously) were the logical points of difference which seemed to define Britons against the Germans in this period. Englishness, as we have seen, was in large part a function of England’s legacy of language and literature.

We have also seen that a profound shift had occurred concerning potential access to the national culture during the period from 1906-1922. When Matthew Arnold was writing *Culture and Anarchy* at the height of Victoria’s reign, one could best gain access via an Oxbridge education, or at the very least, through membership in the National (Anglican) Church. Even as late as 1906, when my narrative begins, there was still a decided advantage to being English and male, but modernist theories of the nation reveal that the acts which formed the nation (often the brutal subjugation of minority groups directed by a cultural and economic aristocracy) were not the same forces which held the nation together. Thus, to some extent, many Irish writers, although not blind to the brutality which marked centuries of Anglo-Irish relations, could nevertheless inhabit an essential Britishness through culture. The same applied to other non-English writers writing “English literature” throughout Britain. One particular theorist of the nation who was working in the decades which preceded the Great War was Ernest Renan, whose “What is a Nation?” (1882) was perhaps the first to define “nation” in terms of culture.
Reading Renan helps us to outline how Britishness could thus bridge distinct ethnic cultures. Disputing the notion that race, language, religion and/or geography were the principal markers of national identity, Renan proposes that its origins lie elsewhere. The nation, he argues, consists of two things:

One is the common possession of a rich legacy of memories; the other is actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage that has been received in common. (58)

Since the desire to live together as a unified Great Britain was often tenuous at best (particularly in Ireland), Shakespeare becomes just such a shared possession among Britons, a cultural “triumph” (to use Renan’s own word) which continues to bind potentially distinct peoples together. However, the female and non-English modernists must have felt that their cultural legacy was in danger of becoming synonymous with Englishness and the ever-narrowing definition of national culture during the years from 1906-1922. To adopt a phrase of Leopold Bloom’s in Ulysses when he is discussing Shakespeare (Bloom, himself, constituting yet another figure on the fringes of British culture, this time as an Irish Jew), “our national poet” (520) did not truly belong to the whole of the British nation.

At this point, an important consideration is the extent to which culture really did unite a Great Britain on the verge of an Anglo-Irish civil war. That is to say, some readers may be more easily convinced that a Scots/English/Welsh bond had withstood the test of time, enduring centuries of economic and political union (if not political or cultural
equality), while the Irish/English relationship was poised for a violent clash. Perhaps, one could argue that, in *Britons*, Linda Colley was right to omit Ireland from the “British Question” and ground the arguments concerning the consolidation of British national identity in religious difference. To do so, however, would be to treat the subject of British national identity without its inherent complexity. Instead, I would argue two points: first, that a number of Irish writers other than Joyce and Yeats would completely eschew any identification with the British; and second, that culture may have been the only means by which any kind of shared Irish/British identity was possible at this very divisive time.

It is important, however, to note that Joyce and Yeats were certainly not alone in their simultaneous admiration and resistance toward Shakespeare. In “Shakespeare and the Definition of the Irish Nation” (1997), Richard English argues that a number of key Irish republican revolutionaries were absorbed by both Shakespeare and Shakespearean criticism. The paradox is a clear one: Irish republicanism was predicated on the need to rid Ireland of English political and cultural domination (and both Yeats and Joyce subscribed to this view, at least for a time) yet these same republican forces yielded to the riches of Shakespeare. The author proceeds to argue that, while not sufficiently linked to Britishness “religiously, economically, [and] symbolically” (137), Irish nationalists such as Peadar O’Donnell, Ernie O’Malley, and Seán O’Faoláin maintained a seemingly contradictory immersion in English literature which may explain why so many Irish were ambivalent about the possibility of their own Britishness. For the Irish republicans and
modernists alike, Shakespeare was thus a sort of testing ground for competing definitions of national identity. In fact, the very notion of reading Ireland within a postcolonial framework becomes complicated in this context. With the continuing evidence of even the most active Irish patriots as ambivalent, at best, about the cultural legacy of Britain and their relationship to it, we cannot simply view the contest between Ireland and England as one marked by the pure resistance we observe in many other colonial liberation struggles. Such is the case with Joyce and Yeats, as well as with Woolf and Eliot and their respective ambivalence (those "profound kinships") with Shakespeare. Any division into distinct and exclusive categories of Irish literature, English literature, or American literature (in the case of Eliot) misses the point that, for many Britons in the modernist period, it is Britishness which is just as important as distinct ethnic affiliations.

The gendering of the nation is similarly complicated for Woolf. Later in her career Woolf once famously asserted that "...as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country" (109). However, three decades before she wrote those words in *Three Guineas* (1938), the possibility of a more feminine Britannia still existed as a possibility to the woman writing *The Voyage Out*, and the (temporary) wartime gains of British women seemed to bear this out. Eliot, Joyce, and Yeats all worked diligently to oppose notions of ethnic purity and separation in these years, and even "Englishness" was a dubious notion for a native of England if, like Woolf, the writer were a woman: "But the educated man's sister--what does 'patriotism' mean to her? Has she the same reasons for being proud of England, for loving England, for defending England? Has she been
greatly blessed in England?" (Guineas 9). Although Woolf's resentment is sincere, there is an attitude operating here which closely resembles the attitudes we noted in the ambivalence of the Irish republican revolutionaries who named England as a mortal enemy while immersing themselves in the collected works of Shakespeare during their confinement in English prisons (English 136). The same female writer who has "no wish to be 'English' on the same terms as [her male audience is] 'English' (101), maintains a well-documented interest in Shakespeare throughout her career from The Voyage Out to Between the Acts (1941). What ultimately binds all of these modernists speaking from the margins of a national culture is a willingness to both celebrate and engage polemically with the whole of British culture in general, and Shakespeare in particular.

V - National Identity Through Discourse

National identity is an anachronism prior to modernity. In feudal societies the individual's social role was more stable and clearly-defined, while one of the hallmarks of modernity is the more ephemeral nature of one's class affinity and its destabilizing effect on all social relationships. As a consequence, as Ernest Gellner suggests in Thought and Change (1964), "If a man is not firmly set in a social niche, whose relationship as it were endows him with his identity, he is obliged to carry his identity with him, in his whole style of conduct and expression: in other words, his 'culture' becomes his identity" (157). Gellner is resuming the thread of the line of thinking first
articulated by Renan which connects national identity and culture. Although national identity can be expressed in other forms—through overt national practices such as singing one's national anthem or standing for ceremonies involving a nation's flag—national identity can also manifest itself in unconscious forms as well. As Antony Easthope suggests in *Englishness and National Culture* (1999), nation is an identity "that can speak us even when we think we are speaking for ourselves" (5). Easthope is interested in demonstrating that national identity is imbricated in discursive practices and argues (like Renan and Gellner) that it derives from culture rather than nature. He attempts, quite successfully, to theorize a materialist explanation of the function and the nature of a collective identity through national discourses. Not content with the pioneering work of Benedict Anderson, whose definition of nation as an "imagined community" has been so enormously influential, Easthope takes exception to the "imagined" component of Anderson's theory. To briefly summarize Anderson's argument, the nation "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. . . . In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined" (6). Easthope's objection to Anderson is that the latter is informed by a nostalgic conception of face-to-face pre-modern contact as real, while implying that the less personal forms of communication in the modern age are more subject to the complications of "signs, language [and] writing," with their attendant potential for miscommunication: "In [Anderson's] pre-national
culture, the lost organic community where everyone knows everyone else, people are supposedly directly present to each other without mediation while in the nation they are not” (Easthope 10).

The gaps in Anderson’s theoretical conception of the nation are that the absence of face-to-face contact prevents a more tangible sense of community and thus necessitates a very different type of collective identity founded on the will to imagine what is not really there. However, Anderson fails to theorize what may constitute an empirically-grounded explanation for the nature and function of national identity. Easthope attempts just such a materialist explanation, showing how discourse is the tangible means through which to identify a collective identification at work in the nation; discourse is indeed what is really there. Easthope begins with Hegel, who asserts that identity unfolds in a dialectic relationship with the Other, then borrows from Lacan, who suggests that the individual’s identity formation initially unfolds during the “mirror stage,” when the infant first has recourse to an external image which is subsequently internalized and accepted as the self. Easthope follows post-Lacanian psychoanalytic theorists in uniting the two and contends that national identity is simply the desire of the individual writ large. More important for my purposes, however, is the role which discourse plays in securing national identity:

...in addition to all the well-known practices and institutions securing what Freud refers to as the ‘rational’ interests of the nation, and in addition to all the more evident objects of national identification [the monarchy, flags etc.], what at a less
conscious level incites identification with the nation is a particular and distinct discursive formation. Against the view of someone who might argue that identification with a form of discourse is labile, tenuous and weak, I would argue that it is in fact immensely strong since it is cognate with those primordial movements, constitutive for the species, in which the subject strives to win a place for itself within language and so become a speaking subject (Easthope 18-19).

Easthope’s work has been invaluable to my own thinking about the wartime discourse of Shakespeare, and how the modernist writers at the margins of a national culture appropriate Shakespeare as a means by which to challenge the dominant discourse and expand the sense of the British nation for which Shakespeare’s works serve as an emblem.

One aspect of the definition of the nation which I share with both Anderson and Easthope is that—unlike Marxist theorists of the nation, for example—I contend that national identity is not imposed from the top down, as a ruling-class operation which promotes the aristocracy’s own self-interests. Instead, following Anderson and Easthope, I believe that the nation “should not be classified ‘as an ideology’ when it is in fact a much wider, lived experience in a relation between social structures and subjectivity, more like kinship or religion or gender than something that should be treated as if it belonged ‘with liberalism or fascism’” (Easthope 9). Religion and kinship (and, with the latter, we have returned again to an echo of Eliot’s “profound kinship”) are marked by just such a dynamic relationship between the individual and social structures which are
mediated by discourse. And it is precisely the unconscious aspect of these discursive practices which postcolonial critics such as Edward Said have illuminated for readers in works such as *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).

I would argue that a similar unconscious discursive network can be observed among Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot, connections which could not exist without the interplay between these novels, poetry, and plays and the social forces which championed both the spread of English Studies and Shakespeare’s role at its apex. And like the type of ambivalence which often exists at the heart of one’s relationship to both family and church (the very tensions inherent in both kinship and religion dramatized in Joyce’s 1915 novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, for example), the modernist response to Shakespeare is fraught with familial tensions. Shakespeare is a figure whose positioning as an icon synonymous with Englishness must be challenged for a multi-ethnic and less-masculine British literature to flourish. From 1906-1922, Britain consisted of the nations of Wales, Scotland and England, while Ireland occupied a more uncertain position. The Irish were in the midst of a “Home Rule” movement temporarily deferred by the Great War, but which eventually led to a civil war (1919-21) that resulted in the creation of the twenty-six counties of the Irish Free State and the six counties of Northern Ireland (Ulster), with the latter maintaining ties to Britain. But then, as now, significant numbers of the Irish (including some outside of Ulster) still felt themselves to be linked to Britain, particularly in cultural terms, which is the case that I shall argue with Joyce and Yeats. “Britishness” is not an identity which replaces other ethnic affiliations:
one can be simultaneously Irish and British, which is precisely the experience of both 

 Joyce and Yeats. And the modernists with whom I am concerned are keenly aware that Shakespeare, himself, was part of a multi-ethnic nation-state. They look to his works for the chance to articulate the “British problem,” in which a vicious metonomy too often operates: a part (England) stands in for the cultural history of the whole (Great Britain). The immersion in English literature and language advocated by the English Association and the Newbolt Report between 1906 and 1922 was not always representative of Britain’s ethnic diversity, which is why the Irish literary renaissance, to which Yeats and Joyce were so integral, and Woolf’s emergent female literary tradition, were such strong and distinct alternatives to a (male-dominated) English cultural hegemony.

The modernists realized that, as Alan Sinfield writes, “Shakespeare is a powerful cultural token, such that what you want to say has more authority if it seems to come through him. This is how Shakespeare comes to speak to people at different times: the plays have been continuously reinterpreted in attempts to coopt the bard for this or that worldview” (11). Although the modernists clearly recognize the cultural authority of Shakespeare, what occurs in the modernist appropriation of Shakespeare is not quite as crude as an ideological appropriation or an attempt to coopt Shakespeare. What does happen is far more subtle. Shakespeare is, instead, imaginatively reconstructed in the pages of the novels, poetry and plays of the modernists. While the Bard’s cultural authority is challenged in this process, it is never completely erased, which would be inimical to the modernists’ intentions as I conceive them: a truly British culture depends
upon the dynamic interchange between the Shakespearean text and the writers who respond to it from their various cultural vantage points within Britain. In effect, I argue that British literature, through the modernists’ imaginative revisions of Shakespeare, subsequently expands in order to better accommodate the contributions of expatriate Americans, the Irish, as well as English female writers.

All of the modernists use the Shakespearean text in different ways. Sometimes the Shakespeare play’s narrative functions as a rough sketch for the modernist to fashion anew, often with one character moving from the periphery of the action to its center, as in the case with Woolf and Yeats, who highlight the actions of the female and Celtic characters, respectively. For Joyce, the plot of *Hamlet* also provides an analogue to the events which unfold in *Ulysses* (in fact, some have claimed that the Shakespeare play is even more central to Joyce’s narrative than Homer’s *Odyssey*), but the real interest for me is the manner in which Stephen Dedalus responds to the text; in other words, *Hamlet* criticism, rather than *Hamlet* itself, is of primary interest in the Joyce chapter. In the case of Eliot, I discuss the nature of a Shakespearean fetish via Eliot’s obsessive return to several key lines from *Antony and Cleopatra* (the lines themselves becoming fetish objects) in his poetry and prose at a period when the expatriate American first begins his bold project of canon formation within the British literary tradition.

While the modernist appropriations of the Shakespearean text vary in form, the issues at stake are similar enough to constitute the existence of a shared response to a dominant discourse. Shakespeare becomes imbedded in the modernist text and serves a
dual function; there is both the desire to use the works of the literary past as part of the project to transform literary style (to follow Pound’s advice and “make it new”), but also, and most important, Shakespeare becomes an important locus for foregrounding a range of issues surrounding the question of national identity: how does the reform of the national educational curriculum help to assimilate women into the national culture, how does a writer simultaneously locate himself within an Irish and British literary tradition, and how does a non-British writer begin to fashion a British identity of his own?

Shakespeare is heavily inscribed within all of these modernist texts (as well in others by Shaw, Henry James, and others) and my intention is to investigate the ways in which his plays have been received and presented anew as part of the modernist struggle for cultural legitimacy. English Studies was never conceived as an innocent encounter with the literary text--English was central to cultural identity politics in that it helped to articulate national identity, a position the founders of the English Association recognized as early as 1906. Thus, in the words of Terence Hawkes, critics must “analyze the ways in which the meanings of those texts have been produced and used [and] the study of how readings of them arise, operate, conflict, and clash, of the social and political positions which they embody and on behalf of which they function” (123). Such is my goal in this study’s attention to the modernist revisions of Shakespeare. Not only do the modernists help us to consider Shakespeare’s Elizabethan and Jacobean world from an early twentieth-century perspective, but their use of the Shakespearean text also sheds light on the cultural context in which the modernists were working, a climate which not only
produced the field of English Studies at the beginning of a new century, but also
foregrounded the types of national identity politics which continue to occupy us to this
very day.
NOTES

1. In *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Eagleton characterizes the Arnoldian enterprise in succinct, although less-than-generous terms: "If the masses are not thrown a few novels, they may react by throwing up a few barricades" (25).

2. The Edwardians were, as Samuel Hynes demonstrates, conscious of a national deterioration in both mind and body. In addition to remedies proposed to restore a pride in the nation’s language and literature, the early years of the century saw alarming reports that “more than sixty percent of Englishmen were physically unfit for [military] service” (22). Beginning with a report published in the January 1902 issue of *Contemporary Review*, several sociologists and physicians published articles which documented the decline in the national health of Great Britain, culminating in the 1904 government-commissioned “Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration.” See Hynes, 22-30.

3. George Sampson’s *English for the English* (1921) sounds a similarly desperate note for the nation’s fate if English studies were not to be accorded its proper academic station: “No attempt has ever yet been made to give the whole English people a humane, creative education in and through the treasures of their own language and literature. The great educational reform now needed is to begin that universal education. English, in the large sense here used, is the one subject that will cover all three aspects of education—intellectual, moral and emotional—and very specially will it cover all that we at present leave naked and barbarous” (120). Incidentally, Sampson’s war against barbarism is to be fought “with the weapons of Shakespeare and Milton” (125), a strategy we will see repeatedly in the account which follows.

4. Henry Newbolt’s poem is entitled “Vita Lampada,” and the passage in question reads as follows:

   The Gatling’s jammed and the Colonel dead,
   And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
   The river of death has brimmed his banks,
   And England’s far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
'Play up! Play up! And play the game!'

See Newbolt, reprinted in Baldick, 93.

5. One of the most even-handed treatments of the Newbolt Report appears in Patrick Scott’s “English Studies and the Cultural Construction of Nationality: The Newbolt Report Reexamined.” Scott highlights some of the more progressive aspects of the committee’s suggestions, including the recognition of the importance of regional dialect and the central importance of the students’ own writing (in addition to an acquaintance with the Great Books). However, Scott does not obscure the ways in which Newbolt nevertheless prescribes English "if not as the dream-inducing opium, then as the tranquilizing Valium of classes and masses alike, fostering false consciousness in the interest of traditional class hegemony" (222).

6. It is important to note that I focus largely on Eliot’s obsession with Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* in the decade before he became one of the century’s best-known poets and before the period when his criticism helped to influence much of the twentieth-century reception of Shakespeare, and indeed shaped the entire body of the British literary canon. For some, the notion of Eliot as in any way marginalized is a dubious one, but the expatriate Eliot in the second decade of the twentieth century viewed himself as very much the “metic” who was not yet assimilated into the British culture he wished to adopt and fashion as his own.

7. Philip Dodd, in “Englishness and the National Culture,” documents the attempt to permit a single (i.e., English) heritage accommodate the experience of ethnically distinct groups. His argument is that groups like the Society for Pure English worked to ensure that dialects could be “preserved” (i.e., as a historical artifact) but that they were unacceptable for use in present-day communication. See *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*. Ed. Robert Colls and Philip Dodd. London: Croom Helm, 1986, 15-19.

8. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s essay “Soldier’s Heart” in *No Man’s Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century. Vol. 2. Sexchanges* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989) is an indispensable account of the different ways in which gender influenced one’s perception of the societal changes wrought by the advent of World War I. Although women on the home front were unable to understand or experience many of the horrors endured by the soldiers who fought the war, Gilbert and Gubar describe how the war effort fostered a similar sense of incomprehension among men, many of whom failed to grasp the sense of economic and personal liberation experienced by the women who filled previously male-dominated roles in both the commercial and industrial sectors.
9. This is a struggle played out nicely in fictional terms in Ford Madox Ford's Great War tetralogy *Parade's End*, as Valentine Wannop ("the girl who demonstrates" - 73) suspends her female suffrage campaign on the eve of the Great War. As Ford's novel suggests, the decision to postpone the suffrage campaign was aided by unrestrained male aggression: "We're living in a regular state of siege... more than half-a-dozen of the young bloods who had dined at Mountby, had gone scouring the country lanes, mounted on motor bicycles and armed with loaded canes... for Suffragettes!" (86).

10. An illustrative example is F.S. Boas' "Wordsworth's Patriotic Poems and their Significance Today," The English Association Pamphlet No. 30, Dec. 1914. Boas devotes much of his analysis of Wordsworth's patriotic impulses to the poet's sonnets ("Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:/ England hath need of thee") but also discusses how Shakespeare figures as "the representative of English speech, rather than of English faith or morals" (11), to both Wordsworth and later poets such as Swinburne.

11. Tom Nairn, in *The Break-up of Britain* (1977), writes that the demise of Great Britain, although inevitable, "has been a slow foundering rather than the *Titanic*-type disaster so often predicted" (13), especially in the wake of Ireland's separation from Britain in 1922.

12. It may appear incongruous to identify British national identity in terms of "anti-militancy" in the nineteenth century, but Colley is discussing the dawn of British naval supremacy and the period before Britain's armed colonial expansion had accelerated to its late nineteenth-century peak.

13. The ambivalence toward British culture is also characteristic of several Anglophone writers in the postcolonial era (Salman Rushdie comes to mind), with the most notable perhaps being V.S. Naipaul. Naipaul seems to have fashioned a British identity for himself (despite some obvious bitterness regarding his colonial experiences in his native Trinidad) largely through his relationship to the British literary heritage: "The migration, within the British Empire, from India to Trinidad had given me the English language as my own, and a particular kind of education. This had partly seeded my wish to be a writer in a particular mode, and had committed me to the literary career I had been following in England for twenty years" (52-53). That journey Naipaul speaks of from Port of Spain, Trinidad to Oxford and then to London is filtered through the lens of the British texts Naipaul remembers from his schooling: the Dickens, Goldsmith, and Shakespeare that shape the way he looks at both the Trinidad of his youth and his current home in England. See V.S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival*, New York: Random House, 1987.

14. The best (and admirably concise, given the territory covered) survey of Woolf's career-long fascination with Shakespeare appears in Alice Fox's *Virginia Woolf and the Literature of the English Renaissance*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1990. Fox documents how Shakespeare was "a part of Woolf's atmosphere" from childhood, and then outlines Woolf's references to Shakespeare in both her essays and fiction.
CHAPTER 2

EMPOWERING THE CELTIC CHIEFTAIN: W.B. YEATS, CUCHULAIN, AND SHAKESPEARE’S *I HENRY IV*

*Earth, receive an honoured guest:/ William Yeats is laid to rest./ Let the Irish vessel lie/ Emptied of its poetry.*

W.H. Auden

*Neath Ben Bulben’s Buttocks lies/ Bill Yeats, a poet twoice the soize/ Of William Shakespeare, as they say/ Down Ballykillywuchlin way*¹

Ezra Pound

Although not as elegant as Auden’s Yeats elegy of 1939, Pound’s playful tribute does allude to Yeats’s lifelong sense of competition with Shakespeare. Although Yeats himself once stated that “I owe my soul to Shakespeare” (*Essays* 519), this claim surfaces late in his life and threatens to obscure Yeats’s objections to Shakespeare’s poetic and dramatic practices. Most notably in “At Stratford-on-Avon” (1901), Yeats criticizes the “continental” influences that taint Shakespeare’s plays, and Yeats worked assiduously to rid his own drama of the Bard’s worst excesses. In this essay, Yeats specifically mentions the “Italian influence” upon Shakespeare. He comments that, had English literature “grown out of itself, [it] might have had the simplicity and unity of
Greek literature.” Yeats concludes in a memorable formulation, “no man, even though he be Shakespeare, can write perfectly when his web is woven of threads that have been spun in many lands” (Essays 109). Given the Shakespearean threads spun throughout Yeats’s drama, this suggests that the Irish Yeats may have viewed Shakespeare as a fellow countryman. A number of scholars, such as Rupin Desai and Leonard Unger, have identified these Shakespearean threads, noting the enduring appeal of the great, tragic heroes for Yeats, suggesting how *King Lear* and *Hamlet* provide conspicuous models for Yeats’s title character of the Cuchulain cycle, five plays which concern his “Achilles of the Gael”: *On Baile’s Strand* (1906); *The Green Helmet* (1910); *At the Hawk’s Well* (1917); *The Only Jealousy of Emer* (1919); and *The Death of Cuchulain* (1939). In effect, these and other studies suggest a Shakespearean anxiety of influence in which Yeats raises aesthetic objections and must resist his predecessor’s overwhelming authority, but does so principally through stylistic revision. Yeats desired that a stylistic “restraint” be restored to the Irish theater, similar to what he admired in Greek (and later the Japanese Nō) drama which could temper Shakespeare’s excesses, particularly the excessive movement which marked Shakespearean productions and consequently detracted from the spoken verses. However significant such revisions may be, an under-explored area of inquiry lies in the questions of ethnic identity which underpin and complicate the influence of Shakespeare on the Cuchulain cycle. I propose that although Yeats may indeed have “owed [his] soul to Shakespeare,” Yeats’s characterization of
Cuchulain as a masculine and empowered builder of community is an Irish writer’s attempt to resist Shakespeare’s essentializing representation of “Celticness” as feminized, divisive, and self-aggrandizing.

From Hegel’s notes on “Lordship and Bondage” to Freud’s *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* to Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, collective identity (including ethnic or national identity) has been defined in terms of difference. And throughout Shakespeare’s plays, the Celt is one of many examples of the Other by which Englishness is idealized and celebrated; Shakespeare thus becomes part of a discursive network which claims to be a bearer of Celtic identity. As Said explains, by means of a discursive network which includes religious studies, travel books, political tracts and literature, the colonized Other becomes fixed and “known” to the colonizer: “On the one hand there are Westerners, and on the other there are Arab-Orientals; the former are rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion; the latter are none of these things” (*Orientalism* 49). And, as Said’s later essay “Yeats and Decolonization” demonstrates, the Irish fulfill a similar role for many English writers.

Although a number of critics, including Philip Edwards (207) and Ruth Nevo (182), view Yeats’s Shakespeare as an “honorary Celt,” and Cuchulain as an Irish Hamlet or Richard II, the notion of a “Celtic Shakespeare” is especially problematic given Shakespeare’s representations of the Celts, particularly in “The Henriad.” Instead of simply comparing Cuchulain to tragic heroes such as Lear and Hamlet, or even to characters in the English histories, such as Richard II and Prince Hal, Cuchulain may be usefully read within the
context of the bard’s essentializing representation of the Celtic warrior, best depicted in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*. As Ruth Nevo suggests in “Yeats, Shakespeare and Ireland,” the Henriad was indeed the “seed bed” of the Cuchulain cycle, becoming Yeats’s Irish Henriad, a national folk-epic concerning Ireland’s greatest warrior-king (183). Shortly after seeing portions of the Henriad performed in Stratford, Yeats did begin work on his own *Irish* history cycle. Nevo claims that it took three plays for Yeats to reject the Henriad and find his own dramatic voice in stylistic terms when he spurned the realism and “popular oratory” of the Henriad and emerged with the cycle’s third play, the Nöth-inspired *At the Hawk’s Well* (194). But we can go further than Nevo and suggest ways in which Yeats escapes from the shadow of Shakespeare’s influence from the very beginning of the Cuchulain cycle. Yeats began the process of establishing his resistance to Shakespeare’s model far earlier: in the first two plays of the Cuchulain cycle, *On Baile’s Strand* (1906) and *The Green Helmet* (1910). It is in these early plays that Yeats clearly begins to rethink the trope of the Celtic warrior, and we can better understand the anti-colonial implications of the Cuchulain plays by contrasting Yeats’s warrior-hero with the essence of the Celtic warrior Glendower in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*. Whereas Shakespeare’s Celt is divisive, feminized, and ineffectual, Cuchulain is a force of unity, a model of masculinity, and boldly re-empowered.
II - Ireland and Wales: A Common Celtic Identity

One potential obstacle to any sort of comparison between Yeats’s Cuchulain and Shakespeare’s Celtic warrior is that Glendower is Welsh rather than Irish. However, the Welsh and Irish peoples had been conflated in the English imagination from the Elizabethan age to Yeats’s day, both as speakers of Celtic languages similarly incomprehensible to English ears and through the position of Ireland and Wales as English colonial settlements. When Hotspur claims in Act 3 of 1 Henry IV that “I would rather hear Lady my brach howl in Irish” than Glendower’s daughter “sing in Welsh” (3.1.231-32), there is a common barbarism implicitly attributed to the Celtic languages undifferentiated by the English Hotspur. An even more important source of association between Ireland and Wales exists via the bond of the common struggle each nation had fought against English rule. As Christopher Highley demonstrates in Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland (1997), the successful settlement of Wales in Shakespeare’s day was often used as a means of justifying a similar colonial policy in Ireland; what had worked to subdue the Welsh, Elizabeth’s advisors argued, should be adopted in Ireland. In fact, Highley reads Shakespeare’s Welsh Owen Glendower as modeled after the historical figure Owyne Clyne Dore, one of whose descendants was reportedly the Irish rebel chief Hugh O’Neill, The Earl of Tyrone, a particular thorn in
Elizabeth I’s side. Tyrone was subsequently adopted as a hero by both the Irish and the Welsh, and the latter even recognized Tyrone as King of Ireland and Prince of Wales. As a result, Highley suggests that in 1 Henry IV,

Shakespeare takes advantage of perceived resemblances and connections between the rebellions of Glendower and Tyrone, weaving into the fabric of the play a displaced representation of Tyrone’s resistance to English authority in Ireland. . . . [It] is the specter of rebellion within Ireland that haunts [the play’s] action and calls forth an extended, if always oblique, consideration of the unrest’s sources, dynamics, and solutions. (Shakespeare 87)

Glendower’s rebellion against the English crown in 1 Henry IV may thus be viewed as analogous to the Irish rebellion which faced the English crown in Shakespeare’s era. The Reformation had isolated England from the Catholic portions of Europe, and many English believed that the Celts had to be subordinated so that Ireland would be unable to offer access to the Spanish armada, or that Scotland might not similarly aid France. The history of tensions on the Anglo-Celtic frontier allows us to see Glendower as a potential, although problematic, source of identification for Irish nationalists still resisting the English in Yeats’s own day. In the pre-Great War context of the first two plays of the Cuchulain cycle, there were similar anxieties regarding a potential German invasion, which again could have been facilitated (the English feared) by a disgruntled Ireland then campaigning for “Home Rule.” However, unlike Shakespeare’s version of the Celtic
"problem," which merely goes away, Yeats revisits those tropes but constructs a very different model of the Celtic warrior, and consequently a very different type of tragic scenario for Cuchulain.

Another example of the conflation of the Irish and Welsh appears in one of Yeats's most famous essays, "The Celtic Element in Literature" (1902), which speculates on the notion of essential Celtic literary characteristics. Responding to Ernest Renan’s *The Poetry of the Celtic Races* (1896) and Matthew Arnold’s *The Study of Celtic Literature* (1891), Yeats, himself, usefully conflates the Irish and Welsh literary pasts, using the medieval Welsh tales in *Mabinogion* as illustrative of the Celtic "passion for nature." Rather than object to the tropes of Celtic-ness established by Renan and Arnold, which include imaginativeness, melancholy, and a passion for nature, Yeats traces the origins of these attributes to pre-classical civilizations which have, in turn, informed the Western European canon from Dante to Shakespeare to Yeats’s contemporaries in the Irish renaissance. Yeats concludes that it is a common Celtic spirit and "the Celtic alone [which] has been for centuries close to the main river of European literature" (*Essays* 185). Given his preoccupation for establishing this Celtic, rather than exclusively Irish cultural lineage, it should not be surprising that Yeats would want to revisit the representation of the entirely unsympathetic Celtic warrior in *1 Henry IV*. 
Despite his expressed admiration for Richard II, which Yeats discusses in "At Stratford-on-Avon," Yeats was also certainly aware of the role of the Celt in 1 Henry IV, a sequel of sorts to Richard II. In fact, the representation of the Celtic warrior, and his association with the English rebel Percy family (The Earl of Northumberland and his son Hotspur), is the principal means by which Henry IV begins to consolidate power in his contentious kingdom. As the play begins, the tenuous Percy/Henry relationship is about to disintegrate into civil war, and the Percies will soon forge a rebel alliance with the Scottish Earl of Douglas, the Welsh Owen Glendower, and a dissident faction of clergymen led by the Archbishop of York. Hotspur delivers an initially favorable report on Glendower, referring to the Welshman as “great” and “valiant” in his fight with Mortimer (1.3.100, 106), but the other members of the English court are less sanguine about Glendower’s prowess. Henry IV attributes Glendower’s purportedly fearsome fighting skills to a form of black magic and refers to him as that “damned Glendower” (1.3.82). Because of Hotspur’s initial praise, however, the stage is set for a later retraction which will shed light on Glendower’s deficiencies and mark Hotspur, in turn, for his weakness in allying himself with an unworthy Celtic confederate.

When Glendower later appears in his one and only scene in the play (3.1), he initially appears as a gracious host to Hotspur, Worcester, and Mortimer, referring to each as “Cousin,” but he also seems ill-suited for diplomacy. In a land dispute which occurs
before the rebels have even battled Henry at Shrewsbury, Hotspur and Glendower quarrel
over their portions of the map and the damming of the River Trent. This trope of the
divisive Celt can be clearly traced from 1 Henry IV to works as ostensibly sympathetic to
Celticness as Matthew Arnold's The Celtic Element in Literature. After initially praising
the "lively Celtic nature" (295), Arnold suggests that, in political matters, the Celt was
more than a bit unsteady: "The skillful and resolute appliance of means to ends which is
needed both to make progress in material civilization, and also to form powerful states, is
just what the Celt has least turn for" (345). Both Shakespeare and Arnold projected an
essential Celtic identity, and a common component was the bitter Celtic divisiveness
which would undermine any form of Celtic political resistance.¹¹

Hotspur, an Englishman seemingly "tainted" by contact with the Celt, intensifies
the land dispute, and in a telling show of contempt for his "ally," insists that Glendower
not contradict him, suggesting that he "speak it in Welsh" [i.e., that "barbaric" language]
so that Hotspur will "not understand him" (3.1.117). Glendower's reply is most
significant for Yeats's later revision of the Celtic warrior. First, Glendower asserts that "I
can speak English, lord, as well as you;/ for I was trained up in the English court"
(3.1.118-19) (in itself a notion with powerful resonance for Yeats, who spent as many of
his early years in England as in Ireland) and then claims that "[his music] gave the tongue
a helpful ornament" (3.1.123), implying both that he is a gifted singer and that the
unmusical English language required the ornamentation of his voice. Although
Glendower presumably did learn his skills at the court of Henry IV, Glendower lays claim
to a skill which Shakespeare never permits him to demonstrate, and we observe the first
of a pattern of empty rhetorical gestures which Glendower never substantiates. The scene
had begun with Glendower’s boast that “At my nativity/ The front of heaven was full of
fiery shapes” (3.1.12-13), a claim which is repeatedly ridiculed by Hotspur. And
Shakespeare’s sympathies clearly do not lie with the Welshman either, as Glendower
merely repeats the purported omens of his birth, relying upon a repeated use of the
promise of his powers rather than their actual demonstration: “I can call spirits from the
vasty deep” (3.1.51) and “I can teach you, cousin, to command the devil” (3.1.54 -
emphasis mine). Such promises are never substantiated and culminate in the Celt’s
failure to appear at the Battle of Shrewsbury, the defining moment in Henry’s victory
over the rebels and the turning point in the king’s eventual consolidation of power.
Glendower lays claim to the mantle of the artist/warrior, but the former “gift” is ridiculed
by Hotspur in a feminizing move as “mincing poetry” (3.1.130), and his absence at
Shrewsbury prevents us from evaluating Glendower’s skills as a warrior, despite the
claim he makes to Hotspur that he has thrice defeated Henry in battle (3.1.63-4). In
contrast, Yeats’s Cuchulain possesses many opportunities to demonstrate not only the
bravery and artistry of which Glendower can only boast, but also an actual connection to
those occult forces which are an essential component of Glendower’s identity.
Yeats’s decision to reclaim Ireland’s past in dramatic form is, itself, a move filled with political resonance. As Frantz Fanon suggests,

...colonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country. Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. (210)

Yeats’s plays are an attempt to restore the myths of the Irish past, national archetypes which were largely absent from both the classrooms and theaters of the colonized. National rebirth in Ireland could be initiated, Yeats believed, under his artful guidance through a return to the folk literature of an earlier age, particularly the exploits of that great Celtic force of unity, Cuchulain. In this way, literature becomes, in David Lloyd’s words, a "national institution that stood in for the political institutions yet to be" (69). On Baile’s Strand, Yeats’s first installment in the Cuchulain series, initiates a more heroic Celtic world than had appeared previously.12 Yeats’s source was a chapter in Lady Gregory’s collection Cuchulain of Muirthemne (1902) in which Cuchulain inadvertently slays his only son Conlaoch.13 Conlaoch had been raised in Scotland by his mother, Aoife, who despised Cuchulain after he had defeated her in battle, became her lover, but then abandoned her. As the play begins, an adult Conlaoch, raised in ignorance of his
father’s identity, has arrived on the shores of Ireland (at Baile’s Strand) intending to keep his promise to his mother and challenge Cuchulain, the greatest champion of Ireland.

The Cuchulain of On Baile’s Strand demonstrates one particular quality which Shakespeare clearly omits from Glendower’s characterization. Both warriors display a rhetorical force (in fact, Cuchulain is quite as garrulous as Glendower), but unlike Glendower, Cuchulain is equally capable of a diplomatic compromise. At this point in his life, Cuchulain is a warrior more likely to resolve a conflict with words than with his sword. Unlike the petulant Glendower, who never bridges his differences with Hotspur, Cuchulain’s initial resistance to swearing an oath of obedience to the “king of kings,” Conchubar, is followed by a sincere recognition that,

It’s time the years put water in my blood
And drowned the wildness of it, for all’s changed,
But that unchanged.—I’ll take what oath you will:
The moon, the sun, the water, light, or air,
I do not care how binding. (Yeats Plays 171)¹⁴

Despite his reservations about the mettle of the sons of Conchubar (“they have no pith,/No marrow in their bones” - 168), Cuchulain accepts the plea of his fellow warrior-king to preserve unity to “make this land safe for them and theirs” (170). In a subsequent show of self-restraint, Cuchulain again eschews the sword and, instead, offers his friendship and gifts to the mysterious young challenger from Scotland who has come to “weigh his sword” against Cuchulain’s.
Although Cuchulain does not yet know that the young man is actually his son, Cuchulain defers the duel, despite the objections of Conchubar and the other kings, who feel that the challenge to Cuchulain is a challenge to all. We learned earlier in the play that “Cuchulain has killed kings,/ Kings and sons of kings” (164), yet faced with a challenge from an obviously noble son of the “wild Scots,” Cuchulain’s actions belie his fearsome reputation. Instead of raising his sword, he counsels Conlaoch to have a greater respect for death, and offers to let it be known that “[Cuchulain] heard a raven crook/ On the north side of the house and was afraid” (176), thus declining the challenge. There is much rhetorical posturing in the scene, similar to the grandiose claims of Shakespeare’s Glendower, but behind it is a simultaneous and growing distaste for battle. Cuchulain’s goal is far from Glendower’s self-aggrandizement, but serves instead to discourage the boy’s challenge. When the boy claims that whether he “live or die is in the gods’ hands,” Cuchulain thunders:

That is all words, all words; a young man’s talk.
I am their plough, their harrow, their very strength;
For he that’s in the sun begot this body
Upon a mortal woman, and I have heard tell
It seemed as if he had outrun the moon
That he must follow always through waste heaven,
He loved so happily. He’ll be but slow
To break a tree that was so sweetly planted. (174)
Such rhetoric is characteristic of Cuchulain throughout Baile; what begins as a claim of fighting prowess soon evolves into a song of love. The irony of the warrior’s words is that the description of Cuchulain’s father’s devotion to his mortal lover is mirrored by Cuchulain’s affection for Aoife, the mother of his child, the same child who Cuchulain will soon unwittingly put to death. And what is equally important is that we see a command of the language to which Glendower could lay claim, but never adequately demonstrate.

One tragic aspect of Baile is that Cuchulain’s newly-forged bond with Conchubair will eventually outweigh the affection he feels toward the boy. When the other kings re-assert their desire to accept the boy’s challenge, Cuchulain must choose between his nation’s unity and paternal feelings which are inexplicable to him. Cuchulain’s desire for unity ultimately wins, and it is a display of which the divisive rebel Celts in 1 Henry IV seem incapable. In fact, Shakespeare’s rebels ignore one of the principal rules governing the military in the English Renaissance, as outlined in Essex’s Lawes and Orders of Warre (1599): “No violent private quarrels in Campe or Garrison upon paine of death” (Essex quoted in Maley, 100). Unlike Glendower, who allows his allies to take the field at Shrewsbury without him, Cuchulain does raise his sword in combat, accepting every challenge, including the slaying of his only son. After a Blind Man and a Fool (shades of King Lear) reveal that the boy was, indeed, Cuchulain’s and Aoife’s son, the grieving
Cuchulain literally "takes arms against a sea of troubles" (unmistakable shades of *Hamlet*), and fights to his death with the waves, the only force capable of mastering this greatest (and most Oedipal) of the Celtic warriors.

Another aspect of Celticness Yeats re-examines in *Baile* is the role of prophecy and witchcraft. In *1 Henry IV*, Falstaff, one of Shakespeare’s most beloved characters, ridicules Glendower before the latter ever takes the stage, parodying how Glendower has marshaled the forces of Hell: "he of Wales that gave Amamon [the devil] the bastinado [a beating], and made Lucifer cuckold, and swore the devil his true liegeman upon the cross of a Welsh hook" (2.5.308-10). Thus begins the demystification of the Celtic warrior; between Act One and Act Two, Glendower’s “magic” has evolved from a potential threat to Henry’s tenuous rule into a form of comic relief in the hands of Falstaff. And behind Falstaff’s ridicule, we can observe a more general contempt for the superstitions that Protestant Englishmen may have linked to the Catholicism widely practiced in both Ireland and Wales. Because of his absence from the stage after his land dispute with Hotspur, Glendower’s dependence upon astrology and prophecy becomes the principal marker of his weakness. Glendower’s mastery of the occult, an ostensible token of power, has been translated by Shakespeare into a symptom of his weakness and absence from the field of battle, as the Welshman “comes not in, overruled by prophecies” (4.4.18).

Yeats reclaims the *power* of magic and of the supernatural in *Baile*. Throughout the play, magic has become central to the events which unfold and is a force to be
respected rather than ridiculed. To understand the extent to which Yeats wanted to amplify the importance of witchcraft, consider that in Gregory's version of the myth, Cuchulain immediately and willingly accepts the boy's challenge, and the influence of magical forces is never mentioned. In *Baile*, however, the power of magic is foreshadowed from the very beginning of the play as the Fool (who is thematically linked as a comedic parallel to Cuchulain, much as the Blind Man is to Conchubar) speaks of running "races with the witches at the ends of the waves" (162). Cuchulain demonstrates a similar fascination with "the pale windy people" (i.e., the witches), and his connection to these magical powers is a primary source of conflict between him and Conchubar, just as it is between the fool and the blind man. While the blind man is preparing to cook a chicken that he and the fool have stolen, the fool is cavorting with witches. Similarly, Conchubar notes how Cuchulain missed the news of the arrival of the young challenger from Scotland because of occult pursuits: "[Conlaoch] came to land/ While you were somewhere out of sight and hearing,/ Hunting or dancing with your wild companions" (166). As Reg Skene suggests in *The Cuchulain Plays of W.B. Yeats* (1974),

> The dance danced by Cuchulain and his wild companions could scarce be other than the great, circular dance, used by dervishes, initiates to the ancient mysteries, devotees of gnostic religions and the members of modern magical societies, for the production of trance states conducive to the evocation of spirits. (47)

Although we are never explicitly told what ceremonies are conducted by Cuchulain in these magical places with "the Shape-Changers that run upon the wind" (171),
Cuchulain’s intimacy with these forces is undeniable, rather than a mere rationale for inaction that it serves for Shakespeare’s Glendower. For Yeats, the spiritual world, complete with its witches and magical talismans, exists in a reciprocal relationship with the material (or temporal) world. As Yeats would later formulate his attitude toward magic, “The central principle of all the Magic of power is that everything we formulate in the imagination, if we formulate it strongly enough, realizes itself in the circumstances of life, acting either through our own souls, or through the spirits of nature” (Yeats quoted in Taylor 7). As a result of this thinking, Yeats makes magic, and the rituals which manifest its power, part of the events occurring on stage, rather than a farcical rationale for the inaction of characters such as Glendower who are off stage. And, as Edward Said has suggested in a discussion of Yeats’s poetry, the “superstitions” of the Irish were also a source of a more radical ideology, a rejection of a colonizing culture’s ideals:

Yeats’s willful mysticism and incoherence do embody a revolutionary potential in the poet’s insistence that “Ireland should retain its culture by keeping awake its consciousness of metaphysical questions.” In a world from which the harsh strains of capitalism have removed thought and reflection, a poet who can stimulate a sense of the eternal and of death into consciousness is the true rebel, a figure whose colonial diminishments spur him to a negative apprehension of his society and of “civilized” modernity. (81)

In the present context, Said is speaking of Yeats’s late poetry, which follows the first stages of Irish de-colonization, but we can see that Yeats’s rebel stance had been
established as early as the Cuchulain plays, written during a period in which many readers may not think of Yeats as quite so politicized. By foregrounding the occult in *Baile* as a connection to Ireland’s pre-colonial past, a past which far predates the age of Shakespeare, Yeats calls into question the values of a culture which dismisses the power of the supernatural, or uses it as a means of identifying its colonial subjects as “backward” or weak. Yeats draws attention here to one of the central binaries which marked the colonial encounter. In addition to the familiar contrasts between developed and developing, civilized and primitive, Said reminds us that colonial discourses are replete with distinctions between the scientific and the superstitious. In *Baile*, Yeats asserts the power of the supernatural as an alternative to the dominant culture’s values.

**V - A Golden Helmet Becomes Green**

In *The Green Helmet*, the second of the five *Cuchulain* plays, Yeats continues to refine his image of the Celtic warrior, providing an even more balanced view of Cuchulain’s temperament. Cuchulain here not only displays a sense of humor (an attribute entirely absent from the main plot of *Baile*), but he also no longer wavers as a force of conciliation and diplomacy in an Ireland beset with civil unrest, a place, we learn at the beginning of *Helmet*, where “neighbor wars on neighbor” (149). And similar to *Henry IV*, where Prince Hal succeeds where Henry IV fails by learning to negotiate the worlds of the court, battlefield, and tavern, the Cuchulain of *The Green Helmet* not only
cavorts with witches, but fills the green helmet with ale to drink a toast to his fellow kings and their rowdy stable boys and scullions. Like Hal’s, Cuchulain’s presence here serves as the one force capable of bringing unity to a divided land through resolve and diplomacy, settling two disputes, one among the warring kings and one involving the similarly contentious women of Ulster. Ironically, Yeats endows his Celtic warrior with the best traits of Prince Hal of *1 Henry IV*, the future Henry V, who as Yeats points out in “At Stratford-upon-Avon,” was a character revered by Victorian critics as the “model Shakespeare held up before England” (104). However, Cuchulain is *not* an Irish Henry V, since we know from “At Stratford-on-Avon” that Yeats’s sympathies were clearly with the much-maligned Richard II, rather than the Hal who would later betray his tavern friends in *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*:

To suppose that Shakespeare preferred the men who deposed his king [i.e., Henry IV and Hal] is to suppose that Shakespeare judged men with the eyes of a Municipal Councillor weighing the merits of a Town Clerk. . . . He saw indeed, as I think, in Richard II the defeat that awaits all, whether they be artist or saint, who find themselves where men ask of them a rough energy and have nothing to give but some contemplative virtue, whether lyrical fantasy, or sweetness of temper, or dreamy dignity, or love of God, or love of His creatures” (105-06).

Yeats’s Richard has the soul of a Romantic poet, while Henry IV and Hal are the forces of expediency, the successful, yet soul-less administrators. By the time of *The Green Helmet*, however, Yeats’s Cuchulain is neither the defeated Richard II nor the cold and
calculating administrators he imagines Henry and son to be. Cuchulain is a distinctly Celtic warrior, but one free from the volatility that leads to his downfall in *Baile*.

Cuchulain is a model of Yeats's own, and one he surely intended to hold up before audiences, both English and Irish, as a way of interrogating Shakespeare's culturally-sanctioned image of Celtic weakness.

Reg Skene, one of the few scholars to analyze *Helmet* in detail, contends that the context of civil war in *Helmet* is linked to the fact that Yeats composed the play during the Abbey Theatre riots which greeted the premiere of John Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* (1907). Cuchulain's cohorts are drunken and riotous, and the warrior is the one force who prevents complete anarchy in Ulster. According to Skene, Yeats observed a similar barbarism in the narrow-minded nationalists who were outraged by Synge's "affront" to Irish womanhood in *Playboy*: "The brawlers who disrupted performances at the Abbey that week certainly provided a model for the quarreling pack of charioteers and stable-boys in *The Green Helmet*" (80). Yeats also may have imagined himself in Cuchulain's role as a force of unity, as the playwright/poet actually took to the stage and defended *Playboy*'s dramatic merits, reminding the rabble that, as the author of the ultra-patriotic *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (1902), Yeats should know best. Like Cuchulain, Yeats personified the unwavering force of conciliation later described in *Helmet*: "the laughing lip/ That shall not turn from laughing, whatever rise or fall;/ The heart that grows no bitterer although betrayed by all" (159). Instead of traditional and
more narrow notions of sword-wielding heroism, Cuchulain now distinguishes himself by
two additional qualities: an ale-swilling bonhomie and, more important, a willingness to
sacrifice himself for his community.

The litmus test for Cuchulain in this contentious environment is another
representative of the supernatural world: the Red Man, who had approached two men
named Conall and Laegaire in a tavern with an intriguing proposition. The Red Man
offers to allow them to “whip off my head!/ Then one of you two stoop down, and I’ll
whip off his” (151). After the drunken warriors accept the challenge and behead the Red
Man, he disappears into the sea, but returns twelve months later to collect his debt. As
the play opens, the twelve months have passed, and the fearful Conall and Laegaire
approach Cuchulain for assistance. Before offering his help, Cuchulain first takes the
opportunity to mock his colleagues over the outrageousness of their tale: “I have
imagined as good when I’ve been as deep in the cup” (151). Here, Yeats alludes to the
trope of the “melodious lying Irishman,” which also describes what Shakespeare’s
Hotspur believes to be behind the outrageous claims by Glendower in *1 Henry IV (Letters
307).* However, just as in *Baile,* Cuchulain recognizes the real power of spirits such as
the Red Man, and displays a familiarity with the tricks of these “shape-changers.”
Cuchulain later confronts him: “Old herring—You whip off heads! Why, then/ Whip off
your own, for it seems you can clap it on again./ Or else go down in the sea. . . . Into the

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When Cuchulain threatens to raise a sword to the Red Man, the latter quickly claims that the game with Conall and Laegaire was simply a jest, and, as a distraction, offers a green helmet for the bravest warrior to claim.

When the offer of the helmet is made, we see that Conall’s earlier description of his house as one which “has fallen on shame and disgrace” (150) applies to the land as a whole. Laegaire soon sings a song in his own praise as Ireland’s greatest warrior, while Conall struggles to retain his hold on the helmet which he had seized. However, when Cuchulain demands possession, he asserts that “I shall give it to all—to all of us three or to none;/ That is as you look upon it—we will pass it to and fro,/ And time and time about, drink out of it and so/ Stroke into peace this cat that has come to take our lives” (153). Such is the course of action not taken by Glendower in 1 Henry IV, who could never bridge the differences between Hotspur and himself. Despite the fact that the Earl of Tyrone, the purported model for Glendower, was an acknowledged success at uniting the disparate rebels who opposed Elizabeth, Shakespeare’s Celt fails to do the equivalent. In contrast, Yeats’s Cuchulain undermines a climate of hostility by filling the green helmet with ale and drinking a toast to the wives of Conall and Laegaire, and then to his own wife, Emer. After Cuchulain’s constant reassurance that his seizure of the cup was designed to foster unity, rather than as a claim of honor for himself, the men of Ulster are temporarily content. However, Yeats then introduces the presence of a second unruly community which The Green Helmet shares with 1 Henry IV; not only do the men of Ulster (and Shakespeare’s rebels) wage war with each other, but their wives are an
equally contentious component of civil unrest. Not surprisingly, however, Shakespeare’s and Yeats’s dramatic narratives unfold in very different fashions, as the Celtic warrior in Helmet masters the unruly female presence, thus avoiding the feminization of the Celtic warrior we will observe in Shakespeare.

VI - “Unruly Women” and the Celtic Warrior

The female presence is a threatening one from the very first scene of 1 Henry IV. In an account of a battle in which one of Henry’s allies has been captured by Glendower, we learn that,

[Mortimer] was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
A thousand of his people butcherèd-
Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse,
Such beastly shameless transformation
By those Welshwomen done as may not be
Without much shame retold or spoken of. (1.1.41-46)

The deeds are so heinous as to be unspeakable, and it is notable that they are committed by a marginalized segment of an already marginalized population. And throughout the play, Welsh womanhood oscillates between the poles of exotic seductress and fearsome Amazon. Glendower’s daughter, who is described as “Charming [Mortimer’s] blood with pleasing heaviness” (3.1.212), is a “seductress” powerful enough to lead Mortimer to
switch his allegiance to the rebel camp. But she is also a female warrior, of the sort who
has unspeakably defiled the bodies of those dead Englishmen in Act One. Glendower
warns Mortimer in Act Three that “My daughter weeps she’ll not part with you;/ She’ll be
a soldier too, she’ll to the wars” (3.1.190-91). And, when the rebel wives do accompany
their men into the field of battle, this is a clear marker of weakness for Shakespeare; the
rebel forces are unable to contain the female presence, and cannot demarcate the separate
worlds of the women and the warrior. As Christopher Highley suggests:

In general, the Irish woman was supposedly unimpressed by patriarchal authority
and the other institutional props of the “godly” society. This was adduced from
her indifference to the proscriptions that banned English and other “civilized”
women from war. The scandalous appearance of Shakespeare’s Welshwomen on
the field of battle, in fact, recalls the English claim that Irishwomen played a
crucial part in promoting rebellion. (“Wales” 103)

The Celtic women are clearly transgressors, boundary-crossers who desire to enter “male”
arenas, and Shakespeare’s Celtic male is unable to prevent them from doing so.

In turn, the Celtic warrior is frequently feminized because of his inability to
master these unruly feminine forces. Hotspur’s descriptions of Glendower frequently
carry an element of the feminine “taint”: “O, [Glendower] is as tedious/ As a tirèd horse,
a railing wife,/ Worse than a smoky house” (3.1.155-57). In addition, Glendower appears
more at home in the company of women, particularly evident in his relationship with his
daughter, which completely overshadows any bond to his son. In contrast, for
Shakespeare the victory of Henry’s forces and Prince Hal serves symbolically to restore the proper separation of the hearth and the battlefield. In 1 Henry IV, Hal is almost completely isolated from any trace of femininity, and it is through his hand-to-hand, or more precisely, “man-to-man,” combat with Hotspur that the purity of the male warrior is restored. Not coincidentally, Hotspur, like the rebels, had allowed his wife Lady Percy to accompany the forces into battle, and this provides a second example of a warrior tarnished by femininity and who is, predictably, defeated. It is certainly true that Shrewsbury, the site of this masculine contest, was significant because of its strategic position at the border of England and Wales. However, the name also carries a particular resonance since the warriors who carry the day at Shrewsbury, are also the ones unencumbered by “shrewish” wives on the field of battle.

Colonial discourse is filled with similar attempts to effeminize a colonized population. The English were particularly prone to casting the Indian male as effete. Thomas Macaulay was perhaps the most notorious for impugning Indian masculinity:

The physical organization of the Bengali is feeble even to effeminacy. . . . His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he has been trampled upon by men of bolder and hardy deeds. Courage, independence, veracity are qualities to which his constitution and his situation are equally unfavourable.” (Macaulay quoted in Rosselli, 122)

The thinking here is that the colonial subject, whether Indian or Celt, is colonizable precisely because he lacks the constitution to resist. And when the discourse is replicated
in the literary texts the dominant culture exports to its colonies, the message becomes even more insidious, at least until the trope is identified and resisted, as Yeats achieves in the Cuchulain cycle.

In *The Green Helmet*, Yeats also revises the predominant image of the female warrior as well, asking his audience to view the female warrior as the norm, rather than as an aberrant mark of weakness. After all, if one thinks back to *Baile*, one remembers that Cuchulain’s great love was the she-warrior Aoife, who occupied Cuchulain both on the battlefield and in his bed.\(^{21}\) Although the eventual subjugation of Yeats’s female warriors may seem problematic to feminist readers, consider also that the female warriors in *Helmet* do, at least, have a voice. In contrast, the Welshwomen of *1 Henry IV* never represent themselves, but are either spoken about by men (e.g., Mortimer’s report of the Welsh women’s “beastly” deeds) or spoken for by men (e.g., Glendower’s daughter who speaks only through her father’s translations). However, like the male warriors in *Helmet*, Cuchulain’s wife Emer and the warring women require the restraint which only Cuchulain is able to impose. As in *1 Henry IV*, there is “female trouble” brewing in *Helmet* from the first lines of the play. Cuchulain is admonished (behind his back) by Laegaire for his inability to control his wife’s arrogance:

> I would he’d come... and make his young wife know
> That though she may be his wife, she has no right to go
> Before your wife and my wife, as she would have done last night
> Had they not caught at her dress, and pulled her as was right.” (149)
Laegaire's words foreshadow the eventual entrance of Emer, who arrives taunting the other wives. Laegaire's and Conall's wives make claims for their husbands' respective beauty and breeding, but Emer counters that, of all the men of Ulster, her husband has the most "pith." A displeased Cuchulain suggests that the Red Man is to blame: "Old hurricane, well done!/ You've set our wives to the game that they may egg us on" (155). Due to the occult influence of the Red Man, Emer and the others claw at each other in an attempt to proceed first through the door of the tavern. At one point, Emer even brandishes a dagger at the crowd as she sings her self-aggrandizing challenge to all that her husband deserves the Green Helmet: "His mind that is fire,/ His body that is sun,/ Have set my head higher/ Than all the world's wives" (156). Cuchulain's solution is to block the door to the tavern with his spear, and then break down the walls so that all may enter together. Not yet satisfied by Cuchulain's democratic impulses, Emer next calls her husband's masculinity into question:

Cuchulain, put off this sloth and awake:

I will sing till I've stiffened your lip against every knave that would take

A share of your honour. (157)

However, unlike Shakespeare's Celtic warrior, whose "stiff-ness" is never substantiated, and who is unable to contain the forces of unruly femininity, Cuchulain recognizes the power of the Green Helmet which has exacerbated the civil unrest, and tosses it into the sea. And yet, one action remains before the forces of unrest, both male and female, can be subdued, since Cuchulain's wisdom is not immediately recognized by all.
Cuchulain must offer his own head to the Red Man as the only means by which to restore order. The debt to the forces of the supernatural must be paid, and Cuchulain’s self-sacrifice finally seems to bring the community to its collective senses. Even Emer, whose earlier song of love was as much a song of her own self-importance, now claims that it is not simply Cuchulain’s glory which inspires her: “It is you, not your fame that I love” (158). In the face of her husband’s decision to offer his own head, Emer does demonstrate one final burst of resolve by threatening to take her own life. But we soon see Cuchulain in control of his wife for the very first time. Cuchulain seizes the dagger from Emer and castigates her: “Do you dare, do you dare, do you dare?/ Bear children and sweep the house. Wail, but keep from the road” (158). Although Reg Skene suggests that, “By sheer masculine power, Cuchulain subordinates the will of the woman who moments before had seemed indomitable” (153), it is not really an issue of masculine versus feminine, but a claim about the strength of community. Although Emer is willingly relegated here to the realm of the hearth, this may not suggest that Cuchulain has completely rejected the role of the female warrior, but instead that no man or woman should prevent Cuchulain’s martyrdom, the act which will free Ireland from the influence of the Red Man. The women of Ulster are not banished from the battlefield, but rather, must recognize that there is a time to lay down their swords and retreat to the hearth. As events transpire, Cuchulain’s gesture reveals that the Red Man has really been attempting
to demonstrate that the helmet belongs, not to the bravest warrior, but to the one best able to achieve unity through sacrifice. In one selfless display, Cuchulain quells a land where "neighbor wars on neighbor," successfully demarcates the worlds of the battlefield and hearth, and achieves his goal with an eloquence in verse which befits a true warrior/poet. And in a single stroke, Yeats has thus turned the representation of the Celtic warrior on its head. By doing so, Yeats is, in a sense, re-educating his audience as readers of Shakespearean drama, implicitly demanding that the trope of the ineffectual and feminized Celtic warrior be rejected.

As Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972) suggests, colonial education was a form of parody, "the hasty manufacture of a few thousand subordinate functionaries. . . necessary for the smooth operation of business" (21). And part of the process of ensuring that orderly operation was to relentlessly codify everything about non-English people through education, particularly notions of racial and ethnic identity. Although Césaire later suggests that a return to the glories of a mythical past is not what he is advocating (31), Yeats skillfully makes use of the myths of the Celtic past in order to demand that his audience re-think the tropes that have been inherited from English representations of Celtic identity. Yeats thereby uses Cuchulain as a way of empowering the Celtic warrior and to remind his audience that Shakespeare (and English literature more generally) could become agents of imperialist ideology. And, as postcolonial theory reminds us again and again, culture may have been imperialism's most effective agent.
Cultural identity politics are central to both the *Cuchulain* cycle and the Henriad. From John of Gaunt’s nostalgic paean to England (“This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle. . .”) (2.1.40) in *Richard II* to Henry V’s defeat of the French in the miracle of Agincourt, the Henriad has been endlessly reappropriated as a foundational myth of Englishness.23 And since notions of Englishness necessarily depend upon the presence of a non-English Other, the Henriad readily supplies several, not only in the form of the feminized French who suffer that ignominious defeat on St. Crispin’s day, but also in the paradigms of the Celts Glendower and Captain Fluellen (in *Henry V*). Although Fluellen ultimately rallies behind Henry’s force of unity in *Henry V*, the Celt still appears prone to quarrel in Act Three, Scene Two with Macmorris and Jamy, his Irish and Scottish allies, and once again the Celts breach Essex’s aforementioned proscription on conflicts “in Campe or Garrison.”

Reading Yeats’s drama with a sensitivity to ethnic identity helps to contextualize the work of modernist writers in the world of cultural identity politics, following the lead of essays such as Said’s “Yeats and Decolonization,” further discrediting the notion that the modernists were mere aesthetes disconnected from broader socio-political contexts, even during the first decade of the twentieth century. Yeats was indeed a poet and dramatist of decolonization, a genuine precursor of a postcolonial dramatist such as Césaire. This is not to say that viewing Yeats’s Cuchulain plays within the context of Anglo-Irish relations is the only way in which to read and understand these works. But it
is important to articulate the notion that Yeats's Cuchulain is no Richard II, that he is not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be, but rather a politically-charged revision of Shakespeare’s “wild and irregular” Celt.
NOTES

1. This untitled poem is reprinted in Humphrey Carpenter's *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound*, London: Faber and Faber, 1988, 505.

2. Rupin Desai devotes a significant portion of two book chapters to the echoes of Prince Hamlet in both Yeats's plays and late poems such as "Under Ben Bulben," claiming, however, that "he is as much Yeats's Hamlet as Shakespeare's" (xx). Ultimately the claim is made for a case of Bloomian "influence anxiety" with "one major writer assimilating the work of another while not allowing himself to be engulfed, but rather establishing yet more firmly his own individuality" (xx).

3. There are, however, stylistic *similarities* between Yeats and Shakespeare, such as the mixture of blank verse with lyric measures throughout Yeats's plays. For more, see Ure, *W.B. Yeats*, 8-10.

4. The Henriad charts the rise and fall of the House of Lancaster and encompasses *Richard II*, *Parts 1 and 2 of Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Parts 1, 2 and 3 of Henry VI* and *Richard III*. In addition to the aforementioned critics who have viewed Yeats's Shakespeare as an honorary Celt, see also Yeats's father's similar views (in J.B. Yeats, *Essays Irish and American*, Dublin: Talbot, 1918, 51), as well as the speculations of the Right Honorable Sir Dunbar Plunket Barton (1853-1937). In *Links Between Ireland and Shakespeare* (Dublin, 1919), Barton "speculates that 'there was some Celt in Shakespeare' and...that Shakespeare did visit Ireland" (Barton quoted in Gifford, 225).

5. Jonathan Allison makes a surprising, yet convincing, case for the political implications of Yeats's sympathies for Richard II, a character clearly connected to English imperialism through his subjugation of those "rough rug-headed kerns" in Ireland (2.1.156) and thus an unlikely candidate for an artist with Irish nationalist leanings. However, as Allison suggests, an English critical tradition, as reflected in the writings of Edward Dowden, had for years devalued Richard for his purported weakness and a lack of ambition. For Yeats, Shakespearean criticism had become a "vulgar worshiper of success," and the complexity
of Richard’s character in the play’s final three acts became, for Yeats, an opportunity for a re-assessment of a Shakespeare character ill-served by the English critical establishment. See Allison, 118-131.

6. Even in Shakespeare’s comedies, the trope of the effeminate Celt is prominent. In The Merchant of Venice, when Nerissa solicits Portia’s impressions of the Scottish suitor, Portia replies with obvious irony: “. . . he hath a neighborly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able” (1.2.72-74). The rival who is unable or unwilling to defend himself is thus no threat at all.

7. Nevo suggests that, for Yeats, the Henriad’s foundational status as a stock of legend central to English national culture, “makes more than probable the supposition that Yeats’s visit to Stratford in 1901 was the seed bed of his Cuchulain cycle” (Nevo 183). In the “Stratford” essay, after all, Yeats speaks of Shakespeare’s “five plays that are but one play,” and then eventually proceeded to write five plays in his own Irish history cycle.

8. This and all subsequent citations from Shakespeare’s works are drawn from The Norton Shakespeare, Stephen Greenblatt et al., eds., New York: Norton, 1997.

9. Because of England’s continuing isolation from European alliances, there was a growing popular anxiety regarding the possibility of invasion: “there were as many books and pamphlets published during [the fourteen years prior to the war] as during the preceding thirty” (Hynes 34). Mass-circulation newspapers such as The Daily Mail published much of this new “invasion literature,” which peaked in the years between 1906-1909 (or the years between Baile and The Green Helmet) and usually concentrated on a single potential enemy: Germany. For more see Hynes, 33-53.

10. There seems to be a contradiction in Yeats’s thinking here. On one hand, Yeats criticizes Shakespeare’s art in “At Stratford-on-Avon” since Shakespeare’s “web is woven of threads that have been spun in many lands.” However, this cultural cross-pollination had been a virtue, indeed inevitable, in “The Celtic Element” (1897) given the inseparable threads of the pre-classical, Celtic, continental, and English literary traditions. Perhaps the explanation is that Shakespeare’s eclecticism, his borrowing from continental sources, were what later troubled Yeats in 1901, who at that time was successfully forging an Irish national theater, which later became the famed Abbey Theatre.

11. Eventually, Glendower does reluctantly capitulate in the land dispute with Hotspur: “Come, you shall have Trent turned” (3.1.132), but there is nevertheless no real agreement here between the rebels. Hotspur refuses the offer perhaps made too late and suggests, “I do not care. I’ll give thrice so much land/ To any well-deserving friend;/ But in the way of bargain, mark ye me,/ I’ll cavil on the ninth part of a hair” (3.1.133-36).
12. There are two versions of *Baile*, but I will be referring primarily to Yeats’s revised version of 1906, which is contained in *The Collected Plays*. Yeats was dissatisfied with the earlier, 1903 version (published in *In the Seven Woods*, Dublin: Cuala Press, 1903) and subsequently re-worked the first half of the play, which, in the words of Reg Skene, “not only made it a better play, but also brought it into line with his new outlook on life, and with the future course of his philosophic development and dramatic technique” (39). Skene refers primarily to Yeats’s disappointment over Maud Gonne’s 1903 marriage to John MacBride, which led him to enhance the play’s sense of illogical and unrequited passion. Skene also discusses Yeats’s desire to enhance the sense of magic in the play (a topic I address later in more detail) to mark it as more distinctly Irish, which is appropriate, since it was the first play to be performed by the National Theatre Society in its new home in the Abbey Theatre in December of 1904. See Skene, 38-48.

13. Yeats’s source in Gregory is chapter eighteen, “The Only Son of Aoife,” but which also contains many significant differences from *Baile*. In Gregory’s treatment of the myth, Cuchulain knows that Aoife will bear their child before he returns to Ireland, and the son appears to have come from the East, rather than from the Scotland of the North as he does in Yeats’s play. In addition, there is no real attempt by Cuchulain to dissuade Conlaoch from the duel in Gregory’s story. Finally, in a detail important to my later discussion of the play’s use of magic, in Gregory’s text, Cuchulain appears not to be cavorting with witches when Conlaoch arrives on shore, but rather is occupied in the far less sinister-sounding “pleasant, bright-faced Dundealgan” (238).


15. Christopher Highley suggests that Glendower’s use of astrology was Shakespeare’s invention. Although Shakespeare’s two principal sources, Holinshed and Daniel, did exclude Glendower from among Shrewsbury’s combatants (in fact, Daniel omits the Welsh forces altogether), the particular explanation given in *1 Henry IV* for Glendower’s absence was strictly Shakespeare’s own. See Highley, *Shakespeare*, 97.

16. I hasten to add that Shakespeare is not always so dismissive of the power of the supernatural, as anyone familiar with Prospero’s magic in *The Tempest* will recall. But then, Prospero was no Celt, nor was he a member of the rebel camp, but instead a legitimate (and temporarily usurped) aristocrat and ruler.

17. *The Green Helmet* is surely ripe for a re-examination. Among Yeats’s plays, it has been nearly ignored, which is even more significant given the relatively marginalized status of his plays as a whole. In a telling phrase in the introduction of *Yeats the Playwright* (1963), Peter Ure notes the indifference of modern critics towards Yeats’s drama: “[Critics] have tended to judge the early ones (1889-1906) as flaccid and
sentimental, and the later ones (1915-38) as barbarous, remote, theatrically impractical, or merely puzzling” (1). Completely elided in this formulation is 1910’s *The Green Helmet*, an important work which serves as a bridge between the ritual drama of Baile and the Nōh-inspired *At The Hawk’s Well* (1917). Unlike Baile, which has been praised by Thomas Parkinson as one of “the best poetic plays of this century” (80), *Helmet* has been largely neglected. In fact, Ure, himself, devotes less than two pages of his study to this second play of the cycle and really does no more than describe the ways in which the narrative departs from Lady Gregory’s *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* and Yeats’s other sources. Ure does inform us, however, that the play was expanded from a 1908 verse of Yeats’s originally entitled “The Golden Helmet,” and that the play eventually juxtaposed two separate episodes from the Cuchulain myths: the quarrel of the chieftains, and the test for the championship of Ulster. As Ure (and Birgit Bjersby before him) suggests, “Yeats has put the episodes together into a single action by...combining Bricriu, the maker of discord, and CuRoi, the tester, into the single figure of the Red Man” (69). The principal revision of Yeats’s, however, is that the champion who gains the prize in *The Green Helmet* is not the strongest (as in Gregory) but the one who is without fear, and willing to offer himself as a sacrifice to his community.

18. Perhaps Yeats also possessed a sympathy for Richard since Ireland was ultimately the king’s ruin. Richard’s weakness was attributed to his inability to subdue the Celts, those “rough rug-headed kerns” whom he is unable to defeat in the Irish wars which dominate his military attentions (*Richard II*, 2.1.155-58).

19. In a letter to Standish O’Grady dated 1898, Yeats describes a verse-narrative in which one of the characters, a tinker, is “a type of that kind of jeering, cheating Irishman called ‘a melodious lying Irishman’” who was to be engaged in a series of conversations with many “portentous persons,” including a Trinity College professor. Fearing the number of enemies he would eventually make and the number of verses he would need to write, Yeats eventually abandoned the project and wrote a short story instead. See Yeats’s *Letters*, 307-08.

20. A 1587 edition of Holinshed’s *Chronicles* clarifies what is elided in *1 Henry IV* and also the extent of the anxieties caused by Celtic womanhood: “the women of Wales cut off their privities, and put one part thereof into the mouthes of everie dead man, in such sort that the cullions [testicles] hung downe to their chins; and not so contented, they did cut off their noses and thrust them into their tailes as they laie on the ground mangled and defaced.” See Holinshed, reprinted in Hodgdon, 271.

21. Yeats’s affinity for the female warrior can undoubtedly be traced to his relationship with Maud Gonne, whose advocation of violent insurrection, R.F. Foster suggests, meant that she was “more amenable to revolutionary politics” than Yeats, who initially advocated more moderate Home Rule policies. This was, of course, prior to the “terrible beauty” born of the Easter Rebellion in 1916. See Foster, 91, 193.
22. In a later work, Emer will have her own opportunity to demonstrate her superiority over the women of Ireland by a similar gesture of self-sacrifice in *The Only Jealousy of Emer*, the fourth play in the *Cuchulain* cycle.

23. See, in particular, the analysis of the nationalist impetus behind Kenneth Branagh’s stage and screen version of *Henry V* and its post-Falklands reception in Graham Holderness, “‘What ish my nation?’: Shakespeare and National Identities.”
CHAPTER 3

BESTEGLYSTER AND BRADLEYISM: STEPHEN DEDALUS'S POSTCOLONIAL RESPONSE TO ENGLISH CRITICISM

-They say we are to have a literary surprise, the quaker librarian said, friendly and earnest. Mr Russell, rumour has it, is gathering together a sheaf of our younger poets’ verses. We are all looking forward anxiously. (158 - my emphasis)

Given the density of the word play throughout *Ulysses*, James Joyce may use the phrase “looking forward” with ironic delight. In this passage of “Scylla and Charybdis,” the speaker, Thomas Lyster, refers to George Russell (AE), one of the backward-looking Anglo-Irish participants in the round table at the National Library. Russell, even more than his colleagues—Richard Best, John Eglinton, and Lyster (i.e., Besteglyster)—represents the culturally conservative tendencies of Irish nationalism; Russell, and others such as Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats, ostensibly looked forward, hoping to re-create the conscience of the Irish race, but they did so through a return to the myths of a heroic yet ancient Irish past. Stephen Dedalus bitterly opposes Russell’s influential version of Irish literary nationalism throughout *Ulysses*. As L.H. Platt has demonstrated, one of the many
dialectics in “Scylla” pits a marginalized, Catholic Stephen against the Anglo-Irish in the library, with the librarians adopting the role of self-proclaimed executors of Ireland’s cultural heritage. Through a rhetorically dazzling critical analysis of Hamlet, Stephen registers yet another form of opposition—a polemic against the tired literary criticism of the librarians, “looking forward” through his textual analysis of Hamlet.

What is most intriguing about Stephen’s criticism is that it resembles a particular version of biographical Shakespeare criticism present at the margins of the academic world in the first two decades of the century, but which would not take root in the academy until the early 1930s. Stephen’s reading of Hamlet reveals his resistance to the dominant trend in English criticism in 1904, a practice which dismissed the notion that a narrative of Shakespeare’s life could be reconstituted through a careful attention to his art. In effect, by the end of “Scylla,” Stephen has articulated a postcolonial reading of Shakespeare, refusing to “mimic” the interpretive strategies that the librarians shared with the critics who disseminated their readings from England’s ancient universities. Several volumes of Shakespeare criticism filled the shelves of Joyce’s library, and the present essay will continue the work of William Schutte and Richard Ellmann, who have examined Stephen’s critique within the context of critical works contemporary with Ulysses, including Ernest Jones’s The Problem of “Hamlet” and the Oedipus Complex (1911), Georg Brandes’s William Shakespeare: A Critical Study (1911), and Maurice Clare’s A Day with William Shakespeare (1913). Much still remains to be said, however, about the relationship between Stephen’s critical theories and that seminal work.
of twentieth-century Shakespeare criticism, A.C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904), a work which possesses an undeniable contextual presence behind the dialogue which unfolds between Stephen and the three-headed B"esteglyster.

The discussion among Stephen and the librarians occurs in the very same year that Bradley's book first appeared, two full decades before the rise of Cambridge English criticism as an institutionally-sanctioned discipline in the years following World War I. However, because Joyce was writing the novel during and after the war, it is difficult not to read "Scylla" as addressing both the role of national literatures and, more specifically, the hegemony of English criticism. The connection here between Stephen and A.C. Bradley is crucial. When Bradley accepted the position of Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1900, professional criticism was still in its nascent stages, but within two decades, as Katharine Cooke suggests, it was difficult to find a serious work of Shakespeare criticism which was not the product of the academy (79). In "Scylla," Stephen's *Hamlet* criticism demonstrates that the current English version of Shakespeare criticism should not serve as a model for Irish critics as well. It is far from coincidental that Stephen considers his place within this tradition by critiquing *Hamlet*, which occupies a privileged place within the English canon. As Terence Hawkes describes the play, "*[Hamlet]* has taken on a huge and complex symbolizing function and, as part of the institution called 'English literature,' it has become far more than a mere play by a mere playwright" (*Meaning* 4).
“Scylla” belongs to the moment when the institution of English literature is beginning to emerge, and Joyce’s episode seems to be very conscious of its status as a rejection of the status quo of early twentieth-century English criticism.

II - The Ghost of Matthew Arnold

Stephen’s implicit questions about English literature and criticism resonate throughout Ulysses. The “Telemachus” episode opens with a series of discussions in the Martello Tower among Stephen, Buck Mulligan, and Haines, the novel’s “young Englishman [and] literary tourist in quest of Celtic wit and twilight” (Gilbert 100). Haines’s presence in the Tower seems to catalyze the novel’s discussion of the Anglicization of Irish culture. As Mulligan borrows Stephen’s handkerchief, the former refers to Stephen, somewhat mockingly, as “the Bard.” Mulligan adds contemptuously that he has discovered “[a] new art colour for our Irish poets: snotgreen. You can almost taste it, can’t you?” (4). If Stephen is the novel’s Irish bard, the Stratford bard will nevertheless preoccupy Stephen (and Joyce) throughout Ulysses, as attested by the more than ninety direct or adapted quotations that William Schutte has uncovered in the “Scylla” episode alone (66). But equally as important as Shakespeare is the prevailing critical tradition which authorized interpretations of his plays in 1904; English criticism represents an aspect of English domination, a parallel to Haines and his condescending search for all-things-Celtic. As Stephen regards his face in the shaving mirror, Mulligan
taunts his friend by invoking both Shakespeare and Oscar Wilde: “The rage of Caliban at not seeing his face in the mirror, he said. If Wilde were only alive to see you” (6). The Irishman-as-Caliban trope, or the “simiarizing” of the Irish, connects Stephen to a discursive network which relegated the Irish to the bestial status of the usurped colonial subject of *The Tempest*. As Vincent Cheng suggests in *Joyce, Race, and Empire*, “Victorian England had stereotyped [the racialized primitive brute Caliban] as the Irish Catholic essence” (229). Unlike Haines, who would like to see the Gaelic language and traditional Irish culture restored to the Irish people as a means of rejecting their status as “Calibans,” Mulligan suggests an alternative plan for the restoration of Irish culture: “God, Kinch, if you and I could only work together we might do something for the island. Hellenise it” (6). A sullen Stephen offers no recognition of Mulligan’s aesthetic prescription, but it is clear that Stephen possesses an equal resentment of both Mulligan’s plan and the Englishman’s presence in the Tower. When Stephen suggests to Mulligan, “Why don’t you play [the English] like I do” (14), there is a clear link between Haines’s cultural imperialism and Mulligan’s prescribed Hellenization. The connection is Matthew Arnold, who first articulated the Hellenizing ideal and a figure who makes a surprising appearance in this same opening episode: “Shouts from the open window startling evening in the quadrangle. A deaf gardener, aproned, masked with Matthew Arnold’s face, pushes his mower on the somber lawn . . .” (7). Like the rigid, paralyzed
face of Shakespeare which appears to Stephen and Bloom in “Circe,” the passive, unemotive expression of the Arnoldian gardener suggests a sense of defeat and stasis in the English critical tradition of which Arnold was a pioneer.3

Stephen’s silence regarding the plan to Hellenise Ireland may be the first form of subtle resistance to the English critical tradition in Ulysses. In addition to being one of the first English writers to formulate the essence of the Celtic in literature, Arnold published Culture and Anarchy in 1869, which contained a prescription for restoring the health of English society through the civilizing power of English literature. For Arnold, culture was the one thing necessary: *porro umum est necessarium*. More precisely, a culture which best expressed itself through English literature was a product of the need to promote Hellenism, rather than Hebraism.4 Joyce almost certainly chose to invoke Arnold’s formative work of cultural criticism since, as Richard Ellmann informs us, Culture and Anarchy (as well as two volumes of Arnold’s Selected Poems) was one of the several hundred titles contained in Joyce’s Trieste library (99). Despite the parallels between Ulysses and The Odyssey—as well as Mulligan’s compulsion to pay homage to the classical body of “the foamborn Aphrodite”—Joyce resists the urge to Hellenise his text, refusing to allow the classical Greek to dominate, as we see in Stephen’s later rejection of Plato. However, the English tradition is frequently rejected as well, as represented by the gardener’s Arnoldian passivity. Because of the wartime context in
which Joyce was writing “Scylla,” English studies was being called upon to “sustain a national ideal” (Doyle 27), and the origin of the link between Englishness and English literature was often traced back to none other than Arnold:

In his educational outlook [Arnold] was a nationalist. . . . Such an ideal, he believed, could be imparted and maintained by a public system of education. . . . Matthew Arnold’s great achievement was that he convinced the younger generation among his readers of the necessity for providing throughout England an abundant supply of secondary schools for boys and girls, schools which would be intellectually competent, attested by public inspection, and aided both by local authorities and the state. (M.E. Sadler quoted in Doyle, 27)

The narrow identification of a tradition of literature written in English (including Shakespeare and Arnold) with the interests of the English state was clearly anathema to Joyce. The Greek, English and Irish traditions are part of the blend of national literatures in Ulysses, and no single tradition assumes a privileged status at the expense of the others. However, as we shall see, the librarians, through an implicit alliance with A.C. Bradley (a true Arnoldian himself), align themselves too closely to prevailing trends in the English academy. The nature of this alliance deserves further consideration, since the librarians’ pitfall is one which Stephen must consciously avoid; if Mulligan’s backward-looking Hellenization functions as the Scylla, then Besteglyster constitutes an imposing Charybdis.

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Among the strains of criticism which surface in "Scylla," Stephen first responds to Russell's neo-Platonic ideal: "Art has to reveal to us ideas, formless spiritual essences" (152). Here, the Anglo-Irishman suggests that art refers to some hidden essence, rather than to an actual object in the world, and especially not to a living, breathing person named William Shakespeare. Through his somewhat convoluted re-imagining of Shakespeare's life and art, Stephen rewrites the narrative of Shakespeare's life in order to serve his own critical practice. Drawing evidence from the biographies of Maurice Clare and Sidney Lee, Stephen conjures up an image of a ghost-like Shakespeare saddened by the death of his son Hamnet, betrayed by his wife Anne Hathaway, and thus "faded into impalpability through death, through absence, through change of manners" (154).

Stephen overturns the accepted critical axiom (that is, when critics were bold enough to connect the art and the artist) that the playwright identified with Prince Hamlet and argues instead that the ghost of Hamlet's father was the true source of Shakespeare's identification. In the process of juxtaposing the text of Shakespeare's life with Hamlet, Stephen also establishes a foothold in the pre-war critical dialogue. For years critics had claimed that the value of the tragedies derived from the philosophy of the plays, a position articulated by A.C. Bradley in Shakespearean Tragedy:

[the tragedies confront us] with the inexplicable fact, or the no less inexplicable appearance, of a world travailing for perfection, but bringing to birth, together
with glorious good, an evil which it is able to overcome only by self-torture and self-waste. And this fact or appearance is tragedy. (40)

Like Bradley, the librarians’ version of Shakespeare criticism argued that biography was of limited interest because it should be subordinated to the play’s characters, who articulate this grand tragic theme, one which derives solely from the text’s narrative development. In the process, Bradley and Besteglyster ignore Shakespeare’s own narrative, while for Stephen, the ghosts of Shakespeare’s life are as revealing as the characters on stage.

Unlike Stephen’s interpretation of Hamlet, where Shakespeare’s deepest unconscious feelings are revealed by the play, in his book Bradley warns of the dangers of straying too far from the text: “the only way, if there is any way, in which a conception of Hamlet’s character could be proved true, would be to show that it, and it alone, explains all the relevant facts presented by the text of the drama” (109). Stephen is equally confident in his assertions but, in contrast, contends that the whole narrative hinges not only upon Hamlet’s character but upon the peculiar character of William Shakespeare. Stephen argues that Shakespeare, himself, had been betrayed by Anne Hathaway and thus wrote from experience when recounting similar betrayals in Hamlet and Othello:

There is, I feel in the words, some goad of the flesh driving [Shakespeare] into a new passion, a darker shadow of the first [i.e., his initial youthful passion for Hathaway], darkening even his own understanding of himself. A like fate awaits him and the two rages commingle in a whirlpool. (161)
Shakespeare’s new passion is the resentment inspired by cuckoldry, and Stephen suggests that Shakespeare could not have portrayed the ghost’s anguished spirit with such intensity if the playwright had not been wounded by his own Gertrude-like betrayal. In contrast to Stephen’s reliance upon events in the life outside the plays, for Bradley everything hinges upon textual evidence; without attention to Hamlet’s character and his actions within the text, there is no tragedy. The librarians share Bradley’s reluctance to look beyond that text for an analysis of Hamlet. There is a condescending interest in Stephen’s critique (“a most instructive discussion,” says Lyster), but also a true reluctance to turn to biography, as Eglinton’s assessment of Anne Hathaway suggests that, “Her ghost at least has been laid forever. She died, for literature at least, before she was born” (156).

Ultimately, Stephen’s foes in the library vigorously resist Stephen’s speculations: “All these questions are purely academic, Russell oracled out of his shadow. I mean, whether Hamlet is Shakespeare or James I or Essex. Clergyman’s discussions of the historicity of Jesus” (152). Russell alludes to late nineteenth-century debates regarding research into the biography of Jesus and whether this scholarship would in any way benefit either the church or its followers. In the hands of the librarians, Shakespeare becomes a sacrosanct Christ-figure who should be free from the prying eyes of scholars. Despite Russell’s belief that Stephen’s theory is “the speculation of schoolboys for schoolboys” (152), Stephen is undeterred. He later expatiates upon the central question posed in the episode, “Who is King Hamlet?” Stephen’s formulation clearly perplexes his audience:
The play begins. A player comes on under the shadow, made up in the castoff mail of a court buck, a wellset man with a bass voice. It is the ghost, the king, a king and no king, and the player is Shakespeare who has studied *Hamlet* all the years of his life which were not vanity in order to play the part of the spectre. . . . To a son he speaks, the son of his soul, the prince, Young Hamlet and to the son of his body, Hamnet Shakespeare, who has died in Stratford that his namesake may live forever. (155)

Russell concludes, in a significant statement of his own textually-grounded approach to Shakespeare, that Stephen’s use of biography is useless because “we have the plays. I mean when we read the poetry of *King Lear* what is it to us how the poet lived? . . . We have *King Lear* and it is immortal” (155). Russell’s is a single-minded devotion to the text, similar to Bradley’s critical practice, that Stephen must resist. As Bradley himself writes at the conclusion of *Shakespearean Tragedy,*

> The whole question how far Shakespeare’s works represent his personal feelings and attitude, and the changes in them, would carry us so far beyond the bounds of the four tragedies, is so needless for the understanding of them, and is so little capable of decision, that I have excluded it from these lectures. (422)

By way of explaining his methods, Bradley also suggests that biography is less useful because “we cannot be sure, as with those other poets we can, that in his works he expressed his deepest and most cherished convictions on ultimate questions, or even that he had any” (16). For Bradley, clearly, “the play’s the thing.”
In contrast, Stephen is completely convinced that Shakespeare’s art express his deepest convictions and that the works, in turn, do illuminate “his personal feelings and attitude.” Stephen’s own analysis of *Hamlet* most closely resembles the work that fellow Irishman Frank Harris would begin to publish as a series of controversial articles in 1899 in *The Saturday Review* and which culminated in the publication of *The Man Shakespeare and His Tragic Life-Story* (1909). The introduction of Harris’s book records his intentions and echoes Stephen’s belief that most contemporary commentators have overlooked the man behind the text:

> We dream of an art that shall take into account...the wars that go on in the blood; the fevers of the brain; the creeping paralysis of nerve exhaustion; above all, we must be able even now from a few bare facts, to re-create a man and make him live and love again for the reader, just as the biologist from a few scattered bones can reconstruct some prehistoric bird or fish or mammal. (xvi)

Harris shares with Stephen an Irishman’s ambivalence toward Shakespeare. While recognizing his obsession with the ephemera of Shakespeare’s life and that “the English will learn from Shakespeare more quickly and easily than from any living man,” Harris also wants to liberate the English from “the tyranny of Shakespeare’s greatness” (xvii, xviii). Harris reminds readers that the words which eulogized Shakespeare’s Antony apply to the Bard, as well: “A rarer spirit never/ Did steer humanity; but you, gods, will give us/ Some faults to make us men” (Shakespeare quoted in Harris 409). Like Stephen, Harris seems most interested in Shakespeare’s faults of the flesh. Harris’s Shakespeare is
driven "by some goad of the flesh" in Hamlet, even though the source of their dark
passion is different. Unlike Stephen, who connects the ghost to Shakespeare’s betrayal
by Anne Hathaway, Harris’s takes the more familiar path and sees Prince Hamlet as the
cracter in which “Shakespeare revealed most of himself” (7). Nevertheless, the
argument is essentially the same: Shakespeare was a sensualist betrayed, initially by the
much older seductress, Anne Hathaway, who lured him into marriage while still in his
teens (Stephen’s position), then again by the “Dark Lady,” his mistress Mary Fitton,
whose falseness “turned him from a light-hearted writer of comedies and histories into
the author of the greatest tragedies that have ever been conceived” (Harris 226). In either
case, the methodology is the same—perceptive readers who observe the insane jealousy
present in every Shakespeare play from 1597 to 1608 should attribute it to the
playwright’s passion scorned.

In one of the librarians’ more sympathetic moments, Thomas Lyster recognizes
Stephen’s debt to Harris’s work: “Nor should we forget Mr. Frank Harris. His articles on
Shakespeare in The Saturday Review were surely brilliant. Oddly enough, he too draws
for us an unhappy relation with the dark lady of the sonnets” (161). While other works,
such as the Lee and Clare texts on the shelves of Joyce’s Trieste library, were willing to
speculate on the details of Shakespeare’s life in Stratford and London, they were
nevertheless reluctant to connect the plays to the playwright’s life. When Stephen later
proceeds to conclude that the shift in tone from the despair of the great tragedies to the
reconciliation of the late romances was a result of the birth of Shakespeare’s
granddaughter in 1608 (as borne out by the presence of those “wondrous” young female characters Miranda and Marina), we see that Stephen possesses no such reservations and, again, we should recall that Harris makes a similar argument (although the latter attributes Shakespeare’s rejuvenation to Shakespeare’s daughter, Judith - 336). Despite Lyster’s initial tact, the librarians cannot conceal their contempt for long, as Eglinton ironically suggests that “the bard’s fellowcountrymen...are rather tired perhaps of our brilliances of theorising” (161). At this point, Stephen’s ideas are quickly identified with his ethnicity by Lyster: “And we ought to mention another Irish commentator, Mr. George Bernard Shaw” (161). But Shaw’s criticism is a topic to which they never return, and Stephen’s biographical “speculations” become indexed and shelved as “brilliant” Irish commentary alongside Shaw, Wilde, and Harris. Biographical criticism seems to be a cottage industry for the Irish, but one never taken seriously by the Anglo-Irish librarians, who subscribe to Bradley’s insistence that one should never read Shakespeare’s plays as a confirmation of the playwright’s psychology. Resisting a line of inquiry very similar to Stephen’s own about the “renewal and reconciliation” of Shakespeare’s romances, Bradley concludes that the preceding “tragic period” which yielded Hamlet, King Lear and others reveals nothing about “Shakespeare the man”:

The existence of this distinct tragic period, of a time when the dramatist seems to have been occupied almost exclusively with deep and painful problems, has naturally helped to suggest the idea that the ‘man’ also, in these years of middle age, from thirty-seven to forty-four, was heavily burdened in spirit. . .[that] the
world had come to look dark and terrible to him. . .[and] that the railings of Thersites and the maledictions of Timon express his own contempt and hatred of mankind. Discussion of this large and difficult subject, however, is not necessary to the dramatic appreciation of any of his works, and I shall say nothing of it here.” (Shakespearean 72 - my emphasis).

To combat the formalist methods of the Bradleyites, Stephen must resort to his “algebra” (Mulligan’s term) in order to articulate the connections between Shakespeare’s biography and art. Stephen reconstructs Shakespeare’s relationship with his brothers (Richard and Edmund) and Anne Hathaway, and he then outlines the way a revisionist biography is reconstituted on the page through the triangular connection between the Prince, Gertrude and the King’s ghost. The extent of the academy’s resistance to Stephen’s reading is registered by Eglinton’s conclusion: “[Stephen,] you are a delusion. . . . You have brought us all this way to show us a French triangle. Do you believe your own theory?” (175). When Stephen admits that even he, himself, is unconvinced by his interpretation, does it undermine the validity of his critical exercise?

The answer is obviously no. The fact that Stephen holds his discussion with this particular audience in this particular space is highly significant. Although Lyster and the others are engaged in a prescription for the ways in which Irish literature and criticism might secure its own identity, their view is decidedly backward-looking. The librarians conduct a rather subdued and familiar discussion of the proper relationship among artist, creation and the universe. With the opening words of “Scylla,” the reader is quickly
exposed to the perils of Charybdis, voiced in Lyster’s description of the title character of Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* as a “beautiful, ineffectual dreamer who comes to grief against hard facts” (151). Lyster’s critique—if one can call it that—is the more familiar voice of literary criticism circa 1904; indeed, it is more a matter of taste than criticism. For Lyster, Goethe’s text is great because it is what “one sees in real life” (151). The irony is that Besteglyster are reluctant to acknowledge that the “greatness” of Shakespeare might similarly illuminate what “one sees in Shakespeare’s life.” Joyce makes his feelings clear about Lyster’s critique, which merely stands in place: “[Lyster] came a step a sinkapace forward on neatsleather creaking and a step backward a sinkapace on the solemn floor” (151 - my emphasis). And when the library conversation later turns to *Hamlet*, the Anglo-Irish again treat the subject with solemnity, too much so for Stephen.

One potential point of comparison between Stephen and Bradley might be a shared interest in psychology; there is a degree of psychological analysis in *Shakespearean Tragedy*, but Bradley believed that understanding the Prince’s character occurs merely through the proper attention to the character’s words; the words on the page transparently express character. The ultimate Bradleyan diagnosis is that Hamlet’s melancholy is the key to the play, but that it would be “absurdly unjust to call *Hamlet* a study of melancholy” (103). Bradley elaborates on his limited interest in the play’s psychology:

.. the psychological point of view is not equivalent to the tragic; and, once given its due weight to the fact of Hamlet’s melancholy, we may freely admit, or may be
rather anxious to insist, that this pathological condition would excite but little, if any, tragic interest if it were not the condition of a nature distinguished by that speculative genius on which the Schlegel-Coleridge school of theory lays stress. (Shakespearean 107-08)

Even though he claims to refute both Coleridge’s and Goethe’s interpretations of Hamlet’s character, Bradley’s Hamlet, a composite sketch based solely on textual evidence, is also a great soul taking arms against a sea of troubles. But unlike Stephen, Bradley makes no connection between the source of those troubles and the author’s state of mind.

To understand the degree to which Bradley’s reading was an instrument of the English University’s hegemony, one must remember that Shakespearean Tragedy was largely compiled from a series of lectures delivered when Bradley was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and that, according to Terence Hawkes,

[Shakespearean Tragedy is] one of the most influential texts of our century: one which by now ranks as almost synonymous with the study of ‘English’ and which, despite earnest efforts to unseat it, remains a key and a vastly formative work. [It] is one of those books whose influence extends far beyond the confines of its ostensible subject, permeating the attitudes to morality, psychology and politics of hundreds and thousands of English-speaking people, regardless of whether or not they have set eyes on the text. (Shakespeherian Rag 31)
Shortly after its 1904 publication, Bradley’s work became an integral component of colonial discourse, reinforcing the spiritual value of English studies and influencing the subsequent dissemination of Shakespeare throughout Britain and the commonwealth.⁶ Even though we are unsure whether Joyce owned a copy of Bradley’s book—at least according to the contents of the Trieste library published in Richard Ellmann’s *The Consciousness of Joyce*—Bradley’s influence was transmitted into most every work of Shakespeare criticism published after 1904. In all likelihood, Joyce would have been aware of Bradley’s arguments through the work of Ernest Jones, whose *The Problem of “Hamlet”* (1911) was a pamphlet that Joyce had definitely acquired in a German translation, and one which was later expanded and published as the full-length *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949). In both versions of the work, Jones cites Bradley, and in the latter work, Jones refers to *Shakespearean Tragedy* more than a dozen times, far more than he cites any other critical work. Jones diverges just as clearly from Bradley’s methods as Stephen, as both writers envision the play’s characters and their creator as a complex of psychological “problems” to be elucidated by an expert. Just as the sexual desires and frustrations of William Shakespeare were central to Stephen’s analysis of *Hamlet*, Jones devotes an entire chapter (“The Hamlet in Shakespeare”) to an inquiry into “the relation of Hamlet’s conflict to the inner workings of Shakespeare’s mind” (*Hamlet* 115). Like Stephen, Jones makes the anti-Bradleyan leap that “there must be some correspondence, however disguised or transformed, between feelings a poet describes and feelings he has himself experienced in some form” (115).⁷ Not surprisingly, perhaps, Jones not only
refers to the methods of Frank Harris, but considers Harris to be persuasive in his account of the connection between Hamlet’s misogyny and Shakespeare’s betrayal by the Dark Lady. But Jones proceeds even further than Harris: “Harris may well be right in saying that behind Queen Gertrude stands someone like Mary Fitton, but behind that lady certainly stands Shakespeare’s mother” (135). As Richard Ellmann indicates, Stephen, as well as Joyce, displays a familiarity with Jones’s reading of Hamlet, although Ellmann also makes it clear that Stephen’s Hamlet is not the Oedipal Hamlet of Jones: “Prince Hamlet, as presented by Stephen in Ulysses, shows no telltale signs of lust for his mother or of jealousy for his father, nor does Stephen himself” (56). The real similarities between Jones and Stephen are a shared interest in the psychological contours of the play’s characters and the notion that unconscious desires drive the play’s plot development. It may be that Stephen’s strong connection to Jones is related to the issue of ethnicity as well. Like Harris, Wilde, Shaw, and others with whom Stephen identifies, Jones was not an Englishman, but rather “a Celt from Wales!” to quote an apparently astonished Carl Jung, who once described Jones as such in a letter to Freud (Jung quoted in Paskauskas xxi).

Unlike Jones’s or Stephen’s interest in Shakespeare’s sexual proclivities, Bradley attempted to deduce a philosophical conclusion from the mountain of textual evidence he gathered. Although sometimes labeled pejoratively as a Victorian, Bradley was writing after the birth of modern academic scholarship. The index to Shakespearean Tragedy abounds with references to other critics, from Shakespeare’s contemporary Robert Greene
through the most renowned of Victorian scholars (much as Stephen’s reading does). However, the view of life that Bradley extracted from the tragedies need not have corresponded “with [Shakespeare’s] opinions or creed outside his poetry” (Bradley Shakespearean 16). Bradley’s criticism takes the reader through the text to make direct contact with the author’s philosophy, without recourse to the biography outside of the text. Bradley’s goal, as stated in a letter, was that the literary work “becomes to the reader what it was to the writer. He [the reader] has not merely interpreted the poem, he has recreated it. For the time being his mind has ceased to be his own, and has become the poet’s mind” (Bradley quoted in Hawkes Shakespeherian Rag, 32). Although engaged in a similar process of re-creation, Stephen makes liberal use of Shakespeare’s biography, but his is not the type of biography constructed solely from the textually-based facts present in the biographies of Clare and Lee. Stephen’s biography makes it new; in fact, Stephen’s biography sometimes makes it up. This is perhaps most evident when Stephen—otherwise so careful about many details of Shakespeare’s texts and biography—gets it wrong when describing Hamlet as a “beardless undergraduate,” rather than the more mature man of thirty that he is in all but the “bad quarto” of Hamlet.8 Regardless of the accuracy of some of Stephen’s claims, his critical practice will not seem so strange when compared with examples of Shakespearean criticism which appeared shortly after the publication of Ulysses.

Although his theory is unconvincing to the librarians, the importance of Stephen’s critical analysis of Hamlet exists in its oppositional nature. Stephen’s is a new type of
critical response which merges elements of biographical scholarship and psychoanalysis. After all, the foundation of Stephen’s critique of the paternity issue in _Hamlet_ rests upon Stephen’s own Freudian ambivalence toward his father. At one point, Stephen claims passionately that “Paternity may be a legal fiction” (170) and concludes,

> When Rutlandbaconsouthamptonshakespeare or another poet of the same name in the comedy of errors wrote _Hamlet_ he was not the father of his own son merely but, being no more a son, he was and felt himself the father of all his race, the father of his own grandfather, the father of his unborn grandson. . .(171)

Stephen ultimately concludes that Shakespeare wrote himself in _all_ of his characters; Shakespeare is not only Prince Hamlet _and_ the ghost, but appears within traces of every other character in the play as well. Again, we can turn to Frank Harris for a similar articulation of Stephen’s argument: “Shakespeare included in himself Falstaff and Cleopatra, beside the author of the sonnets, and knowledge drawn from all these must be used to fill out and perhaps to modify the outlines given in Hamlet before one can feel sure that the portrait is a re-presentment of reality” (8). The result is an interpretation of Shakespeare’s tragedy which confounds the librarians but, at the end of the episode, delights the equally self-assured Scylla, Buck Mulligan. Neither of the young men can abide the complacency of the librarians, either as advocates for the “young bards” of Ireland or as critics of Shakespeare.
It should be remembered, as Gerald Graff illustrates in *Professing Literature* (1987), that Frank Harris was not alone in producing biographical scholarship in the early years of the twentieth century. However, most scholars “turned their backs on interpretations and accumulated ‘facts, still more facts,’ without regard ‘for some purpose beyond them’” (118). Stephen possesses no such hesitation to investigate the purpose beyond the facts. In Stephen’s analysis, the critic uses the art to reveal the life of the artist, rather than looking at the empirical facts of the life and then connecting them to the art. As a result of Stephen’s arguments, Joyce was almost uncannily prescient in imagining one subsequent direction of Shakespeare criticism in the decade after the publication of *Ulysses* in 1922. When Stephen speculates about Anne Hathaway’s seduction of Shakespeare’s brothers Edmund and Richard, Stephen suggests that the “proof” is self-evident, supporting his interpretation with the evidence that two of the most notable Shakespearean villains possessed the names Edmund and Richard (*U* 9.894-919). Even though this type of criticism was vigorously resisted by Bradley and his disciples, this is precisely the type of work published by scholars such as John Dover Wilson and Caroline Spurgeon in the early 1930s.

Discussing the growing influence of rigidly empirical biographical criticism, Wilson explains the reason for the departure which his own work represented: “At the moment I would insist that this secret image of [Shakespeare’s] heart, of which the
biographer may be completely unaware, is too often the root cause of the [critic’s] aberration” (3). Although Wilson’s interest in Shakespeare’s heart (an interest Stephen Dedalus clearly shares) veers toward speculation, Wilson’s work foregrounds the modernity of Stephen’s deliberations in “Scylla.” The preface of *The Essential Shakespeare* (1932) accurately describes Wilson’s critical practice: “Here in a nutshell, is the kind of man I believe Shakespeare to have been.” Like Stephen, Wilson speculates about Shakespeare’s life from the textual evidence of the plays: “Many, again, have supposed that Shakespeare paid a visit to Italy during this period [in 1593 and 1594]—the intimate knowledge he shows in the plays of the topography of Venice certainly suggests more than hearsay” (64-5).

Other notable works of Shakespearean criticism in the 1930s—particularly Caroline Spurgeon’s *Leading Motives in the Imagery of Shakespeare’s Tragedies* (1931) and *Shakespeare’s Imagery and What it Tells Us* (1935)—also constructed an image of Shakespeare’s “essence” from the images of the plays in a manner which resembles Stephen’s methods in the library. As Spurgeon writes in the introduction to *Shakespeare’s Imagery*, “I believe it to be profoundly true that the real revelation of the writer’s personality, temperament and quality of mind is to be found in his works, whether he be dramatist or novelist, describing other people’s thoughts or putting down his own directly” (4). *Shakespeare’s Imagery* contains an appendix of color-coded charts which provides an air of empiricism which would have made Frank Harris proud in his quest for a more “scientific” criticism (recall Harris’s analogy of the critic-as-biologist).
Much like Stephen and Harris, Spurgeon obtains the information that fills her charts, not from any dry documents or court records, but from her own reading of the plays which thus reveals a very subjective, albeit fascinating, portrait of "Shakespeare the man." Even though her work is far more sophisticated and systematic than Stephen's analysis, Spurgeon shares his concern with the manner in which the poet "gives himself away" via the text. Although Stephen is far more interested in Shakespeare's characters than in his imagery, the fact remains that Spurgeon and Stephen proceed in diagnosing the condition of Shakespeare, as a psychological subject, through attention to the text. The major difference, however, is that the case study which Spurgeon provides looks far more healthy than Stephen's or Harris's. Instead of a man driven by the demons of sexual jealousy and self-doubt, Spurgeon's Shakespeare is "healthy in body as in mind" (203) and possesses a character "one can only describe as Christ-like" (Imagery 207). In her own words, Spurgeon's studies have rendered her in a state of "complete humility" before Shakespeare, which contrasts sharply with the ambivalence that one sees in so many of Shakespeare's Irish critics. But Spurgeon and Bradley, as much as their methodologies differed, were members of the English academy (Spurgeon held a post at the University of London) and, if they shared nothing else, maintained a reverence for Shakespeare as both the central figure in the English literary tradition and as an emblem of the national culture more generally. It was beyond the realm of possibility that Spurgeon or Bradley would follow Harris's lead (as Stephen does) and "liberate Englishmen from the tyranny of Shakespeare's greatness."

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But rather than completely rejecting Shakespeare, what Stephen and Harris refute are the interpretive strategies of Besteglyster and their clear ties to Bradley-ite criticism, which, as we have seen, exerted an enduring influence in the decades which followed *Shakespearean Tragedy*. Biographically-based studies such as Wilson’s and Spurgeon’s may have found a mass university audience, but they barely produced a ripple in the wake of Bradley’s impact on academic circles. In the decade following the publication of this work (which remains in print nearly a century later), Bradley eventually relinquished his chair at Oxford to devote himself to the London literary world. He helped to found the English Association in 1906, an organization which promoted the teaching of English and also worked toward the construction of “Shakespeare’s Temple,” a monument to the Bard which never broke ground. Declining a chair at Cambridge, Bradley then became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1910, for whom he edited and wrote sporadically until the outbreak of World War I. During the war years when Joyce was writing *Ulysses*, Bradley wrote little new criticism, but the influence of *Shakespearean Tragedy* continued to grow until it peaked in the early 1920s, as captured by a famous comic verse reprinted by Katherine Cooke:

> I dreamt last night that Shakespeare’s ghost
> Sat for a civil service post;
> The English paper for the year
> Had several questions on *King Lear*
Which Shakespeare answered very badly

Because he hadn’t read his Bradley. (191-92)

Within this context of enormous influence, Stephen Dedalus offers a polemical critical interpretation worlds apart from anything remotely resembling Bradleyism. As a result, the process described by Declan Kiberd, who discusses Yeats’s equally polemical response to *Richard II*—an admiration for the deposed King Richard II which directly challenged the views of another eminent (and Anglo-Irish) Shakespearean, Edward Dowden—also applies to Stephen’s rejection of Bradleyism:

Friedrich Engels had complained that the object of British policy was to make the Irish feel like strangers in their own land; but he seriously underestimated their capacity to reformulate the culture which had been used as an instrument to “civilize” them. . . . The Irish could use Shakespeare to repudiate those critics who “produced” him in their classrooms and on their syllabi; and, more vitally, they could feed their subversive readings back to England. (271)

By resisting the librarians who reflect the predominance of Bradley-ite criticism, Stephen sheds the weight of an inherited Shakespearean critical tradition and speaks out against those forces who would undermine the validity of his analysis. As a result, Stephen does not simply reject the entire weight of English culture—as his obsession with Shakespeare repeatedly reminds us—but he does challenge, in part, the echoes of Bradleyism which inform the librarians’ critical practice and authorize only accepted (i.e., mimicked) readings of *Hamlet*.11
There is a great deal of ambivalence at the center of Stephen’s response to Shakespeare; both Stephen and Joyce will not allow the Irish Bradleyites to stand in place, but neither artist seems able or willing to move completely beyond Shakespeare’s influence. While it cannot be denied that, as Vincent Cheng contends in *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (1995), “the literary tradition of Shakespeare and Milton was...the imperial tradition of the English oppressor” for many Irish writers (3), we need to be careful not to oversimplify the political implications of Joyce’s work. Even though the critical tradition of Arnold and Bradley served an important role as part of that same imperial tradition, Joyce—as Cheng argues throughout his work—was interested in smashing, and not simply inverting, binaries. Thus, Stephen’s more inclusive critical practice could never completely reject, or fail to recognize, several of the models of English Shakespeare criticism which precede him, a line of descent which can be traced in *Ulysses* from allusions to Shakespeare’s contemporary critics and defenders (Robert Greene and Henry Chettle) to Samuel Johnson, Coleridge, and Matthew Arnold. However, criticism must “look forward,” and far more useful to Stephen than these seminal Shakespeareans in “Scylla” are Joyce’s Celtic contemporaries Wilde, Shaw, Harris, and Jones. There is a truly pan-Britannic cast to the critical practices absorbed into the fabric of *Ulysses*. Just as Joyce makes recourse to a diverse world of discourses which critics have thoroughly traced throughout the novel—the juxtapositions of Aristotle and Augustine with the music hall and advertising come to mind—many non-English critical discourses were available to and assimilated by Joyce to challenge the critical hegemony of contemporary Oxbridge
Shakespeare criticism. As a result, Stephen's analysis of *Hamlet* ultimately reveals that the young Irishman both recognizes and maintains a healthy distance from the main currents of English-dominated culture and criticism, adopting a polemical Shakespeare criticism as a provocation to the forces of intellectual stasis, both in Ireland and in England.
NOTES

1. Most interestingly, Platt points to the ways in which Stephen draws on the tradition of Catholic theology, particularly the writings of Augustine, in his debates with the Protestant Anglo-Irish librarians. See Platt, 737-50.

2. Particularly influential for Joyce were Clare’s *A Day With William Shakespeare* and Sidney Lee’s *Life of William Shakespeare* (1898). For more on Joyce’s specific debts to Clare, see Ellmann, 59-62, and for an extended discussion of Lee’s influence, see Schutte, 153-77.


4. For Arnold, “Hebraic” was not necessarily a pejorative term, but instead denoted a strictness of moral conscience which was necessary to stem the tide of anarchy. However, the forces of Hebraism (and here, Arnold is thinking primarily of more radical forces of dissent which opposed the Church of England) also lacked, in Arnold’s view, a more open-minded intelligence and the ability to more fully appreciate “the best that is thought and known” in any age, which is the true ideal of Arnold’s Hellenism.

5. Could Stephen really write off the theory he has worked so hard to outline? The fact that Stephen claims not to believe his own theory may be connected to the larger discussion of faith which underpins the episode, particularly the faith required in a recognition of paternity. Despite an absence of physical evidence to identify, definitively, a male parent, Stephen must still believe in the “legal fiction” of paternity. Similarly, the biographical evidence which Stephen provides in his own reconstruction of Shakespeare’s life may not conclusively support his reading, but Stephen’s faith seems unshaken, despite what he claims outwardly to Eglinton. In addition, the validity of this critical interpretation seems even more sound when considering that Joyce, himself, had a similar ghost theory that he was once optimistic about publishing. See Ellmann, *Consciousness*, 52.
6. Bradley was the son of a minister, but later reacted against his father’s Evangelical fervor. Like Matthew Arnold, Bradley found that literature could assume the role once fulfilled by religion. In “The Study of Poetry,” Arnold had written that “mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us” (*Essays* 2), and Bradley would be one of the English critics who would later put these words into practice: “It was not that *Hamlet* is Shakespeare’s greatest tragedy or most perfect work of art; it was that *Hamlet* most brings home to us at once the sense of the soul’s infinity, and the sense of the doom which not only circumscribes that infinity but appears to be its offspring” (*Shakespearean* 108).

7. To be fair, Bradley nearly constructs his own portrait of Shakespeare in the tantalizingly-titled “Shakespeare the Man.” Interestingly, this essay was omitted from *Shakespearean Tragedy* (even though it was delivered with Bradley’s other Shakespeare lectures at Oxford) and not published until *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909). Throughout the essay, Bradley veers close to Frank Harris territory but then constantly qualifies his speculations (“in trying to form an idea of Shakespeare, we soon reach the limits of reasonable certainty” - 312). Much of Bradley’s so-called “impressions” of Shakespeare are drawn from The Sonnets, and many of his arguments are less than illuminating (Shakespeare was fond of music - 336, but much less fond of dogs -340). When Bradley concludes the piece with his thoughts on Prince Hamlet, Bradley again reveals his true anti-biographical bias. Listing several traits of Hamlet likely to be shared with Shakespeare the Man—a penchant for dreaming, a poet’s “ecstasy at the glory of earth and sky, a propensity for extremes of emotion, and many others—Bradley then undermines his portrait of “the Hamlet in Shakespeare”: “all this, I say, corresponds with our impressions of Shakespeare... probably here and there a good deal heightened, and mingled with others not characteristic of Shakespeare at all” (357). In the end, Bradley reveals that had no true inclination for biographical criticism in any form.

8. The so-called “bad quarto” is the earliest known edition of the play (1603). This version differs markedly from both the second quarto edition of 1604 and the First Folio of 1623, containing more than one-thousand fewer lines and generally being regarded as inferior in every respect. Although many editors have traditionally combined elements of the Folio with the 1604 quarto, more recent collections, including the Oxford Edition (1986), have concluded that the First Folio reflects Shakespeare’s own process of revision and is thus the least corrupt.

9. There is a true irony in the similarities between Stephen’s and Spurgeon’s critical practice. Spurgeon, who in 1913 was the first woman in England to be appointed to a professorship in the arts, was later a member of the Newbolt Committee and thus a custodian of the treasures of England’s literary heritage. In effect, this member of Newbolt, the group tasked with helping English studies to serve the interests of the English nation-state, took her cues, perhaps unknowingly, from a marginalized Irish Catholic writer who is ridiculed for similar theories in “Scylla.” It appears, however, that...
by the inter-war period when Spurgeon established her reputation as one of England’s foremost Shakespeareans, the academic world was more willing to accept criticism steeped in biography.

10. For the details of Yeats’s reading of the “imperialistic enthusiasm” motivating the Anglo-Irish Dowden’s preference for Henry V over Richard II, see Yeats’s “At Stratford-on-Avon” in *Essays and Introductions*, 96-110.

11. Stephen resists the “mimicry” and “repetition” which Homi Bhabha describes in “Of Mimicry and Man” (1994) as “one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (85). The discourse of colonial mimicry, in which the librarians participate, is a strategy for maintaining order among colonial subjects by recreating colonial institutions-in-miniature—including schools and law enforcement practices—thus “normalizing” the colonial state or subject through a similarity to the colonizer’s own culture and values. The subject’s self-identity, which is nearly erased in the camouflage of mimicry, nevertheless becomes a site of “otherness”; those practices and qualities which the colonized has been taught to disavow thus constitute the basis of an entirely different conception of the role one plays within the culture. As Bhabha suggests in writings which followed “Of Mimicry and Man,” mimicry, itself, can become a tool of anti-colonial resistance, equal parts deference and defiance. On the surface, the colonial subject can observe the accepted codes of the colonial discourse, while still implicitly suggesting how inappropriate that discourse can be for one who is *almost the same, but not quite* (i.e., Anglicized but not English). But such is the road to colonial resistance not taken by the librarians in “Scylla,” whose mimicry is all deference without any traces of the “sly” civility Bhabha celebrates. In particular, see Bhabha’s “Signs Taken For Wonders” and “Sly Civility” in *The Location of Culture*, 93-122.
Quite suddenly the storm relaxed its grasp. It happened at tea; the expected paroxysm of the blast gave out just as it reached its climax and dwindled away, and the ship instead of taking the usual plunge went steadily. . . . [T]he sky was swept clean, the waves, although steep, were blue, and after their view of the strange under-world, inhabited by phantoms, people began to live among tea-pots and loaves of bread with greater zest than ever. (Woolf *Voyage* 72)

This storm casts Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915) into several thematic directions which this chapter will pursue, including the "tempest" which interrupts the voyage to the fictionalized nation of Santa Marina and the strange phantoms which haunt both Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Woolf's novel. We also witness the civilized veneer of Edwardian England, with its bread and tea-pots co-existing uneasily with those sea-changed phantoms that swim beneath the surface. Finally, we observe the eroticized
nature of the ship, and the natural world around it, which contrasts so sharply with Woolf's heroine, Rachel Vinrace, who never achieves a corresponding sense of erotic fulfillment, or, as important, fulfillment of an intellectual nature. The Shakespearean echoes which filter through this scene in *Voyage* foreground some of the ways in which Woolf's novel may be read as a revision of Shakespeare, as a novel which expatiates on an important subtext of *The Tempest*: namely, the nature of an appropriate female education.

There are clear similarities between the educations of Shakespeare's Miranda and Woolf's Rachel--both young women essentially serve as instruments used to expand their fathers' power and influence--but there are a number of significant differences. In *The Tempest*, we initially associate Miranda with the garden and innocence, but by the play's end, we feel certain that she has been well prepared for her life at court, confirming Ferdinand's prediction from Act One that "O, if a virgin,/ And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you/ The Queen of Naples" (1.2.451-53). However, Rachel Vinrace fares far worse than Miranda, never surmounting her self-proclaimed ignorance. In contrast to the dangers of *The Tempest*, which are ultimately "safely ordered," Woolf's novel reflects a view of the world in which everything is fragmented and disordered and the dangers are real, culminating in Rachel's death. As a result, Woolf uses the subplot involving Miranda's instruction to explore the failure of female education, as well as the role it plays in Rachel's tragedy. In *Voyage*, Woolf explores the implications of a modern-day "Miranda's" education, and considers the ways in which the respective marriage plots
Involving Miranda and Rachel can be viewed as power struggles, contests which the father inevitably wins. Because Miranda matures into such an intelligent woman, confident in her own sexuality, and has an ostensibly bright future, Woolf revisits the story, first, to focus on the daughter (rather than the father), and second, to highlight the struggles faced by a young woman in the early twentieth century who hopes to achieve a similar sense of social and intellectual fulfillment. Rachel suggests an ironic contrast to Miranda, and her fate demonstrates that early twentieth-century educational practices could never produce a woman as self-possessed as Shakespeare’s young heroine.

In addition to analyzing the similarity of Woolf and Shakespeare’s “strange underworlds” in Section II of this chapter, demonstrating how Woolf does indeed revise The Tempest, an additional goal is to suggest some of the ways in which reading Woolf and Shakespeare together, through the lens of postcolonial theory, might work to articulate the specific nature of Rachel’s tragedy. As June Cummins perceptively suggests in her essay “Death and the Maiden Voyage,” Rachel’s position at the margins of a colonial culture, when subjected to a postcolonial analysis, is a tenuous one. As a member of the colonial culture enjoying the spoils of Santa Marina, Rachel cannot be viewed as completely analogous to the colonized natives; however, as Cummins writes, “Woolf’s novel demonstrates how the native inhabitants of Santa Marina, silenced and overshadowed, reflect Rachel’s similar marginalization by patriarchal culture” (205).

Although postcolonial and feminist theorists both concern themselves with the analysis of marginalized Others, there have been numerous and well-documented instances of a
mutual suspicion. In particular, postcolonial critics such as Gayatri Spivak (in her polemical analysis of *Jane Eyre*, for example) have objected when feminists have exploited the hierarchies which underpin the colonial project, asserting a (European) female subjectivity which depends upon the silence and absence of the “third-world woman.”

Woolf, however, falls into no such traps in *Voyage*. Rachel Vinrace is far from a liberal-feminist “memsahib” whose privileges are predicated upon her “superiority” to her Santa Marian female counterparts. Rachel is ultimately destroyed by the same forces of patriarchal, imperialist aggression which render the native residents of the colony as similarly powerless. The present study will work to bridge further connections between feminist and postcolonial readings of Woolf’s novel, by examining Rachel’s “intellectual colonization” (a phrase I borrow from Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar), which allows us to see significant parallels between Rachel and the natives of Santa Marina, a notion underscored by the intertextual relationship between *The Tempest* and *Voyage*.\(^1\) Woolf appropriates elements of Shakespeare’s plot and text to illustrate how Rachel loses her battle for intellectual home rule in a manner that Shakespeare’s Miranda does not. Woolf offers a critique of aggressive colonial masculinity which denounces the chauvinism of her own culture. There are two key elements of this critique to be articulated in Section III of this chapter. First, I will demonstrate how Rachel is regarded as an absence by the forces of colonial patriarchy in a manner which also resembles the exclusion of the colonized from the spaces where knowledge is both derived and disseminated. Second, I
will discuss how various educational practices imprison Rachel in a perpetual state of infantilization, a condition shared not only by the colonized, but by females in the colonizing class as well. In the process, it becomes clear that Woolf's heroine, Rachel, seems suspended in an intertextual network *between* the roles of Miranda and Caliban, as both a beneficiary *and* victim of the colonial culture of which she is a member, but one who never attains full access to the benefits of her national culture.

II - An Edwardian Tempest

Mine is not the first critical work to have observed some of the points of comparison between *The Tempest* and *Voyage*. Alice Fox in particular has established several connections between the plots of the two works, but she devotes most of her work to the ways in which Woolf alludes to a wide range of Elizabethan texts, including *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, Edmund Spenser's "Epithalamion," and the travel narratives of Sir Walter Raleigh. However, the connections to *The Tempest* remain the most significant. A number of the parallels are fairly conspicuous: Rachel, like Miranda, is the European-born innocent abroad, who has been sheltered from encounters with the opposite sex. Raised by her father after her mother's death, Rachel first glimpses her "Ferdinand" in the person of Terence Hewet. However, there are additional parallels between *The Tempest* and *Voyage* which require more extensive analysis. The "Caliban" who first shatters Rachel's innocence may be (of all unlikely characters) the Tory MP,
Richard Dalloway, whose unwelcome advances terrify Rachel during the voyage to Santa
Marina. The connection between Dalloway and Caliban is confirmed when we consider
Rachel’s subsequent nightmare and the Caliban-like presence of the “little deformed man
who squatted on the floor gibbering, with long nails” (77). In yet another textual parallel,
Prospero’s Mediterranean island becomes the South American nation of Santa Marina in
*Voyage*, where Rachel’s father is a true imperialist, bringing goods to South America and
exporting its raw materials and wealth back to England. The twist in *Voyage*, however, is
that Vinrace, the modern-day Prospero, tends too much to his own business and not
enough to his daughter’s education. Unlike Miranda, Rachel has learned almost nothing
from her father, and Woolf’s novel subsequently veers away from romance toward
tragedy.

Although the characters in the novel speak more generally of Shakespeare on
several occasions, including Mr. Grice’s avowed preference for *Henry V* (for him, Prince
Hal is “the model of an English gentleman” - 54) and Mrs. Fletcher, who simply “hates
Shakespeare” (268), there are passages where *The Tempest* is referred to explicitly. Early
in the voyage out, Clarissa Dalloway meets with Mr. Grice, who shows Clarissa the
treasures of the sea which he has collected in an assortment of glass jars:

“They have swum about among bones,” Clarissa sighed.

“You’re thinking of Shakespeare,” said Mr. Grice, and taking down a copy from a
shelf well lined with books, recited in an emphatic nasal voice:
Full fathom five thy father lies,

“A grand fellow, Shakespeare,” he said, replacing the volume. (54)

A second allusion to “Ariel’s Song” returns again later as a bookend to the first. Near the end of Voyage, after the bizarre (and largely tacit) marriage agreement between Rachel and Terence (282), we hear again these Shakespearean echoes when Terence describes his first impressions of Rachel: “‘When I first saw you,’ he began, ‘I thought you were like a creature who’d lived all its life among pearls and old bones’” (293). In The Tempest, the singing of Ariel leads Ferdinand from the shore, and he claims that the music “crept by me upon the waters,/ Allaying both their fury and my passion” (1.2.395-396). Believing he has lost his father in the tempest summoned by Prospero, Ferdinand’s grief has been tempered by the ever-present music which fills the play. However, as neither Ferdinand’s father, nor Ferdinand himself was ever truly imperiled, Woolf strips some of the illusions from The Tempest, since Rachel’s endangerment proves to be so much more real.

Although “Ariel’s Song” is ultimately a deception, music does play a similarly important role in both Voyage and The Tempest. Like the song’s effect on Ferdinand, Rachel’s music is one of the means by which she comforts herself. Rachel uses her piano to isolate herself from a world in which she, like Ferdinand, seems to have “lost” her father, a man whose first priority is clearly his Hull-based South American export trade: “To feel anything strongly was to create an abyss between oneself and others who feel strongly perhaps but differently. It was far better to play the piano and forget the rest” (36).
One of the most important connections between *The Tempest* and *Voyage* is this pervading sense of parental longing. In Shakespeare’s play, Ferdinand is not the only character who has “lost” a parent. The death of Miranda’s mother has made Prospero solely responsible for raising his daughter. Similarly, in Woolf’s novel, Evelyn Murgatroyd is the “daughter of a mother and no father” (190), while Rachel Vinrace lost her mother at the age of eleven (34). Woolf foregrounds this particular feature of Shakespeare’s plot, and it highlights the consequences of the child’s single-parent education. More specifically, Woolf is interested in an education entrusted to the care of the father. In a sense, we can view an important part of Rachel’s tragedy as the inadequacy of her education; Rachel is largely neglected by her father and has been raised by her two aunts with an apparent ignorance of the world about her including, most damagingly, her own sexuality. Woolf introduces us to her main character early in the novel by discussing Rachel’s education with an intriguing allusion to the age of Shakespeare:

> Her mind was in the state of an intelligent man’s in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth; she would believe practically anything she was told, invent reasons for anything she said. . . . All the energies that might have gone into languages, science or literature, that might have made her friends, or shown her the world, poured straight into music (34).

As I suggested earlier, the dangers of her condition are much more tangible to Rachel than to her counterparts in *The Tempest*. While critics such as Mitchell Leaska have
viewed Rachel’s death as her willful choice to reject a bourgeois marriage with Terence Hewet (337), it is also possible to see her demise as tragic, an unnecessary consequence of an insufficient education. I would tend to view Rachel’s death, less as a form of resistance, but rather, as evidence of her victimization at the hands of a culture’s repressive educational practices. Rachel’s education has shielded her from knowledge—particularly sexual knowledge—in a manner far more extreme than appears in the admittedly fantastical world of The Tempest. Again, Woolf strips away the illusions in her Shakespearean revision. The link between Rachel’s education and her ultimate death appears in an ironic passage immediately after Helen Ambrose has assumed responsibility for Rachel’s instruction during their voyage. In a letter she writes,

I have taken it upon myself to enlighten [Rachel].... Keeping them ignorant [about human sexuality], of course, defeats its own object, and when they begin to understand they take it all much too seriously. My brother-in-law really deserved a catastrophe—which he won’t get. (96-7)

The catastrophe does indeed occur, and it arrives during Helen’s self-appointed watch as Rachel’s educational guardian. The forces that have culminated in Rachel’s current emotional and intellectual state have been set in motion far too early to be overturned in the course of the novel’s narrative.

An important connection between the heroines of the two works is their respective knowledge of their family histories. In Act One of The Tempest, we are introduced to both Prospero and his daughter. In addition to learning of Miranda’s essential goodness,
we quickly learn that she has a frustrated desire for self-knowledge: "You have often/
Begun to tell me what I am; but stopped/ And left me to a bootless inquisition,/
Concluding, 'Stay; not yet'" (1.2.33-36). At this point in the story, Miranda knows
nothing about her family's past and the circumstances which have led to her island exile.
During her fourteen years of life, Miranda has been sheltered from a tale of an uncle who
usurped her father's dukedom, as well as her father's own complicity in his downfall. As
Prospero tells his daughter, "thee my dear one. . . Art ignorant of what thou art" (1.2.17-
18). Although her father has devoted himself to her education ("I, thy schoolmaster,
made thee more profit/ Than other princes can") (1.2.173-74), the knowledge contained in
books has dominated Miranda's studies, rather than a sense of her family history.
Although we never learn the exact nature of Miranda's curriculum, we can surmise that
Prospero restricts himself to the profound knowledge of the natural world which was
characteristic of his magus-like stature, in addition to an instruction in the social graces
required by the future Queen of Naples. Absent from her studies, however, is a
knowledge of her own family history. In fact, Miranda's mother is mentioned only once
in Act 1 (1.2.55-59), a passage where Prospero curiously implies that, if not for her
mother's assurance that Prospero was indeed the child's father, Miranda's birth
legitimacy could somehow be questioned. Other than Miranda, the female is largely an
absence in the world of The Tempest, and when present, seems to be shrouded in a haze
of suspicion and potential betrayal. Similar to Miranda, Rachel seems to have been
sheltered from details of her family, particularly regarding her mother. In Voyage, Helen
Ambrose reveals to Rachel that her mother had been engaged to a man before Rachel’s father and that “she enjoyed things. . . . [and] she got on with every kind of person, and then she made it all so amazingly—funny” (186). This information clearly contradicts what Rachel has learned from her aunts; the aunts’ portrait of Rachel’s mother is much less dynamic, “always making out that [Rachel’s mother] was very sad and very good” (187). Because of this less-than-precise description of her mother’s character, Rachel’s self-knowledge, like Miranda’s, has been frustrated by a distorted sense of her family’s past.

Miranda also possesses two attributes which initially seem to resemble, or even exceed, Rachel’s naivete. First, Miranda falls in love with Ferdinand, the first man she has ever seen, her father excepted. Second, she possesses an essential optimism about the goodness of human nature despite the evidence of Antonio’s, Sebastian’s and Alonso’s treachery, as well as the sometimes cruel means with which her father has restored his power. Nevertheless, Miranda exclaims at the end of the play, “O Wonder!/ How many goodly creatures are there here! . . ./O brave new world/ That has such people in’t!” (5.1.184-187). Miranda’s excitement at this moment is linked to her impending nuptials, which perhaps blinds her to the treachery surrounding her. Such excitement also resembles Rachel’s illusory excitement at the “possibilities of knowledge” inspired by the gift of Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall*, which is connected to her fleeting, and ultimately frustrated, desire to be a part of Terence Hewet’s and St. John Hirst’s masculine world of knowledge (175).
Despite these examples of a naivete—which should be expected from a fourteen year old—Miranda consistently demonstrates an uncanny insight which does not fail to escape her father’s attention; any points of comparison between the conditions of Miranda and Rachel end here. As Prospero recounts his tale of exile from Milan, Miranda asks a question which is quite incisive for a supposedly innocent girl: “Wherefore did they [the usurpers] not/ That hour destroy us?” (1.2.138-139). She also later challenges her father, objecting to the labors he imposes on Ferdinand. Miranda rightly suspects some motive for her father’s desire to imprison Ferdinand and tells her love, “Be of comfort./ My father’s of a better nature sir,/ Than he appears by speech. This is unwonted/ Which now came from him” (1.2.499-502). Miranda recognizes that her father is merely testing the strength of Ferdinand’s love, as Prospero later admits to Ferdinand, “All thy vexations/ Were but trials of thy love” (4.1.5-6). Ferdinand has withstood his trials, much as the Biblical patriarch Jacob does for the hand of Rachel in Genesis, whose name adds yet another layer to the intertextual network between The Tempest and Voyage. In addition, by the end of The Tempest, we have additional evidence that Miranda is Ferdinand’s intellectual equal when Prospero lifts the curtain to reveal the couple channeling their sexual energies into a game of chess. True, Shakespeare makes a subtle reference to the couple’s desire to “mate” at this time, but the playwright also demonstrates that Miranda’s mind makes her a formidable opponent for her future husband and heir to the throne of Naples. If one recalls the expression of
Prospero’s pride in his daughter’s education in Act One, this later scene does confirm that her father/schoolmaster has indeed “made [Miranda] more profit/ Than other princes can” (1.2.173-74).

In *The Voyage Out*, Rachel possesses a thirst for self-knowledge even greater than Miranda’s but usually without the latter’s insight. Through her conversations with Helen Ambrose, Rachel does try desperately to understand her place in the world and to come to terms with her latent sexuality. However, the reader of *Voyage* sees that Rachel’s questions are asked too late in her life and are the product of an education which teaches her very little and grants too much time for idle contemplation. In chapter two, Woolf cynically describes the extent of the “one or two hours” of weekly schooling which Rachel receives:

> At that moment Rachel was sitting in her room doing absolutely nothing. . . . The way she had been educated, joined to a fine natural indolence, was of course partly the reason for it, for she had been educated as the majority of well-to-do girls in the last part of the nineteenth century were educated. Kindly doctors and gentle old professors had taught her the rudiments of about ten different branches of knowledge. . . . But there was no subject in the world which she knew accurately. (33-4)

Although the narrator informs us that Rachel’s aunts have provided for her moral instruction, the demands on Rachel’s mind are far from rigorous: her teachers “would have soon have forced her to go through one piece of drudgery as thoroughly as they
would have told her that her hands were dirty” (33-4). But despite her indolence, Rachel at least recognizes that this system needs reform, even if Terence and Rachel’s prescription for the education of their future children seems strangely unsatisfactory:

They went on to sketch an outline of the ideal education—how their daughter should be required from infancy to gaze at a large square of cardboard, painted blue, to suggest thoughts of infinity, for women were grown too practical; and their son—he should be taught to laugh at great men, that is at distinguished successful men, at men who wore ribands and rose to the tops of their trees. He should in no way resemble (Rachel added) St. John Hirst. (294-5)

The exercise designed to inspire thoughts of infinity might only have added to Rachel’s confusion, but here, and throughout the novel, Woolf also implies that the education designed for the male could also serve for the female; the prescription for the boys to learn to laugh at great men was certainly the more productive endeavor in Woolf’s eyes. After all, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have suggested, Voyage is preoccupied with revisionist history: “[Woolf] had begun to question the histories of men that formed the staple of the early reading prescribed by [her father]” (14). In Voyage, Woolf challenges the notion of history as comprised of the lives of great men, a tradition represented by the leitmotif of Gibbon’s Decline and Fall. This latter text is one which Hirst recommends to enhance Rachel’s education, although Rachel ultimately rejects the work. Another example of Rachel’s frustration with the masculine tradition of letters is the un-read Cowper that she carries with her. The book had “bored her,” which should not be
surprising given Rachel’s propensity for all-things-musical. Cowper’s own aesthetic preferences clearly do not speak to Rachel’s interests: “Give me a manly, rough line, with a deal of meaning in it, rather than a whole poem full of musical periods, that have nothing but their oily smoothness to recommend them” (Cowper 433). As a measure of her frustration with both books, however, Rachel has difficulty articulating her objections, since “read as she would, she could not grasp the meaning with her mind” (201).

Eventually, Rachel claims that the Gibbon has a “perfect style,” but is nevertheless “unyielding in mind” (201). Rachel is close to formulating an objection to a style which does not speak to her needs as a reader, but she lacks the courage of her convictions when speaking to St. John Hirst, and she never seems convinced that her critique is valid. Once again, Rachel’s education has failed her and left her unable to defend herself against St. John Hirst’s condescending attitude toward female intellectual powers. Earlier in the novel, Rachel had claimed that, “‘It’s insolent to—’ . . . and [then] stopped” because “she did not know why she had been made so angry” (155). The reason for Rachel’s anger is all too apparent; Hirst had dismissively asked her whether she could truly and fully appreciate Gibbon. As Hirst continues one of his many monologues directed at Rachel, we discover that, even in the process of assailing the powers of the female mind, Hirst does indeed recognize that education may be a contributing factor in the “ignorance” he perceives: “It’s awfully difficult to tell about women. . . how much, I mean, is due to lack of training, and how much is native incapacity” (154). Rachel is
rightfully indignant but suppresses her anger, a restraint which Shakespeare's Miranda rarely demonstrates. The best example of the contrast can be found in Miranda's indignation when her father accuses Ferdinand of being a traitor in Act One. Noting the physical beauty of Ferdinand, Miranda protests that "nothing ill can dwell in such a temple," which elicits this angry response from her father: "What, I say,/ My foot my tutor" (1.2.469-70). It seems that Miranda is permitted the licence to speak freely with her father and seizes the opportunity—unlike the more passive Rachel—but the attempt to instruct her instructor is where, in Prospero's mind, Miranda goes too far. Miranda may have been the beneficiary of an education superior to Rachel's, but as her father's "foot," she should never presume to be the one imparting the lessons.

Comparing Woolf's and Shakespeare's heroines, one expects that a fourteen-year-old girl raised in isolation from the European world would exhibit a degree of naivete, but Rachel is a twenty-four year old living in the most industrialized nation on earth; Rachel is clearly a victim of her gender and the limits imposed on her education. When Helen writes to family back home in England, she records her amazement at the extent of Rachel's ignorance, serving as Woolf's voice advocating educational reform:

"The question is, how should we educate [girls]? The present method seems abominable. This girl [Rachel], though twenty-four, had never heard that men desired women, and until I explained it, did not know how children were born."
Her ignorance upon other matters as important" (here Mrs. Ambrose's letter may not be quoted). . .“was complete. It seems to me not merely foolish, but criminal to bring people up like that.” (96)

Rachel’s education has been woefully inadequate, and we know from Woolf’s autobiographical writings that Rachel’s education was not unlike Woolf’s own.

In “A Sketch of the Past,” Woolf writes that she was “never at school [and] never competed with children of [her] own age” (65). Woolf, her sister Vanessa, and half-sister Stella were educated more progressively than many Victorian women, since, as Hermione Lee indicates, the Stephens’ Hyde Park Gate home occasionally hosted female educators such as Clara Pater and Janet Case (141). However, like Rachel’s, Woolf’s education was largely confined to writing exercises, reading passages from the classics (in addition to Shakespeare), and some musical instruction.

As Elaine Showalter has demonstrated, a classical education was “the intellectual dividing line between men and women” in the late-nineteenth century (42). The Voyage Out occupies a place within a tradition of writing in which the female heroine attempts to equal the educational standards of the male establishment, a tradition which includes a number of nineteenth-century novels, such as Catherine Crowe’s The Story of Lily Dawson (1852), Charlotte Yonge’s The Clever Woman of the Family (1856), and perhaps most notably, George Eliot’s Middlemarch (1871). Women who did attain the goal of mastering (or even surveying) the classics were almost exclusively self-taught. Initially, Rachel Vinrace possesses such a goal in Voyage, only to be eventually discouraged in her
attempts at self-instruction. Rachel’s failure would no doubt have delighted her father and her aunts as well. Explicit in nineteenth-century thinking on the subject of female education are three notions outlined by Linda Peterson in her study of the Victorian female educator Harriet Martineau. Citing Martineau’s own words, Peterson summarizes three prevailing late nineteenth-century attitudes:

1) that if women pursue knowledge, they will “neglect their appropriate duties and peculiar employments”; 2) “that the greatest advances that the female mind can make in knowledge, must still fall far short of the attainment of the other sex”; and 3) that women are naturally so vain that “any degree of proficiency in knowledge” will make them forget “the subordinate station assigned them by law, natural and divine” (185).

Martineau advocated a curriculum that educated men and women together, initially at home and later in the schools, a program which opposed the segregated instruction that continued to dominate Edwardian schooling in Woolf’s and Rachel’s own day.

This division of educational labor is one aspect of Rachel’s instruction which Helen Ambrose seems to find so appalling: “If [young women] were properly educated I don’t see why they shouldn’t be much the same as men—as satisfactory I mean” (96). To understand the limited range of options available to women, one can examine an illuminating document from the period, entitled Progress in Women’s Education in the British Empire, which resulted from a conference on women’s education conducted during Queen Victoria’s Jubilee of 1897. Despite the presence of charts indicating the
dramatic rise in degrees awarded to female graduates at The University of London, a review of the collection's contents reveals the prevalence of the notion that women were still best suited to an education which prepared them for careers in "horticulture," "dairy work and other outdoor activities," or as "factory and sanitary inspectors." There is an overall feeling that women's education, unlike men's, must not be achieved as an end unto itself, but demonstrated by some practical application, such as the avenues, mentioned above, open to working-class women. As a result, women of Rachel Vinrace's class were less likely to reap the benefits of educational reform, since there was no need for them to enter the work force, and to do so offered a potential threat to those "appropriate duties" and "peculiar employments" described by Martineau.

The aspect of Rachel's curriculum which is most "criminal" to Helen Ambrose is the absence of discussions regarding human sexuality. One consequence of this criminality can be found in Richard Dalloway's advances toward Rachel, an action which makes him one of the prime candidates for the novel's very own Caliban. It may not be tragic that Dalloway kisses the unsuspecting Rachel, but it is tragic that she seems unable to make sense of the emotions she feels after the incident, or to be able to discuss them with Helen Ambrose. Initially, Rachel feels that "something wonderful" has happened, but this quickly gives way to a discomfort confirmed by the horrifying dream of the "deformed man" which has been the subject of much critical commentary. Rachel is clearly repulsed by thoughts of her own sexuality, recognizing at this late moment in her life that she is sexually desired by others, but unable to comprehend the nature of her own
desire, a confusion we witness again in the awkward eroticism of Rachel’s encounter with Miss Allan (252-7). Perhaps what is most disturbing about Dalloway is that he condones Rachel’s complete ignorance of sexuality. Concluding a discussion on the subject of “love” (in the sense that “young men use it,” he adds), Dalloway reminds himself and Rachel that sex is unfamiliar ground for the young woman: “But have you any idea what—what I mean by that? No; of course not. . . . Girls are kept very ignorant, aren’t they. Perhaps it’s wise” (68).

In addition to the general superiority of Miranda’s insights outlined above, there is no question that Miranda’s knowledge of what Helen Ambrose calls “important matters” far exceeds Rachel’s as well. Miranda seems to know herself and to be in command of her sexuality, and not just in the scene discussed earlier where Miranda first admires Ferdinand’s “brave form” (1.2.409-502). To confirm the strength of the couple’s attachment and the active role Miranda takes in securing their future, consider also that there is a definite proposal of marriage in The Tempest (unlike the tacit marriage proposal in The Voyage Out) and that it is Miranda who does the asking: “I am your wife, if you will marry me” (3.1.83). Although Prospero is satisfied with the match (“Fair encounter/Of two most rare affections!”) (4.1.74-5), his anxieties are not yet relieved; the Duke’s final concern is that the young lovers do not “break her virgin-knot before/All sanctimonious ceremonies may/With full and holy rite be minist’red” (4.1.15-17). Ferdinand and Miranda are impassioned young lovers whom Woolf contrasts with the passive Rachel and Terence in The Voyage Out. While Prospero warns his daughter after
catching the lovers in an embrace, "Be more abstemious,/ Or else good night your vow"
(4.1.53-4). Woolf depicts Rachel and Terence rather differently in the forest as their own
“passion” climaxes:

“We love each other,” Terence repeated searching into her face. Their faces were
both very pale and quiet, and they said nothing. He was afraid to kiss her again...
On and on it went in the distance, the senseless and cruel churning of the water.

[Rachel] observed that the tears were running down Terence’s cheeks. (271-2)

What could possibly account for two such different takes on young love? I again suggest
that Woolf gestures toward some of the deficiencies in Rachel’s emotional development,
and by implication, her education, which has left her unprepared to deal with her own
sexuality. Rachel is equally unprepared for the erotic encounter with Miss Allan as she is
in her perpetual longing to see Terence (222). Rachel’s desire is “agony,” and Woolf
suggests the cause for Rachel’s distress:

In her curious condition of unanalyzed sensations she was incapable of making a
plan which should have any effect upon her state of mind. . . . Any woman
experienced in the progress of courtship would have come by certain opinions
from all this which would have given her at least a theory to go upon; but no one
had ever been in love with Rachel, and she had never been in love with
anyone. . . . It seemed to her that her sensations had no name. (223)

Again, Rachel’s condition is conspicuously similar to Woolf’s own, because absent from
Woolf’s own studies is the topic of human sexuality. In fact, Woolf’s memoir recounts
that it was not until around 1907, at the age of twenty five, roughly Rachel’s age (and
near the time when Woolf began work on *Voyage*), that Woolf was first tutored in such
matters by her step-sister’s future husband, Jack Hills: “He it was who first spoke to me
openly and deliberately about sex” (*Moments* 103). Like Rachel, the young Woolf was a
typical late-Victorian/Edwardian bourgeois woman shielded from any discussion of
sexuality, a “danger” which was not lost on Woolf.

A discussion of human sexuality was considered terribly inappropriate for the
moral development of young women like Rachel and the young Virginia Stephen, but this
is only part of the problem which Woolf addresses in *Voyage*. Because women differed
biologically from men, the Victorians believed that their overall educational capability
differed as well. As Joan Burstyn suggests in *Victorian Education and the Ideal of
Womanhood* (1980), menstruation required regular intervals of rest that comprehensive
schooling did not permit. Therefore, women educated too thoroughly were seen as
dangerously subject to sterility, a notion which would could threaten a bourgeois
woman’s first priority: her duties as a mother in the home (92-5).

In the case of Rachel Vinrace, as we shall see more fully in the next section of this
chapter, the nature of her education is designed for her to be able to execute her own
“peculiar employments” (to borrow Martineau’s phrase); in effect, Rachel is destined for
a life as Coventry Patmore’s “Angel in the House,” a guardian of morality who minsters
to her family and improves the quality of everyone’s life, her own excepted. In Woolf’s
own case, despite the somewhat progressive nature of her instruction, Woolf’s diary
records that if her father Leslie Stephen had lived, "His life would have entirely ended mine. What would have happened? No writing, no books;—inconceivable" (Diary 208). Only Sir Leslie's death in 1904 ensured that Woolf would escape Rachel Vinrace's ultimate fate.

III - Rachel Vinrace: Miranda and Caliban

As much as Woolf may have intended Rachel to resemble Miranda, there may be an even more significant comparison to be drawn: Rachel's parallels with Caliban. This is an intriguing proposition given that Caliban was fathered by Satan, and constitutes, in Prospero's words, a "born devil" (which does not speak well of Rachel's father). But Rachel may indeed have symbolic ties to Caliban; after all, Jane Cummins suggests that the deformed man in Rachel's dream may signify far more than a representation of Dalloway's sexual aggression: "the deformed man represents simultaneously Rachel's revulsion upon her discovery of sexuality, her idea of the native [in the colony of Santa Marina] as animalistic and incomprehensible, and, finally, her own self" (208 - emphasis mine). Perhaps Woolf's Caliban is not only Richard Dalloway, but her heroine as well. Rachel is a Caliban, not so much because of any parallels between the characters' functions within the respective plots, but because of the thematic links which connect these two characters who are subjugated by their powerful "fathers." Postcolonial criticism has helped to refocus our attention on the much-misunderstood Caliban and the
ways in which we can re-read the play sympathetic to the plight of this character who has
been enslaved in his own island home: “This island’s mine, by Sycorax my mother,/Which thou tak’st from me” (1.2.334-35). A caveat: I do not wish to fall into the
theoretical trap outlined by Sara Suleri by making “postcolonial” a “free-floating
metaphor for cultural embattlement” (274). In other words, my postcolonial reading does
not equate the positions of Rachel and Caliban, or Rachel and the residents of Santa
Marina, but it does offer us a way to articulate a relationship between Rachel and her
father which is marked by a huge discrepancy in power; Rachel’s father fashions his
daughter’s education in a manner appropriate for his own personal and professional
benefit. But simply to equate the conditions of oppression experienced by Rachel with a
generalized colonial Other is unproductive because it fails to consider the historical and
cultural specificity of various colonial relationships. Instead, my argument is that, as
Anne McClintock suggests in another context, colonial women “experienced the
privileges and social contradictions of imperialism very differently from colonial men”
(6). This is certainly true in Rachel’s case. The important point here is that gender
dynamics were an inherent component of the maintenance of the colonial enterprise, and
McClintock reminds us that male economic self-interest depended on, among other
things, a “persistent educational disadvantage” (14), which is the reason why this essay
foregrounds Rachel’s persistent educational disadvantage in such detail. As Edward Said
reminds us often in Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism, as a discursive bearer of
“knowledge,” Orientalism is far more insidious than military or economic power, and the

essential Orientalist relationship Said describes is "one between a strong and weak partner" (40). A similar arrangement exists at the heart of the gender dynamics within the colonizer's own class in *Voyage*.

We must now consider some of the reasons for the curriculum of Rachel's (and Woolf's) education at the turn of the century and how postcolonial theory can help us to articulate its deficiencies. We need to remember an important notion at this point about *Voyage*: that Rachel is largely an absence to the man ultimately entrusted with her education. Vinrace often omits Rachel from his consciousness, as he does when making introductions to the Dalloways: "There's...Ambrose, the scholar (I daresay you've heard his name), his wife, my old friend Pepper, a very quiet fellow, but knows everything, I'm told. And that's all" (41). Throughout the novel, there is a conspicuous pattern of such instances in which the female is a conspicuous absence. As Pepper and Ridley Ambrose reflect on their salad days as students in the ancient universities of England, "[Helen and Rachel] rose and left, vaguely to the surprise of the gentlemen, who had either thought them attentive or had forgotten their presence" (17). In another notable example of how even the women of the colonial class omit the feminine from their consciousness, Helen Ambrose proclaims her children her greatest passion, and Clarissa Dalloway elicits more information: "Do tell me. You have a boy, haven't you? Isn't it detestable leaving them?" (56). The female child is recollected later, merely as an afterthought for Clarissa. This near-omission of Helen's daughter and her expressed interest in the masculine is
unsurprising, given that Clarissa's own greatest passion is her husband's mission as a
guardian of empire, and the corresponding idea of "Englishness" which fills her thoughts:

Being on this ship seems to make it so much more vivid—what it means to be
English. One thinks of all we've done, and our navies, and the people in India and
Africa, sending out boys from little country villages—and of men like you, Dick,
and it makes one feel as if one couldn't bear not to be English! (50-1).

Clarissa's national identity, her sense of her Englishness, is so intimately bound up with
her own fixation on masculinity, that it should not be surprising that the female recedes
from her consciousness as conspicuously as it does.

There is a similar network of female absence operating in The Tempest. Again,
Miranda's own mother is mentioned only once, and, even then, is a somewhat veiled
presence in her daughter's mind. As a consequence, Prospero assumes the role of both
father and mother, particularly evident in his description of the sorrows of the initial
voyage to the island, a narrative which assumes the tone of a father's birthing fantasy:

O, a cherubin

Thou wast that did preserve me. Thou didst smile,

Infusèd with a fortitude from heaven,

When I have decked the sea with drops full salt,

Under my burden groaned, which raised in me

An undergoing stomach, to bear up

Against what should ensue. (1.2.152-58)
This birthing implies a new beginning for the Duke, and in the absence of Miranda’s actual mother, Prospero creates a surrogate island-family, with himself as both mother and father to the wicked, monster-child Caliban and obedient, angel-child Ariel. Further erasures of the female presence abound within the text of *The Tempest*, although one particular instance has probably occurs without Shakespeare’s intent. As Stephen Orgel reveals, when a deliriously happy Ferdinand interrupts Prospero’s masque in Act Four to exclaim, “Let me live here, ever./ So rare a wondered father and a wise/ Makes this place Paradise” (4.1.122-24), there is a curious textual anomaly which had puzzled scholars since the beginning of the twentieth century: why does Ferdinand here neglect Miranda’s contribution to his happiness? Orgel reports that Miranda has been omitted from Ferdinand’s thoughts here, but only because the crossbar of the “f” in “wife” may have broken early in the folio’s print run. Nineteenth-century editors had emended “wife” to “wise” on logical grounds, but nevertheless, “after 1895 the wife became invisible” (112) and a century of readers would be led to believe that Ferdinand was only celebrating his prospective father-in-law, and not his wife-to-be at this moment.⁵

The implications of these omissions of the female presence in both *The Tempest* and *Voyage* are terribly significant. Postcolonial criticism has illustrated how the European colonizer has been construed as a “sovereign subject by defining its colonies as Others, even as it constituted them, for purposes of administration and the expansion of markets, into programmed near-images of that very sovereign self” (Spivak, “Rani” 128). However, any examination of that “sovereign” colonial subject reveals fissures and,
ironically, the female European colonial subject often resembles the colonial Other in important ways. When we think of Rachel’s disappearance from the consciousness of her father, the words which Gayatri Spivak uses to describe the position of subaltern women also applies to Rachel:

Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the “third-world woman” caught between tradition and modernization. ("Subaltern" 306)

The notion of the violence inflicted upon Rachel seems confirmed by her ultimate fate, and we see ties to Spivak’s description of the subaltern in Rachel’s position as she becomes suspended between the “traditional” matriarchal position of Clarissa Dalloway and the roles for the “new woman” as embodied by Woolf, herself. And, as I have suggested earlier, her marginalization, often to the point of a complete absence, has taken its toll on Rachel, who expresses an ever-present metaphysical quandary about her own self-hood. After the momentary awakening of her sexuality, Rachel reveals a hopefulness about her self-image, which ultimately proves illusory: “The vision of her own personality, of herself as a real everlasting thing, different from anything else, unmergeable, like the sea or the wind, flashed into Rachel’s mind, and she became profoundly excited at the thought of living: ‘I can be m-m-myself,’ she stammered” (84). However, for Rachel, that stammer foreshadows that the notion of “being herself” is tenuous at best.
Not only is Rachel an absence, but women are more generally excluded from the realm of knowledge; only a man like Mr. Pepper could lay claim to “know everything,” and only a man such as Mr. Elliot could possess a “profound knowledge” (115). Such practices seem to have taken their toll on Rachel, who also emphasizes her ignorance when she presents her own “biographical sketch” during Hewet’s picnic in the hills of Santa Marina: “Rachel stated that she was twenty-four years of age, the daughter of a ship-owner, [and] that she had never been properly educated” (143). When we return to the scenes involving Rachel and Richard Dalloway, Rachel’s intellectual insecurities are painfully obvious, but just as much a part of her identity:

“I know nothing!” she exclaimed.

“It’s far better that you should know nothing,” he said paternally, “and you wrong yourself, I’m sure. You play very nicely, I’m told, and I’ve no doubt you’ve read heaps of learned books.” (65)

In contrast, the identities of both Hewet and Hirst are inseparable from their educations: Hewet was “educated at Winchester and Cambridge” and Hirst “got scholarships everywhere—Westminster—King’s” (144). Despite the best efforts of her male companions, Rachel has been unable or unwilling to consume those “learned books”; just as Caliban is described by Prospero as a “dull thing,” it is Rachel’s essential nature which makes her unsuitable for the education initially prescribed for her. Rachel’s disillusion with Cowper and Gibbon again leaves music as the only mode of inquiry and expression available to her, and one which seems to be the special provenance of the female, as
witnessed by the musical dialogue of Wagner's Tristan and Isolde carried on by Rachel and Clarissa Dalloway (47). Outside the realm of the musical, however, the female is largely silenced. One exception might be the educated and independent Miss Allan, the writer engaged in composing a Primer of English Literature. However, hers is not a project addressing the needs of many female readers or writers. Miss Allan seems content to glorify "the great tradition" (years before F.R. Leavis popularized the phrase) from Beowulf to Swinburne, which really constitutes the great, male tradition of English literature. Such a tradition, including the "great books" which frustrate Rachel, is one which Rachel initially hopes will introduce her to what S.A. Henke describes, adopting a near-anagram for "Caliban," as "unimagined Cabalistic mysteries," a desire which obviously proves illusory. As Henke asserts, Miss Allan's studies do not serve Rachel well:

But what kind of education is appropriate for a twentieth-century woman?

Certainly not the kind of learning represented by Miss Allen. . . . Fondly stroking her father's gold watch, she reverences "the great tradition" of masculine knowledge and tries to compress the "best that has been thought and known in the world"—by men—into digestible capsules of salient information, suitable for assimilation by children and ladies acquainted with the "masters" of English literature from Beowulf to Browning. (4)

It should be apparent to readers of Voyage that--insufficient though it is--Rachel's schooling has been designed with a very definite end in mind. In her own way, much like
Miranda, Rachel has been very carefully prepared for a particular role; Rachel will not rule as the Queen of Naples, but she will have a place in her father's "court." For Vinrace, Rachel's best possible education would teach her the graces of the perfect hostess, and the excessive attention to music will, most likely, not interfere with this plan. The reason Rachel has been taken on the voyage which will lead to her death is that Vinrace "should like her to begin to see more people" (86). However, Vinrace's motivation is hardly unselfish; he has begun to contemplate a career in Parliament, which means that Rachel will have to take the place of her mother. As Vinrace explains to Helen:

"I should want Rachel to be able to take more part in things. A certain amount of entertaining would be necessary—dinners, an occasional evening party. . . . In all these ways Rachel could be of great help to me. . . .if you could see your way to helping my girl, bringing her out. . . .making a woman of her, the kind of woman her mother would have liked her to be." (86 - emphasis mine)

But what kind of a woman is Rachel really being groomed to be? In the mind of her father, Rachel could best aspire to imitate Clarissa Dalloway, who is the perfect wife of a Tory M.P. Although Helen Ambrose believes the Dalloways to be "second-rate," Clarissa does play to perfection the role for which Rachel is being groomed. Clarissa is dismissive of artists (who enclose themselves "in a little world of [their] own"—45), although she knows enough of Bronte and Austen to make conversation (57-8). And she
is well-spoken enough to address the noble work which her husband performs, but without the license to discuss politics too freely. As a result of his wife’s role playing, Richard Dalloway is grateful that,

“I have been able to come home to my wife in the evening and find that she has spent her day in calling, music, play with the children, domestic duties—what you will; her illusions have not been destroyed. She gives me courage to go on. The strain of public life is very great.” (65 - emphasis mine)

Clarissa’s principal illusion seems to be that artists are the only ones who enclose themselves in that little world of [their] own “with pictures and music and everything beautiful” (45). Clarissa fails to see that she and Rachel have also been shut away. The irony is that Clarissa’s class, and the trappings which accompany her position as a woman, ensure that very imprisonment. Again, the very presence of such “illusions” provides another subtle connection between The Tempest and Voyage. In The Tempest, Prospero’s power depends upon his ability to conjure up fantastical illusions which deceive the usurpers and help him to restore his dukedom, the maintenance of power through theatrical means which Stephen Greenblatt refers to as a component of the Renaissance “theater state” (49). In Voyage, Dalloway maintains his intellectual “superiority” by relegating his wife to a position in which she serves his own needs. As a result, Dalloway can proclaim, “Few people, I suppose, have fewer illusions than I have” (64), which reinforces the sense of Voyage as an anti-Tempest, one in which the veil has been lifted and Miranda’s innocence has been drowned. In order to maintain an image of
himself as a guardian of the “civilized world,” Mr. Dalloway needs a partner who, in Clarissa’s words, “keep[s] one at one’s best” (61). And one of the most important components of the Dalloway marriage is that Clarissa not threaten her husband’s self-image; Dalloway’s own illusions must be maintained at all costs. Vinrace is trying to mold Rachel in a similar manner, creating the illusion of a well-rounded and well-balanced society hostess, but one whose deficiencies will contribute to Rachel’s death. Rachel’s self-esteem must be diminished in order to enhance the self-esteem of the fathers and husbands who have helped to construct this role for her. As Woolf later writes in *A Room of One’s Own*, the female is the mirror which allows the man to see himself reflected as twice his actual size (35). Terence Hewet seems aware of this process in *Voyage*, when he claims “I believe that we must have the sort of power over [women] that we’re said to have over horses. They see us as three times as big as we are or they’d never obey us” (212). And part of that process of enhancing the image of the male requires the continual process of infantilization that marks Rachel’s condition. Treating Rachel as a child, rendering her here as the largely unseen and unspoken Caliban-child—rather than Miranda’s more privileged position—alleviates a potential dilemma for the forces of patriarchy in *Voyage* and allows us to consider another way in which Rachel is analogous to Caliban.

Contributing to the discussion of the colonized as “absence,” Edward Said defines the practice of Orientalism as the imperialist’s propensity for “disregarding, essentializing, denuding the humanity of another culture, people or geographical region”
(108). We see numerous examples of the colonial subject (or the colonies, themselves) as an absence in other texts written at the time Woolf was writing *Voyage*, particularly in the description of the blank spaces on the world map in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902). However, that notion of frequently disregarding the colonized, and of rendering him or her as present in the consciousness only when he or she is of practical use for the colonizer (much as Rachel is to her father) becomes especially problematic for the forces of imperial power. The solution to the problem of the absence (which is really not an absence) is addressed by Said more fully in *Culture and Imperialism*:

But of course the natives could not really *all* be made to disappear, and in fact they encroached more and more on the imperial consciousness. And what follows are schemes for separating the natives—Africans, Malays, Arabs [and others]—from the white man on racial and religious grounds, then for reconstituting them *as people requiring a European presence*, whether a colonial implantation or a master discourse in which they could be fitted and put to work. Thus...one has Kipling's fiction positing the Indian as a creature clearly needing British tutelage, one aspect of which is a narrative that encircles and then assimilates India, since without Britain India would disappear into its own corruption and underdevelopment. (167 - emphasis mine)

We may begin to see here how an analogous process of threatened disappearance, combined with a desire for tutelage, is at the heart of male/female relations within the world of *Voyage*. Because Rachel cannot be ignored indefinitely, and because she must
be enlisted to serve her father’s political aspirations in the Tory party, she requires the presence of a Helen Ambrose or a St. John Hirst to “illuminate” or “enlighten” her. Such figures provide the necessary tutelage of which Said speaks. As a result, the twenty four year old Rachel becomes suspended in a perpetual adolescence. Rachel is rarely permitted to exercise her will as an adult, but instead continues to appear to others, in the thoughts of Helen Ambrose, as “more than normally incompetent for her years” (20). Rachel’s father continues to refer to her as his “child” (21), which is not without its overtones of affection, but is also nevertheless inscribed with the process of infantilization. Throughout *Voyage*, the women suffer a number of similar indignities. Clarissa Dalloway, we learn from her husband, is “never allowed to talk politics” (64), a practice which we can assume would have been adopted in Rachel’s future as a “proper” Tory hostess. For the moment, however, we need not deal in speculation to see how Rachel occupies the position of a child in her own house. Following the very temporary liberation which follows Dalloway’s kiss, Rachel reflects on an existence in which she is unable even to walk the streets unchaperoned, and is shielded, much like Helen Ambrose in the opening pages of the novel, from any knowledge of the working poor. Like a child, Rachel has been protected from anything which might injure her “delicate” sensibilities:

[S]he saw her life for the first time a creeping hedged-in thing, driven cautiously between high walls, here turned aside, there plunged in darkness, made dull and crippled forever—her life that was the only chance she had—the short season between two silences. (82)
Woolf wastes few opportunities to remind us of Rachel’s child-like status. In her discussions with St. John Hirst, he describes her as “absurdly young compared with men of [her] age” (154), and after some insulting remarks directed at Rachel by Hirst, Hewet “found that a young woman angry is very like a child” (157).

Rachel’s description of her life as “dull” and “crippled” re-emphasizes the stifled nature of her emotional and intellectual development, which also shares a corresponding under-development in her physical presence. As Helen suggests to her husband, “she really might be six years old,” referring to the smooth unmarked outline of the girl’s face, and not condemning her otherwise” (25). However, one of the great ironies of Rachel’s tragedy is that the same Edwardian patriarchy which sought to protect Rachel’s chastity and moral purity by preserving her in a perpetual state of childishness actually contributes to her eventual demise. As Hermione Lee describes it, “girls of Rachel’s (and Virginia Stephen’s) age and class are both overprotected from, and the victims of, a system which exploits women intellectually, sexually and socially” (Novels 35)

Rachel is, indeed, the exploited “child” requiring the tutelage of the father. Nevertheless, there are dangers regarding too much tutelage in both Voyage and The Tempest. As we observe in the case of Caliban, whose education was one of Prospero’s great follies, Rachel is only educable to a limited extent. By teaching language to the beastly Caliban, Prospero had tried to fashion him in a role that was “unsuitable.” Similarly, by educating his daughter beyond the needs of a surrogate Parliamentary wife, Vinrace would suffer the potential loss of his own prestige and power. There is an interesting parallel at work here between
the fathers in the two works: Prospero’s choice of Ferdinand as his daughter’s husband consolidates the father’s hold on the kingdoms of Milan and Naples, while Vinrace’s decision to hold his daughter in a state of infantilization strengthens his ambition for a seat in Parliament, all the while tragically sacrificing Rachel’s own future and happiness.

IV - A Postcolonial Re-Vision

By the conclusion of the novel, Rachel succumbs, not so much to the fever which she contracts, but to a loss of the will to live in the world which has been made available to her. As June Cummins writes, “Because Rachel’s death is not a suicide, we are unable to confer on her a willfulness or conviction that we may see in Woolf’s own choice to die. But we can trace a dispiritedness, a lack of desire or fight that allows us to see her death as a choice” (209). Whether viewed as willful or not, the tragedy of that death foregrounds Woolf’s critique of early twentieth-century female education, a critique which arises from and is connected to an important subtext of Shakespeare’s play. Through Woolf’s revision of Shakespeare’s The Tempest, we can imagine Woolf asking herself, “How could Miranda have attained the self-assurance, both intellectually and sexually, that she demonstrates at the end of Act Five?” We know that Prospero prized his books “above his dukedom” (1.2.168), and we can surmise that Miranda now shares her father’s respect for the bettering of one’s own mind. As we have seen in excerpts from Woolf’s memoir, the writer recognized that knowledge and self-image were
inextricably linked, and a contributing factor in Rachel’s tragic fate is the absence of both.

*The Voyage Out* inaugurated a lifetime dialogue with Shakespeare’s work which we would see explicitly in the discussion of “Shakespeare’s Sister” in *A Room of One’s Own*, as well as in the Shakespearean allusions which Woolf presents in novels such as *Mrs. Dalloway, Orlando* and *The Waves*. Other studies of *The Voyage Out* have analyzed, in great detail, the inter-textual nature of *Voyage*, and its relationship to works such as Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall* (Gilbert and Gubar) as well as an essay devoted to the connections between similar explorations of the self in *Voyage* and Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (Pitt), or even between *Voyage* and Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Henke). The intertextual dialogue between *The Voyage Out* and *The Tempest* is every bit as important for continuing the discussion about the dynamics of Woolf’s heroine’s quest for knowledge and self-identity, as well as an important tool for using postcolonial theory to articulate more fully the tragedy of Rachel Vinrace.

*Voyage* is a novel in which “Englishness,” at least for the Dalloways, connotes unity and wholeness. “Conceive the world as a whole,” Richard suggests to Rachel as he commences a discussion of the proper workings of the imperial machine:

“I can conceive no more exalted aim—to be the citizen of the Empire. Look at it this way, Miss Vinrace; conceive the state as a complicated machine; we citizens are part of that machine; some fulfill more important duties; others (perhaps I am

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one of them) serve only to connect some obscure parts of the mechanism,
concealed from the public eye. Yet if the meanest screw fails in its task, the proper
working of the whole is imperiled” (66).

Perhaps lost in Dalloway’s catechism is the implication that Rachel not lose sight of her
own “mean” task: to remain outside the realm of the knowledgeable and powerful and to
serve the men who serve the empire. Yet how can England ever be whole, Woolf asks
implicitly throughout Voyage, when the female exists, not as a true partner to the male
within the nation, but as another “weak partner” in Said’s imperial dynamic. Female
education can be viewed as woefully inadequate in the Edwardian England of Voyage in a
way which it had not been in the education of Miranda in The Tempest.

By asking her readers to connect The Tempest and Voyage, both in its network of
direct allusions and plot similarities, Woolf secures a place in what Marianne Novy refers
to as the tradition of female “re-visions of Shakespeare.” Appearing as it did in the first
years of the new century, Voyage assumes a place as a successor to the nineteenth-century
revisions of Shakespeare’s heroines, which includes Mary Cowden Clarke’s “The Rose of
Elsinore,” published in The Girlhood of Shakespeare’s Heroines (1851), a narrative
which imagines Hamlet’s Ophelia raised by a peasant couple when Polonius was called
from Denmark to a Parisian court. Like Clarke, Woolf focuses on the formative years of
the young woman’s education, which later explains much about the character’s ultimately
tragic fate.
What may be most interesting about Woolf's use of *The Tempest* is that Shakespeare had drawn upon the riches of non-Western peoples and places in his own play, and Woolf's novel casts her heroine in a condition which is comparable to certain aspects of the experiences of the "Calibans" of the New World. In its way, *The Voyage Out* provides a wonderful bridge between a work like the aforementioned "Rose of Elsinore" and Aimé Césaire's postcolonial revision of *The Tempest, Une Tempête* (1969). When Said characterizes the latter work as "an affectionate contention with Shakespeare for the right to represent Caliban" (*Culture* 212), his words could equally well apply to Woolf's novel. Woolf aims to represent, not only Caliban's, but Miranda's story, or more precisely, to unite the experiences of Caliban and Miranda through the experience of Rachel Vinrace. As Césaire's play reminds us, Caliban is the excluded, the forgotten, and the exploited, who exists only to serve Prospero's designs. And, as *The Voyage Out* reminds us, in the early years of the twentieth century, these words serve to describe Rachel Vinrace's experience all too well.
NOTES

1. Gilbert and Gubar describe how colonization possesses an intellectual, as well as political, dimension, as they catalogue the numerous male characters entrusted with Rachel’s education, including St. John Hirst and Richard Dalloway. See Gilbert and Gubar, 15.

2. Richard Dalloway later appears as a more fully drawn character, the husband of the title character in Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1953.

3. Mitchell Leaska argues that Rachel was unable to face life as the bourgeois wife of Terence Hewet: “hers is a death consciously unresisted, unconsciously sought—it is a self-willed death” (337).

4. As the editors of The Norton Shakespeare suggest in a footnote, “princes” is a generic Renaissance plural for princes and princesses. The choice of words also suggests the extent to which Miranda’s education crosses gender boundaries, which is certainly not the case, as we shall see, with the education of Rachel Vinrace.

5. Even the recent first edition of The Norton Shakespeare (1997), which is based on the Oxford University Press edition of 1986, provides no annotation of Ferdinand’s puzzling remarks.

6. Readers of Mrs. Dalloway will recall that the Clarissa of the later novel, at times, resists the role of the “perfect” Parliamentary wife: “With twice his wits, she had to see through [Richard’s] eyes—one of the tragedies of married life” (116). In addition, in the later novel, Lady Bruton considers Clarissa to be a hindrance to her husband’s career, characterizing her as one of those “women who often got in their husbands’ way, prevent[ing] them from accepting posts abroad, and [who] had to be taken to the seaside in the middle of the session to recover from influenza” (160).

7. Prior to departing on his voyage to locate Kurtz, Marlow sits in the offices of the trading company and stares at the wall. He sees,
...a large shining map, marked with all the colours of a rainbow. There was a vast amount of red—good to see at any time, because one knows that some real work is done in there, a deuce of a lot of blue, a little green, smears of orange, and on the East Coast, a purple patch, to show where the jolly pioneers of progress drink the jolly lager-beer. However, I wasn’t going into any of these. I was going into the yellow. Dead in the centre.

Here, color suggests “progress,” while the unclaimed and uncolored center is ripe for colonial expansion. See Conrad, 36.

8. The infantilization at work in Voyage is similar to that which Vincent Cheng perceives in the relations between Greta and Gabriel Conroy in James Joyce’s “The Dead.” Just as Greta is made to wear galoshes and is reprimanded by Gabriel for her tardiness at Julia and Kate’s Christmas party, we observe similarities in Rachel’s treatment at the hands of her father. See Cheng, 134-38.
CHAPTER 5

CLEOPATRA AND HER PROBLEMS: T.S. ELIOT AND THE FETISHIZATION OF SHAKESPEARE’S QUEEN OF THE NILE

But remember that I am a metic—a foreigner, and that I want to understand you, and all the background and tradition of you. I shall try to be frank—because the attempt is so very much worthwhile with you—it is very difficult with me—both by inheritance and because of my very suspicious and cowardly disposition. But I may simply prove to be a savage. (Eliot Letters I, 318)

This excerpt from a 1919 letter to his friend Mary Hutchinson expresses T.S. Eliot’s keen anxiety as an outsider to British literary culture. Eliot feared that he might be viewed as a “savage,” which is confirmed by the epigraphs borrowed from Conrad’s Heart of Darkness (1902) in both “The Hollow Men” (1925) and in the original manuscript of The Waste Land (1922). Nevertheless, Eliot was not always the Kurtzian outsider driven mad by a realization of “the horror” of modern civilization. In essays such as “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919) and “Hamlet and His Problems” (1919), Eliot knew exactly what was wrong with (literary) culture and how best to remedy
it. In the latter essay, the expatriate American’s confidence remains staggering to readers today. He declared *Hamlet* to be an “artistic failure” and, instead, advocated a critical reappraisal of Shakespeare’s too-oft forgotten, although “most assured” artistic successes, *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. His polemical and influential critique in the “Hamlet” essay was both an American’s intervention into the British literary canon and a signpost for Eliot’s readers to sift for the traces of these later Shakespeare plays in Eliot’s poetry.

But what can we say about the specific means by which Eliot asserts his position within the British cultural mainstream? How does Eliot’s criticism and verse appropriation of “less canonical” Shakespeare plays help him to move from a potentially marginalized position to the center? Jean-Michel Rabaté’s “Tradition and T.S. Eliot” (1994) first drew my attention to Eliot’s use of the term “metic,” but in the present essay I want to build a case for Eliot’s attempts to move beyond his position as a metic via one specific text: Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*. A metic is a special breed of resident alien, one who possesses only some of the privileges of citizenship. Although the metic pays taxes and assumes some of the burden of the privileges of the native-born population, he is, as Rabaté indicates, “rarely admitted fully into the communal mysteries” (212).³ Eliot’s response to Shakespeare, generally speaking, seems to be part of his attempt to reassess Shakespearean drama, one of England’s great communal
bodies of myth. And his interest in Cleopatra seems particularly crucial to Eliot's
burgeoning sense of his own British identity; Cleopatra is one example of the Other by
which Eliot fashions a distinctive British national identity.

Typically, critics have described how Eliot's response to Cleopatra is a way of
ironically juxtaposing the imperial splendor of the Roman and Egyptian past with his own
more cynical take on the degradation of life in modern London. However, this essay will
read Eliot's reception of Cleopatra from a new perspective: that the character of
Cleopatra can be construed as a "problem woman" for Eliot in a number of his poems. I
read the allusions to Cleopatra in poems such as "The Burnt Dancer" (1914), The Waste
Land, and "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" (1920), not in terms of the
ironic distance between Cleopatra and her modern-day equivalents, but in terms of
similarity. Much like Eliot's female characters with whom she is compared, Cleopatra is
a problem insofar as she is artificial, even inanimate, and she represents the antithesis of
the "life" and "rebirth" which are so central to Eliot's poetics. In all of the poet's
depictions of his Cleopatra surrogates, the "problem woman" represents darkness, a
devouring sexuality, and is treated in a manner consistent with the discursive practices of
imperialism: the Cleopatra figure is embedded in a discourse which recognizes her as an
object of desire, but one which can be contained through discourse. Through
representation, it is possible to "know" her and thus diminish her power.

Like Princess Volupine (of "Burbank") or the unnamed woman (a.k.a.
"Belladonna") at the heart of the "A Game of Chess" section of The Waste Land,
Cleopatra occupies a position which seems to threaten Eliot; she ostensibly possesses a beauty beyond language, but it is nevertheless subject to a series of objective descriptions to which Eliot returns again and again in his criticism and verse. Eliot highlights how Shakespeare's Cleopatra—a purely sensual Orientalized body—figures as a form of contagion capable of causing Mark Antony to "go native" and indulge in carnal pleasures. Because Antony thus neglects his duties as one-third of the Roman triumvirate, Cleopatra becomes symptomatic of a more general (Eastern) societal decay. What we thus have in Eliot's allusions to Cleopatra are an outsider's (i.e., expatriate American's) reading of the ultimate outsider (female, dark-skinned, North African), an interpretation in which the metic uses the figure of the racialized Other as a means to admit himself more fully into those "communal mysteries."

II - Antony and Cleopatra in Eliot's Criticism

Before examining the fetishization of Cleopatra in verse, we should first examine the roots of Eliot's interest in her character in his criticism. In an *Egoist* essay entitled "Studies in Contemporary Criticism" (1918), Eliot first turns his attention to Caesar's description of the Queen on her deathbed, a scene which would preoccupy Eliot throughout his career: "She looks like sleep,/ As she would catch another Antony/ In her strong toil of grace" (5.2.336-38). Eliot praises the description for two reasons: first, because of its aptness for Cleopatra's characterization, since even in death Cleopatra's
beauty was a “toil,” or snare, in which an Antony could be entrapped. Second, Eliot admired these lines because Shakespeare’s figurative language blurs the distinction between the literal and metaphorical. “Grace” could be ambiguously secular and spiritual: as both a form of physical allure and as the state of one who has been unconditionally blessed. In addition, “toil” could be both a physical effort as well as the aforementioned snare. For Eliot, this tension within the metaphor was the reason for its success: “the healthy metaphor adds to the strength of the language [and] makes available some of that physical source of energy upon which the life of language depends” (“Studies” 114). At this early stage in his career as a critic—like many before and after him—Eliot views Shakespeare as a poet (one who just happens to be a dramatist as well), and Eliot’s admiration for *Antony and Cleopatra* is intimately tied to the play’s poetic language.

No other example of Shakespeare’s mastery of the language so delighted Eliot as did Cleopatra’s “strong toil of grace.” In “Philip Massinger” (1920), Eliot documents how Massinger’s “feeling for language had outstripped his feeling for things” (*Essays* 185) and provides a contrast with those familiar lines describing Cleopatra. Shakespeare provides a poetic fusion (Eliot’s term) which Massinger’s dramatic verse does not. Shakespeare has a gift for combining into a single phrase two or more diverse impressions so that, in Eliot’s words, “the metaphor identifies itself with what suggests it” (*Essays* 185). Without mentioning the phrase, Eliot here suggests that *Antony and Cleopatra* does indeed possess the so-called “objective correlative” (first discussed in
"Hamlet and His Problems"), since there is a clear relationship between the metaphor and the objects which lie behind it. Unlike *Hamlet*, in which the emotions are "in excess of the facts as they appear" (*Essays* 125), the emotions of *Antony and Cleopatra* seem to correlate better with the events which inspire those very emotions.

In the seeming contradiction between two ostensible oppositions (toil/grace), Eliot detects a physical energy which enhances our sense of involvement in the metaphor. In his second "Andrew Marvell" essay (1923)—a review of a new edition of Marvell's poems—Eliot resumes the thread of his analysis of the "grace" metaphor by expanding the sense of diverse impressions being successfully fused in these lines from Caesar's eulogy. In addition to the aforementioned tension between "grace" and "toil," Eliot now detects a fusion between the seemingly separate ideas of "how she looks" to Caesar and how Cleopatra looks to the reader. In the resultant fusion, again, there is a sense of "closeness" for Eliot between the language used to describe these things and the things themselves, or, as Eliot puts it, "a restoration of language to contact with things" ("Marvell" 809). Curiously, throughout the analysis, Cleopatra constitutes an object to Eliot, as the repeated use of the word "thing" suggests. Surely, Eliot speaks of her in this context as a material presence, but nevertheless, the use of the word is highly charged from a postcolonial perspective. As the work of Edward Said reminds us frequently, the "Oriental" is less a human subject than a body of traits to be studied, codified, and *known*. As part of the process of maintaining power through discourse, the colonizer must insist that the colonial body be a known and predictable quantity and "formulate the Orient, to
give it shape, identity, definition with full recognition of its place in memory, its
importance to imperial strategy, and its ‘natural’ role as an appendage to Europe” (Said
Orientalism 86). Ironically, in this passage, Said is discussing the Orientalist
“engulfment” of Egypt by the instruments of knowledge and power as disseminated by
Napoleonic France in its early nineteenth-century occupation of North Africa. From the
fall of the Roman empire, to the Renaissance publication of the volumes of Plutarch
consulted by Shakespeare as he wrote Antony and Cleopatra, through the continued
colonial exploitation of Egypt by Britain in Eliot’s own day, the figure of the Egyptian
exists as a European projection entirely realized through discourse: Egypt’s identity is
inseparable from what Europe knows about Egypt. In other words, the material body
becomes reduced to a body of materials; the divide between “us” (the British) and “them”
(Egypt) becomes, more accurately, a divide between “us” (the British) and “it” (what we
know about Egypt). All of this carries a special resonance when considering the
historical context in which Eliot demonstrates such a keen interest in Egyptian “things.”
In pre-war Britain, newspaper headlines were filled with discussions about “the problem”
of Egypt, particularly through a series of lectures to the House of Commons delivered by
Arthur James Balfour. This was a time in which Egyptian nationalism was on the rise,
and the continuing British presence in Egypt was becoming increasingly tenuous. Eliot,
perhaps inevitably, engages in a colonialist discourse, which possesses even more
resonance given Eliot's status as the "metic." Cleopatra, as an objectified colonial subject within the play, functions as a means of strengthening Eliot's own identification with British culture.

Despite his frequent engagement with *Antony and Cleopatra* in his earliest criticism, Eliot was apparently unsatisfied with his analysis of the play because he returned to the same passage from *Antony and Cleopatra* at least twice more in the 1920s. In the 1926 Clark lectures on the metaphysical poets, Eliot suggests that Shakespeare's metaphors are superior to most other seventeenth-century poetry (and thereby similar to the verse of the metaphysical poets whom he admired so much) because the imagery of the bard's figurative language is "absolutely woven into the fabric of the thought" (*Varieties* 123). To understand his argument more completely, we can turn to the "strong toil of grace" passage, again cited in Eliot's "Dante" essay of 1929, in which he argues that most similes and metaphors (including Dante's) are merely designed to make the reader see more clearly, whereas the metaphor in Shakespeare,

... is expansive rather than intensive; its purpose is to *add* to what you see (either on the stage or in your imagination) a reminder of that fascination of Cleopatra which shaped her history and that of the world, and of that fascination being so strong that it prevails even in death. It is more elusive, and it is less possible to convey without close knowledge of the English language. (*Essays* 205)

Although the emphasis is once again placed on the description of Cleopatra as *poetry*, Eliot now alludes to Cleopatra's role within the narrative of the play as an object of
sexual "fascination" which shaped a larger narrative: the history of the post-classical world, or the very civilization which Eliot's criticism has been trying to celebrate since "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Cleopatra's body is a disruption for both the forces of Roman law and order within the play, as well as to Eliot as a reader outside the play. Eliot's view on the "danger" of Cleopatra clearly surfaces in the 1926 Clark Lectures, in which Cleopatra's "toil of grace" evokes "Cleopatra's disastrous power over men and empires" (Varieties 123). However much Eliot had wanted to deal strictly with the formal properties of Shakespeare's tragedy in his earlier essays—including the operation of the Shakespearean metaphor—he inevitably turns toward the links between the poetic language, character, and empire in these later essays. By the late twenties, Caesar's description of Cleopatra is superior verse because it not only engages the reader in a metaphor bursting with energy, but because it captures the essence of a woman who is dangerously sexual, even in death. This fascination with Cleopatra's body is really the key to our postcolonial understanding of Eliot's response to the play and is confirmed in a number of early poems to which we now turn.

III - The Cleopatra Obsession in Verse

I begin with a lengthy section of the passage from Antony and Cleopatra because the nature of Enobarbus's rhetoric is so crucial. Act Two, Scene Two concludes with the extended description of Cleopatra enthroned; Enobarbus's words suggest why Antony's
loyalties have been divided between Rome and Egypt. Enobarbus implies that, given the splendor in which Cleopatra first appeared to Antony, how could Antony not have strayed from both his wife Fulvia, and from his position at the head of the triumvirate:

The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne
Burned on the water. The poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick with them. The oars were silver,
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggared all description. She did lie
In her pavilion-cloth of gold, of tissue-
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see
The fancy outwork nature. On each side her
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
With divers-coloured fans whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid did. (2.2.196-211)

Broken up by brief interjections from his audience ("O, rare for Antony!") Enobarbus continues his poetic narrative for another thirty two lines, lines to which Eliot will return.
in both his poetry and prose. But what is most interesting to me about Enobarbus's description of Cleopatra is that its echoes throughout Eliot's verse reveal so much about Eliot's own preoccupation with the figure of the racialized Other.

"Echo" is the best way to describe Eliot's use of Enobarbus's rhetoric in his earliest poetry. The 1997 publication of *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917* allows us to trace Eliot's interest in Cleopatra back to poems which preceded his first great success with "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Editor Christopher Ricks provides a wealth of parallel passages which connect Eliot's work to what the poet once referred to as "the mind of Europe," or, in other words, the great Western tradition from Homer to Dante to Shakespeare. Although many of Ricks's "literary parallels" seem highly tenuous, he has limited himself to works which Eliot is known to have read or is likely to have read, and also makes the editorial decision to describe his suggested parallels using the words "compare to," a choice which "declines to direct a reader as to what to deduce from the comparison" (xxvi). This semantic hedging on Ricks's part seems entirely appropriate, however, which points to one of the most conspicuous aspects of Eliot's use of allusions in this early stage of his poetics: unlike the phrases consciously borrowed from Dante or Shakespeare in *The Waste Land* (numerous examples to follow), the *March Hare* poems "allude" in the most strict sense of the word. It seems as if Eliot does not yet possess the confidence to place, quite directly, the voices of his poetic predecessors beside his own. An excellent illustration appears in the use of *Antony and Cleopatra* in one of the collection's more accomplished verses, "The Burnt Dancer."
In the original manuscript, “The Burnt Dancer” is dated June 1914 and is described by Ricks as “Dantesque.” Indeed, the epigraph is borrowed from the *Inferno* XV.6, and the “circle of desire” to which Eliot refers in his opening stanza suggests the circle in which Paolo and Francesca are trapped in the *Inferno*’s fifth canto. Such echoes of Dante seem fairly explicit, but there are also subtextual shades of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Blackness and desire are central to Eliot’s poem, as the “black moth” which is caught in that “circle of desire” is shared by the unnamed “him” who “Expiates his heedless flight/ With beat of wings that do not tire” (lines 4-5). This is an echo of the oars of the bargemen transporting the “black” Cleopatra, “which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made/ The water which they beat to follow faster/ as amorous of their strokes” (2.200-02). In *Antony*, Cleopatra with her “tawny front” (1.1.6) and self-described “amorous pinches black” (1.5.28) has distracted Antony and rendered him a “strumpet’s fool” (1.1.13), while in “The Burnt Dancer,” the black body has “Distracted [him] from more vital values/ To golden values of the flame” (lines 6-7 - emphasis mine) and he has come “from a distant star/ For mirthless dance and silent revel” (12-13). The parallels with *Antony* (to which Ricks does not make connections) gradually come into focus: Antony has traveled to Egypt from his native Rome and been “distracted” by his passion for Cleopatra, much to the regret of the Romans who wish Antony to “Leave thy lascivious wassails” (1.5.56); indeed, Caesar hopes that Antony will “Let his shames quickly/ Drive him to Rome” (1.5.73-74). However, even the death of his first wife
Fulvia and re-marriage to Caesar's sister Octavia cannot permanently extricate Antony from Cleopatra's "circle of desire," longings Antony himself describes as being "stirred by Cleopatra/ Now, for the love of Love and her soft hours" (1.1.45-46).

As in *Antony and Cleopatra*, race and desire figure prominently in "The Burnt Dancer," since the "black moth" of stanza one is again invoked in the poem's refrain, "O danse mon papillon noir!" (14, 29, 41). Like Cleopatra, the "papillon noir" is an exoticized, Oriental body geographically linked to both Africa and the Bay of Bengal:

The tropic odours of your name
From Mozambique to Nicobar
Fall on the ragged teeth of flame
Like perfumed oil upon the waters
What is the secret you have brought us... (15-19)

This strikes one as a standard-issue exoticized description of "Oriental" sexuality, of the kind that populated numerous nineteenth-century literary fantasies (*Madame Bovary* comes to mind), and later in the works of Gide, Conrad, and Maugham in the early twentieth century. As Edward Said makes clear, the Orient becomes suggestive of a more mysterious and less guilt-ridden sexuality which is unattainable in the lives of the bourgeois who resort to "daydreams packed inside Oriental clichés: harems, princesses, princes, slaves, veils, dancing girls and boys, sherbets, ointments, and so on" (190). But in "The Burnt Dancer," Eliot is drawing on the language of a very specific example of a much earlier Orientalist discourse, and this time the editor of *March Hare* does indicate...
the source of the literary parallel. The linkage of the “flame...perfumed...waters” imagery derives directly from the first lines of Enobarbus’s description of Cleopatra with her throne “burning” on the waters and her “perfumèd” sails which made the winds “love-sick.”

“The Burnt Dancer” is representative of Eliot’s poetics at this early stage of his career, in that the echoes from Shakespeare are just that: echoes of another’s voice, rather than the lines consciously borrowed from *Antony and Cleopatra* in *The Waste Land*. Comparing the *March Hare* poem with the later, more mature work reveals a great leap in the poet’s development; the former reads as an amalgam of hazy connections between Shakespeare and Eliot, but with no truly distinctive voice. The copiousness of Ricks’ annotations suggests a young poet sifting through a litany of his poetic predecessors, but struggling to speak with a voice which is his own. Eliot would find that voice (or voices, more precisely) with the publication of *The Waste Land* in 1922, and it is instructive both to consider how Eliot’s appropriation of *Antony and Cleopatra* in *The Waste Land* becomes more overt, while his attitude toward the Othered figure of Cleopatra is similar to what we observed in “The Burnt Dancer.”

As I mentioned in my introduction, generations of commentators on *The Waste Land* have suggested that the “distortions” of Enobarbus’s speech are intended to be ironic. Readers have assumed that the irony concerns the juxtaposition of the Queen of the Nile with the “Belladonna” in “A Game of Chess,” the unnamed female character who sits before a glass, surrounded by material splendor:
. . . the glass

Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting the light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion.
In vials of ivory and covered glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid--troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odors; (78-89)

After the near-direct borrowing of the “the Chair she sat in”--lines which signal the
Shakespeare allusion to the reader--Eliot here returns to a network of “echoes” like those
observed in “The Burnt Dancer.” The reason that some critics have suggested an ironic
contrast between Cleopatra and Eliot’s “Belladonna” is that Shakespeare’s “pretty
dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids” have become a “golden Cupidon” and the “perfumèd
sails” have been transformed into “strange synthetic perfumes” which trouble and confuse
and “drowned the sense in odours.” The prevailing critical assessment is that such
“distortions,” as Sukhbir Singh, for one, contends, “display an analogue/antithesis
between the antiquity and contemporaneity” (60), with the analogue existing in the
parallel texts, and the antithesis arising from Eliot's idealization of antiquity and consequent disparagement of his own contemporary age. It is certainly true that in Eliot's description the scene is presented as far more vulgar; the lavish material possessions on display cannot conceal the perfumes which vex the senses. However, both scenarios—Shakespeare's Queen in her flotilla of rhetorical hyperbole and Eliot's Belladonna in her surfeit of conspicuous consumption—display an equal submersion in an ocean of lust and excess. Could either Shakespeare's or Eliot's respective female figures be held up as any sort of ideal? Certainly not--both are "problem women" and are treated in the manner in which the colonized female body has been repeatedly represented in colonial discourse.

What is most striking about an analysis of the passages in question is how both female characters are an absence: In Enobarbus's description, Cleopatra's own person "beggared all description," which suggests a beauty somehow outside of language, but which also suggests an obstacle in representation similar to Belladonna's absence in "A Game of Chess." In the case of Shakespeare, the reliance upon the descriptions of Cleopatra on parade (as opposed to descriptions of the Queen herself) may be a function of the limits of actually staging this scene. When the Romans first gaze at Queen Cleopatra, the awe-inspiring spectacle would never look as striking to the audience as it did to Enobarbus and Cleopatra, and Shakespeare's verse more effectively carries the power of those images. However, Cleopatra's absence may signal something more troubling, and closer to what operates in Eliot's poem. Even though we learn from Cleopatra that she has been the lover of at least two other Romans in addition to Antony--
“great Pompey” and “broad-fronted [a.k.a. Julius] Caesar”-- we are never led to understand what they actually see in Cleopatra; if you return to the earlier citation of Enobarbus’s description of the Queen enthroned, after the meticulous detail of the barge and its exotic trappings, all that the audience knows about the female body is that “she did lie in her pavilion,” certainly a semantically-loaded description given Cleopatra’s propensity for deceit. On one hand we are led to infer the sexual power of the African femme fatale from the litany of her Roman lovers, but the simultaneous absence of her body directs us away from any inherent attractiveness of Cleopatra. Although Cleopatra is infinitely more appealing to the audience than she appeared in Plutarch (Shakespeare’s source), what most strikes this reader is the tension between the testimonials to her beauty which coexist rather uneasily with the character we see who, more than anything, appears maddeningly self-absorbed and self-destructive.

A similar measure of self-absorption and female absence lies at the heart of Belladonna in “A Game of Chess.” The catalogue of things which surround her is extensive: the fruited vines, sevenbranched candelabra, ivory, coffered ceiling, and colored glass completely obscure the figure of female desire; the reader of The Waste Land is unable to see Belladonna for all of the finery which surrounds her. The same profusion of jewels and fragrances which should ostensibly stir the senses of those who gaze upon her instead “drown” the senses. Instead of directing his reader’s gaze at the female figure who is consciously analogous to Cleopatra, Eliot instead limits the gaze to Belladonna’s immersion in her own reflection in the mirror. And because Eliot
consciously juxtaposes Cleopatra with his own Belladonna character, we must consider the body here as not only female, but as the racialized Other, and one which affords a unique opportunity for reading Eliot as part of a colonial discourse which sheds light on Eliot’s attempts to assume the mantle of the British colonizer.

IV - The Colonial Fetish

Homi Bhabha theorizes how the visibility of the racial/colonial Other constitutes a “problem” for the colonizer’s identity. In describing the conflicted nature of the desire for the Other, Bhabha suggests that in instances of scopic pleasure, there is both, . . . a point of identity (‘Look, a Negro’) and at the same time a problem for the attempted closure within discourse. . . . In the objectification of the scopic drive there is always the threatened return of the look; in the identification of the Imaginary relation there is always the alienating other (or mirror) which crucially returns its image to the subject (81).

In other words (and without digressing into a lengthy discussion of the Lacanian psychoanalytic theory which underpins Bhabha’s argument), the gaze at the body of the colonized can be both reassuring in that it reinforces racial difference, thus reinscribing the colonizer’s own self-identity. But the gaze is also problematic insofar as the colonizer can see a bit too much of himself in the gaze which is returned by the colonial subject.

We see this conflict at work in Eliot’s (and Shakespeare’s) representation of
Cleopatra/Belladonna. As long as the gaze is unreturned, the scopic pleasure is a form of surveillance (in itself a form of power), but once that gaze is returned, there is a threat that the Other can function as the mirror in Lacan's mirror stage—the point at which identity is first conferred. As a result, the power of the female Other's own gaze must be diffused somehow; to be completely enthralled by this female body and to exchange glances and allow the text to immerse itself in the riches of that body too much would undermine both the identity of the colonialist writer/observer and the sense of power he wields over his literary subject. Thus Eliot (and again Shakespeare) have created what Bhabha refers to as an “impossible object” whose power must be contained through discourse. Thus, the Orientalist fantasy (which operates in “The Burnt Dancer,” as well) is invoked. Within this discourse, the body of the racialized Other becomes secondary to what surrounds it:

Not itself the object of desire but its setting, not an ascription of prior identities but their production in the syntax of racist discourse, colonial fantasy plays a crucial part in those everyday scenes of subjectification in a colonial society which [Frantz] Fanon refers to repeatedly. Like fantasies of the origins of sexuality, the productions of 'colonial desire' mark the discourse as 'a favoured spot for the most primitive defense reactions such as turning against oneself, into an opposite, projection negation.' (Bhabha 81)

What surrounds the potentially unsettling figure of the African female body are all of the trappings of the Oriental sexual fantasy—complete with its perfumes and oils—in both
Enobarbus’s description of the “appeal” of Cleopatra and in Eliot’s analogous update of Belladonna and “the chair she sat in like a burnished throne.” What Bhabha helps us to see is that Eliot’s recasting of the “barge” scene from Anthony and Cleopatra is conspicuous in its reliance upon the fetish object, whether inanimate objects (e.g., ivory vials) or of the body (e.g., Belladonna’s “hair spread out in fiery points”). Such a practice positions Eliot within a colonial discourse in which the isolated artifact, whether in the form of a body part or as commodity (such as home decoration or personal fashion), is severed from its cultural context and depends upon the absence of the people whom such objects represent. Racial representation thus becomes elided; the colonized people disappear from the text and are either reduced to a fetishized body part or completely replaced by commodities.

Enobarbus’s words filter into another Eliot poem from the period under discussion, and this notion of Cleopatra as an anxiety-ridden sexual presence to be contained is perhaps even closer to the surface. In “Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar,” we have not only a verse charged with anti-Semitism, but one in which the whole economy of the poem is built upon a foundation of anxiety over the loss of empire. Even more explicitly than in “A Game of Chess,” “Burbank” invites a sense of comparison between the corrupted present age and an idealized empire of the past. However, this time, the past is not located in classical antiquity, but in the Venetian Renaissance. Eliot’s most potent symbol of the majesty of Venice is the emblem of the city—the lion of San Marco—whose wings have been “clipped” by the combined force of
three characters: first, Burbank, a representative of crass American consumerism with Baedeker tour book in tow; second, Bleistein, the worldly, Jewish entrepreneur whom Eliot condemns for his rapacity in the fur trade; and finally, Princess Volupine, who like Belladonna, is consciously conflated with Cleopatra; she is yet another “problem woman” for Eliot.

Although the poem is a fraction of the length of The Waste Land, Shakespearean fragments fill its eight stanzas. In an epigraph which manages to juxtapose the nineteenth-century French poet Théophile Gautier, Eliot’s fellow expatriate Henry James, and Robert Browning, Shakespeare appears as well in the form of the allusion to “goats and monkeys” which derives from Othello’s crazed outburst at Desdemona’s purported infidelity (4.1.260). As in “A Game of Chess,” there is again a distillation of the themes of obsessive sexual desire and the racialized Other via Shakespeare, this time in Othello’s Venetian setting. Surprisingly however, Othello does not occupy a central position in the poem after its epigraph; instead, one of “Burbank”’s central characters, Princess Volupine, becomes twinned with Cleopatra: “Her shuttered barge/ Burned on the water all the day” (lines 11-12). Since “Burbank” was written somewhere between 1918 and 1919, it is tempting to view the work as a sort of intermediate stage in the use of that particular Shakespearean fragment between the composition of “The Burnt Dancer” and “A Game of Chess.” The allusion is not as merely suggestive as in the former poem, but it is not an annotated “theft” that we see in the latter. Nevertheless, the centrality of Antony and Cleopatra is confirmed early in the previous stanza, as Eliot again invokes
Shakespeare’s play. In Act Four, Scene Three, just before the Egyptian forces are crushed by Caesar, a group of Cleopatra’s soldiers hears mysterious “Music i’th’ air” and we learn that, “‘Tis the god Hercules, whom Antony loved/ Now leaves him” (4.3.13-14). The soldiers recognize the song as an omen of the defeat to come, since Antony, once a supremely active and decisive warrior, has abandoned his battles for the sake of sensual pleasures with Cleopatra. Similarly, in Eliot’s poem, after Burbank’s relationship with Volupine, “the God Hercules/ Had left him, that had loved him well” (lines 7-8). Both Antony and Burbank experience a “fall,” and both Shakespeare and Eliot cherchent la femme. Thus, Eliot first hints at the analogy between Cleopatra and Volupine, as the latter contributes to the decline of an imperial majesty, represented by the “pared claws” and “clipped wings” of the lion of San Marco, the patron saint of Venice.

Like Cleopatra, Volupine is a sexual predator (as confirmed by a name which has more than a hint of the “vulpine”), who weakens the men she encounters. Venice has become a travesty of its former splendor because of the influx of characters such as Bleistein (an anti-Semitic symbol of the nation’s decay) and Volupine, who possesses a “meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic hand/ To climb the waterstair” (lines 25-26). The blue nails may suggest consumption, whose physical ravages are a parallel to the city’s moral decay; such decay is significant because again, as in Antony and Cleopatra, the female becomes a form of contagion which is simultaneously an object of desire. Although that “shuttered barge” that “burned on the water” is what lures men like Burbank, the Cleopatra-like Volupine weakens, feminizes, and ultimately destroys. And again, the
body itself, despite the intimations of sexuality and allure, is never presented to us in full. At best, we get the exoticized surroundings—in the case of “Burbank,” there is the barge, as well as the horses which also transport Volupine’s coach “under the axeltree” and “Beat up the dawn from Istria.” The locale which is invoked here, Istria, is a peninsula near the head of the Adriatic, and most significantly, positioned to the east of Venice. And when the body is represented—which it is to an extent we have not yet seen in other Eliot/Shakespeare parallels—there is only the fetishized (and “blue-nailed”) hand. Like the colonial landscape itself, which is often represented as unknowable and unrepresentable (e.g., the “dark continent), the feminine is an unrepresentable absence which can be, as Anne McClintock suggests, “the objects of fetishism but never the subjects” (193 - her emphasis). The sexuality of both Cleopatra and Volupine is potentially empowering; it shows clear signs of the ability to overwhelm or at least effeminize the male. While the Orientalized Cleopatra claims in Shakespeare’s play that, “I. . .put my tires and mantles on [Antony] whilst/ I wore his sword Philippan” (2.5.21-23), the similarly Othered Volupine possesses perhaps even more transgressive power, working to emasculate both her male suitors and the aforementioned lion of San Marco. As a result, the female figure must be treated as either a complete absence (“For her own person, it beggared all description”) or reduced to a fetish object (“A meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic hand”) which is far more manageable in the economy of male desire.
As Eliot’s career progressed, he eventually revised his earlier assessment of the Shakespearean canon: *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* were eventually subordinated to the “romances.” These late plays—which include *The Tempest, Cymbeline, and Pericles*—blend aspects of tragedy and comedy, and occupied a privileged position in both Eliot’s criticism and verse, with the most conspicuous poetic appearance being the allusions to *Pericles* in “Marina” (1930). Not surprisingly, Eliot abandons his earlier fascination with “Cleopatra and her problems” at a time when his own position within the national culture had become more secure. Earlier in his career Eliot’s *Hamlet* criticism, in particular, was considered typical of his faults in that, as Terence Hawkes suggests, “[Eliot] seems unable to grasp the play’s links with a native English tradition” (*Shakespeherian* 79). However, in the period after Eliot became a British subject in 1927 and one of the most influential critical voices of the century, his desire to wrestle with the Shakespeare plays in which the racialized, gendered, or ethnic Other are prominent seems to become less imperative. As Charles Warren’s study *T.S. Eliot on Shakespeare* (1987) makes clear, beginning in the 1930s, Eliot seems less interested in analyzing individual plays and more concerned with tracing Shakespeare development as a dramatist as a whole. In fact, one of the turning points to which Warren refers is Eliot’s essay “The Music of Poetry” (1942); here, Eliot contends that *Antony and Cleopatra* marks the transition from an earlier emphasis on producing a complete harmony between
the verse and the speaker's character toward an increasingly elaborate "music," which was simultaneously more elaborate and complex, yet retained contact with colloquial speech. Instead of a formalist attention to the workings of individual metaphors within the play, or a fascination with the destructive power of Cleopatra's sexuality, Eliot now considers the relationship of *Cleopatra* to the entire body of Shakespeare's plays.

There is a clear discursive shift here which must be related to Eliot's further assimilation into the national culture. No longer playing the role of the metic, who needs to enter a discourse which constantly foregrounds the representation of the Other as a means of inscribing his own opposition to that Other's most conspicuous attributes (and hence, confirming that Eliot is not *really* an outsider), the Eliot of the 1930s and beyond is a sort of naturalized Matthew Arnold, commenting on the national culture from within and able to see Shakespeare's development writ large. For the Eliot of the 1930s, Shakespeare becomes a sort of neo-classicist who predated the eighteenth-century revival of classical forms. Eliot reacted against writers such as Herbert Read and John Middleton Murry, who considered Shakespeare to have mocked "conventional morality." Such critics viewed Shakespeare as a sort of precursor to the Romantic movement which, in Murry's eyes, "is the English cultural tradition" (Ellis 41). For Read, Shakespeare was *the* great anti-classical rebel, but Eliot was now secure enough in his position *inside* British culture to formulate his own (alternate) great tradition, with the metaphysical poets supplanting even Shakespeare in importance. I would argue that Eliot's interest in the Shakespearean canon displaced his interest in the individual plays, works which are
no longer fetish objects themselves, piecemeal fragments to be dispersed about Eliot's own poetry and criticism. In this way, *Antony and Cleopatra* is no longer a "fragment shored against [Eliot's] ruins" but a part of the entire Shakespearean oeuvre which Eliot feels secure enough to re-assess. As a result, one might even say that Cleopatra is a problem no more.
NOTES

1. The published epigraph from “The Hollow Men” (“Mistah Kurtz—he dead”) consists of the words spoken to Marlow by the “manager’s boy” after Kurtz’s death. After the profundity of Kurtz’s final words (“The horror! The horror”), the “insolent” tone of the manager’s boy possesses unmistakable traces of “scathing contempt” to the devastated Marlow. See Conrad, 112. The original epigraph to The Waste Land—prior to the revisions of Eliot and Ezra Pound—was again borrowed from Heart of Darkness, drawn from Marlow’s description of Kurtz’s deathbed ruminations and Kurtz’s final words cited above. See Eliot, The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts, 3.

2. For example, Shakespeare’s Coriolanus surfaces in a number of works. There is an early allusion in “A Cooking Egg” (1920): “For I shall meet Sir Philip Sidney/ And have talk with Coriolanus/ And other heroes of that kidney” (Collected Poems 36) and again in the “What the Thunder Said” section of The Waste Land (“Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus” - line 416). In addition, there is Eliot’s more extended treatment in the unfinished “Coriolan” (1931). For an intriguing discussion of the links between Shakespeare’s haughty tragic hero and Eliot’s evolving poetic persona, see Terence Hawkes’ Meaning By Shakespeare, 106-112.

3. One anecdotal illustration of Eliot’s metic status during the war years appears in Lyndall Gordon’s recent biography, T.S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life (1999). During a war in which various maladies prevented Eliot from joining the armed forces, the poet worked on the home front as a schoolmaster. But as Gordon suggests, “his days were spent with schoolboys to whom he was a foreigner, ‘the American master’” and Eliot “felt no interest in them, and looked upon teaching not as a means of expression but as a barrier to it” (138). As a result, the journey from the margins to the center of the British literary world would have to be accomplished through Eliot’s own writing, rather than his teaching career.

4. For the remainder of the essay I will refer to the anonymous woman at the beginning of “A Game of Chess” as Belladonna, although critics are far from unified in their references to her. Martin Scofield, in T.S. Eliot: The Poems (1988), uses the term since “the picture of the grand lady in the lavish classical or renaissance setting [is] possibly
anticipated by ‘Belladonna’ at line 49” (113). Similarly, George Williamson’s *A Reader’s Guide to T.S. Eliot* (1953) also refers to “Belladonna”: because of her “strange synthetic perfumes,” we are here “in the presence of Belladonna, no less narcotic than cosmetic, herself presently in need of an anodyne” (135-36).

5. Said begins *Orientalism* by examining the nature of Balfour’s logic and rhetoric pertaining to the “crisis in Egypt” and considers the degree to which it is typical of the “Orientalist” discourse which *Orientalism* will analyze in detail. See Said, 31-46.

6. The citation of Enobarbus’s lines from Act 2, Scene 2 often appears in surprising contexts. For example, in an essay in praise of Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens and the melodrama (evidence of the “populist” Eliot perhaps, the same Eliot who championed the popular musical hall entertainer Marie Lloyd), Eliot praises Collins’s “life-like” characters, but contrasts them with the equally effective characterizations of Dante, Shakespeare, and Dickens, who could by virtue of “a single phrase, either by [the characters] or about them, set these characters wholly before us.” The illustrative example drawn from Shakespeare is a phrase from Enobarbus which Eliot believes to set Cleopatra before us instantly and which follows the passage cited above: “I saw her once/ Hop forty paces through the public street” (*Essays* 411). In Eliot’s eyes, Collins, who lacked a poet’s sensibility, could never crystallize into a single phrase an image of a character with almost “super-natural” clarity (to use Eliot’s own term), insofar as it sets before us a character, a life to be seen in relation to the reader’s own life, no matter whether the method of presentation is a play, novel or poem.

7. Eliot never intended to publish the *March Hare* poems, but instead offered them to his American publisher John Quinn for a price of $140 in 1923 (Ricks xi), a token of gratitude for helping Eliot achieve the American publication which was so important to his sense of vindication over his decision to remain in London. Many of these poems, which were bound in a notebook, were early drafts of published work (like “Prufrock”) but forty “new” poems have also come to light, including four sets of obscene verses added to the collection by its editor, Christopher Ricks. To some extent, Ricks’s editorial apparatus overwhelms the collection, which consists of roughly eighty pages of Eliot’s verse and more than three-hundred pages of annotations. Nevertheless, Ricks’s scholarship is laudable, and he outlines his approach to Eliot’s poetry, in which he eschews interpretation in favor of tracing textual allusions: “This edition is based on the conviction that, subordinate to the establishing of the text and its textual variants (which are given at the foot of a poem’s page), the important thing is evidence of where the poems came from, and of where they went to in Eliot’s other work” (xxii).

8. In one of his most famous critical formulations, Eliot once asserted that “Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different” (*Essays* 182). Seemingly fearful during the period of composing the *March Hare* poems to “deface” what he cannot yet
weave into the fabric of his own poems, Eliot merely "imitates," which is why many of
the March Hare poems lack the characteristic stamp of the more mature Eliot of The
Waste Land.

9. According to Peter Ackroyd, Eliot included The Waste Land's annotations only with
the December 1922 book-length edition published by Horace Liveright. When the poem
first appeared in the Autumn of 1922 in the periodicals The Dial and The Criterion, Eliot
had not included the notes, but did so for the book publication "to avoid the charges of
plagiarism which had been leveled at his earlier poetry" (Ackroyd 127). Apparently, even
after the original draft of annotations was complete, the book was still not long enough to
be printed, so Eliot expanded them in a classic instance of the intersection of commerce
and scholarship. Eliot's own annotations to The Waste Land ensure that readers could not
fail to see a different poetics at work. What were once veiled echoes of Shakespeare and
others were now conscious borrowings. For the opening of "A Game of Chess," Eliot
reminds his readers that his opening lines, "The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne"
develop from Antony and Cleopatra (2.2.190). Eliot's great advance is the notion that a
poem could be constructed out of such overt references. Ironically, this practice is what
endows him with an original voice of his own; Eliot's conscious thievery is what first
provided him with true originality. At times the references are verbatim, but at others
there are deliberate, yet slight modifications, such as the substitution of "Chair" for
Cleopatra's barge. As Eliot would later explain in "What Dante Means to Me" (1950): "I
gave the references in my notes, in order to make the reader who recognized the allusion,
know that I meant him to recognize it, and know that he would have missed the point if
he did not recognize it" (To Criticize 128). Even though The Waste Land was the only
poem for which Eliot provided such notations, this does not suggest that such
recognitions of allusions are only relevant to his best-known poem; instead, I only suggest
that Eliot is more direct about the method of incorporating his literary influence. The
allusions are obviously easier to trace in The Waste Land, although the "problem" of
Cleopatra remains the same.

10. Although my focus in the present essay is on the "problem" of the analogous figures
of Cleopatra and Eliot's Princess Volupine character, there has been much critical
discussion of Eliot's Bleistein and his anti-Semitic portrait, much of it newly inflamed by
Anthony Julius's T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form, Cambridge: Cambridge
UP, 1995. For a specific discussion of "Burbank" in this context, see pages 92-110.

11. Hawkes suggests that Eliot's failure to connect Hamlet to a "native, English tradition"
is a charge also leveled by F.R. Leavis in English Literature in Our Time and the
University (London, 1969), 149-54. Both argue that the young Eliot was insufficiently
versed in his English criticism. Had Eliot been familiar, for example, with Thomas
Rymer's late seventeenth-century analysis of the rhetoric of Othello, Prince Hamlet's
linguistic "excesses" may not have seemed so distinctive or objectionable.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

KIPLING'S PUCK OF POOK'S HILL AND THE LIMITS OF BRITISH NATIONAL IDENTITY

The modernist appropriation of Shakespeare can be seen to have begun in earnest in 1906. This was the year in which Yeats, as a playwright, first confronted the Shakespearean tropes of Celticness in On Baile’s Strand. But 1906 is also a logical starting point since the English Association began its project of establishing English Studies as an essential element in the national education in this very same year. And, as I have argued in Chapter One, the central figure of both the national curriculum (newly dominated by English Studies) and the emblem of the national culture, more generally, was none other than William Shakespeare. Within two years of the appearance of Yeats’s Baile, the first installment in his Irish Henriad, a young Virginia Woolf would begin work on her own initial engagement with Shakespeare, a novel initially known as Melymbrosia, but later re-titled The Voyage Out. In addition, it is in the middle of this first decade of the century that A.C. Bradley published Shakespearean Tragedy, a work of criticism
which exerted its academic influence almost immediately, spurring countless imitators, and even a few vocal opponents. In the latter category, two young writers--James Joyce and T.S. Eliot--would later register their opposition to Bradley’s methodology (Joyce), as well as his preferences within the Shakespearean oeuvre (Eliot).

In my introduction, I demonstrated the intensity with which Shakespeare was brandished as a token of Englishness by influential members of the academic world between 1906 and 1922, particularly the membership of groups such as the English Association and the Newbolt Committee. My intention was to demonstrate both the centrality of Shakespeare to definitions of national identity in Britain, as well as to illustrate just how narrow those very definitions could be when national identity and Englishness were conflated. For reasons I have articulated, Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot each appropriated Shakespeare as a means of expanding the definition of the national culture--to secure a place for the voices of female writers, the non-English and expatriates who viewed themselves as contributors to (and critics of) a Shakespeare-centered British literary culture. I have argued that we need to read a number of seminal modernist works as alternatives to a dominant Shakespearean discourse which considered Shakespeare to be an unproblematic national ideal in Great War-era Britain. At best, these four modernists were deeply ambivalent about Shakespeare; Shakespeare could indeed serve as an emblem of the national culture, but just so long as the nation in
question was not conceived too narrowly. The modernists’ career-long admiration for Shakespeare’s drama and verse did not preclude them from treating the Bard a bit roughly when the issue of access to the national culture was at stake.

II - Rudyard Kipling: Fellow Traveler?

One writer who is in no way ambivalent about Shakespeare is Rudyard Kipling, who otherwise could have occupied a position at the heart of this dissertation. Two key elements are in place: a lifelong engagement with Shakespeare in both Kipling’s poetry and fiction, and evident insecurities about his position within the national culture. The Bombay-born writer was a naturalized Briton like Eliot, and Kipling once revealed his outsider status by referring to himself as a “savage,” using the same word which Eliot later adopted in the letter to Mary Hutchinson that I cite in my epigraph to Chapter Five (Ricketts 152; Eliot Letters 318). Upon closer examination, however, we see that Kipling is perhaps the best literary exemplar of the era’s dominant Shakespearean discourse—a discourse which considers Shakespeare’s works to embody the essence of an homogenous national culture, and one in which an initiation into the Bard’s riches provides the means by which national identity can best be conferred upon the school-aged.

Much like Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot, Kipling’s interest in Shakespeare spanned his entire career. A nod to Shakespeare appears in “The Disturber of Traffic”
(1893), a short story in which a nearly-mad lighthouse keeper named Dowse lives in the distant Flores Straits (near Timor) with a strange half-human creature named Challong as his sole companion. Instead of ensuring the safety of the ships which approach the channel, Dowse wields a Prospero-like power over the vessels and leads them towards their peril. As Angus Wilson suggests, "The Prospero-Caliban relationship declares Kipling's fascination with [Shakespeare]. . . and introduces the theme of obsession which was to reappear often in [Kipling's] work" (168). Kipling was also particularly interested in Dowse's dual potential as both a magus-like creator and animal-like destroyer, the latter perhaps fostered by his relationship with the Caliban-like Challong. Kipling would later pursue his interest in The Tempest in even greater detail in an article entitled "Shakespeare and The Tempest" (1894). During a visit to Bermuda, Kipling observed that the topographical details of the island bore an uncanny resemblance to those of Prospero's Island, and he concluded that Shakespeare must have possessed a keen knowledge of New World exploration and geography, even though the island of The Tempest is actually located in the Mediterranean, somewhere between Tunis and Naples. In the poem, "The Craftsman" (1918), Shakespeare is our principal character, enjoying a pint at the Mermaid Tavern and describing the inspiration for one of his most notorious female characters. While playing on the banks of the Avon, "a boy drowning kittens/ Winced at the business; whereupon his sister—/ Lady Macbeth aged seven—thrust 'em under,/ Somberly scornful." Finally, Kipling engages once more with Shakespeare in the short story "Proofs of Holy Writ" (1932), a fictional account of the efforts of Shakespeare
and Ben Jonson to revise Chapter Sixty of Isaiah in the newly-published King James Bible. Thus, Kipling's Bard not only possessed an interest in colonial expansion outlined in the "Tempest" essay, but was also one of two writers to be entrusted with editorial work on Jacobean England's version of the Word of God. And perhaps these interests were not unrelated—in Kipling's age, as colonial educators were well aware, empire building (or empire-consolidation) and Shakespeare often went hand in hand.

In addition to these periodic engagements with the Bard's texts, there is one particular encounter with Shakespeare which merits closer attention. Never does a Shakespearean text more closely resemble the Holy Word in Kipling's work than in Puck of Pook's Hill, first published in 1906 (in a nice bit of congruity). Not only does Kipling borrow the beloved Puck of A Midsummer Night's Dream, but Puck enters speaking lines borrowed directly from Shakespeare's text: "What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here,/ So near the cradle of our fairy Queen" (3.1.65-66). In this case, the "homespuns" are two children (reportedly modeled after Kipling's own) named Una and Dan who are staging a Shakespearean appropriation of their own (an abbreviated version of Midsummer created by their father) when they encounter Shakespeare's sprite in a Sussex field. Over the course of the book's ten tales and numerous poems, Puck serves as the children's magical guide through British history, dispensing a series of life-lessons to ensure that Dan and Una are both respectful of the nation's customs and secure in their burgeoning sense of national identity. In this single collection, Kipling manages to weave together many of the threads central to the chapters of this dissertation: Britain's multi-
ethnic origins, the role of culture in uniting these often disparate groups, and growing
cconcerns over the connection between literature, education, and national identity. Once
again, Shakespeare is at the center of it all, although his work is never problematized in
Kipling's text as it is in the pages of writers such as Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot.

III - Puck and the History of the Britons

Prior to his move to England in 1897, Kipling had considered himself to be a true
outsider, writing as late as 1902 that England was “the most marvelous of all foreign
countries that I have ever been in” (Kipling quoted in Carrington 369; emphasis mine).
The beauty of the Sussex countryside which surrounded Batemans, the family home,
seems to have fostered his subsequent immersion in the history of his adoptive nation and
inspired his creative impulses. In Puck, Kipling presents a series of stories that document
both the beauty of the countryside and the connections between national identity and the
land, itself. Before Puck begins to relate the first of the numerous tales, he must
symbolically transfer a parcel of land to the children through the ancient custom of seizin-
-by carving out a piece of the turf and handing it over to them, Puck recognizes that Una
and Dan have literally taken possession of the land. And hearing the tales which follow
this ancient rite helps them to understand the responsibility that comes with their status as
landed English aristocrats.
*Puck* is, like the best children’s literature, not strictly designed for children. One of the book’s overriding adult themes is the articulation of the origins of Britain’s complex national identity. The various storytellers—to whom Dan and Una are introduced by Puck—are a diverse group, seemingly outsiders to Britain as much as Kipling was himself: a Norman knight present during the defeat of the Saxons in 1066, a centurion of Roman stock charged with defending Hadrian’s Wall (at the present-day border of England and Scotland), and a Spanish Jew who helped to ensure King John’s capitulation in the passage of the Magna Carta. These characters—none of whom are imbued in any sense of Britishness by birth—are the principal means by which the children learn the foundational myths of their own nation. From the waning days of the Roman occupation of Britain, Kipling’s centurion writes that,

> [Hadrian’s] wall was manned by every breed and race in the Empire. No two towers spoke the same tongue, or worshiped the same Gods. In one thing only were we equal. No matter what arms we had used before we came to the wall, *on* the wall we were all archers. . .(137)

Similar definitions of national consciousness, where a common enemy helps to consolidate a seemingly diverse collection of ethnicities, should sound familiar (recall the national unity fostered by the opposition of Protestant Britons to a “decadent,” Catholic France during the Napoleonic Wars, or the unifying power of literature intended to combat Great War-era anxieties over German militarism--and the attempted seizure of Shakespeare—in the days when Kipling was writing *Puck*). Defending and occupying the
land, a land increasingly sacred to Kipling, is the first step in bridging ethnic differences. In the tales told by the Norman knight, Sir Richard, Norman and Saxon can experience a collective national identity when they must finally share and defend the nation's sacred ground. As Richard's fellow knight, De Acquilla, expresses it, now that the Norman has been named the Warden of an English manor, "I do not think for myself nor for our [Norman] king . . . I think for England. . . . I am not Norman, Sir Richard, nor Saxon, Sir Hugh. English am I" (106). Tale after tale reinforces this lesson, and Kipling attempts to fashion the national will by presenting an idealistic vision of nationhood by asserting unity through a shared possession of both a land and its culture.

As a representative of that common culture, it is no accident that Shakespeare's Puck is chosen as the children's guide. Not only was Midsummer suitable for children because of the presence of its magic and fairies, but there is also something quintessentially English about the play. One of the most persistent myths about Midsummer (unsubstantiated, as Stephen Greenblatt reminds us in The Norton Shakespeare) is that the play was first produced as a private entertainment at an English country home for a wedding whose guests included the Faerie Queene herself, Elizabeth I. But the play also celebrates the values of the English aristocracy, namely the satisfaction of a suitable marriage match (admittedly not a desire solely of the English), and other more recreational aristocratic pleasures, including the hunt. In addition, the play dramatizes the Rites of May, a rural custom which had dated back to the age of
Chaucer (if not further), as well as the Elizabethan practice of maintaining a troupe of theatricals who staged pageants which help to reflect and reinforce the values of their ruling class employers.

In addition to the more conservative ideological connections between Kipling’s *Puck of Pook’s Hill* and Shakespeare’s play, the character of Puck is an appropriate conduit for English history because of his particular and timeless associations with Englishness. As Jack Voller has written, “Puck is much more than just the quintessential English sprite—he is a reification of Englishness itself” (84). Unlike other fairies, the so-called “old things” who have come to England, Puck has always been there; he is as ageless as the land, itself. Explaining the origins of his fellow spirits, Puck explains that he arrived first and witnessed the outsiders’ arrival in ancient Britain: “The Phonecians brought some [spirits] over when they came to buy tin; and the Gauls, and the Jutes, and the Danes, and the Frisians, and the Angles brought more when they landed. They were always landing in those days. . .and they always brought their Gods with them” (50). But while Puck remains, the other “old things” have gradually drifted away because of a failed acclimation to the nation and its culture. As Puck describes it, “they flitted to other places because they couldn’t get on with the English for one reason or another” (50-1).

One might logically suggest that the Saxons, Gauls, Jutes, and Angles were the very origins of the English race, but this contradiction is never pursued by Kipling; only Puck remains a permanent fixture of the landscape.
Readers of *Puck* must ultimately conclude that true Englishness is somehow beyond the influence of such supernatural (and thus outdated) religious practices. We can imply that the power of the "old things" carried less force in an age increasingly skeptical about the occult. Even though the very presence of Puck's magic might, for example, invoke a comparison with Yeats's "pale windy people" in the Cuchulain cycle, one must consider that the role of magic and the supernatural plays a very different part in *Puck*. Once the Gauls, Jutes, and Angles arrived on the shore of Old England, they presumably left their superstitions behind in the process of securing their new national identity. Puck is a special exception, and his magic is visible only to Una and Dan, and then only in the most ephemeral form. After each successive tale, the children must eat from the leaves of the oak, ash, and thorn trees (an Anglicized lotus plant, apparently), which renders them oblivious to all that they have seen and heard. In time, the children gradually recall the history and lessons that Puck has shared with them, but it assumes a dream-like and un-real form to them.

The important notion here is that Puck's instruction enters Una and Dan's unconscious; magic is accessible only to the world of children, but is then cast aside in maturity. The parents of Una and Dan are removed from this world of the fairies (much like the parents in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), because it is just that: a dream of childhood. And the dream serves an educational purpose in both works: to secure a place within the community for children on the verge of assuming their position at the top of the social hierarchy. The only adult even remotely sympathetic to the world of Puck's
magic is the family's tenant, Hobden. This noble rural laborer is never privy to the lessons imparted to Una and Dan, but when asked about the presence of magical spirits, Hobden makes it known that he at least acknowledges the possibility of their existence:

I ain't sayin' nothin', because I've heard naught, an' I've seen naught. But if you was to say there was more things after dark in the shaws than men, or fur, or feather, or fin, I dunno as I'd go far about to call you a liar. (186)

Kipling portrays Hobden as nearer to the state of innocence necessary for the apprehension of magical spirits, but the author ultimately suggests that a relationship with such forces cannot endure beyond childhood. Here, we are obviously worlds apart from anything remotely resembling the use of the supernatural in Yeats's drama and verse. In *On Baile's Strand* and *The Green Helmet*, magic is an integral part of the adult world, both through civil discourses (recall how Cuchulain's relationship with the occult places a strain on his relationship with the other Chieftains) and in the battles which actually decide the fate of the Celts. In the world of *Puck*, as Jack Voller writes, Kipling is "concerned largely with the link between civilization and its dark roots in myth and magic, but that [he], somewhat uncomfortable with this recognition, kept this link 'hedged about with safeguards' and was reluctant to insist on it too strongly" (85). The magical rites of Puck are simply inconsistent with the Christian virtues articulated throughout the collection's stories.
To register the extent of the difference between Kipling and his contemporaries in their appropriation of Shakespeare and conception of the nation, it is in the collection’s final story that we observe the most significant disparity. Until this point in the collection, national identity has been a recurrent subtext, but now it assumes a place at center stage. Prior to “The Treasure and the Law,” one might infer that Kipling joined Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot in a desire to make national identity more inclusive. After all, when Normans, Saxons, and Romans look beyond their ethnic origins and consider themselves to be English after their arrival in England, there is a tendency to believe that Kipling proposes that the nation is available to all who claim identification with it. However, “The Treasure and the Law” belies any such notion, delineating the very prescribed limits imposed upon national identity in Britain—one particular barrier to assimilation being religious difference.

The central character in the tale is Kadmiel, an English Jew clearly descended from Shakespeare’s Shylock, and a character who shares many of his predecessor’s predicaments as a cultural outsider. One of Kadmiel’s principal problems is that he, unlike our other historical tour guides in *Puck*, possesses no land, the first clear marker of his distance from the other representatives of the nation. Kipling subscribes to the familiar trope of the wandering Jew, an exile from his land of origin (in this case, Spain) but also an exile from most human bonds. Ostensibly, we can read his story as an attempt
to document the role played by the Jews in the adoption of that most treasured of national
documents—the Magna Carta—but a closer look at the story reveals that Kipling’s
conception of the nation is far less inclusive than we observe elsewhere. The most
obvious point of comparison here would be Joyce’s very different treatment of the
problems of reconciling religious and national identity in Ulysses. The “Cyclops”
episode, in particular, foregrounds Leopold Bloom’s difficulties in asserting his Irishness
during an encounter with the ultra-patriotic “Citizen,” who believes that Bloom’s
Jewishness precludes any identification with the Irish nation. Joyce’s keen satire of the
Citizen’s chauvinistic views reveals that Joyce’s more expansive notion of national
identity is the antithesis of Kipling’s own in Puck. For Bloom—and for Joyce as well—the
nation is “the same people living in the same place” (272). Bloom’s words induce
contempt (and a gob of spit) from the Citizen, who cannot reconcile Jewishness and his
nation, a difficulty which, as we shall see, Kipling seems to share, albeit in a much more
subtle form.

“The Treasure and the Law” ends the collection because, more than any other
historical event related in Puck, the drafting and adoption of the Magna Carta was
essential to the stability of the nation in the centuries that followed—the document was a
guarantor of freedom central to the nation’s identity. If Britain’s diverse population had
possessed the will to be unified as early as the Roman Empire, Kipling suggests, the
Magna Carta was the document necessary to place limits on the powers of the monarchy
and to protect the rights of all Britons. The ostensible goal of the story is to remind the
children that there is, as Puck insists, “but one Law in Old England for Jew or Christian—
the Law that was signed at Runnymede.” As the children have learned from their history
lessons, the Magna Carta was signed by King John at the insistence of the land-owning
Barons. The part of the story unfamiliar to Una and Dan is the equally significant role of
Kadmiel and his fellow Jews. In the story which Kadmiel relates, Kipling makes a
problematic attempt to re-claim the virtues of his Jewish narrator and cast him as
medieval Moses-figure, who helped bring the Law to Britain.

What Kadmiel really brings to Britain, however, are the finances necessary to
extort King John’s signature on the charter. Both the equally debt-ridden Barons and the
King had borrowed heavily from Kadmiel and his fellow Jews, with the latter more than
willing to lend in order to protect themselves from potential abuses by either side. We
learn, for instance, that King John had pulled the teeth of Jews to force them to lend him
money (199), while the alternative punishments of the Barons were “tenfold more cruel.”
(201-02). Although the children are supposed to be learning that Jews were integral to
the arrival of the constitutional monarchy, the reader of the tale instead registers the
extent to which the “freedom” of the English Jews was purchased at a very dear price, a
price which they alone paid. As a result, Kadmiel reminds the children that they have
neglected an equally important lesson: “You Christians always forget that gold does more
than the sword. Our good King [John] signed because he could not borrow more money
from us bad Jews” (199), since Kadmiel ultimately decides to side with the Barons and
withhold further loans to the King. Kadmiel hopes to ensure that the King “deny justice to no one”—words drawn from the great charter, itself—but we see what his decision costs him: a permanent place within his local community and nation.

The cost is indeed great. Caught between the King and the Barons, Kadmiel must sever ties with Elias, another Jew of Spanish origins, and the closest thing to family that Kadmiel has ever known. Because of his desire that “the land will have peace, and our trade will grow” (203), Kadmiel risks the potential tortures of King John to collaborate with the Barons. Although the fortieth declaration of the charter originally read, “To no free man will we sell, refuse, or deny right or justice,” Kadmiel is able to the revise the beginning of the phrase to “To none will we sell. . .” (emphasis mine). The alteration costs Kadmiel two hundred pieces of gold—a move which ultimately brings freedom to all Britons—but it is a freedom in which Kadmiel is unable to share. The price that Kadmiel pays could be viewed as one which redeems the religious Other in the eyes of the community, but an intriguing subtext is that Kadmiel nevertheless personifies one of the dominant tropes of his Jewishness: a natural affinity for gold. Any attempt to rehabilitate the Jew is undermined by the verse which precedes the tale, which again speaks of the Jew’s instinctive access to “the secret river of Gold.” Since Kadmiel resumes his money-lending in the years following the adoption of the Magna Carta, one presumes that Kadmiel’s privileged access to the gold has been restored. Despite Kadmiel’s demonstrated rejection of material possessions, at the end of the story he is removed from the community, essentially the same community that Una and Dan will enter with
adulthood. Kadmiel remains the outsider, inspiring more than a little trepidation in Puck, himself, and clearly presented as the exotic Other, actually outfitted in a “spicy-scented” fur-lined gown and doomed to continue his wanderings. Therefore, Kadmiel is not only not a true Briton, but we soon learn that even his wealth is not truly his own.

The ultimate source of the freedoms granted by the Magna Carta seems to be the gold, itself, rather than Kadmiel’s actual benevolence. One should consider that the treasure which Kadmiel withholds from King John is the very treasure obtained from the “joyous venture” of the Norman and Saxon knights whose stories appeared in earlier chapters of *Puck*. A result of an expedition to Africa, the treasure can be seen as the spoils of an archetypal colonial quest which predates, by several centuries, the imperial conquests which more permanently consolidated national identity in Britain. Ironically, a similar process is at work in the Kadmiel story, despite the fact that the ostensible lesson is that national identity has been extended to both Jew and Christian. The best that Kipling can offer, however, is that the Jew can assert a presence as the narrator of a tale which outlines the origins of the constitutional monarchy. Beyond this narrative presence, however, Kadmiel’s role is a limited one as he must continue his travels, an “ancient mariner” with no social or familial connections, and no real share of British national identity.
V - Kinship and a More Inclusive Nation

_Puck of Pook's Hill_ concludes with a verse that would have resonated deeply with any of the writers who succeeded Kipling in appropriating Shakespeare as a way of examining the connection between culture and national formations in the years between 1906-1922:

Land of our Birth, our faith, our pride,
For whose dear sake our fathers died;
O Motherland, we pledge to thee,
Head, heart, and hand through the years to be! (210)

Here, Kipling suggests that there are a variety of bonds which help to unite the nation: birthright (and its connections to the land), religion, as well as the simple will to take pride in the very abstract idea that is the nation. As we have seen, Kipling’s stories do not always bear out this all-inclusive definition, but the one thread which unites the various components of national identity is kinship (and again we return to my dissertation’s title). The nation is a family, and a true citizen is a member of that family willing to defend the land. For Kipling—as indeed for Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot—literary kinship and the nation are also inextricable, and the ultimate patriarch is Shakespeare.

The Bard provides the characters who remain alive to us centuries after their first appearances on the Elizabethan stage, reminding Britons of their multi-ethnic origins and
the related social problems which persisted into the early-twentieth century (and beyond). Although Shakespeare was equally important to both Kipling and his contemporaries, and continues to be contested in the postcolonial era, the aims which underpin Shakespeare’s appropriation are obviously very different. For Kipling, the definition of national identity, one that is transmitted through Shakespeare, has become increasingly stable since the days of the Roman occupation, the Norman conquest and the age of empire initiated by Shakespeare’s Elizabethan contemporaries. Kipling can be seen as part of a discursive network which included the membership of the English Association, as well as the later and even more influential Newbolt Committee on the Teaching of English in England: persons who arrived at a similarly homogeneous definition of the British nation in a time of great anxiety about the national culture and used Shakespeare as a means of locating the essence of national identity. In contrast, Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot (as well as their postcolonial successors) present a far more expansive definition, reminding us that national identity is far from stable, and that Shakespeare is not merely an uncomplicated icon of the nation, but the very figure through which a far more complex and expansive definition of British national identity should be examined.

In the hands of English academics such as A.C. Bradley and the members of the Newbolt Committee, Shakespeare became not only the national poet but also the very measure of humanity itself. Through the efforts of similarly conservative critics, Shakespeare has been endlessly appropriated to reinforce existing national, racial, and cultural hierarchies, rather than de-stabilizing such categories. This is why the plays
themselves remain such powerfully contested cultural documents in the current age of postcolonialism. As works such as Thomas Cartelli’s *Repositioning Shakespeare* (1999) and Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin’s *Postcolonial Shakespeares* (1998) have recently demonstrated, writers such as Aimé Césaire, Michelle Cliff, Tayeb Salih, and others have continued the tradition of powerful Shakespearean appropriations outlined in my own study. These postcolonial writers have foregrounded the literary misrepresentations of marginalized peoples, while also challenging Shakespeare’s privileged position of authority within a variety of national formations in former outposts of the empire. But, as we have seen, questions of national identity, power relations between dominant and marginalized cultures, and Shakespeare’s role at the center of these struggles are far from recent developments. Such challenges faced the writers at the heart of my dissertation, but from within a particular national formation that was perhaps, in retrospect, in the closing stages of viability as a national formation. As Graham Holderness suggests, “to have a forceful and vigorous ideology of nationalism, you have to have a forceful and vigorous nation to enact and substantiate it” (75). In the present day, because of the status of Britain as a diminished world power divested of its imperial possessions, a unified British national consciousness seems far less tenable.

This is why my study necessarily ends at the beginning of the 1920s. The eclipse of British influence in Ireland had culminated in Britain’s recognition of the Irish Free State in 1923, and the two Irish writers that I discuss never possessed quite the same relationship to British culture--Yeats, in particular, writes of his nation in his late poetry
(“That is no country for old men”) and demonstrates no ambiguity that he equates Ireland, but not Britain, with Byzantium. The situation for Woolf and Eliot becomes far different, as well. Neither ever completely relinquished his or her interest in Shakespeare, but each writer’s relationship to the Bard, and by consequence to the national literature, had evolved. When Woolf meditates on the imagined figure of Judith Shakespeare in *A Room of One’s Own* (1928), she no longer speaks as one who assumes a rhetorical power from the simple act of appropriating Shakespeare. Instead, her position closer to the center of the national literary world—as novelist, frequent contributor to national literary magazines, and even publisher of writers such as T.S. Eliot—ensures a more playful tone in these later encounters with Shakespeare. To adopt Martha Rozett’s phrase, it is less a case of “talking back to Shakespeare” than talking about him, a practice in which both Woolf and Eliot frequently engaged.

Despite the more even footing with which all of these modernists approached Shakespeare after 1922, the Bard’s cultural authority seems to be far from effaced, a lesson perhaps not lost upon the postcolonial writers who have succeeded Yeats, Woolf, and the others. Regardless of the effect of postcolonial appropriations on the literary canon outside the Anglo-American academy, Shakespeare remains a literary Saint in the English-speaking world whose status only seems to be strengthened by the various forms his appropriation has taken. Despite the occasional polemic for Shakespeare’s diminishing influence, including Gary Taylor’s “The Incredible Shrinking Bard” (1999), even the discussions of Shakespeare’s purported demise are continued evidence of his
centrality to cultural debates. The Shakespeare that, for so long, has been the keystone of English Studies continues to be one of the central figures through which truly postcolonial literatures can be imagined. And more than any other writers, Yeats, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot were instrumental in establishing the terms of the debate by which Shakespeare's cultural authority was tested as never before. These modernist appropriations of Shakespeare remind us that Shakespeare needs to be at the center of the curriculum, because he continues to serve his more radical critics just as well as he serves those who attempt to coopt him for the dominant culture.
NOTES

1. As Angus Wilson writes in *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling*, Kipling had only settled permanently in England in 1897, having previously lived in India, England and even Vermont after his marriage to Caroline Balestier, an American, in 1892. Even after 1897, his career as a journalist ensured that he would make extended stays in South Africa, as well, enhancing Kipling’s sense of rootlessness in the period prior to his more permanent re-location to Sussex beginning in 1902.

2. “The Craftsman” appears in *Rudyard Kipling: The Complete Verse*, London: Kyle Cathie, 1990, 280-81. The poem is a difficult one to date precisely. Many Kipling scholars refer to it as “early,” while Peter Keating suggests that the verse was composed in 1918, although its theme “had been outlined” many years earlier. See *Kipling the Poet*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1994.

3. Paul Franssen further pursues the connections between Shakespeare in his roles as Bible scholar and “muse of Empire.” Franssen believes that Shakespeare, writing at the dawn of British colonial expansion, assumes the mantle of the White Man’s Burden, “by equipping the future empire builders with the two texts they will need to take with them to desert islands (or not so desert islands—a Caliban or two to be civilized would do no harm).” See Franssen’s “The Bard, the Bible, and the Desert Island” in *The Author as Character: Representing Historical Writers in Western Literature*, Eds. Paul Franssen and Ton Hoenselaars, Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1999.

4. Greenblatt reminds us that scholars possess a persistent hunger for details about the composition of Shakespeare’s plays, but that there is “not a shred” of evidence that *Midsummer* was either written for, or performed at, any such Elizabethan wedding. See *The Norton Shakespeare*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. The supposition first appeared in print in E.K. Chambers’s “The Occasion of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*” in *A Book*
of *Homage to Shakespeare*, Israel Gollancz ed., Oxford: H. Milford, 1916, 154-60. In his essay, Chambers conjectures that the play had been written to celebrate the aristocratic marriage of Elizabeth Carey and Thomas Berkeley.

5. For a discussion of the particular postcolonial writers to whom I refer, see Cartelli 105-119 and 147-168, and Loomba 1-19.
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