

## Foreign and Postcolonial Shakespeare

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### Introduction:

\*Post-colonialism is not a homogenised discourse: there are numerous types of colonisation – physical and cultural.

\*We have chosen to concentrate on less obvious instances where the effects of colonialism are more subtle and complex.

“Colonialism therefore comprises the expansion of royal hegemony in the English-Welsh mainland (the internal colonialism of the core), the extension of British influence in the semi-periphery of Ireland, and the diffuse range of British interest in the extreme periphery of the New World.” (Political Shakespeare, p.51-2)

### Post-colonialism and its main issues:

\*Universality and Difference (Otherness)

“The myth of Universality is thus a primary strategy of imperial control as it is manifested in literary study.” (A Post-colonial Reader, p.55)

\*Representation and Resistance

“If I desire to change the role and identity fashioned for me by those earnest agents of colonialism, I will need to borrow some of their resolve” (Literature in the Modern World, p. 278)

\*Post-modernism and Post-colonialism – who is writing/appropriating, for whom?, why?

\*Hybridity

“The post-colonial project usually posits precisely the impossibility of that identity ever being ‘uncontaminated’.” (A Post-colonial Studies Reader, p.135)

\*Language – as instrument of oppression and/or liberation

“Language provides the terms by which reality may be constituted ;it provides the names by which the world may be ‘known’.” (A Post-colonial Reader, p.283)

### The Sub-consciously Post/colonial:

What do we mean by ‘sub-consciously PC? The questions we are interested are ‘What is being colonised and how can one be colonised?’ [The land, the mind or both at once?]

The areas of our examples: Northern Irish and Arabic practices of Shakespeare. Are they colonial or post-colonial, or both?

### Physical and cultural colonialism

\*Irish? Branagh – pointers in reading Shakespeare beside Branagh and his background.

-choice of roles

- personality cult vs. nationality/ethnicity
- how Branagh is hyped – is ‘Branagh’ a construct just as ‘Shakespeare’ is?
- Branagh’s justification of his to working =lower class = Irish as ‘other’

“The more I am involved with acting and production, the more practical I feel its applications are and its value. It’s more than just being in entertainment at the crudest level.”

(about the 1996 ‘Hamlet’ film)

“Personal freedom which involves peace of mind is so admirable and it’s what this film is about...How not to worry about the bank manager, the bills, people disliking you or the feeling ‘I’ve failed in my own expectations’? ”

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### Cultural colonialism

#### \*Shakespeare and Arabs

- Reverential to Shakespeare – buying into the myth
- Subverting Shakespeare : trans/adapting Shakespeare’s plays to suit the Arab cultural situation (unconscious )

“Humanity gave him the themes and subjects of his works; therefore, he was theirs too.” ( PhD Thesis, Tounsi, Mohamed : Shakespeare in Arabic, Univ. Northern Colorado 1989 p.125)

“The new feature of this Arabic Hamlet is that it allows some alterations at the cost of the original for religious purposes. Thus Islamic religion compelled the translator, although he is Christian, to include some Muslim beliefs to satisfy the spectators and readers who are mostly Muslims.” ( PhD Thesis, Twajj, Mohamed : Shakespeare and the Arab world, Northwestern University 1973 p. 87)

### Conclusion

- Shakespeare internalised = continuous process of colonisation and its resistance= Blurring the historical linearity of PC.
- ‘Subconsciously post/colonial’ = clash of intention and reception

### **Bibliography**

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