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The Tempest and American Appropriations of Shakespeare

Peter Rawlings

In 1847, the house reputed to have been the birthplace of William Shakespeare was acquired on behalf of the British nation. It was thereby rescued not only from a sequence of unscrupulous and exploitative custodians, having existed for some time simply as a public house, but also, many believed, from the powerful grasp of Britain's American cousins. The *Illustrated London News* devoted a special edition to the auction, in which it was reported that the auctioneer had argued for the value of the property not least by drawing attention to the fact that among its many annual visitors was a large number of Americans (190). Visits by landmark Americans in the nineteenth century included Washington Irving (who also took in the Boar's Head in London and even went to Bermuda), Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry James.[1] Washington Irving's account of his visit reveals a deep scepticism about the authenticity of the whole scene and, similarly, Hawthorne focuses on the tall stories of the curator. Characteristically, James writes at length about a nearby country house and maintains a studied silence about what he describes as "so thickly besieged a shrine." In the year after the sale, Maun-gwu-Daus, a latter-day Caliban, deposited a memorial of his visit in a local Stratford-on-Avon newspaper:

> Indians of North America
> Heard the name that shall not decay,
> They came and saw where he was born,
> How great was the sound of his horn [. . . .]
>
> The Spirit is with Mun-nid-do,
> Who gave thee all thou didst do:
> When we are at our native home
> We shall say, "We have seen his tomb."[2]

Excitement over the sale had been stimulated by speculation that some of those American visitors were about to dismantle the house and ship it to the West, where it would become some kind of itinerant show. According to a London *Times* correspondent:

> one or two enthusiastic Jonathans have already arrived from America to see what dollars can do in taking it away. The timbers, it is said, are all sound, and it would be no very difficult matter to set it on wheels and make an exhibition of it. We hope and trust that no such desecration awaits it (7).

This story is far from apocryphal. A certain George B. Churchill, a prominent American Shakespeare scholar at the turn of the century, reports P. T Barnum's attempt to "transport to America the house in which Shakespeare was born" (xxlx-xxx). Phineas Taylor Barnum (1810-1891), whom Churchill describes as a "shrewd and vulgar showman," ran a museum in New York that specialised in "freak shows," the most famous of which was the famous dwarf "General Tom Thumb," who was exhibited in 1842. Subsequently, Barnum was one of the founding partners of the "Barnum and Bailey" circus. A similar outcry erupted when Stratford City Council planned to accept money from the Scottish-American steel millionaire Andrew Carnegie to build a public library on land bordering the birthplace. Ultimately, this involved the demolition of two adjoining Elizabethan houses. One campaigner expressed her abhorrence at the possibility of such a site being contaminated by the "unpoetic millions" of an American industrialist. Rather late in the day, given the by then gradual migration of Shakespearean scholarship from the Britain to America, Marie Corelli went on to warn of the danger of "the treasure of the Old World" being transferred to the "New" (55).

By the mid-nineteenth century, Shakespeare had become the principal conduit of culture high and low both in Britain and in much of the rest of Europe, especially Germany. Culture exists, of course, as the extrinsic manifestation of all forms of power and all things imperial. How small even Shakespeare seems by contrast with the reputation subsequently organized for him. The great enigma for many critics in the nineteenth century was how a man who left hardly a biographical mark could be squared with the corpus of plays that he seemed to have written. Hence the Baconians and all the rest. Shakespeare's fortune, perhaps his misfortune, was to have been caught up in colonial processes the magnitude of which had hitherto been unseen in the history of nations and empires. First Britain, and then America, postulated liberty, individualism, and opportunity partly in his name. Ashley Thorndike, writing in 1933, posits a Shakespeare who acts as a unifier of America, and as the very fire under Israel Zangwill's "melting pot":[3]

> Shakespeare has been a symbol of unity, a moving force, almost a directing deity. He was worshipped in the libraries and theatres of the Eastern cities in much the same way that he was being worshipped in England, but in the West the travelling elocutionist, the lecturer, the company of actors on a Mississippi show-boat became his emissaries and evangels. The frontier would not leave him to Europe

and the East; no other writer was so quickly assimilated in the wilderness.

Improbably enough, or only too probably, Thorndike goes on to maintain that "reverence" for Shakespeare "became the symbol, the mark of culture, which united the frontiersman with Lowell and Emerson" (122-124). If as Marx, Althusser, Macherey, and Foucault have variably contested, the purpose of culture is to assist in the ideological mechanism whereby illusions are perpetuated, and the real relation of people to the material realities of their existence is distorted, the construction of Shakespeare continues to be an admirable site for the pursuit of such goals.[4]

It has become fashionable to trade in terms of the "post-colonial" and "post-modern." This essay does not seek to invest heavily in such perspectives. This is largely because the label "post-colonial" seems ludicrous in a world where every individual is a colony of one sort or another and where two or three nations conceal their omnipotence behind concepts of a "global village,", or a "global economy." I want to suggest that "post-colonialism," itself a discourse of oppression whose function can be regarded as that of masking abiding colonial realities, should be disavowed. Equally, it would make little sense to think in terms of a "pre-colonial" phase. Nevertheless, it is possible to acknowledge the extent to which the idea of "nationhood" is relatively modern, being associated, in the main, with Renaissance Europe and the voyages and conquests of Britain, Spain, Portugal, and others in the early modern period and before. In this context, *The Tempest* has frequently been approached as a play caught up in the embryonic stages of colonialism as we now have it. I want to develop this approach by situating *The Tempest* a little more fully in its peculiarly American context.

From the outset, it was clear to many influential American thinkers and writers that the political independence declared in 1776 would be merely nominal until some kind of cultural independence could be achieved. Relevant here is Fanon's model of national development once a colony achieves a measure of independence (168-178). America began, necessarily, by acquiescing in and assimilating the culture of Britain; then, it attempted to establish a cultural grammar of its own as part of the process of fabricating a national identity. For America, as for Fanon's post-colonies, identity was primarily constituted by conflict: the War of Independence and, above all, the Civil War. Once America had blood on its hands, it could be taken seriously as a nation. This blood-letting became part of a narrative of origins and identity in which Shakespeare, as I shall argue later, was deeply imbricated. The cogent, yet specious argument, involved several important moves. Shakespeare had been the common inheritance of both the British and the Americans; he wrote at a time when America was being dreamed of in the East; he was hugger-mugger with explorers, apostles of freedom, and railers against tyranny.

As his folios moved to American libraries, and English literature, spearheaded by

the bard, became a kind of cultural version of the Ford car, Shakespeare was part of the means by which America vanquished the Old World and asserted its cultural superiority. But Emerson, to a degree, Melville, and certainly Whitman, held that what was then only a burgeoning Shakespeare industry was a sign of America's continuing dependence on a Shakespeare at odds with the spirit of the New World. Emerson's was the founding discourse in the American declaration of cultural independence. "We have listened too long," he complained, "to the courtly muses of Europe" ("The American Scholar" 293). He suffered, however, from anxieties over what seemed like the insurmountable, monumental, unsurpassable supremacy of a Shakespeare who could never be imitated. Ultimately, he disposed of the problem by making the classic ideological move: he extracted Shakespeare from history, politics, material contexts and, of course, his national parameters. The de-historicizing of any writer, the declaring of his or her "universal" reach, is a form of political sanitization, a way of drawing teeth. For Emerson, then, Shakespeare sprang "like the rainbow daughter of Wonder, from the invisible, to abolish the past, and refuse all history" ("Shakespeare; or, The Poet" 255). Melville and Whitman adopted more adversarial positions. Melville allows Shakespeare his genius, but looks forward to an American equalling and even excelling it. Indeed, he proffers Hawthorne (and why not?) as a candidate for such a rôle. In the process, despite some ironic self-protection, his language is competitive, pugilistic, and expansionist:

> if Shakespeare has not been equalled, he is sure to be surpassed, and surpassed by an American born now or yet to be born. For it will never do for us who in most other things out-do as well as out-brag the world, it will not do for us to fold our hands and say, In the highest department advance there is none.

America, believed Melville, had a pre-lapsarian insouciance, a proximity to the natural, that would inspire a greater Shakespeare: "this Vermont morning dew is as wet to my feet, as Eden's dew to Adam's" (246).

Uncompromisingly, Whitman spent much of his life arguing fervently that the American adoption of Shakespeare was incongruous. Hawthorne's cautiously nationalistic approach to the problem becomes rabid jingoism in Whitman. The New World's values, for Whitman, were those of democracy, the masses, freedom, the modern, and the future. Shakespeare belonged to the feudal past with all its aristocratic structures, faded glories, and oppressions; and "great poems, Shakespeare's included, are poisonous to the idea of the pride and dignity of the common people, the life-blood of democracy" "Democratic Vistas" 144). Again:

> for all he stands for so much in modern literature, he stands entirely for the mighty aesthetic sceptres of the past, not for the spiritual and democratic, the sceptres of

the future ("Shakespeare for America" 675).

Whitman was more than susceptible to the

swelling act
Of the imperial theme.[5]

He had no need of the deluge of post-colonial criticism in which we now have to swim or drown; he simply took it for granted that culture was an articulation and legitimation of a territorial business involving the oppression of others under the guise of offering more developed models of equality. Such an obvious stance, for him, stood free of the need for theoretical obfuscation:

> The stamp of entire and finish'd greatness, to any nation, to the American Republic among the rest, must be sternly withheld till it has put what it stands for in the blossom of original, first-class poems.

Furthermore:

> Until the United States have just such definite and native expressers in the highest artistic fields, their mere political, geographical, wealth-forming, and even intellectual eminence, however astonishing and predominant, will constitute but a more and more expanded and well-appointed body, and perhaps brain, with little or no soul . . . . The hour has come for democracy in America to inaugurate itself in two directions . . . .autochthonic poems and personalities ("Poetry Today in America—Shakespeare—The Future" 2: 205).

Against Shakespeare and all that he saw him as representing, Whitman pitched the voluble terrain of an egalitarian America construed as being natural rather than artful and artificial:

> Think, not of growths as forests primeval, or Yellowstone geysers, or Colorado ravines, but of costly marble palaces . . . . The low characters, mechanics, even the loyal henchmen—serve as capital foils to the aristocracy . . . . The [plays] are altogether non-acceptable to America and democracy ("A Thought on Shakespeare": 55-56).

Whitman is not content to consign Shakespeare to the "arriere *[sic]*" of "far-back ages," he asks: "What is there in those works that so *imperiously* and scornfully dominates all our advanced civilization and culture" ("A Backward Glance O'er

Travel'd Roads" 18).[6] Such imperiousness he seeks to overthrow by challenging it with a vital, more recent culture. Inextricably linked in Whitman are post-Darwinian ideas of evolution and progress and the promotion of America as, therefore, inevitably superior to what has preceded it. Whitman had no propensity for modesty, and he felt easily able to advertise himself as not only Shakespeare's successor, but as the voice of an imperialising, speciously democratic America:

> As America fully and fairly constrained is the legitimate result and evolutionary outcome of the past, so I would dare to claim for my verse. Without stopping to qualify the averment, the Old World has had the poems of myths, fictions, feudalism, conquest, caste, dynastic wars, and splendid exceptional characters and affairs, which have been great; but the New World needs the poems of realities and science and of the democratic average and basic equality, which shall be greater ("A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads" 18).

America, although not alone, has always had a facility for calculating the "democratic average," and for hazarding the brutal base lines of "basic equality." These calculations and cartographies have rendered peripheral, to say the least, Native Indians, blacks, women, and similar such democratic detritus. At least Caliban, unlike most of the Native Indians, lived long enough to learn "how to curse" (I ii 364) in the language of his oppressor. The immediate problem, however, was America's dependence on its anteriority, its imitations and celebration of all things Shakespearean. The moment of *The Tempest*, for Whitman, involves the engendering of currents that would overwhelm it. It was an age "when America commencing to be explored and settled commenc'd also to be suspected as destin'd to overthrow the old standards and calculations" ("George Fox (and Shakespeare)" 853). What Whitman regards as Shakespeare's tyranny over America he abhors: "is there not something terrible in the tenacity with which one book out of millions holds its grip?" ("A Thought on Shakspeare" 55).

In older age, and in ways consonant with my later interpretation of the ultimately conservative function of *The Tempest* and Shakespeare in American society, Whitman began to agonize over the problem of where the limits of freedom might be. He suggested that an imitation of Shakespeare, among others, could act as a restraining force on the masses. He began to suffer anxieties about what the "democratic average" might average out. Commenting on the "outgrowth of our unloos'd individualities," he concluded there surely comes a time when it is "requisite that" such individuals "shall not be too free." "The inmost spiritual currents of the present time," he went on, "curiously revenge and check their own compell'd tendency to democracy, and absorption in it, by mark'd leanings to the past" ("Poetry Today in America—Shakespeare—The Future" 198).

Everywhere in Whitman there is the unadorned expression of the despotic function of poetry and the arts in the modern world. His destructive subscription is to a model of progress involving a teleology in which America is some kind of final cause. Much in Whitman serves to remind us that narratives, and the grander the better, were and are at the centre of the constitution of America. In conquering Shakespeare, in surpassing Old World Culture, indeed in the act of acquiring territories actual and of the mind, America has become the omniscient, omnipotent narrator in Biblical and Miltonic creation myths, paradises lost and regained, and millenarian epics.

Emerson's querulous acceptance of Shakespeare and Whitman's resoundingly ambivalent rejection amount to similar things. The American adoption of Shakespeare, its act of dispossessing the Old World's of its cultural glory, appears as part of an apparent displacement process—new for old, real for sham democracy and freedom for their infinite contraries—that nonetheless recuperates, or "resuscitates" (as Whitman has it) the dogma of imperialism, in all its democratic guises, complete with a populist rhetoric of bewildering banality.[7] The American War of Independence was not only about competing senses of liberty, but about who would assume the mantle of oppressor-in-chief under the banner of such concepts.

American commentators were keen to see Shakespeare and *The Tempest* as being on the brink of the "brave new world" of America (V I 184). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Frank Bristol held that

> In Shakespeare's day the two most important branches of literature, those most eagerly sought for and read, were the plays of the dramatists and the voyages and travels of the American explorers.

What begins, for Bristol, as an influence on Shakespeare becomes a common determinant of both his plays and America, the latter stealthily shifting from an effect to a cause in the process:

> The discovery of America had much to do with the revival of English learning and literature, and aroused the Anglo-Saxon mind to that creative activity which produced her immortal drama . . . . Columbus, Cabot, Drake, Raleigh, and America, made possible Shakespeare.

Charles Mill Gayley believed that Shakespeare's enthusiasm for the voyages of discovery, as demonstrated in *The Tempest*, shows the extent to which

> Our American heritage is of the revolutionary fathers, of the colonial fathers, of the English founders of colonial liberty—the contemporaries and friends of the poet and prophet of the race.

From here, it was but a short step to larger designs:

> the thoughts and even the words of the liberal master [Shakespeare] . . . passed into the minds of our Revolutionary Fathers and into the Declaration of Independence . . . . the principles common to Shakespeare . . . are the principles of liberty which America enjoys today (Bristol iv, 5-6).

More specifically, Washington Irving was one of the first writers to posit a connection between the Virginian Company voyage, which left Plymouth on June 2, 1609 and ran aground on the island of Bermuda, and *The Tempest*. Musing on his own storm-tossed journey to Bermuda, Irving wrote that

> the islands derived additional interest in my eyes, from fancying that I could trace, in their early history, and in their superstitious notions connected with them, some of the elements of the Tempest ("The Bermudas: A Shakespearian Research" 17).

The play begins with a storm, continues in confusion, mystery, and magic, and ends with the apparent reconciliation of all conflicts. This is not only the classic narrative of comedy, it is the grammar of many American accounts of its own history. At the beginning of the play, and appropriately enough given the sea-faring context of Britain's conquests, everyone is at sea. 'At sea,' proverbially, connotes the landless, unanchored possibility of change that a period of chaos, or tempest, can proceed. Inversions of authority, especially in the shape of kingship, arise in the opening scene. Only in such a context, where there is a "sea-change/Into something rich and strange" (I ii 401-402) is it possible to ask "What cares these roarers for the name of a king?" (I I 16). This question is pursued as part of some momentary, giddy speculation over commonwealths, equality, and a society that would not be driven by wealth and the material. In line with one American strategy for national identification, Gonzalo expresses his dream of the island's potential, and that of society in general, almost entirely in terms of negatives:

> I' th' commonwealth I would, by contraries,
> Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
> Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
> Letters should not be known; riches, poverty.
> And use of service, none; contract, succession,
> Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
> No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
> No occupation, all men idle, all;
> And women too, but innocent and pure;

> No sovereignty— [. . . .]
> All things in common nature should produce
> Without sweat or endeavor: treason, felony,
> Sword, pike, gun, or need of any engine,
> Would I not have [. . . .] (II I 148-163)

This is close indeed to two classic European conceptions of American in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Vespucci's letter on America (1502) sees the New World as having "no religious belief . . . . no private property . . . they have no boundaries of kingdom or province; they obey no king or lord" 290). Similarly, Montaigne asserted that this America has

> no traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no name for a magistrate or for political superiority, no custom of servitude, no riches or poverty, no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupations but leisure ones, no care for any but common kinship, no clothes, no agriculture, no metal, no use of wine or wheat.[8]

When Melville tendered Vermont as a version of Eden, he was following a long tradition. John Locke, whose theories of monarchical accountability supplied the rationale for the "Glorious Revolution" (1688) in England and adumbrated elements of the American Declaration of Independence, proclaimed in harmony with Vespucci, Montaigne, and the spirit of *The Tempest*:

> Thus, in the beginning, all the world was America, and more so than that is now; for no such thing as money was any where known (41).

In *The Tempest,* the island represents, and becomes the agency of an envisaging of the ideal, a Utopia, never made actual. Its temporary inhabitants return, or move on, to the political realities. Even before then—given the early murderous plot of Sebastian and Antonio, and the whole Trinculo-Stephano-Caliban move against Prospero—there is a dire need for the weapons of war Gonzalo's commonwealth would exclude. As Prospero and the rest leave, the island becomes a failed utopia, even a dystopia. More than that, in an anticipation of what was to be the American experience for countless migrants and vassals, the nightmare has preceded, and forever deferred, the dream. In one of the earliest accounts of the island, apparent binaries become vulnerable to easy transpositions:

> Who did not think, till within these foure yeares, but that these islands had begun

> rather a habitation for Divells, than fit for men to dwell in? Who did not hate the name, when he was on land, and shun the place when he was in the seas? But behold the misprisions and conceits of the world! For true and large experience hath now told us, it is one of the sweetest paradises that be upon the earth ("The Bermudas: A Shakespearian Research" 62).

Prospero's island represents a capacity for wonder that propels the tawdry realities, but to which there can be no tangible access.

Locke's world as America, in keeping with Melville's Vermont and earlier dreams of what the West would offer, involve negative conceptions of the ideal. As Scott Fitzgerald implies at the end of *The Great Gatsby*, this sense of wonder had always already been obstructed by the mundane: its recovery would depend on the impossible and unwanted materialisation of these negative conceptions:

> And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailor's eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world . . . .for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder (187-188).

Consummately, *The Tempest* generates this originating wonder, but it also dramatizes, as the whole "pageant" melts "into air, into thin air" (I iv 150), its confinement to that non-temporal "enchanted moment":

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep (I iv 156-158).

With Somnus now are the play's nervous explorations of the textuality of power and authority, and the promise of counter-texts, as Prospero resumes power with the debris of superior alternatives behind him. That double impulse in *The Great Gatsby* —"an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired"—is that of all utopias: the need for Martin and Candide, for instance, is to return to the horrors of the real as they recoil from the delights of their Utopia, Eldorado, in Voltaire's *Candide* (1759). That radical ambivalence towards "wonder" is shared by Gonzalo:

> All torment, trouble, wonder, and amazement

> Inhabits here. Some heavenly power guide us
> Out of this fearful country! (V I 104-106)

Scott Fitzgerald captures the muted tone, ultimately, of all Utopias, and the mood of much of *The Tempest*, with the finality of that "the last time in history." America, and the island of *The Tempest*, so fleeting was the promise of both, amount not even to the last chance of a new beginning; both simply become vehicles of a superficial reconfiguration licensed by a momentary realization of possibilities that must remain merely that. In Fredric Jameson's terms, what *The Tempest* and America substantiate is not the impossibility of Utopia, but perhaps the impossibility of even imagining Utopia (208). The act of orchestrating the possibility, of clearing the space for it, prevents its realization:

> As I told thee before, I am subject to a tyrant
> A sorcerer, that by his cunning hath
> Cheated me of the island (III ii 42-44).

What Shakespeare and Scott Fitzgerald commemorate, in their different ways, is the eventual impotence of an undeniable capacity for wonder in the only world—of the here and now, problematically—which is possibly desirable. Voltaire's satire on Leibnitz's "best of all possible worlds" is biting not just because it shows the impossibility of such a realm, but also because it registers the energy with which mortal-kind can reject the concept.

If, as Frederic Jameson has it, the failure of Utopias, whether real (Socialism?) or imagined (real democracy?), allows us to measure the poverty of what remains, then it could also be argued that such failures are about making us settle for what passes as a utopian equivalent in the real world: we can have a realm of boundless expectations, if at all, as long as it belongs to a never-never land, and as long as it is not allowed to interfere with the practical functions of a society in which the natural limits of what is possible are used to rationalize oppression and inequality at all levels both national and international. In Jameson's terms, Prospero's island, like the European dream of America itself, does not represent an affirmation of its possibility, but the "desperate attempt to imagine something else," something other than the limitations of the quotidian. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, and all that they were constructed as representing by revolutionary and nineteenth-century Americans are defining elements in the constitution of America. More precisely, these elements coalesce in determining the relative importance of dreams and reality. Failed dreams, utopian constructions, and the rest, are the principal apparatuses by which the contours of what is pragmatically possible are rationalized. Prospero's vision might have a "baseless fabric" (Iv I 151), but the play nevertheless dramatizes the extent to which all power, and

this is especially relevant to American colonial power, depends upon origin mythologies, mystique, and fantasies of the possible.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, among others, was not only alert to the significance of the Civil War in the building of the nation, he also saw the war as renewing America's contact with Shakespeare. Shakespeare was a poet because he was "first to mark/ Through earth's dull mist the coming of the dawn," a dawn now sullied, but also sanctified, by the carnage of battle. The re-birth of America, its "second morn," has Shakespeare as a president by consanguinity, smeared with the American blood that has mingled with his "freshening dew":

In this dread hour of Nature's utmost need,
    Thanks for these unstained drops of freshening dew!
Oh, while our martyrs fall, our heroes bleed,
    Keep us to every sweet remembrance true,
Till from this blood-red sunset springs new-born
    Our Nation's second morn! (762)

Much of this is the focus of Robert Frost's "The Gift Outright" (a poem he read at President Kennedy's inauguration in 1960). There, America's ex-colonial situation is regarded as being initiated by a Civil War that involves its fall from innocence, if not its descent into imperial evil. The "many deeds of war" now include not only the Civil War, of course, but other wars conducted in the name of freedom (often a camouflage for the committing of atrocities) against Germany and half the world, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and the rest. There is careful nostalgia in Frost for lost innocence and artlessness, and a confidant, poignant commitment not to what was or is, but to what will—and, therefore, never will—be:

The land was ours before we were the land's.
She was our land more than a hundred years
Before we were her people. She was ours
In Massachusetts, in Virginia,
But we were England's, still colonials,
Possessing what we still were unpossessed by,
Possessed by what we now no more possessed.
Something we were withholding made us weak,
Until we found out that it was ourselves
We were withholding from our land of living
And forthwith found salvation in surrender.
Such as we were we gave ourselves outright
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)

To the land vaguely realizing westward,
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she would become (467).

The contention of this essay has been that the seizure of Shakespeare, together with artful uses of *The Tempest,* have been part of the way in which many Americans sought to deal with their perception of an "unstoried, artless, unenhanced" state. Relevantly, Stephen Greenblatt has spoken of the American need for "fabricated histories and artificial memories."[9] After the Civil War, the nation, no longer "unstoried," had had its own tempest and could claim, thereby, a more authentic filiation with Shakespeare. By the time the Civil War ended, the empowering mythologies of America were firmly in place, and Caliban's cry—"Burn but his books" (III ii 95)—would become the impossible imperative of its future dominions.

Notes

1. Washington Irving, "Stratford-on-Avon," (I: 173-210); Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Recollections of a Gifted Woman," (5: 90-119); Henry James, "In Warwickshire" (1877) (122-126).
2. Quoted in James G. McManaway (516).
3. .The trope originates in Act I of Israel Zangwill's drama The Melting Pot (1908): "America is God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming!"
4. The relevant Marx is in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*; Louis Althusser argued that "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" is represented as natural within a "universally reigning ideology" in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (148, 153) ; Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.
5. *Macbeth*, I iii 24-25 ; throughout, all quotations from Shakespeare are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*.
6. My emphasis.
7. Whitman wrote of America's "day-rise of science and resuscitation of history" in "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads" 18.
8. Quoted in Terence Martin 226.
9. "Literary History and Racial Memory."

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