

Bastard Foreigners

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REVIEW OF SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLISHES: AGAINST ENGLISHNESS by Margaret Tudeau-Clayton.

However dissentious, alienating, confusing and anxious life may have been for most of the English under the Tudors, the period, especially its last two decades, has usually been remembered as an idyllic apogee of national self-definition. By the time Shakespeare and his apprentice John Fletcher co-wrote *All Is True* (printed as *Henry VIII*) in 1613, wistfulness for the previous reign was already growing, despite what the playwrights and others may have recalled about Tudor rule: agricultural depression, enclosure, the plague, the poor law and the Essex Rebellion. The play concludes with the future Elizabeth I's christening, during which her godfather, Thomas Cranmer, the archbishop of Canterbury, is inspired to prophesy:

In her days every man shall eat in safety,
Under his own vine, what he plants; and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours:
God shall be truly known; and those about her
From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,
And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.

It isn't clear that these lines were intended as a wholehearted endorsement of nostalgia for the old queen and her times. Only a decade after her funeral, there may have been as much pathos in reflecting on how disappointed Cranmer would have been had he actually lived to experience Elizabeth's less than utopian reign as in the belief that this golden age had now passed away. But by the early 20th century the passage was being used to underwrite the notion that in Elizabeth's time England had achieved unprecedented and unsurpassed levels of Englishness, supremely articulated in the works of Shakespeare. In *The Literature and Art of the Empire* (1924), Major A.A. Longden and Edward Salmon claimed that Cranmer's prophecy supplied 'proof of Shakespeare's confidence in England's destiny', while for J.A.R. Marriott, writing in 1918, it helped show that to Shakespeare, 'as to other Elizabethans, England was something more than a home and a country: it was an inspiration. At no period in our history has the realisation of national unity been keener, the consciousness of national identity more intense.'

Countless historical novels, costume dramas and schoolbooks of the early 20th century promulgated the idea that the English were at their most characteristically pragmatic, upright and plain-spoken in the late 16th century. Godly but merry, uncorrupted by foreign fashions, Elizabethan Englishmen were properly bearded, and Elizabethan Englishwomen were decently farthingaled. And they were all manifestly destined to be Protestant, to defeat the Spanish Armada, and to eat all the roast beef they could desire. The more one thinks about it, the odder it seems that one of the figureheads for this particular strain of national mythology is Elizabeth I, a multilingual queen whose letters and speeches display far more diplomatic evasiveness than empirical straight-talking, whose suitors included Eric of Sweden, Don Carlos of Spain and the Duc d'Alençon, and whose characteristic style of dress was about as plain and godly as that of Lady Gaga. It is equally odd, as Margaret Tudeau-Clayton's splendid new book meticulously points out, that another is still William Shakespeare.

The truth is that, for all the enthusiastic assertions of Major Longden and his ilk, Shakespeare has always been somewhat miscast in the role of England's national poet. There is nothing in his non-dramatic poetry remotely suitable for setting to music as a national anthem, and his plays dealing with his country's history invariably depict England as a place of civil wars and succession crises. Even in wartime, propagandists have been hard-pushed to find readily useable material in them. As if the fact that *Henry V* depicts a war against de Gaulle's compatriots rather than Hitler's weren't awkward enough, the script of Laurence Olivier's 1944 film had to cut the king's threats to allow his troops to rape and pillage at Harfleur, his orders for the killing of prisoners of war at Agincourt, and the Chorus's parting admission

that Henry's short-lived territorial gains proved futile, with his reign being followed by yet another period of internecine bloodshed. The last lines of *King John* look more promising, and were quoted on at least one military recruitment broadside during the Napoleonic Wars, but they are spoken by Richard the Lionheart's illegitimate son over the usurping John's poisoned corpse. Even without the undercutting produced by a knowledge of its dramatic context, the play's final couplet contains a big 'if': 'Naught shall make us rue/If England to itself remain but true.'

This didn't dampen the enthusiasm of Salmon and Longden, who also point to a famous passage from *Richard II*. 'None could witness a play of Shakespeare or hear declaimed such lines as those which close *King John*, or those of John of Gaunt when dying,' they declare, 'without a quickening of the pulse and a belief in the destiny of "this royal throne of Kings, this sceptered isle, the envy of less happier lands."' But Gaunt's speech, as an airline advertising agency discovered in the 1990s, is very poorly suited to inspirational use, or indeed to quotation at all. It's not just that those successive alternative phrases for 'this England' go on for so long (19 lines) before finally breaking down into repetitive near incoherence: 'This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,/Dear for her reputation through the world ...' The problem is that one finally arrives at the sentence's main verb to be told that this land 'Is now leased out – I die pronouncing it –/Like to a tenement or pelting farm.' Inconveniently, the national poet's most famous invocation of the glories of England doesn't depict the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth, but a constitutional upheaval two centuries earlier, during which a dying medieval aristocrat invokes an even earlier heroic past only in order to point out that it is emphatically over. It has been supplanted, he tells us, by a mortgaged time of 'inky blots and rotten parchment bonds'.

Those who offer less compromised expressions of national pride in the Shakespeare canon are usually a bad lot. The most nationalistic character in the *Henry VI* plays (1590-92) is not an honourable warrior but the populist rebel Jack Cade, who has Lord Saye beheaded because 'he can speak French, and therefore he is a traitor.' The xenophobic rhetoric favoured by Cade is assigned to another repulsive character in the last of this sequence of histories, *Richard III* (1593), when before his defeat at Bosworth the tyrant assures his troops that the adversaries who have arrived from across the Channel are at once effeminate and a gang of sexual predators:

If we be conquered, let *men* conquer us,
And not these bastard Bretons ...
Shall these enjoy our lands? Lie with our wives?
Ravish our daughters?

Nearly two decades later, Shakespeare was still at pains to associate this sort of attitude to other nationalities with villainy. In *Cymbeline* (1610) the characters keenest to assert their nation's proud independence and ethnic distinctiveness are Imogen's amateur vivisectionist stepmother and her son, the would-be rapist Cloten: 'Britain's a world/By itself,' he vaunts, 'and we will nothing pay/For wearing our own noses.' Both are defeated over the course of the play, and its happy ending celebrates Cymbeline's wise decision that Britain should remain part of the Roman Empire.

Shakespeare doesn't go out of his way to make the English national character sound very appealing either. The gravedigger in *Hamlet* suggests that if the distracted Danish prince doesn't recover his wits during his banishment to England "'Twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.' Trinculo, washed up on a Mediterranean island in *The Tempest* and finding the abject Caliban, immediately speculates about the riches he might earn by displaying this exotic specimen at English fairs, since 'not a holiday-fool there but would give a piece of silver ... When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.' Portia, reviewing her suitors in *The Merchant of Venice*, is unimpressed by the horse-obsessed Neapolitan prince, the grim County Palatine, the capering French lord Monsieur le Bon and the alcoholic nephew of the duke of Saxony, but reserves a special half-contemptuous pity for

‘Falconbridge, the young baron of England’. He is, admittedly, good-looking, but has no proper national dress, wearing instead a German bonnet, an Italian doublet and French hose. Despite this outfit he is fatally parochial, the monoglot speaker of an obscure offshore language no educated Venetian would ever bother to learn. ‘He hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian,’ Portia tells Nerissa, ‘and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man’s picture, but alas, who can converse with a dumb show?’

Where are Shakespeare’s hymns to the expressive power of his unfairly scorned native tongue, his inspiring depictions of his country’s legendary heroes and soul-stirring landscapes, his adaptations of its folk songs and ballads, his affectionate curatorship of the peasant customs and superstitions of his home region, his rants against a foreign or would-be foreign ruling class? He does not even seem to think in terms of ‘foreign’ and ‘native’, using the word ‘foreigner’ only once in his work, when the swaggering delinquent Pistol in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* deploys the insult ‘mountain-foreigner’. It’s used, pointedly, against a Welshman, the town’s pastor, a member of one of the ethnic groups with the strongest claim to be regarded as indigenous to these islands. Elsewhere, Shakespeare much prefers the term ‘stranger’, a category to which anyone, regardless of origins, might belong or come to belong at any time. It is no wonder that in *National Poets, Cultural Saints: Canonisation and Commemorative Cults of Writers in Europe* (2016) Marijan Dović and Jón Karl Helgason express some frustration that as a national dramatist-poet Shakespeare has ‘overshadowed other viable candidates from other periods ... like, for instance, the Romantics’. They can see the point of Italy’s investment in another premodern writer, Dante, whose laments about the disunity of the Italian peninsula in the days of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines made him a fit dedicatee for countless Piazza Dantes during the Risorgimento. But alongside Sándor Petőfi, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Taras Shevchenko, Mihai Eminescu or Robert Burns, Shakespeare barely looks like a national poet at all, unlike Byron, as Dović and Helgason point out, whose engagement with liberal politics and eventual death in the cause of national liberation (even if it was the liberation of Greece rather than his own country) helped him fit the 19th-century nationalist bill much more comfortably. A prize exhibit at the Adam Mickiewicz museum in Warsaw is a copy of *The Works of Lord Byron Complete in One Volume* (Frankfurt, 1826), with the inscription: ‘Byron, presented to Pushkin by A. Mickiewicz, an admirer of them both’. The gesture seems self-consciously designed to cement the status of all three as bona fide Romantic national bards. It is worlds away from the self-presentational style, or absence of one, of the self-effacing Renaissance artisan-actor-scriptwriter who gave the world *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet* but seems to have given autographs only on legal documents.

It has to say something about Shakespeare’s abstention from a limitingly English agenda that, despite his failure to cultivate the image of a celebrity poet, or to wander in exile among fellow would-be emancipators, he is the most frequently represented in effigy of all post-medieval national poets in regions that do not speak the language in which he wrote. In 1623 Ben Jonson’s commendatory poem in the First Folio tried to imagine the Shakespeare canon as amounting to a decisive patriotic victory over his country’s international rivals: ‘Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show/To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.’ But the many monuments to Shakespeare erected on the Continent since then show little consciousness that the homage they express has anything to do with Britain, co-opting him without apparent resistance into their own contexts, canons and histories. Germany, for instance, founded the world’s first national society for the study and appreciation of Shakespeare in 1864, seven years before it had a unified state (and nearly a century and a half before the establishment of a British Shakespeare Association), and the Deutsche Shakespeare Gesellschaft marked its fortieth birthday by commissioning one of the only genuinely attractive likenesses of the playwright to be found anywhere. Otto Lessing’s 1904 statue, installed in the park beside the river Ilm in Weimar, deliberately makes Shakespeare the neighbour of the two founding dramatists of the German tradition, Goethe and Schiller, but unlike its sterner English precedents in Westminster Abbey (Peter Scheemakers, 1741) and Stratford (Ronald

Gower, 1888), this is a portrait of the writer who circulated sugared sonnets among his private friends. Lessing's Shakespeare half-sits on his plinth, one foot off the ground, looking quizzically to one side as if making a proposition to an invisible someone a little further along the path: in one hand he holds a small scroll (a love poem?) while the other, resting between his thighs, toys with a rose. This is a Shakespeare fit to have his poems set as lieder. He is also celebrated as a central figure in German *Kunst* on the proscenium arch of the Latvian national opera house in Riga, once the city's German-speaking theatre, where four portrait profiles installed in the 1880s show Goethe, Schiller, Shakespeare and Wagner. A more august Shakespeare takes his place in a pantheon of great men on the façade of the university library at Tübingen (1912), where he is presented as a peer not just of Goethe and Schiller, but of Kant, Leibniz, Luther and Bismarck.

Not only are some of the most striking representations of Shakespeare outside the Anglophone world – among many others, the statue that surveys the Piața William Shakespeare in Craiova, western Romania, deserves notice – but so too is the best modern theatre purpose-built for the performance of his plays. In Germany, Shakespeare's Wittenberg-educated prince long served as a figure for the country's intellectuals, wavering over-speculatively in the face of their national mission, and *Hamlet* acquired a comparable resonance in Poland. During Poland's 19th-century absence from the map of Europe, Shakespeare's Denmark – ruled by a usurper who, having supplanted the heroic feudal regime of Old Hamlet, governs with the support of foreign mercenaries, at a court in which the rightful prince, though longing to reclaim the kingdom, is reduced to staging drama in order to provoke his oppressors – served as a convenient political allegory. In 1905 Stanisław Wyspiański could even argue, in *The Hamlet Study*, that the only appropriate venue for a modern revival of *Hamlet* was the former Polish royal castle at Krakow.* In part as a result of this long-standing national investment in the play, the city of Gdąnsk now boasts the stunning Teatr Szekspirowski, three-quarters funded with EU regional development money and officially opened by Donald Tusk in 2014. Built on the site of a converted fencing school in which touring English actors performed in the early 17th century, Renato Rizzi's prodigy of an auditorium deploys hydraulic engineering to sidestep the question of whether a present-day Shakespearean playhouse should be antiquarian or postmodern, passing on this choice to each visiting director. If they prefer something neo-Elizabethan to a high-tech, indoor proscenium arch theatre, at the touch of a button the roof will open to the elements, the raked stalls seating will subside into a flat floor in front of the vertically arranged boxes, and a thrust stage will slide out, from which the actors, surrounded on three sides by spectators as at an open-air London amphitheatre or inn yard playhouse of the 1590s, can speak in as vernacular or hierophantic a manner as they wish. This beautiful architectural toy is the chief venue of the annual Gdąnsk Shakespeare Festival, and much loved by the impressive range of international touring companies that have played there.

Sadly, while it remains a monument to the importance of Shakespeare in Poland and to the continuing status of the Shakespeare canon within European culture, the Teatr Szekspirowski is now a glorious relic of a recently vanished era. Back in the first decade and a half of the 21st century, the EU might still invest more than €11 million in a fancy showcase for England's most famous writer. Now that Shakespeare's erstwhile homeland has become a non-member state, things are rather different. In 2017 Gdąnsk was the venue for the first European Shakespeare Research Association conference to take place since the referendum, and it was a gathering much altered in mood. One of the speakers, aptly enough, was the Swiss scholar Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, who by then had been publishing scholarly articles minutely scrutinising Shakespeare's language for evidence about his perspectives on English and on Englishness in relation to the rest of Europe for a decade. *Shakespeare's Englishes*, the culmination of this work, is at once a very scrupulous and learned book about the late 16th century and a document of our own troubled times. If there is a hint of antagonistic bitterness in its subtitle, 'Against Englishness', that isn't an accident. A not very deeply buried subtext of her study is the question of whether a clique of insular Elizabethans caused Brexit, and how it was that Shakespeare failed to stop them.

The villains of the piece are a group of 16th-century writers whose combined assault on foreign loan words, terms newly invented from Latin, imported fashions and outlandish cuisine add up to what Tudeau-Clayton calls a 'cultural reformation project'. They include George Gascoigne ('the most auncient English words are of one sillable ... the more monasyllables that you use, the truer Englishman you shall seeme'), Thomas Nashe (who accused the academic Gabriel Harvey of 'supplanting and setting aside the true children of the English, and suborning inkehorne changlings in their steade') and Thomas Wilson, who invented the phrase 'the King's English' in his *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553), thereby invoking royal sanction for the 'plainness' he prescribed. Their campaign inevitably had particular problems with the cultural legacies of the Norman conquest. John Green, with exactly the bluntness he advocates, longed for the linguistic and ethnic purity of Anglo-Saxon England. 'Before the Conquest by Bastard *William* that the French came in,' he claimed in 1615, 'our English tongue was most perfect,' but nowadays 'a plaine man can scarce utter his mind.' Even the greatest English writers of the Middle Ages, when the court habitually spoke French, were now under suspicion. In 1605 Richard Verstegan scorned Chaucer as 'a great mingler of English with French', and Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* had earlier lamented that the educated upper class was still following his example: 'the fine Courtier wil talke nothyng but Chaucer.' Spenser, though happy to invoke Chaucer in Book IV of *The Faerie Queene* (1596) as the 'well of English undefiled', had some sympathy with this position, or at least seems to have distrusted those who continued to add French-derived words to English vocabulary instead of contenting themselves with established practice. The preface to Spenser's *Shepherdes Calender* (1579), very much in the mode of the cultural reformers, criticises those who have been 'borrowing here of the french, there of the Italian, euery where of the Latine, not weighing how il those tongues accorde with themselues, but much worse with ours: So now they have made our English tongue, a gallimaufrey or hodgepodge of al other speches.'

'Gallimaufry' and 'hodgepodge' are both culinary terms (and ultimately of French origin, as Tudeau-Clayton points out), and the question as to whether English should be a linguistic fusion cuisine or homogeneous as ship's biscuit came to a head in the Elizabethan playhouses, which both attracted and depicted a heterogeneous miscellany of social classes. As venues where crowds could hear new vernacular dialogue exemplifying all sorts of registers and social situations, the newly established commercial theatres were recognised as exerting an immense influence on English usage, for better and worse. The author of the university play *Albumazar* (1615), for instance, regards public playhouses as places where the lower orders might pick up vocabulary above their station. In a subplot a farmer hopes to win his mistress with 'complements drawne from the Plaies I see at the Fortune, and Red Bull, where I learne all the words I speake and understand not'.

If only in self-defence, writers for commercial theatres might claim that they were allies of the reformers, and that, rather than helping to equip amorous rustics with incomprehensibly affected flattery, they were trying to purify the dialect of the tribe. Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors* (1612) adopts some of the linguistic nationalists' favourite vocabulary:

our *English* tongue, which hath ben the most harsh, uneven, and broken language of the world, part *Dutch*, part *Irish*, *Saxon*, *Scotch*, *Welsh*, and indeed a gallimaufry of many, but perfect in none, is now by this ... meanes of playing, continually refined ... so that ... from the most rude and unpolisht tongue, it is growne to a most perfect and composed language, and many excellent workes, and elaborate Poems writ in the same, that many Nations grow inamored of our tongue (before despised).

Heywood's last claim was vindicated in 1666, when the expatriate Giovanni Torriano would write (in Italian) that England's playhouses were the best reason for learning the local language: 'The English language is today a most copious, most flourishing, most pregnant tongue, and worthy that a foreigner should apply himself to learn it, if not sufficiently to speak it, at least enough to understand their stupendous comedies and tragedies.' Heywood was not the only playwright to take a stand on the

desirability of establishing a standard, properly English form of English. During the 'War of the Theatres,' Ben Jonson dramatised the struggle for linguistic purity in *Poetaster* (1601), when Crispinus is purged and forced to vomit up Latinate neologisms on stage. Some of them still sound pretty out of the way, such as 'turgidous', 'ventositous' and 'furibund', but others, such as 'spurious', 'strenuous' and 'reciprocal' have been in common use since Jonson wrote.

Whatever Jonson may have thought of it, Shakespeare soon used 'reciprocal' in *King Lear*, and the first of the words that Crispinus is made to cough out – 'retrograde' – had recently been heard in the second scene of *Hamlet*. Tudeau-Clayton's book is largely dedicated to pointing out just how thoroughly Shakespeare's writings defy every canon of the reformers, and indeed to showing how his Elizabethan works in particular allude repeatedly to their favourite tropes only to qualify and refute them. 'Put at its baldest and boldest,' as she says in her introduction, 'my claim is that these plays evoke only to resist the project of a cultural reformation ideology to appropriate for the figure of the plain-speaking, plainly dressed virtuous citizen the normative ("proper") centre of "the King's English" (*Merry Wives*, 1.4.5) (Chapter 2) and "the true-born Englishman" (*Richard II*, 1.3.273).'

The result is challenging to read – there aren't many sentences in *Shakespeare's Englishes* which deploy fewer inverted commas and parentheses and references than the one I've just quoted – but persuasive. Paying minute attention to linguistic texture, etymology and nuance, Tudeau-Clayton shows not only how Shakespeare delighted in hodgepodes and heterogeneity, from the level of plot to the micro-level of puns, but with what casual élan he picks up and spits out the linguistic purists' own rhetoric. As she shows, the characters who advertise themselves as champions of plain-speaking in Shakespeare are usually Machiavellian hypocrites (Richard III, Mark Antony, Iago), while the only one to call himself a 'true-born Englishman' is Henry Bolingbroke, en route to usurping the throne. Just as strikingly, the one character who appeals to the notion of 'the King's English' is Mistress Quickly in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, herself delightfully prone to what we would now anachronistically call malapropisms.

To imply that any single version of English is innately superior to another would in any case be incongruous in Shakespeare's *Windsor*, where the parson is the Welshman Hugh Evans and the doctor the Frenchman Dr Caius. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* nowhere suggests that either man is less than a fully entitled member of the community, and when the cleric and the medic attempt to fight a duel, the local pub landlord – who has a splendidly distinctive mine-host idiolect, and is later tricked into laying on elaborate hospitality for some fictitious Germans – takes considerable comic pains to prevent it. Mistress Page wants the Frenchman to marry her daughter, Anne, and although her husband, George, would prefer the upper-class twit Slender as a son-in-law, and Caius has a second rival in the person of the broke but ultimately successful courtier Fenton, no one expresses any serious Francophobia or asks whether the doctor has the right number of points to qualify for resident alien status. Shakespeare, as Tudeau-Clayton underlines, is if anything a Francophile, quite unlike Gascoigne or Wilson, and even when he dramatises Henry V's invasion of France he is careful to point out that there are differences between Welsh, Scottish, Irish and English officers in Henry's army just as serious or as trivial as those between the English and the French. Indeed the ultimate goal of the military campaign – like that of Shakespeare's play, which includes a whole scene written in French – is to reaffirm Anglo-French hybridity, since one of Henry's principal demands is marriage to the French princess Catherine, by whom he hopes 'between Saint Denis and Saint George' to 'compound a boy, half-French, half-English'.

In the 1590s, as Tudeau-Clayton notes, Shakespeare lodged in parts of London favoured by French migrant workers and refugees, and in 1603-4 stayed in the household of the Mountjoys, a family of expatriate wig-makers and jewellers, on Silver Street.[‡] The moral core of her book, artfully postponed until the fourth of its five chapters, is its account of Shakespeare's literary dealings with such 'strangers': his determination to welcome not just supposedly foreign words into his vocabulary but supposedly foreign people into his imagined communities. The key exhibit here is a speech from the multiply

authored play *Sir Thomas More*, which survives in a manuscript now in the British Library. Originally drafted in the early 1590s, the play was refused permission for performance by the Master of the Revels, partly because it gave a sympathetic depiction of a Catholic martyr, but more pressingly because of its uncomfortably topical dramatisation of the 1517 Ill May Day riot between London citizens and resident foreigners. At some point – most scholars think in 1603 or 1604, but Tudeau-Clayton would prefer a date closer to the anti-immigrant disorders of 1593, when the Commons passed a bill to limit the trading rights of aliens – Shakespeare was called in to do some rewriting to *Sir Thomas More*. While his additions still failed to get the play past the censor, their rediscovery in the 20th century has provided Ian McKellen with an eloquent humanitarian party piece for some decades. In what modern editors label Scene 6 of the play (part of ‘addition II’, written in ‘Hand D’), More quells the rioters by rhetoric alone:

You'll put down strangers,
Kill them, cut their throats, possess their houses,
And lead the majesty of law in lyam
To slip him like a hound. Alas, alas! Say now the King,
As he is clement if th'offender mourn,
Should so much come too short of your great trespass
As but to banish you: whither would you go?
What country, by the nature of your error,
Should give you harbour? Go you to France or Flanders,
To any German province, Spain or Portugal,
Nay, anywhere that not adheres to England:
Why, you must needs be strangers. Would you be pleased
To find a nation of such barbarous temper
That, breaking out in hideous violence,
Would not afford you an abode on earth,
Whet their detested knives against your throats,
Spurn you like dogs, and like as if that God
Owed not nor made not you, nor that the elements
Were not all appropriate to your comforts,
But chartered unto them? What would you think
To be thus used? This is the strangers' case,
And this your mountainish inhumanity.

The strangers have been accused of undercutting local markets by introducing ‘strange roots’, meaning foreign root vegetables. In the manuscript the phrase appears as ‘straing roots’, and Tudeau-Clayton mines the multiple punning meanings around ‘strange’, ‘straying’ and ‘roots’, geographical, metaphorical and lexical. For her the root of the Shakespearean turns out to be straying itself, a central premise of his art being that we are all not only strangers but wanderers.

Tudeau-Clayton's account of the ways in which Shakespeare does and does not represent London citizens provocatively reverses the perspective offered by Richard Helgerson in his 1992 study *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*. While Helgerson was embarrassed that Shakespeare's historical plays, unlike those of his peers such as Heywood, were fixated on the monarchy and the court rather than London burghers, Tudeau-Clayton is perfectly happy to find Shakespeare with the elite. It was the House of Lords, after all, that threw out the anti-aliens bill, and those who spoke up for immigrant workers were the courtiers. In the scenes Shakespeare added to *Sir Thomas More* the ordinary citizens are less sympathetic and authoritative, the court more wisely cosmopolitan. She is also pleased that Shakespeare didn't join younger colleagues such as Jonson and Thomas Middleton in writing citizen

comedy, which she regards as constrictingly normative and habitually chauvinistic, pointing in particular at its first fully fledged specimen, William Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money* (1598). The genre also includes Thomas Dekker's *Shoemakers' Holiday* (1599), in which the jovial shoemaker Simon Eyre is enabled to get rich and become lord mayor of London thanks to his willingness to take on a Dutch workman, who tips him off about a well priced cargo of imports. 'Hans' is really an English aristocrat called Rowland Lacy, disguised with an accent and a surprising skill with leather in order to remain near his beloved and avoid taking part in Henry V's French war, but the play is still founded on a fable of hospitality rewarded. Tudeau-Clayton's view of citizen comedy as consistently anti-immigrant means ignoring this play, and elsewhere too she pushes her case a little further than the evidence warrants. Her account of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which she regards as Shakespeare's critique from within of citizen comedy, is hostile towards George Page, whose name suggests exactly the normative combination of patriotism (George, as in the saint), print standardisation and financial record-keeping (Page, as in book) advanced by the cultural reformers. The main norm Page upholds within the play, though, is the surely unobjectionable one that his friend Frank Ford should not indulge a paranoid, tyrannous and unfounded jealousy over his wife, Alice. (He may be prosaic in and of himself, but if only Othello or Leontes had spent more time with decent fellows like George!) Tudeau-Clayton is surprisingly unsympathetic here, too, towards the female domesticity defended by Alice and her friend Margaret Page. While the play's principal alternative interior space, the Garter Inn, presided over by a character listed in the dramatis personae as 'the Host', might indeed be celebrated as a quasi-religious allegory for universal hospitality, it is also the sleazy, commercial, male domain from which Falstaff plans his exploitative colonial ventures against the women. 'They shall be my East and West Indies,' he tells himself, 'and I will trade to them both.'

Tudeau-Clayton is rather inclined to fall uncritically for Falstaff throughout her book. Extravagant, rootless, fecund in rhetoric, copious in fiction and committed to perpetual festivity, the fat knight has too much in common with what Tudeau-Clayton most wishes to celebrate in the Shakespeare canon for her to acknowledge (except in occasional parentheses) that he is also a ruthless, opportunistic parasite, whose self-indulgence involves a deep carelessness towards the lives and interests of others. Those who have compared our current professedly Shakespeare-loving prime minister to Falstaff, on the grounds of his reliance on a comically grandiose verbal style and a posh shambolic charisma to distract interlocutors from inconvenient facts, aren't far off in other respects. Falstaff at one point signs himself as 'Sir John to all Europe', but Boris Johnson was prepared to renounce his European citizenship and ours for personal advantage, and who is to say that Falstaff wouldn't have done the same, if the price had been right? It's true that the long, slow scene in *Henry IV, Part 2* in which Falstaff sits out after supper in a Gloucestershire orchard with Justice Shallow and Justice Silence, a scene in which nothing happens except the eventual arrival of news of the old king's death, is as close as Shakespeare ever comes to offering his audience a glimpse of Merry England. And what with Mistress Quickly's assertion after Falstaff's own death that he is 'in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom', it seems certain that, for Shakespeare, Sir John has special access to something deeply and immemorally English. But as ever with Shakespeare, it is something we are allowed to see right round, and it involves privilege and predation as well as the air from a lost Eden. That scene in the orchard is also a near Beckettian presentation of two old men keeping themselves alive by lying to each other, in the company of a third who seems able to communicate only in random fragments of half-remembered songs. We should remember, too, that Falstaff and his entourage are there specifically to fleece their host, from whom he is about to borrow the enormous sum of £1000, which will never be paid back.

A tendency to overpraise anyone who seems to be an exponent of both/and rather than either/or, even when it's Falstaff trying to have it all at whatever cost to others, is built into any book that sets out to discredit the imposition of exclusionary binarisms. In illustrating and vindicating Shakespeare's eclectic inclusivity and expansiveness, and contrasting it to the habits of mind of his puritanically inclined

nationalist contemporaries, Tudeau-Clayton very occasionally slips into over-simplifying binarisms of her own. The exclusionary binarism between we who aren't binarists and they who are is very hard to avoid, and it proves to be difficult for her to praise Shakespeare as a non-jingoist without sometimes turning him into a doctrinaire anti-jingoist in the process, something which seems both un-Shakespearean and, well, un-English. One of her oppositions, adopted as a subheading early in the book, is 'Lenten Jonson v. Festive Shakespeare'. (Has none of the Shakespearean scholars who glorify the carnivalesque, and assume that Shakespeare sided wholly with Sir Toby Belch against Malvolio, ever had noisy neighbours?) But, as Prince Hal observes, 'If all the year were playing holidays,/To sport would be as tedious as to work,' and while Shakespeare certainly understands both history and literary genre in terms of yearly cycles of feast and fast, he never tries to deny one at the expense of the other, and in practice neither did Jonson, the author of *Bartholomew Fair*.

The most notable lingering false opposition within her book, however, and a more pervasive one, is 'older, Catholic' (good) v. 'Protestant' (bad). She finds it 'ironic' that the *Book of Common Prayer* (whose desire to offer Christianity 'in such a language ... as is most easy and plain for the understanding, both of the readers and hearers' she regards as sinister) disseminated passages from the Bible describing all mortal life as an erring pilgrimage. Here, it may be worth remembering a historical point that Tudeau-Clayton barely mentions, namely that the French migrants Shakespeare knew in London were Huguenot Protestants. Contrary to what *Shakespeare's Englishes* sometimes seems to imply, the Catholic France of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre wasn't a paradise of ecumenical harmony, any more than the Protestant England of Sir Francis Walsingham, or the Spain of the Inquisition. The newly reforming realm governed by Elizabeth may not have been the Arcadia subsequently pictured by nostalgic imperialists, but the Counter-Reformation wasn't much fun for minorities, and, as Shakespeare's histories themselves show, the era before both wasn't any better.

The incidental contrasts Tudeau-Clayton draws between a present-day Britain still shaped by the legacy of the reformers and an allegedly more linguistically diverse and playful Francophonía may also surprise. It is interesting and suggestive to hear that a high percentage of pro-Brexit voters told pollsters that they associated English with plainness and clarity, even though I suspect that some of the same people, if asked, might nonetheless have pointed to the prose styles of P.G. Wodehouse or Sir Humphrey Appleby as being characteristically English. It is baffling, though, to be told that today's English speakers shun puns and wordplay, and that unlike their Francophone counterparts they are taught to repeat the same word endlessly rather than employ synonyms. This is one rare point on which Tudeau-Clayton is surely mistaken, erroneous, wrong, deluded, inaccurate, economical with the truth and saying the thing that is not. How many synonyms are there in French anyway, nearly four centuries after the hyper-purist Académie Française was set up to limit the expansion of its vocabulary by repelling un-French intruders? Whatever restrictions on free movement it may now be contemplating, even the current government has never suggested imposing penal duties on loan words. Despite the best efforts of the puritans deplored by Tudeau-Clayton and the standardising measures advocated by a few lexicographers since then, modern English remains very much open to new terms and idioms, in this respect at least continuing to follow the example of Shakespeare. For all the pain and sense of betrayal registered in Tudeau-Clayton's book, there is some comfort to be gained at its conclusion from the reflection that, even if his admirers include Boris Johnson, England's national poet is gloriously non-nationalist.