

A Tempest and The Tempest: To De-ghettoize the Classic and Cultures

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Abstract Postcolonial reading is a popular and interesting perspective to study Shakespeare's classic work *The Tempest*. Yet the discriminating images of the aboriginal people in this book impedes its circulation and its teaching due to ethnic issues. Is a postcolonial critique really incompatible with, and unfriendly to, the context of world literature? Martinican politician and author Aimé Césaire's *A Tempest*, an adaptation of *The Tempest* in French Language, seems to offer a good solution to answering this question. By replacing the word "The" with the word "A," Césaire's adaptation rebuts the attempts to make postcolonial reading exclusive and superior, and indicates the possible and inexhaustible diversity in rewarding various perspectives when interpreting the classic. This applies to not only specific classical works but also to national literature studies. In Chinese literature studies, diverged voices argue about which is the more representative: Chinese ancient literature or modern literature, and Chinese scholars' studies or those of overseas scholars. To anoint only one particular means, as the privileged method to understand and present Chinese literature and culture, is questionable. In this paper, the rebuttal against the ghettoization of classic works and literature will be examined and illuminated to prove that it is easier and more suitable to make links rather than build fences among different perspectives, times and people.

Key words *The Tempest*; *A Tempest*; Cross-cultural Communication; Chinese Culture; Postcolonial Study

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From “The” to “A”: To De-ghettoize the Classic

In Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* (2008), Caliban, a member of the aboriginal population of the island, is depicted as ugly, uncivilized and even evil. Prospero, the intruder of the island, calls him a “poisonous slave” that is “got by devil himself” and an “abhorred slave” who is “being capable of all ill” (119-120). He hates and rejects the imported civilization as he curses that “You taught me language, and my profit on’t is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you for learning me your language” (121). He even tried “to violate the honor of” the latter (349-350). The conflict between Caliban the aboriginal and Prospero the intruder seems highly resembles that between the colonizer and the colonized and it seems to be persuasive proof for postcolonial study of *The Tempest*. Yet the negative image of Caliban makes it a very sensitive and controversial perspective that brings unexpected trouble to the classic work.

An article titled “Who’s afraid of ‘The Tempest’?” appeared on the news website “Salon.” It reported on a ban on ethnic studies in Arizona in the U.S. The ban results in the proscription of “Mexican-American history, local authors and even Shakespeare” (Biggers). Shakespeare’s classic play *The Tempest* is involved. It seems that *The Tempest* is no less intimidating than a real tempest. The prompted debates and strong emotions can be more intense than a roaring storm. Whether *The Tempest* indicates a sense of discrimination against “the other” has given rise to a big controversy. It becomes a major public issue insofar as the study or performance of this classic play is concerned. But the question is how *The Tempest* has been transformed from a literary classic into a banned book? How and why does the postcolonial perspective become so overwhelming in determining the fate of this classic work? Is it justified to deprive potential readers of a classic work because of one way of interpretation only?

Dating back to 1808, Edmond Malone published a pamphlet with a long title *An Account of the Incidents, from Which the Title and Part of the Story of Shakespeare’s Tempest were Derived; and Its True Date Ascertained*. In the pamphlet, Malone “reviewed the reports on the 1609 storms and voyagers caught in it” (Stritmatter and Kositsky 5). He means to “make apparent why he believed this particular storm inspired Shakespeare to write *The Tempest*” (5). Malone insisted that Shakespeare must have read about “one or more of the several descriptions that

appeared in London in 1610 and 1611 of the Gates-Somers expedition's shipwreck on Bermuda in 1609" (A. Vaughan and V. Vaughan 5). And with this assertion, subsequent scholars "contend that Shakespeare meant the tempest to be substantially about English imperialism" (5). Though some scholars notice how "tangential" the "ties between the pamphlets and the play" are, the influence of this claim persisted in the twentieth century (5). The validity of the claim is not based on historical facts. Neither does the authorial intention matter anymore. Because "what matters to many twentieth century interpreters are the power relations between colonizer and colonized that seem embedded in the play's plot and characters" (6).

Aimer Césaire's *A Tempest*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, was produced under this circumstance. Aimer Césaire is a Martinique born politician who had made consistent efforts in revolting against colonization. In 1969, he rewrote the story of *The Tempest* and titled it *A Tempest*. It was intended to be performed for the black audience particularly. Though plots of the original play have been preserved, the style of language and the features of the characters have been modified. Richard Miller, the translator of Césaire's *A Tempest* from French to English, mentions that Césaire "denied any attempting any linguistic echo of Shakespeare" (Césaire, *A Tempest* II). Caliban, the most commented on figure among scholars of postcolonial studies, is also depicted differently in *A Tempest*. Unlike the cruel and uncivilized Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, in *A Tempest* Caliban stands out as "a hero through the illumination of his culture." He is brave and with integrity. Such a shift of Caliban's personality, as a commentator of the book suggests, is "perhaps the most significant accomplishment of *A Tempest*" (II). Considering Césaire's political standpoint, it is not unexpected that he intends to depict Caliban as an outstanding fighter revolting against the evil colonizers. Césaire in his book *Discourse on Colonialism* severely condemns the cruelty of colonization. He calls it not having "a single human value" (2). Some people, in an effort to justify colonization, argue that to colonize is to import civilization. To Césaire, however, such claims are unjustified. Césaire declares that "between colonization and civilization there is an infinite distance" (*Discourse* 2). *A Tempest* reflects Césaire's political orientation. Roles are reversed and perspectives are switched. It speaks for the colonized and serves as a rebuttal against *The Tempest* which, under such circumstances, is regarded as a piece of work that embodies racial discrimination.

To some scholars, however, reducing *The Tempest* to a work only about colonization is an impetuous gesture; and to interpret the play exclusively from the postcolonial perspective provokes opposing voices. In his article "Stormy

Weather: Misreading the Postcolonial Tempest,” Peter Hulme, who defends the postcolonial approach to *The Tempest*, quotes some of the scholars whose opinions diverge from his own. Brian Vickers, for example, is one of those critics. In his book *Appropriating Shakespeare*, Vickers fires the fiercest criticism against the postcolonial perspective. From the title of the book we can easily tell that he tries to designate a way of appropriateness to appreciate Shakespeare while criticizing ideological “appropriation” of the bard’s works. To Vickers, distorted interpretations must be rejected. Vickers’ accusation of postcolonial reading of *The Tempest* is serious. Hulme paraphrases Vickers’ opinion and suggests that “According to Vickers, postcolonial readings of *The Tempest* are guilty of reducing the play to ‘an allegory about colonialism with Prospero seen as ‘an exploitative protocapitalist’ and Caliban ‘an innocent savage, deprived of his legitimate heritage’” (“Stormy Weather”). Vickers strongly objects to those postcolonial critics. The postcolonial reading of *The Tempest*, as Vickers furthers his criticism, is less an alternative perspective than “a kind of show-trial in which works of literature, amongst them *The Tempest*, are judged in the balance and found guilty of endorsing colonialism and its evils” (qtd. in Hulme, “Stormy Weather”). To Vickers, postcolonial reading is a distorting perspective imposed on the play. It is irresponsibly applied to the study of the play, and it deliberately disregards the most valuable parts of Shakespeare’s work. The perspective which Vickers deems appropriate and indispensable derives from a less politically-oriented but more philosophical theme---“the dichotomy of art and nature” (Vickers 416). As Vickers argues, not only is it revealed within the play of *The Tempest* but it was “important in Renaissance thought and in Shakespeare” (416). To Vickers, this perspective must be more essential and enduring than the postcolonial approach.

Unlike Vickers who criticizes postcolonial reading by pointing out its defects and fallacies, another kind of critique, as Hulme suggests, is “to try to construct a third position, above or beyond the conflict” (“Stormy Weather”). Jonathan Bate is one of the scholars who embrace “pluralism” in interpreting *The Tempest*. Bate elevates Shakespeare’s work to a level where it is “not just an icon of various European nationhoods but a voice of what we now call multiculturalism” (qtd. in “Stormy Weather”). To Bate, although “Prosperian” reading dominates, the alternative “Calibanesque” reading “has always been latent in the play” (qtd. in Hulme, “Stormy Weather”). Different perspectives, as Bate suggests, are not mutually exclusive. They do not compete with each other but co-exist with each other. Their validity is not challenged by each other. They all contribute to the study of the play.

Yet Bate's emphasis on the "capaciousness" of the play has been ironically attacked by Hulme. Bate's idea, as Hulme sarcastically summarizes, is that "all these readings have somehow been locked up in the play waiting for Frantz Fanon to come along and liberate them" ("Stormy Weather"). To Hulme, it is just a self-fancied illusion. It caters for the "classically liberal fashion" and it is too tolerant with conflicting and paradoxical trends ("Stormy Weather"). In another article "Nymphs and Reapers," Hulme also expresses his concern about this kind of "pluralistic incorporation." Unlike his direct denunciation of the plural reading in "Stormy Weather," Hulme's argument in "Nymphs and Reapers" begins with his admission that "different but contemporaneous inscriptions take place" (Barker and Hulme 195). He suggests that "*The Tempest* read by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1914 as the work of England's national poet is very different from *The Tempest* constructed with full textual apparatus by an editor/critic such as Frank Kermode" (195). Hulme seems to have recognized the possibility and validity of alternative perspectives, but he then warns that this "should not lead inescapably to the point where the only option becomes the voluntaristic ascription to the text of meanings and articulations derived simply from one's own ideological preferences" (196). Instead of accepting "a recipe for peaceful coexistence with the dominant readings," Hulme strives to initiate "a contestation of those readings themselves" ("Stormy Weather"). The winner of the contestation can be no other than postcolonial reading. Because postcolonial reading is "better" and "more interesting" ("Stormy Weather"), Hulme declares that postcolonial reading not only defeats alternative ways to appreciate the play but also shatters the illusion of "pluralistic incorporation."

It seems that Hulme not only argues for the superiority of postcolonial reading of *The Tempest* but also attempts to make it exclusive and dominant. Postcolonial reading is to displace alternative perspectives rather than parallel them. To Hulme, the authority of this exclusive perspective is never to be questioned. If postcolonial reading becomes the only approach to the play, however, the future of the classic play is not so promising, considering the ban on it at in Arizona. But the question is, is it possible and valid to confine a classic play to a single perspective?

In fact, if we look at Césaire's *A Tempest*, which is developed from postcolonial reading, we can find it resonating with Bate's argument about "pluralist reading." Shakespeare's *The Tempest* with the definite article "*The*" seems to depict a particular tempest. It seems to be a specific event that had happened in history. The title resembles that of a documentary which records a devastating storm. Césaire, on the other hand, displaces the definite article "The" with the indefinite article "A." It is a deliberate gesture to prepare readers for a fabricated story or a tale. Césaire

may intend *A Tempest* more as an alternative in interpreting the play than a contrast against it. It reveals a different but not exclusive version of the story. It means to parallel the play. And it challenges the authority of it. Similar ideas can be found in the prelude which Césaire creates and prefaces the adaptation with. The prelude reflects the indefinite feature of the play. It motivates readers to explore the diverse and multiple “alternatives.”

The prelude begins with a narrator’s voice, contextualizing the play within a live theatre. Following it are the words of a “Master of Ceremonies.” His monologue directs readers’ attention to the backstage. It discloses what happened behind the curtain and before the play.

Ambiance of a psychodrama. The actors enter singly, at random, and each chooses for himself a mask at his leisure.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Come gentlemen, help yourselves. To each his character, to each character his mask. You, Prospero? Why not? He has reserves of will power he’s not even aware of himself. You want Caliban? Well, that’s revealing. Ariel? Fine with me. And what about Stephano, Trinculo? No Takers? Ah, just in time! It takes all kinds to make a world. (Césaire, *A Tempest* 1)

The context of the play, as we understand from the beginning sentence, resembles that of a psychodrama. And normally in psychodramas, “participants are invited to re-enact significant experiences and to present their subjective worlds with the aid of a group” (Kellerman 11). “The reenactments” however, “are as different from each other as are the lives of the people who present them” (12). Césaire notices such personal and subjective feature in acting. Different actors have various life experiences and perspectives. Presentation of the same character by different actors, therefore, can be dramatically different. As Césaire suggests in the prelude, the allocation of characters among the acting crew is “at random” and “at leisure.” It is highly possible that the play can be another version if the set of characters are assigned differently. These indefinite characteristics of the play certainly differentiate it from historical events which are definite and objective. Unlike historical facts, the story can be fake. By giving actors “masks,” Césaire conceals actors’ true expressions and differentiates them from the acting faces. These details in *A Tempest* encourage people to discover the uncertainty and fakeness which *The Tempest* bears. Audiences are intrigued to ask questions like how much truth can be derived from *The Tempest*. Is the assumption about its historical background

true and definite? Does the play reflect its context faithfully? And should we rigidly adhere to the self-opinionated belief that the play can only be studied from the postcolonial perspective?

Hulme's insistence should be refuted. In fact, what Hulme insists is not as well-supported as what he resists. Bate's argument about "pluralism" reading of *The Tempest* may find support from T. S. Eliot's idea about classic. In "What is a Classic," Eliot reminds us of the attributes that determine the value of a classic. They are "variety," "comprehensiveness" and "relatedness." "Variety," as Eliot elucidates, refers to the potential of a classic to be approached from interdisciplinary perspectives. A classic should possess the quality to inspire intellectual minds from different specialized fields. Virgil's work, for example, is so inclusive that "no specialized knowledge or proficiency can confer the exclusive title to talk about Virgil" (Eliot 7). Such inclusiveness not only breaks through the boundaries between different subjects but also encompasses individual specialties and preferences. As Eliot points out, "each can give his testimony of Virgil in relation to those subjects which he knows best, or upon which he has most deeply reflected" (7). A classic is not only academically inclusive but also emotionally comprehensive. The second attribute of a classic is "comprehensiveness." Classics, as Eliot argues, "express the maximum possible of the whole range of feeling which represents the character of the people who speak that language" (27). Classics "represent this at its best" and "have the widest appeal" (27). Classics are able to impress on people's minds and resonate with their feelings. And they can arouse people's empathy regardless of their conditions and backgrounds. The third quality of a classic is their "relatedness." Classics, as Eliot observes, reach beyond the monolingual or intra-cultural environment. To be aware of the excellence of another culture and to appreciate it will facilitate progress and elevation of a civilization. As Eliot suggests, "to make use of a foreign literature in this way marks a further stage of civilization beyond making use only of the earlier stages of one's own" (19). Virgil, as Eliot suggests, "was constantly adapting and using the discoveries, traditions and inventions of Greek poetry" (19). And "it is this development of one literature, or civilization, in relation to another, which gives a peculiar significance to the subject of Virgil's epic" (19).

To Eliot, therefore, classics are academically, emotionally and culturally inclusive. If we apply Eliot's ideas to the case of *The Tempest*, the conclusion reached must deviate from Hulme's. Postcolonial studies as a specialized field can certainly contribute new and provoking perspectives to interpreting Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. But it is not the only approach. The play is academically and

emotionally inclusive. It prompts different intellectual responses and emotional reactions. For example, Vickers' preference for a traditional way to interpret *The Tempest* is certainly reasonable. And his effort in finding the "dichotomy between art and nature" in *The Tempest* is certainly rewarding. The various and polemical responses not only reflect the inexhaustible richness of the play but also extend the life of it. The play will not become obsolete because of lack of new perspectives. It will remain lively and inexhaustible. And it will attract and nurture new interest in the play. The play is also culturally inclusive. It reaches beyond the domestic context and relates to a foreign culture. It travels from England to Martinique through the approach of postcolonial studies. But the approach is not a ghetto to confine the play. It is a bridge enabling communication between the two different cultures. Such communication benefits both. Both acquire better understanding of the play because they are informed of different perspectives. Through cross-cultural communication, the study of *The Tempest* maintains vigorous and progressive. The study of the play will be frustrated if we restrict ourselves to a single approach or one cultural perspective.

Mount Lu: Deghettoizing Cultures

To ghettoize literature within a specific culture is an unpopular side to stand with. The claim is especially unconvincing when circulation and communication between different cultures thrives in this age of world literature. In his article "What is World Poetry," Stephen Owen criticizes modern Chinese poets for their deliberate detachment from national history and literary tradition. He takes several passages from Bei Dao's poetry collection *The August Sleepwalker* as examples. The collection was translated by Bonnie MacDougall from Chinese to English. One of them is "An End or a Beginning."

Ah, my beloved land
 Why don't you sing any more
 Can it be true that even the ropes of the Yellow River towmen
 Like sundered lute-strings
 Reverberate no more
 True that time, this dark mirror
 Has also turned its back on you forever
 Leaving only stars and drifting clouds behind. (Bei Dao 63)

Owen expresses his strong disapproval of poems like this. To Owen, Bei Dao

deliberately employs “circumscribed ‘local color’” and “universal images” to cater for a foreign audience. The poems are “readily translatable” and they “give the international reader an altogether safe and quick experience of another culture” (Owen 28). Such poems, as Owen points out, denote “a sense of cultural loss and decline” (30). Owen even laments that the poems betray “the glories of traditional poetry” in China (30). National literature and literary tradition, as Owen indicates, is essential to literature. It is national and cultural specificity that orient literature. Cultural roots keep a national literature from being lost in pure “uncertainty” (28). Similar to Hulme, Owen upholds his specialization in Chinese classical literature and refuses to relate it to the external world. Owen considers Chinese culture and literature to be a closed circle. It fences off any external influence and change. New entries should inherit the tradition and conform to the fixed rules within the circle.

Such ghettoization of Chinese culture and literature provokes severe criticism. In her book *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies*, Rey Chow sharply points out that Owen’s claim is of racial discrimination. It is more self-concerned than academically oriented.

This is the anxiety that the Chinese past which he has undertaken to penetrate is evaporating and that the sinologist himself is the abandoned subject...writers of the “third world” like Bei Dao now appear not as the oppressed but as oppressors, who aggress against the “first world” sinologist by robbing him of his love...Owen’s real complaint is that he is the victim of a monstrous world order in front of which a sulking impotence like his is the only claim to truth. (Chow 4)

To Ray Chow, Owen’s disapproval of Chinese modern poetry indicates his personal unwillingness to step out of his intellectual comfort zone. He prefers to stay within the field of classical Chinese poetry which he is specialized in. Owen’s dislike of Chinese modern poetry, therefore, originates because of his subjective prejudice instead of objective observation. Zhang Longxi in his book *Mighty Opposites: From Dichotomies to Differences in the Comparative Study of China* furthers the criticism to a disciplinary and cultural level. Owen’s idea is not only an expression of personal preferences. As Zhang suggests, it is more an attempt to impede mutual understanding and cultural communication. Barriers are established between disciplines. To Owen, non-specialists in Chinese literature are not entitled to participate in the creation and study of it. Chinese literature and culture is taken as the ultimate other. It is trapped within a ghetto without any access to the external

world.

It would indeed be fortunate if a scholar of classical Chinese literature were willing to step into the area of modern studies, for the willingness to pull down the usual barriers between fields of scholarly pursuit is a prerequisite for success in the attempt to get out of the cultural ghetto...his [Owen] views tend to ghettoize Chinese literature and to define China and the West, 'national' and 'international' poetry, 'as mutually exclusive, as closures.'" (Zhang, *Mighty Opposites* 133)

Owen's readiness to establish dichotomies between China and West, the national and the international, the classical and the modern, derives from "his predilection for cultural differences" (Zhang, *Mighty Opposites* 133). What he insists on is the "incommensurability" between China and the West (133). Chinese poetry, as Owen argues "remains in a fundamental continuum with historical actuality." But "Western poetry is fictional and detached from history" (134). According to Owen's assumption, Chinese poetry must intertwine with history so as to be differentiated from western poetry. Owen also uses it as "the most important criterion to disqualify Bei Dao's work" (133). To Owen, poetry that is detached from Chinese history and tradition should not be called "Chinese literature" but rather "literature that began in Chinese language" (131). By labeling Chinese literature as "the special other," Owen isolates and ghettoizes Chinese literature and culture.

Owen's claim resonates with Hulme's obsession with the postcolonial reading of *The Tempest*. Hulme's familiarity with postcolonial studies determines his preference for postcolonial reading of *The Tempest*. His specialization supports his faith in the perspective. In fact, the only evidence that validates the perspective is the "tangential ties" between Malone's pamphlet and the play. But Hulme still adopts it to evaluate and exclude alternative perspectives. Postcolonial studies become a closed field without addressing external but relevant fields of studies. *The Tempest* has also been reduced to a work only for postcolonial reading. Compared to Owen's insistence, Hulme's assertion seems to be more provincial. Owen resists embracing new and modern development because of his nostalgia for classical Chinese literature. Hulme not only refuses new perspectives but also denies the traditional reading of the play. Vickers' defense of the "dichotomy of art and nature" in *The Tempest*, for example, has been sarcastically criticized by Hulme. Hulme suggests that Vickers considers his perspective to be "a simple truth" ("Stormy Weather"). Ironically, this is the exact attitude Hulme himself holds toward the

postcolonial reading of the play. To Hulme, *The Tempest* is not only confined to the closed field of postcolonial studies. It also remains stagnant along the historical continuum.

To de-ghettoize classic and culture is urgent. And to expand one's tunnel vision and embrace alterity gains more support. Zhang, for example, argues for adopting multiple perspectives in China studies in his article "The True Face of Mount Lu: On the Significance of Perspectives and Paradigms." Similar to Eliot who reveals the inexhaustible diversity embedded in a classic, Zhang suggests that China studies should be illuminated from multiple perspectives rather than rely on a sole angle. By quoting a Chinese classical poem, Zhang initiates his argument.

Viewed horizontally a range; a cliff from the side,
It differs as we move high or low, or far or nearby.
We do not know the true face of Mount Lu,
Because we are all ourselves inside.
—Su Shi, "Written on the Wall of the Temple of West Woods."
(Zhang, "The True Face" 58)

Mount Lu is manifested in different shapes from diverse perspectives. No single angle can capture the whole picture of Mount Lu. Similarly, in Chinese Studies we should allow multiple perspectives. Chinese people are insiders. Their familiarity with the local culture is their advantage. Sinologists are considered as outsiders. They can benefit from their objective perspective. But neither of them can claim superiority or singularity in China studies. It "requires integration of different views from different perspectives" (Zhang, "The True Face" 68). "B[but] such integration," as Zhang proceeds his argument, "is not a simple juxtaposition of insiders' and outsiders' views; it is more of an act of interaction and mutual illumination than adding up native Chinese scholarship and Western Sinology" (68).

When rebutting Owen's claim about Bei Dao, David Damrosch expresses resonating opinions in his article "World Literature, National Contexts." Damrosch points out that "Rather than being a rootless cosmopolitan, Bei Dao is doubly or multiply linked to events and audiences at home and abroad" (527). Bei Dao's poetry not only relates to the domestic environment of China where his "prosody may be subverting Maoist calls to abandon the complexities of aristocratic poetry and return to the purity of the old Shih Ching (Book of Songs)." His creation also responds to external impact. For example, the "translations of earlier Spanish-language poets like Rubén Darío and Federico García Lorca" have influenced Bei

Dao's poetry creation (526). It seems that in this age of world literature, a solid mastery of national and special knowledge is not enough to sustain the dynamic development of world literature. Scholars nowadays need to adopt a more "general" and macro perspective. They need to be aware of and alert to the changes beyond national and disciplinary borders. They need to relate their special knowledge to other fields of studies. The relationship between generalist and specialist is mutually indispensable and reciprocal. Compared to generalist, as Damrosch suggest, specialist "is not always in the best position to assess the dramatically different terms on which a work may engage with a distant culture" (517). On the other hand, "specialist's knowledge is the major safeguard against the generalist's own will to power over texts that otherwise all too easily become grist for the mill of a preformed historical argument or theoretical system" (517). Only when they work in collaboration can we "understand the work effectively in its new cultural or theoretical context while at the same time getting it right in a fundamental way with reference to the source culture" (517).

Eliot's idea about classic, Zhang's opinion about perspectives and Damrosch's argument about collaboration between generalist and specialist offer us a solid ground to argue against Hulme's insistence on postcolonial reading of *The Tempest*. Postcolonial reading cannot exhaust the classic play. We cannot grasp the whole picture of the play by sticking to a single perspective, however productive it might be. And overemphasis on the special knowledge makes scholars less alert to the external and emerging changes. Possible connection and potential communication would be dispelled. The classic play is ghettoized and forgotten. Hulme's insistence on the play's historical connection is, to some extent, justifiable and may counts as serious scholarship. But to deliberately disregard other perspectives and downplay the importance of communication between different angles should be avoided.

William Hamlin, one of the scholars whom Hulme criticizes, seems to provide a more open-minded and progressive approach to study the play. Hamlin suggests that we should shift "the contextual ground from the highly politicized discourse of colonialism to the more taxonomic, speculative, polyvalent, and autonomous discourse of ethnography" (qtd in Hulme, "Stormy Weather"). By doing so, Hamlin intends to show that "one may retain the New World context and the historicist approach without necessarily committing oneself to the near-dogmatism that seems endemic to colonialist readings" (qtd in Hulme, "Stormy Weather"). Hulme ironically comments on Hamlin's attempt by calling it "in best pluralist fashion" ("Stormy Weather"). Hulme again declares his rigid commitment to postcolonial reading of *The Tempest*. He is reluctant to associate it with other perspectives.

Damrosch in his article “World Literature, National Contexts” accurately predicts such attitudes. Damrosch observes that “[T]he more committed today’s Shakespeareans become to understanding literature within a cultural context, the less likely they are to feel comfortable in comparing Shakespeare and Kalidasa” (515). It explains Hulme’s resistance against alternative perspectives. Hamlin’s proposal, in contrast to Hulme’s idea, reflects and respects the diversity of the classic play. He acknowledges the value of contribution made by different perspectives. Instead of denying or displacing postcolonial reading of the classic play, Hamlin supplements and supports the perspective by relating alternative perspectives to it. Postcolonial reading is reaching outward and is ingeniously correlated to relevant fields. It is not simple integration of perspectives or co-existence of “plural” interpretations. Different perspectives are taken together to illuminate each other for mutual benefit.

Hamlin’s idea about how to read the classic play reminds of Damrosch’s strategy to combine “hypercanon” and “countercanon.” Classics that are dominant may impede the entry of less familiar works into the list of canons. They may threaten the circulation and readership of those less-accessed works. Such situation should be changed. It is especially necessary in this age of world literature. Communication between literatures needs most urgently to break through the closed circle of “canons.” Damrosch in his article “World Literature in a Postcolonial, Hypercanonical Age” suggests that we should combine the study of “hypercanon” with that of “countercanon” in world literature studies. To completely overthrow the “hypercanons” seems not feasible and unnecessary. And to recklessly deny the value of classics and traditions also counts as a provincial and parochial gesture. A better way is that we associate the two kinds of canons with each other and establish a reciprocal relationship in between. As Damrosch proposes in the article, “[W]e should resist the hegemony of the hypercanon, yet as long as it’s a fact of life, we should also turn it into our advantage” (50). We can relate widely-acknowledged classics to less-popular literary classics. The “hypercanons” will smooth the way for “countercanons.” “Countercanons,” therefore, can also be well-received among audience who has not been familiarized with them. The value of less-familiar classics may gain more acknowledgements from expanded geographical areas and academic fields. The traditional classics can also benefit from this kind of communication. New and inspirational interpretation will emerge. Stereotyped interpretations of the classics will be refined and enriched.

Conclusion

To reduce and restrict a piece of classic to something that deserves only a single

way of interpretation is unreasonable. And to prioritize one particular perspective to perceive a culture is questionable. Thanks to the renaissance of the concept of world literature, recent years witness lively communication between different cultures. Making classics and cultures ghettoized like isolated and scattered islands is not feasible when bridges and tunnels are built in between. We expect and welcome a new “A Tempest” that reveals another inspiring aspect of *The Tempest*. We anticipate a new perspective to contribute to the depiction of the whole picture of China studies. And we applaud alternative thoughts to help disclose the “true face” of Chinese literature and culture. On the other hand, diversity and multiplicity does not wipe out affinities within different classics and cultures. Exclusive differences that are deliberately fabricated should be avoided. Differences do not overwhelm the affinities that enable communication between literatures and cultures. We reach through the tunnel to relate and recognize the affinities. And we overcome the tunnel vision to realize and respect the alternatives.

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