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The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Turzan. By Eric Cheyfitz.

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States courts. The legal theory that Shattuck presents is straightforward and unintimidating.

However, the book suffers from two significant defects. First, as Laurence M. Hauptman observes in his historical introduction, it is "a personal memoir." The book is too much a personal memoir and too little a legal history. Numerous points made in the book would have been clearer with the addition of greater historical and legal detail. A bibliography and more references to sources discovered during legal research would greatly increase the usefulness of Shattuck's book. Given the frequency of reference to the Nonintercourse Act of 1790 in this volume, I found the lack of reference to Francis Paul Prucha's work on this topic surprising.

Second, information is presented in a disjointed manner. For example, the sixth chapter deals with the Oneida land claims arising before the Nonintercourse Act of 1790. Information is delivered in a way that makes it necessary to read the whole text to fully understand the historical context of all the Oneida claims. Furthermore, a great deal of information is presented in appendices that are not effectively integrated into the text.

Shattuck describes his legal strategy for pursuit of the Oneida claims as a "furrow-by-furrow" approach. History seems to be best written in this methodical, furrow-by-furrow manner. My hope is that Shattuck will return to this topic in future years and present us with the definitive, well-integrated, furrow-by-furrow legal history of the Oneida land claims.

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The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from *The Tempest* to *Tarzan*. By Eric Cheyfitz. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. 202 pages. \$27.50 cloth.

Eric Cheyfitz's recently published book of criticism offers readers a compelling and dramatic account of Anglo-American imperialism in the Americas from both an historical and a theoretical perspective. Weaving in and out of a broad range of texts, the author skillfully intersects fiction, drama, biography, historical accounts, and political and philosophical treatises in a densely packed radical analysis of Western culture, language, and thought as it comes into contact with, and ultimately conflicts with, other

cultures, most specifically North American native cultures. Cheyfitz asserts quite convincingly that at the base of these conflicts is a fundamental problem of translation; he exposes the politics or, in most instances, “repressed politics” of this translation as being essential to an understanding of the Anglo-American/Native American frontier—a frontier deeply inscribed with the cultural and linguistic violence of the arriving Western Europeans. The book’s true power, however, does not rest simply on a recollection of past injustices perpetrated on native cultures, but on the author’s ability to integrate this perspective with the notion that the Anglo-American imperialist model of communication, essentially monologue masquerading as dialogue, continues to be practiced—almost as if there is a continuum tracking the West’s relationship with the foreign, which up to this moment has never been significantly altered or interrupted.

“I have come across the ages out of the dim and distant past from the lair of primeval man to claim you—for your sake I have become a civilized man—for your sake I have crossed oceans and continents—for your sake I will be whatever you will me to be” (*Poetics*, p. 3). This quote, taken from Edgar Rice Burroughs’s *Tarzan of the Apes*, is an appropriate introduction to the *Poetics*’ first chapter, which attempts to describe twentieth-century United States foreign policy. For Cheyfitz, these words represent the deepest fantasies of that policy: The uncivilized savage (read today’s communist, terrorist, etc.) comes “in loving submission to our will” to claim the United States, understood, of course, to be “civilization.” Early European travel narratives such as *Instructions* and *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia* testify quite vividly to the fact that this policy sank its imperialist roots on this continent shortly after the settlement at Jamestown. These narratives laid out specific strategies for “converting” the Indians, while at the same time translating Native American cultures into English economic and political terms: referring to crowning native kings and the buying and selling of land, all the while ignoring the cultural differences that make these concepts untranslatable into the Indians’ kinship-based culture, an essentially nonhierarchical society that does not conceive of land as an alienable commodity. For Cheyfitz, these narratives come dangerously close to numbing us to our own cultural narcissism: “Unless we are attentive to the repressed problem of translation, [these narratives] will continue to teach us what they have taught us: to forget the other side of the story. Indeed, what we have today,

growing out of and perpetuating the dynamics of these narratives is a foreign policy of forgetfulness" (p. 9). At the same time, like United States foreign policy, *Tarzan of the Apes* operates as the great simplifier, offering us a grand vision of the world, allowing Anglo-America to repress distinctions that threaten to reveal who the true savages really are:

The cultural function of *Tarzan* is radically to reduce or homogenize domestic political complexities by displacing them onto a foreign scene, whose own political complexities are thereby radically homogenized in the vision of the romance. To turn our attention obsessively as we have in the United States to that radically decontextualized figure the *terrorist* . . . is a way of forgetting our homeless people, for example, by forgetting that what we call terrorism in the Middle East is itself the result of the political struggle against homelessness (p. 15).

Deeply embedded in this power politics of language is the notion of eloquence. In the West, before the advent of the attempted mastery of the mechanical arts in the nineteenth century, eloquence was looked upon as the prime technology for transforming the world. Texts such as *Moby Dick*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Douglass's *Narrative*, and Emerson's *Nature* all contain scenes where the power of an eloquent orator is crucial. However, it is the character Prospero from *The Tempest*, with his books and magical orations, who is the quintessential embodiment of the eloquent orator. Cheyfitz consistently returns to this character and to the play itself to illustrate how the drama, written at the outset of the "discovery" of the New World, is a microcosmic depiction of Western imperialist attitudes toward native cultures. The "motor" that drives this imperial technology is the power of metaphor, which, in the history of eloquence, is etymologically and ideologically inseparable from translation. Aristotle defines metaphor, which is taken from the Greek word meaning "to carry across," as "transporting a term from a familiar to a foreign place" (p. 35). Implicit in this definition is the sense that metaphor is based "on a kind of territorial imperative, in division that is between domestic and foreign" (p. 36). This division of language into two camps, whether domestic/foreign, familiar/strange, or proper(literal)/figurative, is what allows the conflictive play of dialogue to take place. Historically, this interplay of language has had both a democratic and an imperial component. When there is equivocal-

ity, voices exist only in translation of each other. However, when this equivocality is repressed, the dialogue between the literal and figurative aspects of language is sacrificed, and an absolutized, oppositional hierarchy is created. Certainly, it is this latter scenario that has dominated the contact between Anglo and Native American cultures, amounting to a persistent attempt to gag any sort of alternative eloquence. Critics who might contend that Cheyfitz's theory is too idealized or utopian would be well advised to re-examine his analysis of translation and metaphor. He continually challenges his readers, entangling us in the complex politics of translation until we are forced to question radically how the West has traditionally dealt with the "other" in terms of language and culture.

It is just this problem of translation that has forfeited meaningful cultural contact for cultural and linguistic violence. Columbus's fantasized translations of his contact with the Arawak, where he hears, sees, and understands whatever he chooses to, merely sets the stage, in Cheyfitz's view, for the eventual translation of Native American *land* into the English common law's concept of *property*. The difference between the two cultures' relationships to the land is so basic and so striking that it seems unlikely that they could ever translate each other. Using Aristotle's *Topics*, Cheyfitz reveals that, in the West, property is the shadow of substance in the metaphysical realm, but when it is transferred into the physical realm, property becomes substance itself. "Those who own property become its shadow. In the West's system of things, we are the shadows of property; and if we own nothing, then even this obscure visibility is denied to us" (p. 50). He juxtaposes the emerging emphasis on individualization and capitalist economies in the West with the Native American kinship economies, illustrating that while the notion of community did not die in the West, the societal importance of property holding led to the formation of hierarchies of ownership, possession, etc., which obscure extended kinship. In contrast, Native American "kin-ordered" cultures are more egalitarian and decentralized. In such a society, the boundaries are "shifting and open," unlike in capitalist models, where the boundaries are "fixed and closed" and lead to the closing off of land as property. In kin-ordered societies, there is an inherent connectedness that governs people's relations: "We can imagine the members of these societies thinking of themselves in terms of reciprocal relations rather than as opposed entities" (p. 54). John Locke's "Second Treatise," on the other hand, certainly

a central pillar that supports Anglo-American political consciousness, conceives of an individual as having "property in his own person," who, through labor, can convert the land, which was originally common to all, into his own property. Locke's very definition of an individual relies on the "bounding" or enclosing of a place, a concept that is untranslatable into Native Americans' open boundaries.

We can only talk about the sale of property if . . . we talk . . . exclusively in English terms. For from the Indians' perspective there was in the first place no place to translate . . . That is, the land that the Indians negotiated to share with the English was in kin-ordered terms not alienable in individualized places that could be traded in a market economy (p. 57).

In spite of the complex interdependencies the settlers had with the Indians, which would have suggested the need for equivocality between cultures, the newcomers assumed a racial superiority to the native peoples they encountered that was similar to Europe's hierarchical system of class. Essentially, the distinction between the westerners and either the "savages" of North America or the lower classes back in Europe was not based on a biological conception of race but instead on class status grounded in cultural difference. To this end, Cheyfitz asserts that *The Tempest*, with its Western conceptions of savagery and civility, is "a play obsessed with putting people in what the ruling class understands as their proper places both geographically and socially" (p. 86). Of course, one of the crucial elements in the perpetuation of this system of putting people in their proper place is the proper relationship to language. In other words, who decides what is appropriate, eloquent speech.

This decision was originally made by the arriving Europeans who viewed themselves as the arbiters, having taken over for the Romans, of a universal empire. This notion of a single, universal culture, embodied in the medieval concept of *translatio imperii et studii*, was rooted in the belief that the "civilizing" force of empire and language had been transferred from the Romans and the Greeks to the Europeans. Consequently, the early settlers felt it was their duty to bring their culture to the rest of the world, converting the savages to the one true civilization and the one true God. Ironically, to achieve this universal empire, which is intended to "civilize," the West must first translate the foreign into its own terms, usually "barbarian" or "savage," which of course

perpetually distances the "other" from the empire even as it "admits" them.

For Cheyfitz, as long as the West continues to think and act in accordance with the *translatio imperii et studii*, these cultures will remain in perpetual conflict. In the imperial fantasy that *The Tempest* embodies, this conflict is not figured as the result of the Europeans' cultural and linguistic violence against native cultures, but as the inability of the savage to be civilized. This is all too typical of the West's relationship with the foreign. Montaigne's *Of the Cannibals*, however, is an eloquent, though isolated dissent from the West's tradition of univocality. His essay recognizes the "democratic eloquence" of the native cultures, a nakedness of speech to which he aspires and that is in conflict with the European notion of eloquence grounded in the rules of decorum. Montaigne equivocates between European and Native American cultures, calling into question the West's absolutized conceptions of savagery and civility: "They are even savage, as we call those fruits wilde, which nature of her selfe, and of her ordinarie progresse hath produced: whereas indeed they are those which our selves have altered by our artificiall devices, and diverted from their common order, we should rather term savage" (p. 144). Montaigne attempts to offer his European audience a positive model of the Native American kin-ordered societies, revealing them to be not simply savage and presocial, as the West prefers to view them, or even absolute, romanticized negations of European culture, but as an authentic counterculture:

[In Native American cultures] there are no individuals; for all persons are articulated as halves of one another . . . True eloquence, it follows, cannot be achieved in a language that expresses the hierarchical relationships contained in the notion of mastery, the notion that one person or class has the right to exist at the expense of another. This will become the language of individualism that, developing along with capitalism, will rationalize or naturalize capitalism's cannibalizing of the poor. It is a language the ideal of which is univocality: the assertion of a single voice over others, the mastery of one voice by another. It is a language whose emphasis is on monologue rather than dialogue, on semantics rather than syntax (on identity rather than relation). Doubt, or equivocality, is a wilderness to this language, which strives to drive doubt out and clear places in the name of the proper. The terms of this language are fences against the encroachment of

other terms. And what of a language so desperately in need of surety? The revolutionary vision of Montaigne's Indians suggests that this language betrays its radical doubt through the act of repressing it. The language of reaction is primed to become the language of revolution if it can find eloquent orators, who, exploding its univocality, release the power of equivocality, the power of voices in translation that possessing no proper places must share a common place equally (p. 159).

Here, Cheyfitz's own eloquence lays bare what is at the core of *The Poetics of Imperialism*: As long as Western culture and language are grounded in the terms of a competitive and isolating individualism, its clearest expression being capitalism, it will never be able to translate true democracy, so eloquently expressed in Native American kinship cultures. Whether it is with native cultures or the Third World, unless authentic equivocality is established, the West will continue to talk to itself about itself, all the while pretending to be engaged in a process of communication.

The Poetics of Imperialism could not be more timely. Although the author's rigorous academic approach may make his case inaccessible to some readers, the story of translation that he proposes resonates with clear and powerful intensity at a time when the United States, celebrating the quincentennial of Columbus's *discovery*, desperately struggles to interpret the shifting political landscape of the world, somehow wishing to believe that it is the administrator, or translator, if you will, of a "new world order." Without question, we are fortunate that Eric Cheyfitz offers us his bold and insightful voice in eloquent opposition to the numbing din of the West's univocality.

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Portage Lake: Memories of an Ojibwe Childhood. By Maude Kegg. Edited and translated by John D. Nichols. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 1991. 272 pages. \$29.95 cloth; \$19.95 paper.

"Long ago, when I was a little girl . . . (p. 3)." Thus begins this charming book that is invaluable to students of Ojibwe language and culture alike. Maude Kegg, a member of the Mille Lacs band, is a storyteller describing, in her native language, her childhood at Portage Lake, Minnesota. Mrs. Kegg was born in 1904 and raised by her maternal grandmother, Aakogwan, Margaret Pine. The