

**Gordon McMullan and Phillip Mead, with Ailsa Grant Ferguson, Kate Flaherty and Mark Houlahan. Afterword by Catherine Moriarty. *Antipodal Shakespeare: Remembering and Forgetting in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, 1916-2016*. New York: Bloomsbury—The Arden Shakespeare, 2018. 241pp. A\$91.80 Hardback ISBN: 9781474271455s**

Paul Daley, writing in *The Guardian* in November, declares that ‘Australia has reached peak Anzac. And not before time.’ The Australian government’s commemoration of 100 years of ANZAC has drummed home the dates and the events of the war, as well as emphasising certain well-worn sentiments surrounding the service of Anzac servicemen in 1914-18. *Antipodal Shakespeare: Remembering and Forgetting in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, 1916-2016*, features on its cover a sepia image of Anzacs gathered outside London’s Shakespeare Hut during the war. This sets one to flinching—is this book an example of yet more Anzac commemoration?

In their introduction Gordon McMullan and Philip Mead describe the confluence of two commemorative events in London in 1916—one to mark the Tercentenary of Shakespeare’s death, and the other to commemorate ‘the disastrous landings at Gallipoli a year earlier.’ They write that the aim of this ‘brief and focussed book’ is:

...to sketch a possible alternative way of reading the becoming-global of the phenomenon ‘Shakespeare,’ situating that process in relation to time, geography and ideology by presenting a specific case study, one that connects Shakespeare, war, commemoration, monumentalization, myth-making and nationhood at a precise historical moment, and that follows some of the outworkings of that moment across the past century. (8)

McMullan and Mead note that the emphasis of the book is an ‘antipodal reading’ of Shakespeare—their term ‘Antipodal Shakespeare’ offered as an alternative to ‘local’ and/or ‘global Shakespeare’ (11). The ‘mode of reading’ they propose is ‘a means of analysing cultural activities taking place in parallel, with shared impetus and a range of connections, direct and indirect, almost certainly colonial in origin, across significant geographical distance, most likely across the hemispheres (12). From here each chapter leads us through a series of side steps through the portal of Shakespeare into the territory of the First World War, Anzacs, empire and ‘nation building.’ Each writer eloquently examines how the commemoration of the playwright and his works have been used to scaffold ideas of British and Australian nationhood.

In Chapter one, ‘Forgetting Israel Gollancz: The Shakespeare Tercentenary, the National Theatre and the effects of commemoration, Gordon McMullan describes how the origins of London’s National Theatre can be found in the ‘tortuous process of commemoration that began with the build-up to the Shakespeare Tercentenary of 1916’ (30). McMullan explores how Sir Israel Gollancz, Professor of English at King’s College from 1903-1930, Secretary of the committee for the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre, and editor of *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare*, was ‘a consistent presence in the planning and execution of the 1916 Tercentenary,’ and ultimately a driving force in the creation of the Shakespeare Hut. McMullan views Gollancz as a key contributor to ‘global Shakespeare’ and argues that:

The forgetting of Israel Gollancz and of his contribution to the Shakespeare Tercentenary is ... synecdochic of the larger forgetting of the impact of the Tercentenary on the creation of certain contemporary UK cultural institutions. (34)

The chapter is an enlightening opening to the antipodal mindset of the book, setting up for the reader a sense of how commemoration 'disappears and then reappears elsewhere in unpredicted locales' (59).

In the second chapter, 'Shakespeare, memory and the city: The Tercentenary in Sydney and its afterlife,' Philip Mead shifts the book's investigation of the Tercentenary to early twentieth-century Sydney. In April 1909 the President of the New South Wales Shakespeare Society, Henry Gullet, delivered a lecture as part of the commemorations of the playwright's birthday. McMullan notes that the text of Gullet's speech indicates that he was 'preparing the ground' for his own contribution to Shakespeare commemoration in Australia (64). Gullet was firmly on the side of those who preferred a monument or statue rather than a national theatre as an appropriate Shakespearean memorial. Mead describes how Australian debates about the commemoration 'took their lead from London, and the work of the London Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre committee, chaired by Israel Gollancz, was regularly reported on in the Australian papers' (66). In Sydney, however, the Citizen's Committee of the Shakespeare Society were in favour of a living monument, rather than a statue, and proposed a 'Shakespeare wing' be constructed at the New South Wales National Library, along with a 'suitable hall' for lectures and performances, with 'one fifth of the money raised ... devoted to the encouragement of Australian literature and dramatic art' (68-9). Mead notes that instead of these enlightened ideas, Sir Bertram Mackennal's Sydney Shakespeare Monument was the eventual outcome of the Sydney Tercentenary Memorial Fund, which, he argues, 'represents the belated victory of a very privatised version of Shakespeare remembrance over the more democratic and culturally aware vision of the Sydney citizens' (70). Mead describes the Sydney Shakespeare statue as 'a kind of zombie memorial,' noting its 'asynchronous lines of association with Shakespeare's role in Anzac and First World War commemoration' (79). The chapter concludes with an analysis of the demolition of Shakespeare Place for the new Cahill Expressway in the 1960s. Mead brings Jeffrey Smart's famous painting of the expressway to bear on the narrative of how Gullet and Mackennal's monument has been 'forgotten or misremembered, even ruined' by 'the relentless rebuilding of the modern city, in other words by post-war modernity' (86).

In Chapter 3, 'The Shakespeare Hut for Anzacs: Building commemoration, performing memory, 1916-19' Ailsa Grant Ferguson takes us back to London during the First World War, and outlines the creation and purpose of the Shakespeare Hut. This 'mock-Tudor building at the corner of Keppel and Gower Streets in Bloomsbury' was 'a YMCA building dedicated to the memory of Shakespeare' and the only YMCA facility to be designated as a memorial. (90-2). The Hut, constructed as a temporary measure on the site of the proposed National Theatre, was a home from home for serving Anzacs from 1916-19 and was staffed by volunteers, and featured presentations of Shakespearean plays by well-known performers. Given that after the war the Shakespeare Hut was quickly forgotten, Grant Ferguson explores what the Hut conveys about 'collective memory, commemoration and, perhaps more particularly, forgetfulness' (92). She notes that 'the paternalistic benevolence of the Shakespeare Hut does not sit comfortably with the assertiveness engendered by the emergence of the Anzac story' (93). After the Armistice the Shakespeare Hut became the premises of the Indian YMCA and was 'a space for radical discussion of Indian independence' (93). This next phase in the life of the building,

Grant Ferguson suggests, was a further reason for the ‘rapid, wholesale forgetting of the Hut.’ She writes:

Forgetting, so often seen as a negative, as a lack of remembering, is as active a cultural process as remembering. (93)

The Hut allowed for an intermingling of the cult of Shakespeare with the war effort and made manifest the concept of Shakespeare as the birthright of ‘Dominion’ soldiers (99). Grant Ferguson notes that ‘Shakespeare’s name adds gravitas to the place, as well as linking it with a sense of the ‘positive’ side of England, encouraging a notion of shared history and national identity’ (101). Weekly productions of Shakespeare’s plays at the Hut, co-ordinated by leading professional performer Gertrude Elliot, ‘formed a significant element of ... [the] commemorative function’ of the Hut (109). Grant Ferguson reflects on the significance of these truncated Shakespearean performances on the tiny stage of the Hut, and how they may have been received by Australian and New Zealand soldiers, most of whom were not familiar with the plays or the actors. She brings the reader into the space of ‘temporariness, transience and liminality’ occupied by the Hut:

The ongoing imminence of the building’s destruction was, tragically, shared with its audience, due as they invariably were to return to the front after their brief time in the Hut’ (106).

In Chapter 4, ‘From the Shakespeare Hut to the Pop-up Globe: Shakespeare, memory and New Zealand, 1916-2016,’ Mark Houlahan explores commemorative events for the tercentenary in New Zealand. He begins in Waiouru, New Zealand’s National Army Museum, as he investigates material relating to his grandfather and his service in campaigns in Egypt and Palestine. His grandfather’s antipodal journey ‘from the South Island of New Zealand to the Middle East and back’ are emblematic of the ‘antipodal Shakespeare which this book proposes ... a series of dynamic transfers of cultural insight and learning, fully in train in 1916 and the years following and echoing dynamically still, a hundred years later’ (118-19). Moving on from his own personal ‘antipodal’ connection to the First World War, Houlahan zooms out to look beyond the narrative of iconic battles and battlefields, noting that ‘to focus exclusively on these ... is to under-read the war’ (119). Houlahan writes that to focus on connections between the First World War and Shakespeare allows new perspectives on the war, despite the Centenary of Anzac generating quantities of writing and scholarship that ‘seem like a deluge in which all perspectives drown’ (122). Houlahan adds to Grant Ferguson’s account of the Shakespeare Hut with excerpts from letters and diaries of New Zealand soldiers. He notes that ‘soldiers in the hut report eating, sleeping and listening to music’ and that ‘despite the records of performances there by renowned actors, I have found no reports of Shakespeare activities within the hut from soldiers who stayed there.’ Even though the organisers of the Shakespeare Hut claimed that the presentation of Shakespeare’s plays in the Hut was of ‘central importance’ to the Anzacs who stayed there, Houlahan’s archival research suggests that this was not the case (128-29). In contrast, his research indicates that the Tercentenary was widely acknowledged in New Zealand, and that newspapers kept the public well-informed of commemorative events in England. Houlahan concludes the chapter with an account of the Pop-up Globe, which first appeared in Auckland as part of the Shakespeare 400 celebrations in 2016. He notes that the Pop-up Globe was, like the Shakespeare Hut a century before, a temporary structure, and as a collaboration between New Zealand practitioners and Australian academics, the project ‘was itself something in the spirit of Anzac’ (140).

In Chapter 5, 'Lest we remember: *Henry V* and the play of commemorative rhetoric on the Australian stage,' Kate Flaherty discusses 'the efforts of rapprochement between Anzac Day and the Tercentenary.' She argues that 'this early-century intersection continued to play out in discourses of nation-founding, especially in Australian productions of *Henry V*, throughout the following century' (145-46). Flaherty notes that in 1916, in contrast to the decorous English response to the clash of Tercentenary and first Anzac Day commemorations, Australians used 'Shakespeare' 'to underwrite the emergent discourse of "the birth of a nation" which would eventually become the monolithic myth of Anzac' (152). Flaherty explores the notion that particular productions of Shakespeare's plays can be viewed as 'fossils,' preserving 'the performative encounters of "Shakespeare" with living culture' (147). Her elegant analysis of *Henry V* in Australia explores how this 'monarchist and militaristic drama that had been so useful since the Tercentenary for cementing the Englishness of Australia' has been interpreted by leading Australian companies since the 1990s (162).

Catherine Moriarty's 'Afterword: The antipodal dynamics of commemoration' draws the strands of the book together, underlines the shared sense of enquiry prevalent throughout the book. She emphasises that the exploration of the Shakespeare Tercentenary and Anzacs and Anzac Day through the concept of 'antipodal Shakespeare', enables us to 'recognize the way in which commemorative events are exploited by different actors for different reasons at different times' (185). This slender volume belies its size and is densely packed with keen scholarship and scrupulous archival research. *Antipodal Shakespeare: Remembering and Forgetting in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, 1916-2016* is an engaging and important contribution to Anzac history and Shakespearean scholarship.

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