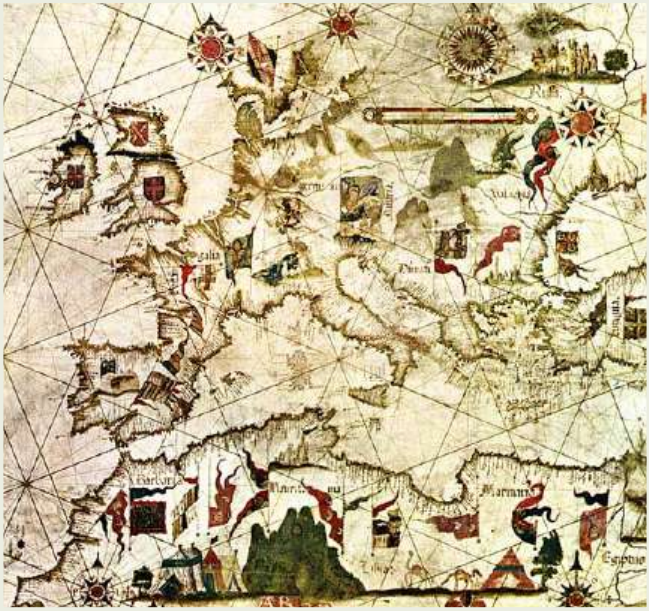
Shakespeare and the Mediterranean • 2

# *The Tempest*

Edited by Fabio Ciambella



Edizioni ETS

Skenè Studies I • 4

**Skenè Studies I • 4**

Shakespeare and the Mediterranean • 2

# *The Tempest*

Edited by Fabio Ciambella

Edizioni ETS

*SKENÈ. Texts and Studies* (https://textsandstudies.skeneproject.it/index.php/TS)
Supplement to *SKENÈ. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies*

info@skeneproject.it
Edizioni ETS
Palazzo Roncioni - Lungarno Mediceo, 16, I-56127 Pisa
info@edizioniets.com
www.edizioniets.com
Distribuzione
Messaggerie Libri SPA
Sede legale: via G. Verdi 8 - 20090 Assago (MI)
Promozione
PDE PROMOZIONE SRL
via Zago 2/2 - 40128 Bologna

ISBN (pdf) 978-884676737-0
ISBN 978-884676736-3
ISSN 2421-4353

## Shakespeare and the Mediterranean

This series collects selected contributions to the International Summer School annually organised by the Skenè Research Centre, Verona University (https://skene.dlls.univr.it/en/), as well as articles related to its activities.

**Published volumes:**

Silvia Bigliazzi and Emanuel Stelzer, eds. 2022. *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean • 1: Romeo and Juliet* (pp. 296)

# Contents

# Contributors

**Silvia Bigliazzi** is Professor of English Literature at Verona University, where she is the Director of the Skenè Research Centre devoted to drama and theatre studies. Her fields of interest include Renaissance poetry, literature and the visual arts, and translation for the theatre (co-ed. *Theatre Translation in Performance*, Routledge 2013). She has translated into Italian John Donne's poetry (Rizzoli 2012[2]), *Romeo and Juliet* (Einaudi 2012) and *Double Falshehood* (Rizzoli 2012), and, for the theatre, Q1 *Romeo and Juliet* (2016) and *Macbeth* (2016). On Shakespeare she has published two monographs (*Oltre il genere. Amleto tra scena e racconto*, Edizioni dell'Orso 2001; *Nel prisma del nulla. L'esperienza del non-essere nella drammaturgia shakespeariana*, Liguori 2005) and several miscellanies (*Revisiting the Tempest. The Capacity to Signify*, Palgrave 2014; *Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, and Civic Life*, Routledge 2016; *Shakespeare and Crisis. One Hundred Years of Italian Narratives*, John Benjamins 2020). In 2019 she published *Julius Caesar 1935: Shakespeare and Censorship in Fascist Italy* (Skenè). Her recent research includes: the reception of classical drama in the English Renaissance, the reception of Graeco-Roman paradoxical and sceptic traditions in the English Renaissance, and the study of the Italian novella tradition behind Shakespeare's plays. She is the co-General editor of *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies*, as well as of the series *Global Shakespeare Inverted* (Bloomsbury) and *Anglica* (ETS). She is the PI of the digital projects SENS (Shakespeare's Narrative Sources, Italian Novellas and their European Dissemination) and CEMP (Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England).

**Paul Edmondson** is Head of Research for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, an Honorary Fellow of The Shakespeare Institute,

University of Birmingham, and a Visiting Professor in Human Rights, Birmingham City University. His publications include: *Shakespeare: Ideas in Profile*; *Twelfth Night: A Guide to the Text and Its Theatrical Life*; *Destination Shakespeare*; *Finding Shakespeare's New Place: an Archaeological Biography* (with Kevin Colls and William Mitchell); *New Places: Shakespeare and Civic Creativity* (with Ewan Fernie); *Shakespeare's Creative Legacies* (with Peter Holbrook); *A Year of Shakespeare: Re-living the World Shakespeare Festival* (with Paul Prescott and Erin Sullivan); and, in collaboration with Stanley Wells: *Shakespeare's Sonnets*; *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt: Evidence, Argument, Controversy*; *The Shakespeare Circle: An Alternative Biography*; and *All the Sonnets of Shakespeare*. He is a Trustee of the British Shakespeare Association, The Rose Theatre, and The Friends of Shakespeare's Church. He also turned his late friend Greg Wells's Ph.D. thesis into a book: *John Hall, Master of Physicke: A Casebook from Shakespeare's Stratford*. He is currently writing Shakespeare and Stratford-upon-Avon for the Oxford Shakespeare Topics series.

**Magdalena Gabrysiak**, after her undergraduate study in English and Literature, is a recent Masters Graduate of Oxford University, where she studied Comparative Literature and Critical Translation. Her research interests revolve mainly around ecocriticism and ecological readings of both philosophy and literature. The topic of her dissertation was an ecocritical analysis of modern utopian science fiction, which attempts to uncover the ecological characteristics of utopian thought in the face of environmental crisis.

**Shira F. Melcer** is a third-year student of two bachelor's degrees. She is double-majoring in English Literature and Functional Linguistics at the Hebrew University, while studying for a degree in Classical Piano at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. The combination of both realms enticed her to explore the prolific intersection of literature and music. She has completed an internship at the Tel-Aviv Review of Books magazine, editing, translating and writing essays, and is currently working at the music department of the university's central library. She has earned a place in the English department's Honours Colloquium and has won the first prize in the Academic Essay Competition of the Music Academy for her

essay "Ariel's Music: The use of Shakespeare's Words in Italian and English Madrigal Forms." She hopes to pursue further the research of Early Modern music and literature in England.

**Cristiano Ragni** is Junior Researcher in English Literature at the University of Verona. After earning his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of Perugia and carrying out part of his research at the Warburg Institute in London, he was a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Universities of Turin and Genoa. His main research interests lie in the relations between political thinking, theology, and theatre in the Elizabethan age, with particular attention to Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare and to academic drama in Latin. He is also interested in the reception of Greek and Latin classics in modern and contemporary literature. For the project *In the Margins of Theatre* (IMT) at the University of Verona, he is studying the marginalia that can be found in early printed playbooks. Among his recent publications, besides essays in edited collections and peer-reviewed journals, are the first Italian edition of Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris* (2017), the monograph *La Nazione e il Teatro. Alberico Gentili, Shakespeare e l'Inghilterra elisabettiana* (2020), and an edition of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (2023). Dr Ragni is a member of the Editorial Board of *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies* and Managing Editor of the series *Skenè. Texts and Studies*.

**Erin Reynolds** is an undergraduate student at the University of St Andrews, interested in Modernism and Comparative Literature.

**Anmol Deep Singh** is an MA student in Comparative European and Non-European Languages and Literatures at the University of Verona. His fields of research are digital literary mapping, queer studies and Shakespearean studies. He was a member of the DH research project *Mapping Legal Issues in English Literature and Culture* at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of Verona and has presented the results of his research titled *Between Space, Place and Law: Mapping E.M. Forster's* Maurice in the poster session of 2022 ELO Conference. Currently, he collaborates with the Skenè Research Centre and the *Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival*.

**Emanuel Stelzer** is a researcher at the University of Verona. He is the author of *Portraits in Early Modern English Drama: Visual Culture, Play-Texts, and Performances* (Routledge, 2019) and of *Shakespeare Among Italian Criminologists and Psychiatrists*, 1870s-1920s (Skenè Texts and Studies, 2021). His articles have appeared in journals including *Critical Survey*, *Early Theatre*, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, *English Studies*, *Notes and Queries*, *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, and *Skenè: Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies*. His main interests are early modern English literature and drama, textual studies, and theatre history. He contributes to the digital projects SENS (Shakespeare's Narrative Sources: Italian Novellas and their European Dissemination) and CEMP (Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England), of which he coordinates the early modern section. His work on William Sampson has earned him the Huntington Library Quarterly Centennial Essay Prize; he has also translated into Italian Philip Massinger's *The Picture* (Aracne, 2017) and John Milton's *Comus* (ETS, 2020). He is managing editor of *Skenè: Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies* and contributes to *The Year's Work in English Studies*.

**Stanley Wells** CBE, FRSL is one of the world's foremost Shakespearians, a former Life Trustee (1975-2017) and former Chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (1991-2011), Emeritus Professor of Shakespeare Studies of the University of Birmingham, and Honorary Emeritus Governor of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, of which he was for many years Vice-Chairman. He holds a Ph. D. of the University of Birmingham, is an Honorary Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford and of University College, London and holds honorary doctorates from Furman University, South Carolina, and from the Universities of Munich, Hull, Durham and Warwick, Marburg and Craiova. He also received a knighthood in the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours in recognition of his services to Shakespeare scholarship. His books include *Literature and Drama*; *Royal Shakespeare: Studies of Four Major Productions at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre*; *Modernizing Shakespeare's Spelling*; *Re-editing Shakespeare for the Modern Reader*; and *Shakespeare: the Poet and his Plays*. He edited *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II*, and

*The Comedy of Errors* for the New Penguin Shakespeare and *King Lear* for the Oxford Shakespeare. He was for nearly twenty years the editor of the annual *Shakespeare Survey*, and writes for the *New York Review of Books* and many other publications. He has edited *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies* and is General Editor (with Gary Taylor) of *The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*, co-author of *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* and General Editor of the *Penguin Shakespeare*. His most recent books are *Shakespeare in the Theatre: An Anthology of Criticism*; *The Oxford Dictionary of Shakespeare*; *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* (edited with Michael Dobson); *Shakespeare For All Time*; *Looking for Sex in Shakespeare*; *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and *Coffee with Shakespeare*, both co-authored with Paul Edmondson; *Shakespeare & Co.*; *Is It True What they Say About Shakespeare?*; *Shakespeare, Sex, and Love*; *Great Shakespeare Actors, and William Shakespeare: A Very Short Introduction*. Together with Paul Edmondson he has edited *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* and *The Shakespeare Circle*, for Cambridge University Press. Stanley Wells was elected The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's first Honorary President in June 2011.

# Introduction

Fabio Ciambella

Is Shakespeare's *The Tempest* a Mediterranean play? Some scholars, such as Cantor (2006),[1] argue that "although *The Tempest* is set on a nameless and imaginary island, it is located somewhere in the middle of the Mediterranean, poised between Europe and Africa" (896). The reasons for such a statement are numerous. First of all, if one excludes the histories, set in Britain for obvious reasons, almost all the remaining plays are set in the Mediterranean, especially the romances, to which *The Tempest* belongs. As a matter of fact, *Pericles* is set in the Eastern area of the Mediterranean, *Cymbeline* divides between Rome and Britain, and *The Winter's Tale* opens in Sicily and then moves to a Bohemia, which, as is well-known, has an improbable (Mediterranean?) seacoast. Secondly, as most of the play's resources[2] are set in the Mediterranean, *The Tempest* itself must be part of the Mediterranean world dictated by its intertextual network. Suffice it to mention Virgil's *Aeneid*[3] or Ovid's *Metamorphoses*[4] among *The Tempest*'s best-known classical resources whose adventures are set in the Mediterranean Sea. Moreover, although it is true that a "brave new world" (5.1.215)[5] had been discovered and recently

1 See also, among others, Wilson 1997; Garber 2004, 855-6; Stanivukovic 2007, 19.

2 I am here borrowing the concept of 'resource' from Drakakis 2021.

3 For further details, see, among others, Kott 1976; Hamilton 1989; Wiltenburg 2007.

4 Critics have highlighted intertextual and interdiscursive echoes between *The Tempest* and book 7 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (either in Latin or via Golding's translation), i.e., the episode of Jason and Medea. See, among others, Brown 1994; Lyne 2000; Garrison 2019.

5 All quotations from *The Tempest* are from the New Oxford Shakespeare modern critical edition by Taylor et al. (2016).

colonised by the British when Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*, the centre of the early modern world was still the Mediterranean Sea, where the European Christian fleets were engaged in battles and wars against the Turks. In this regard, Kantarbaeva-Bill (2014), for instance, reads *The Tempest* as a Eurocentric play focused on the rivalry between Christian princes and the Ottoman empire, these latter reduced to silence in the play:

> *The Tempest* can . . . be read as an appeal to European powers, specifically to the emergent Great Britain, to take advantage of the waning Ottoman power. The Ottomans are demonized and portrayed as weak and effeminate; though they managed to conquer the Roman Empire, that era has long passed. (51)

Nevertheless, some "[c]ritics have in effect tried to shift the geographic center of Shakespeare's world from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic" (Cantor 2006, 897). This geo-ideological shift, Cantor affirms, was mainly effected by US critics by the end of the last century, who

> have understandably looked for ways to link Shakespeare with their concerns as Americans. The result has been to emphasize the issue of colonialism in Shakespeare, to pursue the geographic and historical connections between Shakespeare and America by foregrounding the subject of the British Empire in his plays. (Ibid.)

Ariel's reference to the "the still-vex'd Bermoothes"[6] (1.2.229), that is, the Bermudas, or other allusions "to a Patagonian god named Setebos[7] . . . and to dead Indians"[8] (McInnis 2014) might be a clue

6 It must be noted, however, that Prospero calls Ariel to fetch some dew in Bermuda, which is not strange since he is a spirit of the air. In fact, Ariel does not say that the ship is in Bermuda: "Safely in harbour / Is the king's ship; in the deep nook, where once / Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew / From the still-vex'd Bermoothes, there she's hid" (1.2.269-72).

7 Although the witch Sycorax, Caliban's mother, worships a Patagonian god, as stated by her son ("[Prospero's] art is of such power / It would control my dam's god, Setebos", 1.2.448-9), she is also said to come from Argier, i.e., Algeri ("PROSPERO Where was she born? Speak. Tell me. / ARIEL Sir, in Argier", 1.2.312-3), on the southern Mediterranean cost.

8 The reference to "a dead Indian" (2.2.34) is by Trinculo who, in

in favour of the 'Atlantic hypothesis', even considering that some scholars,[9] following Malone's influential 'discovery' of Strachey's letter as a possible resource of the play (1778), discuss whether William Strachey's account (1609) of the *Sea Venture*'s shipwreck off the coasts of the Bermudas can be one of the resources of Shakespeare's play. This account of a "most dreadful tempest" was published in 1625 under the title of *A True Reportory of the Wracke*, as part of Samuel Purchas's four-volume collection of travel narratives *Purchas his Pilgrimes.* Vaughan (2008) affirms that the letter, probably surviving in two manuscript copies before 1625, reached England in September 1610. Although it might be possible that Shakespeare read it, and

> [d]espite the affinity between Strachey's letter and Shakespeare's play, it must be emphasized that Bermuda, according to most critics, is not the scene of the play. Rather, an abundance of textual affinities between the play and the narrative attest that Strachey's account of an event that took place near and on the Bermuda Islands almost certainly helped to shape Shakespeare's play – set in the Mediterranean – about a hurricane, an island refuge, and various characters and events that imaginatively draw upon the Bermuda story. (273)

Malone's hypothesis, albeit dismissed for some time,[10] gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s, when decolonisation movements arose in Africa and the Caribbean. It is in those years that the (post) colonial readings of *The Tempest* began to pinpoint it as a colonialist

his speech, does not affirm that on the island there are Indians, he only acknowledges that he knows they exist somewhere.

9 Issues concerning Strachey's letter are strictly connected with the authorship debate; hence, in this introduction I deliberately decided to avoid the topic. See Stritmatter and Kositsky 2007 or Vaughan 2008 for further details.

10 See, for instance, Stoll, who stated that "[t]here is not a word in *The Tempest* about America or Virginia, colonies or colonizing, Indians or tomahawks, maize, mocking-birds, or tobacco. Nothing but the Bermudas, once barely mentioned as a faraway place" (1927, 487), or Kermode, who affirmed that Strachey's letter added "nothing . . . fundamental [to *The Tempest*'s] structure of ideas which could not have existed had America remained undiscovered, and the Bermuda voyage never taken place" (xxv).

play, resulting in a decentralisation of the Mediterranean setting, as well as in the interpretation of the Prospero-Caliban stage couple as a master-servant relationship which anticipated Defoe's Crusoe-Friday duo. In this context, Raman argues that there is no play by Shakespeare more "associate[ed] with New World colonization" (2011, 51) than *The Tempest*. Nevertheless, even before the second half of the last century, some researchers had moved the play's Mediterranean setting to the Atlantic Ocean. Lee (1968 [1929]), for example, believed that Caliban is a faithful portrait of the Native Americans, "a creature stumbling over the first stepping-stones which lead from savagery to civilization" (296). Later scholars, such as Lamming (1960) and Fernández Retamar (1974), shared this view, thus moving the setting of *The Tempest* from the Mediterranean Sea to an island in the Atlantic Ocean, more precisely in the Caribbean, although British colonialism did not arrive there until 1625, some years after Shakespeare's death.

Nevertheless, a couple of allusions to places in the Atlantic Ocean cannot outweigh the references to Mediterranean landmarks that abound in the play. Stritmatter and Kositsky, for instance, have counted numerous occurrences of Mediterranean cities – that is, Argier (2 occurrences), Carthage (4), Milan (17), Naples (20), and Tunis (9) – and conclude that since the beginning of the twenty-first century scholars have "invite[d] a return to [the] critical exploration of the play's Mediterranean context" (2013, 86). This return to a Mediterranean-centred view of the play after years of (post)colonial interpretations also raised questions about the peripheral position of England within the Mediterranean Sea, and about the kingdom's possibility of taking advantage of this position to turn its attention to the American continent. As argued by Brotton:

> To interrogate the specificities of *The Tempest*'s complex negotiation of its Mediterranean contexts does not simply call for a rejection of its New World readings in favour of its Old World resonances . . . Instead I would argue that the play is precisely situated at the geopolitical bifurcation between the Old World and the New, at the point at which the English realized both the compromised and subordinated position within which they found themselves in the Mediterranean, and the possibility of pursuing a significantly

> different commercial and maritime initiative in the Americas. (2016, 37)

After all, even Caliban is a character whose origins are halfway between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea:

> The composite nature of Caliban that includes the blending of New World references and a North African origin, for example, serves as a reminder that England's early colonial endeavors are contemporaneous to England's experiences of North African piracy and Ottoman power in the Mediterranean; such seemingly different contexts can be interlinked politically and symbolically in complex ways. (Hatner 2019, 81)

Therefore, the late-20th/early-21st century Mediterranean-centred views of *The Tempest* re-focus scholarly attention on the Mediterranean Sea, yet enrich their critical considerations with ideological, political, and symbolical issues that hint at (post)colonial readings of the play. So much so that, as suggested by Loomba, different geographies interweave and "remind us . . . of the limitations of compartmentalizing the waters, of thinking about the Atlantic without the Mediterranean, and the Mediterranean without the Indian Ocean" (2015, 28).

Whether one adheres to the Mediterranean or Atlantic hypotheses, it is clear that the sea in the play is a multi-symbolic, semantically polysemic, and even deliberately geographically ambiguous space, whose role in *The Tempest* must be investigated precisely by considering it as a multifaceted location. As Scuriatti affirmed,

> The sea of *The Tempest* is highly ambiguous from the geographic point of view: partly Mediterranean, partly Atlantic Ocean, partly Irish Sea,[11] it is a highly wrought intertextual phenomenon evoking Virgil's *Aeneid* and the Homeric poems, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and functioning symbolically also as a catalyst for some of the fundamental themes in the text. (2012, 92)

On that topic, Hatner argues that "[a]s we have only begun to explore the manifold connections between these spaces, it is an important

11 In 1919, Plunket Burton put forward the hypothesis that *The Tempest* could be set in Ireland, instead of the Mediterranean or the Atlantic. See Baker 1997 for a thorough discussion of the Irish matter in *The Tempest*.

task for Early Modern Studies to further pursue lines of investigation that focus on their intersection" (2019, 81).

It is exactly this intersection of geographical, political, and symbolical issues that is explored in this volume dedicated to *The Tempest* and the Mediterranean Sea.

***

This volume consists of eight articles which explore the relationship between *The Tempest* and the Mediterranean Sea. It is organised in four Parts, each dealing with the Mediterraneity of the play from different perspectives. Part 1, entitled "*The Tempest*: Its Genesis and Its Mediterranean World(s)", focuses on close readings of the text in order to explore the importance of the Mediterranean Sea for the genesis of the play and the narration of the past and present events in which the Shakespearean characters participate. This approach paves the way for Part 2, "*The Tempest* and the Mediterranean Myth: from Resources to Afterlives", which investigates the relationship between the Shakespearean play, its resources from the Mediterranean Graeco-Latin past and its afterlives in twentieth-century poems looking at the Mediterranean dimension of the play. "From the Mediterranean to the Mediterranean: *The Tempest*, Italian Music and Cinema" is the title of Part 3, which looks at both influences on *The Tempest* and of *The Tempest*. First, it is dedicated to understanding how Italian Renaissance music may have influenced some choices concerning Ariel's song(s). Secondly, this part explores how *The Tempest* has shaped the production of three twentieth-century Italian directors who mainly dealt with dialects in their works. Finally, Part 4, "Ecocritical and Postcolonial Readings of *The Tempest*", offers two methodologically well-framed readings of the play which reaffirm the centrality of the Mediterranean Sea in *The Tempest*, and try to bring to the fore new textual evidence in support of the Mediterraneity of the play, by adopting and/or criticising recent approaches.

Part 1 includes two articles by Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells, and Silvia Bigliazzi. Edmondson and Wells's essay investigates the genesis of the play, positing the easy – yet difficult to answer – question, "How . . . did Shakespeare set about writing *The Tempest*?".

The centrality of the Mediterranean Sea is acknowledged, although (post)colonial readings and the 'Atlantic hypothesis' are also considered, together with issues concerning Shakespeare's eclectic use of classical and contemporary "Mediterranean-based" resources – from Virgil's *Aeneid* to Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essays* and Thomas's *The Historie of Italie*, among others – and the circumstances which led to *The Tempest*'s performance(s) and publication in the Folio. In this fascinating essay which touches on some of the play's main issues, the two scholars explore the Mediterranean setting against the backdrop of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which, like *The Tempest*, are not tied to any individual source, while likewise being set in a Mediterranean context.

Bigliazzi's essay focuses on the role of memory in *The Tempest*, and relates it to the play's Mediterranean resources, in particular to book 2 of the *Aeneid*, with the aim of understanding how the characters comprehend "the finiteness, irreversibility and linear directionality typical of tragic time, fraught with tensions and anxieties" in the precarious world of the play. After introducing sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theories of memory – indebted to Plato's ontology of memory, Aristotle's epistemology, as well as Montaigne's philosophy – and their "awareness that the sense of the past is ephemeral and that it may be subjected to revision", intertextual links between Aeneas's and Prospero's painful narratives are knowledgeably explored. Bigliazzi concludes that in *The Tempest* the construction of meaning is inherent in the questioning of the model of Aeneas's tale and in the fact that the loop of time Prospero lives in is dramatised, as well as in his fear of forgetting things – or not remembering them properly. This opens questions about time, memory, and storytelling on stage, something new if compared with Aeneas's confidence in his own memory.

Part 2 opens with Cristiano Ragni's thorough exploration of the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between the Greek myth of Plato's Demiurge – as "depicted in the *Timaeus*" – and Prospero, interpreted as a divine-like character, in Ragni's words, "Shakespeare's Demiurge". The article begins with the affirmation that the Mediterraneity of the play is also connected with its Graeco-Latin resources, and goes on to investigate Plato's myth

of the Demiurge, who, similarly to Prospero, "is not described as the creator of the cosmos, but as a craftsman, a divine Reason, that imposes order to the universe". The closing section of the article is devoted to an analysis of the relationship between the Demiurge and Prospero, ascertaining that the myth of the Platonic Demiurge might have inspired Prospero's eagerness to impose order onto a chaotic situation, and his desire to craft "a brave new world" (as stated by Miranda, 5.1.217) at will.

Erin Reynolds explores another idea of *The Tempest* as a myth understood as "a 'pattern of events' or a basic essence of a work, distinct from its poetry". The chapter focuses on W. H. Auden's poem *The Sea and the Mirror*, and puts forward the idea that the Shakespearean play inspires and informs the poem, which can be considered both an adaptation and afterlife of the play. Before delving into the text of Auden's poem, Reynolds retraces the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century critical thoughts and conceptions that shaped the idea of the 'myth' of *The Tempest* from Shakespeare to Auden's *The Sea and the Mirror*. The goal of the essay is not only that of understanding the process(es) of deconstruction and reconstruction of the myth of *The Tempest* in Auden's poem, but also that of analysing why Auden was inspired by Shakespeare's play in the first place. Reynolds sagaciously concludes that reading *The Sea and the Mirror* through the lens of *The Tempest* helps readers and scholars understand the extent to which the 'myth' of the play "fit into [Auden's] philosophy of dualism", and permits them "to transform Ariel and Caliban into representatives of the two 'Hells' on either side of Auden's 'This World'". Moreover, the 'myth' is subverted by making Ariel and Caliban actors who play roles of themselves "to demonstrate the limitations of knowledge in life and art".

In the third Part, Shira Melcer and Emanuel Stelzer examine the relationship between Shakespeare's play, music, and cinema in search for Mediterranean inspirations. Melcer offers an interesting overview of the Italian madrigal and its differences from and similarities with the English version, which derives from the Italian one, through Yonge's 1588 *Musica transalpina*, the first collection of madrigals ever published in England, of Italian origin. By analysing Robert Johnson's 1611 English madrigal form of Ariel's song "Full Fathom Five", probably "the version used in the first performance

of *The Tempest*", and Thomas Morley's Italian form of "O Mistress Mine", from *Twelfth Night* 2.3, Melcer proposes her own version of "Full Fathom Five", with clear influences and confluences of Italian and English madrigal forms, thus presenting a more 'Mediterranean' – and historically accurate – version of Ariel's song.

Stelzer offers a multifaced and thought-provoking exploration of what he calls "dialect Shakespeare", a series of adaptations of *The Tempest* in Italian dialects, from the Neapolitan version by Eduardo De Filippo (1983), to Davide Iodice's 1999 *La Tempesta. Dormiti, gallina, dormiti* (*The Tempest. Sleep, Chicken, Sleep!*), and Gianfranco Cabiddu's 2016 film *La stoffa dei sogni* (*The Stuff of Dreams*). Recurring to sociocultural and ideological approaches, Stelzer reflects on the role of Italian dialects in Shakespeare's adaptations of *The Tempest*, with the aim of understanding whether and to what extent their use represents a sort of reaction to cultural hegemony – *sensu* Gramsci –, at the same time foregrounding local political and countercultural movements. Since *The Tempest* explores the power of language as an *instrumentum regni* to control alterities – as evident in the Prospero-Caliban relationship – dialectal adaptations perfectly embody the quest between minority and hegemonic culture(s)/language(s).[12]

The closing Part proposes two different, critically fresh and original, readings of *The Tempest* according to two of the most widespread approaches today, that is, ecocriticism and postcolonialism. This latter approach, however, is criticized. Magdalena Gabrysiak introduces her chapter by questioning what Ariel means by "sea change" (1.2.401) in his/her famous initial song "Full Fathom Five", and in order to do so she draws upon a solid review of the most significant ecocritical readings of the play, with particular emphasis on the Mediterranean Sea. These ecocritical readings, affirms the author, underline "a need to remember a pre-modern ocean, and in their focus on a distant past and in their

12 For matters concerning the tension between centre and periphery, minority and hegemonic cultures in relation to Shakespeare studies, see, for instance, the series Global Inverted Shakespeare, edited by David Schalkwyk, Silvia Bigliazzi, and Bi-qi Beatrice Lei, for Bloomsbury The Arden Shakespeare.

interest in memory, they echo key themes of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*". In this sense, Gabrysiak, like Bigliazzi in this volume, reflects on the "complex web of interconnected temporalities and narrativized memory" of the play, especially on such Aristotelian temporal categories as *kairos* and *chronos*, and Shakespeare's use of sources, understood through Shane Butler's model of the classics' deep time. The chapter concludes with a brief yet interesting analysis of two contemporary cinematic and theatrical adaptations, Warlikowski's *Burza* (2008) and Taymor's *Tempest* (2010), interpreted as works "that look towards Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as a countermeasure against Romantic models for human engagement with the environment".

Finally, through the lens of postcolonial theories, Anmol Deep Singh reads Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda as a political act encompassing gender and racial issues; an act of rebellion which overcomes the interpretation of Prospero and Caliban relationship as a master/servant one. The author argues that it is true that Caliban is a victim of Prospero's power; yet it is also true that he is the one who perpetrates (or tries to perpetrate) violence. For this reason, the reader/audience is invited to revise the usual idea of Caliban as Prospero's favourite, innocent prey. Although critics have argued that Caliban cannot be accused of rape, since he did not understand the ideological and political implications of that kind of violence, "he seems to recognise its potentially political effect: when Caliban is accused by Prospero of trying to dishonour Miranda, his reference to his future lineage betrays an instinct for self-preservation, which, as primitive as it sounds, does have a political inflection". In fact, by raping Miranda, Caliban would have the possibility to have a child from the future queen of the isle; hence, the failed attempt, says Singh, is also "a failed coup".

## Works Cited

Baker, David J. 1997. "Where Is Ireland in *The Tempest*?". In *Shakespeare and Ireland: History, Politics, Culture*, edited by Mark Thornton Burnett, and Ramona Wray, 68-88. Basingstoke and London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press.

Brotton, Jerry. 1998. "'This Tunis, Sir, Was Carthage': Contesting Colonialism in *The Tempest*". In *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, edited by Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, 23-42. London: Routledge.

Brown, Sarah A. 1994. "Ovid, Golding, and *The Tempest*". *Translation and Literature* 3: 3-29.

Cantor, Paul A. 2006. "The Shores of Hybridity: Shakespeare and the Mediterranean". *Literature Compass* 3-4: 896-913.

Drakakis, John. 2021. *Shakespeare's Resources*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Fernández Retamar, Roberto. 1974. "Caliban: Notes Towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America". *Massachusetts Review* 15 (1-2): 7-72.

Garber, Marjorie. 2004. *Shakespeare After All*. New York: Anchor Books.

Garrison, John. 2019. "Medea's Afterlife: Encountering Ovid in *The Tempest*". In *Ovid and Adaptation in Early Modern English Theatre*, edited by Lisa S. Starks, 113-28. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hamilton, Donna B. 1989. "Defiguring Virgil in *The Tempest*". *Style* 23 (3): 352-73.

Hatner, Marcus. 2019. "Placing Prospero's Island: (Post)Colonial Practices of Comparing in the Academic Reception of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*". *Forum for Inter-American Research* 12 (1): 73-85.

Kantarbaeva-Bill, Irina. 2014. "Anglo-Ottoman Anxieties in the *Tempest*: from Displacement to Exclusion". *Caliban: French Journal of English Studies* 52: 43-51.

Kermode, Frank. 1954. "Introduction". In *The Tempest*, edited by Frank Kermode, i-lxxxviii. London: Methuen.

Kott, Jan. 1976. "The *Aeneid* and the *Tempest*". *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics, New Series* 3 (4): 424-51.

Lamming, George. 1960. *The Pleasures of Exile*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Lee, Sidney. 1968. *Elizabethan and Other Essays* (1929). Edited by Frederick S. Boas. Freeport: Books for Libraries Press.

Loomba, Ania. 2015. "Mediterranean Borderlands and the Global Early Modern". In *Representing Imperial Rivalry in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, edited by Barbara Fuchs and Emily Weissbourd, 13-32. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Lyne, Raphael. 2000. "Ovid, Golding, and the 'Rough Magic' of *The Tempest*". In *Shakespeare's Ovid: the* Metamorphoses *in the Plays and Poems*, edited by A.B. Taylor, 150-64. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MacInnis, David. 2014. "Shakespeare and the Atlantic World". In *Atlantic*

*History*, edited by Trevor Burnard. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199730414/obo-9780199730414-0242.xml#obo-9780199730414-0242-bibItem-0008 (Accessed 22 June 2023).

Malone, Edmond. 1778. "An Attempt to Ascertain the Order in which the Plays of Shakespeare Were Written". In *The Plays of William Shakespeare, with Notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens*, edited by Isaac Reed, vol. 1, 269-346. London: C. Bathurst.

Plunket Barton, Dunbar. 1919. *Links Between Ireland and Shakespeare*. Dublin – London: Maunsel & Co.

Raman, Shankar. 2011. *Renaissance Literature and Postcolonial Studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Scuriatti, Laura. 2012. "Sea Changes: the Sea, Art and Storytelling in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Isak Dinesen's *Tempests* and Marina Warner's *Indigo*". In *Civiltà del mare e navigazioni interculturali: sponde d'Europa e l''isola' Trieste*, edited by Cinzia Ferrini, Roberta Gefter Wondrich, Paolo Quazzolo, and Anna Zoppellari, 90-106. Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste.

Stanivukovic, Goran V. 2007. "Introduction". In *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings*, edited by Goran V. Stanivukovic, 1-20. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stimatter, Roger A., and Lynne Kositsky. 2013. *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare's The Tempest*. Jefferson – London: McFarland & Co.

– 2007. "Shakespeare and the Voyagers Revisited". *Review of English Studies* 58: 447-72.

Stoll, Elmer Edgar. 1927. "Certain Fallacies and Irrelevancies in the Literary Scholarship of the Day". *Studies in Philology* 24 (4): 485-508.

Taylor, Gary, John Jowett, Terry Bourus, and Gabriel Egan, eds. 2016. *The New Oxford Shakespeare. The Complete Works: Modern Critical Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, Richard. 1997. "Voyage to Tunis: New History and the Old World of *The Tempest*". *ELH* 64 (2): 333-57.

Wiltenburg, Robert. 2007. "The *Aeneid* in *The Tempest*". *Shakespeare Survey* 39: 159-68.

# Part 1

## *The Tempest*: Its Genesis and Its Mediterranean World(s)

# 1

# How Did Shakespeare Write *The Tempest*?

Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells

Abstract

In this article, we want to think about how Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*. The play first appeared in print in 1623 in the First Folio, but is recorded as having been performed in London by the King's Men before King James I and his court at the Palace of Whitehall on Hallowmas night – that is to say, the 1st of November – 1611. It was usual for plays to be given in the public theatres before being performed at court so probably *The Tempest* had already been performed in spring or summer 1610 in one of the company's regular playhouses. It seems likely that Shakespeare had started thinking about it during the later months of 1609 or early in 1610. It was to be the last play he wrote single-handed. The research question we want to answer is "How did Shakespeare set about writing *The Tempest*?". The play is in fact unusual among Shakespeare's plays in that the story it tells is of his own devising, although it draws heavily both on the playwright's reading and on his knowledge of contemporary events. In this sense, it is very similar to *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with which the play shares the Mediterranean setting. In our opinion, the answer to the question must be sought in the relationship between the artist's life and the creations of his art.

Keywords: *The Tempest*; King's Men; source studies; art; Mediterranean Sea

In this article, we want to think about how Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*.[1] The play first appeared in print in 1623, seven years after he died, in the First Folio edition of his complete plays, but is recorded as having been performed in London by Shakespeare's company, the King's Men, before King James I and his court at the Palace of Whitehall, the principal royal residence, on Hallowmas night – that is to say, the 1st of November – 1611. It would have been

1 Quotations from *The Tempest* are from Shakespeare 1987. Quotations from other Shakespearian works are from Shakespeare 2005.

a grand occasion. The King's Men, formerly the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which Shakespeare had helped to found in 1594 and for which he had acted and written ever since, was the leading theatre company of the time. Performances at court before the King and the Royal Family were attended by fashionable audiences that included aristocrats and foreign ambassadors. It was usual for plays to be given in the public theatres before being performed at court so probably *The Tempest* had already been performed in spring or summer 1610 in one of the company's regular playhouses, either the open-air Globe, or the smaller, more exclusive indoor Blackfriars playhouse – or possibly both. It seems likely that Shakespeare had started thinking about it during the later months of 1609 or early in 1610. It was to be the last play he wrote single-handed - that is to say before *Henry VIII*, otherwise known as *All is True*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and the lost *Cardenio*, all written in collaboration with his younger colleague John Fletcher. Whether he knew as he wrote *The Tempest* that it was to be his last solo-authored play we cannot tell for certain, but it is natural to see Prospero, the deviser of the play's action, as to some extent a projection of its author, and there is a valedictory air about the play, not least in Prospero's Epilogue as he asks for the audience's applause as a way of liberating him. In his words we hear simultaneously the character Prospero, the actor who is impersonating him, and the playwright Shakespeare, all of whom can call up "spirits to enforce" and "art to enchant":

> Gentle breath of yours [that is, the audience's applause] – my sails
> Must fill, or else my project fails,
> Which was to please. Now I want
> Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
> And my ending is despair
> Unless I be relieved by prayer,
> Which pierces so that it assaults
> Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
> As you from crimes would pardoned be,
> Let your indulgence set me free.
> (5.1.329-38)

How, we want to ask, did Shakespeare set about writing *The Tempest*?

In order to write any play, he had first to find or to devise a story to tell – or possibly more than one story, if he wanted to write a play with both a main and a parallel plot, or subplot, as for instance in *King Lear*. And having chosen or devised a basic narrative, he needed to shape it to dramatic form.

*The Tempest* is unusual among Shakespeare's plays in that the story it tells is of his own devising. He seems to have been assisted in writing the play by accounts of an actual shipwreck – that of a boat called *The Sea Venture* – off the coast of Bermuda in 1609, mentioned in documents written the following year. For most of the 35 or so plays that he had already written, or in which he had at least a main hand, he had relied for his basic plot material on pre-existing sources – on history, whether ancient, as in the Roman plays, or modern, as in the English history plays; on legend, as in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*; on prose fictions, as in the romantic comedies, *Othello*, and *The Winter's Tale* or on pre-existing plays, some classical, as in *The Comedy of Errors*, others modern, as in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

But occasionally he made up a story himself. Such plays are especially revealing about his creative processes. As long ago as 1972 Stanley Wells published an essay called "Shakespeare Without Sources" in which he discussed the three plays – *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Tempest* – in which Shakespeare was not dependent for his overall plot on pre-existing narrative material. He suggested that these plays are especially interesting in that they bring us close to the workings of Shakespeare's own mind and imagination. The fact that their plots are of his own devising does not of course mean that in writing them he did not draw extensively on his reading in, especially, the classical literature that he had studied at school and that continued to fascinate him throughout his creative life. All three plays have a Mediterranean setting – *Love's Labour's Lost* in Navarre, a province of Spain; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Athens (though with very strong reminiscences of Shakespeare's Warwickshire), and *The Tempest* on an unnamed Mediterranean island. And the classical Roman author Ovid is a dominant presence in *The Tempest* to such an extent that one of Prospero's greatest and best-known speeches, the one that begins "Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves" (5.1.33), is virtually a direct borrowing from the *Metamorphoses*

(Ovid 1961, 7.197-209) where it is spoken by a sorceress, Medea. But the plots of these three plays are Shakespeare's own, and thus especially revealing of how his mind worked.

Although *The Tempest* does not adapt a pre-existing story, it draws heavily both on Shakespeare's reading and on his knowledge of contemporary events. It is a play of ideas, taking as its basis the story of a bookish and reclusive Duke of the Mediterranean city of Milan, Prospero, who, fifteen years before the action begins, had deputed his powers to his brother, Antonio. Treacherously, Antonio persuaded the King of Naples, Alonso, to support his usurpation of Prospero's powers and to banish Prospero and his three-year-old daughter Miranda. At the humane insistence of the courtier Gonzalo, they are allowed to set out to sea in a small boat provisioned only with Prospero's books. They have come ashore on a small island inhabited only by a semi-human monster, Caliban, son of a deceased witch, Sycorax, whom Prospero has subdued as his slave; and Prospero has somehow acquired a spirit, Ariel, who will carry out his commands. The action begins twelve years after the banishment. Alonso with members of his court and his son Ferdinand are returning to Italy from Antonio's daughter's wedding to the son of the King of Tunis when their ship is wrecked on the coast of the island to which Prospero had been banished.

The opening scene, portraying the shipwreck in graphic detail, is a virtuoso piece of dramatic writing showing astonishing knowledge of seamanship. It opens the play with a bang, introducing us to the members of the Neapolitan court and providing an image of a topsy-turvy situation in which the normal social hierarchy is challenged and disrupted by the powers of nature. "What cares these roarers for the name of king?" says the boatswain (1.1.16-17).

The long scene that follows, in which Prospero recapitulates for his fifteen-year-old daughter Miranda the events that have brought them to the island, is in complete contrast. Miranda manages to remain alert throughout Prospero's thorough narrative account, but eventually falls asleep at the end of it. There is, however, a distinct possibility that members of the audience will have nodded off before she does. Stanley remembers long ago taking his seven-year-old daughter to see the play and feeling her gradually dozing off as Prospero went on and on and on. This is the price that Shakespeare

(and his audiences) have to pay for his decision, to simulate the unity of time, to begin the story at the end.

The composition of a play, as distinct from a prose narrative, makes special demands. The story, however long a period of time it covers, must be one that can be represented on stage within a limited period of time, a period that is determined in part by the staying power of the audience. Elizabethan audiences seem to have had great stamina – Shakespeare's plays vary in length from fewer than 2000 lines of verse and prose in *The Comedy of Errors* to as many as 4000 or so in *Hamlet. The Tempest,* with just over 2200 lines, is his third shortest play. And plays must have stories that can be represented by a limited number of actors according to the size of the company that performs them.

At the time Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*, his acting company, the King's Men, had a basic complement of some fourteen actors, all male, including three or four boys who primarily played the female roles. Shakespeare himself acted with them, though not necessarily in every play. The company had been in existence for some seventeen years – since 1594 – with few changes of the leading personnel. Shakespeare knew the actors intimately, was fully aware of their strengths and their weaknesses. The star actor, Richard Burbage (c.1567-1619), was about Shakespeare's age and had played major roles with the company since its inception. He was, pretty certainly, the first Romeo, Hamlet, Othello, Lear, Leontes, and Pericles, and he went on playing these roles long after he first created them. He was undoubtedly a great actor.

An early stage in the writing of the play was to think up a story which would form the basis of the plot. Shakespeare was an immensely practical man. As he wrote his play he would undoubtedly have borne in mind the need to provide roles suited to the talents of individual members of the company, including those who specialized in comic roles, and the three or four boy actors who played female roles. Some of the actors would have been required to double as the "strange shapes" that bring in the banquet and "dance about it" in Act Three. Since there is only one human female – Miranda – in the cast list, it seems likely that Ariel too would have been played by a boy, rather than by an adult male. He plays Ceres in the masque, and probably Iris and Juno too were given to boy

actors. The masque also calls for "certain reapers" who may have been played by actors of the company not required in this scene, or possibly by extras brought in especially for the court performance.

Shakespeare knew too that he had musicians in the company, and Stephen Orgel writes that *The Tempest* "calls for more music, and of more various kinds" than any other Shakespeare play (Shakespeare 1987, 220). We know all too little about this side of the company's work. No instrumental incidental music has survived for any of Shakespeare's plays but we have music for a few of the songs including an exquisite – and short – setting of Ariel's "Full Fathom Five" composed by the lutenist Robert Johnson (c.1583-1633). To hear this song – sung for example by Alfred Deller, a counter-tenor, or male soprano, accompanied on a lute – is the closest that we can come nowadays to the experience of the play's original audiences.

Shakespeare and his fellow playwrights had help in constructing their plays from the practice of the Mediterranean-based classical dramatists. It's clear that at the Stratford grammar school Shakespeare studied comedies by the Roman dramatists Plautus and Terence which conform to the so-called unities of time, place and action as recommended by Aristotle – that the action of a play should take place in a single location within a single day and that it should have a unified plot. Very few plays by Elizabethan dramatists conform precisely to these criteria, but nevertheless they exerted a huge influence on stage practice from the very beginnings, and one of Shakespeare's earliest plays, *The Comedy of Errors*, derives its plot from the classical drama, *Menaechmi*, by Plautus; no translation of it existed so he must have read it in the original Latin. It's interesting that at the end of his career Shakespeare found it convenient to return to the principles of dramatic construction that had helped to shape its beginnings. In *The Tempest* as in *The Comedy of Errors* the action takes place within a single day. Both plays depict the end of a long story, and in both of them this compression necessitates extended passages of retrospective story telling from the father of a participant in the play's action. In *The Comedy of Errors* Shakespeare places this in the opening scene but in *The Tempest* he delays it, opening the play with the high drama of the wreck of a ship carrying as passengers some of the principal characters of the play. We learn later that the storm that drives the ship onto the coast

of Prospero's island has been conjured up by Prospero himself. The opening stage direction, "*A tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard*" reveals Shakespeare drawing on the full resources of the professional theatre of his time, with a thunder-run down which cannon balls were rolled and in which fireworks were set off to simulate lightning. Whether these resources were available for performances at court we cannot tell. Written entirely in prose, this scene is an extraordinarily naturalistic evocation of a storm at sea. Indeed, Orgel reprints an analysis of the seamanship of this scene by A.F. Falconer, a professor of English with exceptional expertise in nautical matters. He wrote a book called *Shakespeare and the Seaman* in which he reveals that in writing the scene "Shakespeare has made exact use of the professional language of seamanship". Intriguingly, Falconer states that "he could not have come by this knowledge from books, for there were no works on seamanship in his day, nor were there any nautical word-lists or glossaries" (Shakespeare 1987, 207-8). This statement has biographical implications. If it is true, then it seems that Shakespeare was either, at some point in his life, a sailor, or that he spoke closely with and listened to sailors.

But what of Shakespeare's wider literary research and thought that contributed to his writing of *The Tempest*? Shakespeare knew his Virgil well, and invites us to think about the *Aeneid* as the play unfolds before us. Yet, as Colin Burrow observes, it "shimmers across the work rather than shaping it" (2013, 82). Shakespeare uses the *Aeneid* to draw attention to aspects of his story, for example in the shipwrecked King Alonso and his courtiers' conversation about "widow Dido" and "widower Aeneas" (2.1.83, 84). Ariel's appearance at the magical banquet in act three seems like Shakespeare's attempt to stage an actual episode from the *Aeneid* (book three) when the travellers are about to partake of a feast only to have it snatched away from them by harpies. Shakespeare's use of Virgil is familiar and playful, drawing the audience in through references to the *Aeneid* but without, as Colin Burrow notes, directing them towards any overt political conclusion as Virgil himself does (2013, 77-83).

The Neapolitan crew, like Aeneas and his fellows, have encountered an enchanted island, which encourages Shakespeare to remind us of Homer's *The Odyssey* as well. Although he does not

explicitly mention the sorceress Circe, we might find an echo of the sound of her name in Sycorax. Circe is associated in Shakespeare's mind with a desperate kind of comic confusion. In his earlier tale of a shipwreck and its effects on a community, *The Comedy of Errors*, the Duke of Ephesus in commenting on the apparent enchantment of his exasperated citizens says: "Why, what an intricate impeach is this! / I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup" (5.1.270-1). As *The Tempest* unfolds before us, as we consider the story of Prospero's impeachment, watch the visual clowning of Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban, witness the drawing together of confused and possibly traumatised individuals, and follow the intertwining of their island-experiences, we may well be reminded of "Circe's cup" and the enchanted and dangerous transformations that *The Tempest* permits.

Shakespeare makes significant use of John Florio's translation of the *Essays* of Michel de Montaigne, published in 1603. Indeed he seems to have had the book open on his writing table as he was writing the play. The clearest evidence of this is in Gonzalo's Act Two, Scene One description of his ideal commonwealth. In his essay "Of the Cannibals", Montaigne wrote:

> It is a nation, would I answer Plato, that hath no kind of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate nor of politic superiority, no use of service, of riches or of poverty, no contracts, no successions, no dividences, no occupation but idle, no respect of kindred but of common, no apparel but natural, no manuring of lands, no use of wine, corn, or metal. The very words that import lying, falsehood, treason, dissimulation, covetousness, envy, detraction, and pardon were never heard of among them. (1965, 1.220)

Shakespeare adopts this vision of a vegetarian, teetotal, egalitarian, pacifist, hippy paradise as Gonzalo speaks his account of what he would do if he "had plantation" of the island on which *The Tempest* is set:

> I'th'commonwealth I would by contraries
> Execute all things. For no kind of traffic
> Would I admit no name of magistrate;
> Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,

> And use of service, none; contract, succession,
> Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
> No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
> No occupation, all men idle, all;
> And women too – but innocent and pure;
> No sovereignty . . .
> (2.1.145-54)

Not surprisingly, the cynical Sebastian and Antonio interrupt Gonzalo's idealistic musing with ironical comments, but the old counsellor goes on paraphrasing – or should we say plagiarizing – Montaigne undeterred:

> All things in common nature should produce
> Without sweat or endeavour. Treason, felony,
> Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
> Would I not have but nature should bring forth
> Of it [its] own kind all foison, all abundance
> To feed my innocent people.
> (2.1.158-62)

Reading Shakespeare's lines, one can watch over his shoulder as he changes Montaigne's third-person description of what the "nation" – "commonwealth" in Gonzalo's revealing change – did into a vision of what the old man imagines might be.

There is a second, shorter but maybe even more significant debt to Florio's Montaigne. It comes at a climactic moment in the play's action, and interestingly was not remarked upon until 1961 by Eleanor Prosser. Speaking to Ariel at the moment when Prospero's enemies lie in his power, Prospero debates with himself and with Ariel whether he should exercise forgiveness. Ariel thinks he should: "Your charm so strongly works 'em / That if you now beheld them your affections / Would become tender". "Dost thou think so, spirit?" asks Prospero. "Mine would, sir, were I human", replies Ariel. To which his master responds:

> And mine shall.
> Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
> Of their afflictions, and shall not myself.
> One of their kind, that relish all as sharply

> Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?
> Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th'quick,
> Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
> Do I take part. The rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance.
> (5.1.20-8)

This is the turning-point of the play's action, and it draws upon another of Montaigne's essays, the one called "Of Cruelty", in which he writes:

> He that through a natural facility and genuine mildness should neglect or contemn injuries received should no doubt perform a rare action, and worthy commendation. But he who, being stung and touched to the quick with any wrong or offence received, should arm himself with reason against this furiously-blind desire of revenge, and in the end, after a great conflict, yield himself mastery over it, should doubtless do much more. The first should do well, the other virtuously: the one action might be termed goodness, the other virtue. (1965, 2.108)

Shakespeare adapts Montaigne's "stung and touched to the quick" to "struck to th'quick", alters "rare action" to "rarer action", changes "injuries received" and "wrong or offence received" to "their high wrongs", takes over the idea of arming oneself with reason against vengeance ('revenge' in Montaigne), and adapts the concept of "genuine mildness" to that of becoming "tender". Shakespeare creatively reworks a passage from Montaigne that clearly meant much to him. In fact the entire play seems to have developed in Shakespeare's imagination from just those few words from Montaigne. They provided him with the moral centre of the drama, Ariel's spiritual articulation of forgiveness.

Shakespeare knew William Thomas's *The Historie of Italie* (1549), which includes an account of Prospero Adorno, a deposed duke of Genoa, and of King Alfonse of Naples who abdicated in favour of his son, Ferdinand, in order to "sail to Sicily where for the time of his short life (that dured scarce one year) he disposed himself to study, solitariness, and religion." (Shaheen 1999, 737). Prospero's magic, like that of Christopher Marlowe's Dr Faustus, is dependent

on books and entirely genuine. Whilst looking back to Marlowe's play, Shakespeare was also writing in stark contrast to his friend and rival Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*, first performed in 1610, a year before *The Tempest*. In Jonson's play we encounter only a charlatan magic and its attendant satire. Shakespeare, true to his more romantic interests, powerfully depicts the figure of a genuine magus. The editor of the second Arden edition of *The Tempest*, Frank Kermode, in attempting to characterise the play as a "pastoral tragicomedy", mentions the influences of the popular Elizabethan comedy *Mucedorus* from around 1590, book six of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and Shakespeare's collaborator John Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*, from around 1608 (Shakespeare 1954, lix).

Shakespeare also drew on his knowledge of the Bible, and, since Prospero's is a spiritual kind of magic, *The Tempest* is easily available to theological readings. In his important study, *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Plays*, first published in 1999, Naseeb Shaheen notes the use of the Bible in one of the accounts of the shipwreck of The Sea Venture in 1609 and the apparently miraculous survival of its crew and passengers. In November 1610 there was published *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia, with a Confutation of Such Scandalous Reports as haue Tended to the Disgrace of so Worthy an Enterprise*. It compares the storm to the one in the Book of Jonah, the darkness of the storm to the plague of darkness in Egypt in the Book of Exodus, and there are mentions of the Garden of Eden, Elijah being fed by the ravens, and Jesus's words from Luke 21:26: "And men's hearts shall fail them for fear and for looking after those things which shall come on the world: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." But, notes Shaheen, Shakespeare uses none of these biblical references; instead those to be found in *The Tempest* are of Shakespeare's own choosing (1999, 763).

Shaheen notes twenty-five biblical allusions in *The Tempest*. But his interest is in direct verbal comparison, rather than a biblical context for Shakespeare's narrative. Shaheen does not, for example, refer to the four mentions of tempests in the Psalms, each evoking the power of God and the human desire for revenge. Shakespeare would have known these verses and mainly through Miles Coverdale's translation in *The Book of Common Prayer*. One of the references especially encapsulates his underlying dramatic

interest: Psalm 83:15, "Persecute them even so with thy tempest and make them afraid with thy storm". The other three references to "tempest" in the Psalms are: Psalm 11:7 "Upon the ungodly he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest: this shall be their portion to drink". Psalm 50:3: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: there shall go before him a consuming fire, and a mighty tempest shall be stirred up round about him". And Psalm 55:8. "I would make haste to escape: because of the stormy wind and tempest". Shakespeare alighted on the name "Ariel" from Isaiah 29:1-2. It appeared in the Bishop's Bible and in the marginalia of the Geneva Bible, apparently Shakespeare's preferred reading version. It is used twice as an alternative name for the holy city of Jerusalem – but only in Isaiah 29:1-2. But he also knew that "Ariel", from the Hebrew, means "Lion of God". His imagination would also have connected the name to the symbol of the great naval power, the dukedom of Venice, and its presiding and famous symbol, the lion of St Mark. Lion-like, it is Ariel who performs the tempest at Prospero's bidding and puts "the wild waters in this roar" (1.2.2).

Shakespeare made use of biblical allusions throughout his works, but perhaps of all his plays *The Tempest* in performance comes closest to a religious ritual. Its story is almost liturgical. Prospero enacts his stories of enslavement, reunion, relinquishing, forgiveness, freedom, and retirement before an audience who, like a congregation gathered together in a church, are invited to bear witness, to support that which is being enacted, and who are asked to put their hands together for a prayer at the end of Prospero's confessional epilogue.

Shakespeare wrote this play – as he wrote all his plays – out of his capacity for empathy. As Miranda looks onto the ship caught in the tempest, she, who is herself depicted as possessing a creative and artistic sensibility – and takes after her father – displays the empathy of a serious-minded dramatist: "O, I have suffered / With those that I saw suffer!" (1.2.5-6). Shakespeare himself might have said the same. The dramatist's objective is to body forth a story that the audience can believe is real. In *The Winter's Tale* when the supposed statue of Queen Hermione seems magically to come to life, Paulina speaks words that we might consider to be the dramatist's creed: "it is required / You do awake your faith" (5.3.95).

In considering the overall impact of *The Tempest*, the critic Margreta de Grazia suggests that "the possibility that men can act in response to what does not touch them personally is the hope held out by the play, the hope present in Prospero's name. It is also the hope sustaining the entire theatrical enterprise" (1981, 249). For de Grazia, if Prospero's epilogue allows the audience itself to answer his prayer – and surely we always do with our applause – then, she says, our "response in itself would redeem art and life" (1981, 264). In other words, we, the audience, become god-like not only in restoring Prospero back to Naples but at the same time conferring our validation on Shakespeare's work of art through the blessing which is ours to bestow – through our applause.

How, to return to the question with which we opened our talk, did Shakespeare write *The Tempest*? He wrote it partly through his own faith in the power of the theatre, that is his faith in his own "art to enchant". His art was rooted in reading as well as in the practical considerations and contingency of the playhouse. *The Tempest* portrays the power of reading. Prospero's library is "dukedom large enough" (1.2.110); indeed, he loves his books so much that he prizes them "above [his] dukedom" (1.2.169). His books accompany him in his exile. Reading sustains Prospero, gives him strength, and teaches him magic. This is why Caliban wants Stefano and Trinculo first to seize and then to burn Prospero's books (3.2.90 and 96). But, as Prospero's power becomes more and more apparent, it seems that he really needs only one book, the one he says that he himself will drown when he abjures his "rough magic" (5.1.50), and after he has broken and buried his staff.

Peter Greenaway's 1991 film *Prospero's Books* is visually compelling in its portrayal of the books from which Prospero has drawn his magical powers. Greenaway cast one of the greatest Shakespearian actors of the twentieth century, Sir John Gielgud, as Prospero. He is omnipresent in the film and speaks almost every single line of *The Tempest*, even those of the other actors whom he appears alongside. Greenaway's film, through its portrayal of Prospero, thus succeeds in inscribing onto the play the omnipresence of Shakespeare himself, the author, the director of the action. In the story that the film wants to tell us – about where *The Tempest* came from and how Shakespeare-Prospero wrote it – only two of

Prospero's books survive. In the story about them told in the film, these are Book 23, that is *Master William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*, from 1623, and Book 24, that is, as hear in the film, "the 36th play, *The Tempest*".

How, to return to the question with which we started, did Shakespeare write *The Tempest*? He did so in part through his own sense of himself as an author. That *The Tempest* somehow bodies forth Shakespeare's self-empowerment as a dramatist especially ignited the English Romantics' imagination: for them, Shakespeare was Prospero; Prospero is Shakespeare. An enabling phrase for this influential critical meme comes in one of the poet John Keats's marvellous letters which gestures towards an autobiographical approach to Shakespeare's works: "a man's life of any worth" wrote Keats on 19 February 1819, "is a continual allegory . . . Shakespeare led a life of Allegory; his works are the comments on it" (2014, 311). For Samuel Taylor Coleridge, when lecturing on the play, Prospero was "the very Shakespeare himself of the tempest" (Bate 1992, 530). The Prospero-Shakespeare equation persists in our cultural reception of the play and supplies the final part of our answer to the question: how did Shakespeare write *The Tempest*?

The image of Prospero's magical book becomes Shakespeare's book: his book of spells, a metaphor for the corpus of works surviving in various states of manuscript and forms of print until his writing of the play. One answer to the often-asked question: "why is *The Tempest* the first play to be printed in the 1623 folio edition if it is among the last plays Shakespeare wrote" is that in it we find a particularly intense example of Shakespeare's artistic sensibility and character. "Shakespeare" is sourced from within Shakespeare's previous works, as surely as Prospero is sourced in his own magic. Shakespeare repeats motifs and moods, and adapts situations and characterizations across the whole of his playwriting career. With *The Tempest* it is almost as though Shakespeare, late in his career, wanted to show himself and his playwrighting and acting peers that he could still produce a play on his own, still make up a story, perfectly crafted, and highly original.

We have already mentioned *The Comedy of Errors*. Its divisive storm and its family reunions forecast situations present in other works which precede *The Tempest*, for example *Twelfth Night, or*

*what you will*, *Pericles*, and *The Winter's Tale*. The coups-de-théâtre whereby the supposedly dead in those storm-at-sea plays are resurrected and reunited hark back to the appearance of the Abbess to Egeon and Egeon to the Abbess in *The Comedy of Errors* and to the coming together of Hero and Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing*, of Isabella and Claudio in *Measure for Measure*, and of Prince Posthumus, Princess Innogen and the long-lost royal family in *Cymbeline*. Prospero's relationship with Ariel harks back to King Oberon's with Robin Goodfellow in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Prospero's manipulation of events and people seems reminiscent of the Machiavel Richard III. Prospero as a taming patriarch harks back to Petruccio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. A head of state usurped by his brother links *The Tempest* to *As You Like It* and *Hamlet*. The relationship between Prospero and his brother, the supposed Duke of Milan, resembles that between the rightful Duke Vincentio and his deputy, the Lord Angelo in *Measure for Measure*. Miranda and Prince Ferdinand's love-at-first-sight, in spite of familial division, harks back to *Romeo and Juliet*. The interrupted feasting in *The Tempest* recalls the banquet scenes in *Macbeth* and *Timon of Athens*. The wedding masque bears comparison with the appearance of Hymen in *As You Like It* and the apparitions conjured by the three Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*. The forming and development of the castigated outsider, Caliban, by a prevailing foreign culture recalls Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, Othello, Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Aaron the Moor in *Titus Andronicus*. Prospero, like his magician antecedent, Owen Glyndwr in *Henry IV Part One* can "call spirits from the vasty deep" (3.1.51-3), but they really do come when Prospero calls them. King Alonso and his court are castaways, King Lear-like, in the storm. His son, Prince Ferdinand, is thought to be lost at sea in the "ooze" (3.2.100), like Pericles's Queen Thaisa. As King Pericles buries his supposedly dead wife at sea, he laments over her in the following words:

> . . . scarcely coffin'd, in the ooze;
> Where, for a monument upon thy bones,
> And e'er-remaining lamps, the belching whale
> And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse,
> Lying with simple shells.

(Scene 11, 59-63)

Or, as Ariel sings, to Ferdinand of his supposedly dead father:

> Of his bones are coral made;
> Those are pearls that were his eyes;
> Nothing of him that doth fade
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.
> (1.2.400-4)

In thinking of *The Tempest* as a self-empowered, self-sourced, and self-determining drama on Shakespeare's part it is important *not* to read the play as merely half-disguised autobiography. This kind of reading, which took root in the Romantic period, reached through the nineteenth century – for example in Edward Dowden's influential *Shakespeare: a Critical Study of his Mind and Art* (1875) – and into the twentieth century, reaching its apotheosis in Morton Luce's first Arden edition of the play in 1902. Luce writes that "the great artist puts into his work the best part of him; and in a long series of his creations the spirit of his life will consciously or unconsciously become manifest" (1902, l). Luce then spends the next twenty pages of his introduction illustrating the "high moral tone of *The Tempest*" (ibid.) and claiming it all for Shakespeare's own, personal, political and religious outlook. In 1906, within four years of Luce's edition, the great essayist and biographer Lytton Strachey would find nothing especially attractive in Prospero and even make the claim in his essay "Shakespeare's Final Period" that Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* out of boredom:

> bored with people, bored with real life, bored with drama, bored, in fact, with everything except poetry and poetical dreams. He is no longer interested, one often feels, in what happens, or who says what, so long as he can find place for a faultless lyric, or a new, unimagined rhythmical effect, or a grand and mystic speech. (1906, 52)

Strachey is wrong. He is being characteristically playful and waspish, he himself was a descendent of the William Strachey whose eye-witness account of the shipwreck in 1609 in part inspired

*The Tempest*. In his essay he set out to undercut the kind of moral autobiography that underpinned Luce's literary criticism.

But *The Tempest* continues to seek a conversation about the relationship between the artist's life and the creations of his art. So to conclude this talk, we should like briefly to make three connections between *The Tempest* and Stratford-upon-Avon. These are made possible in part by biographical accounts of Shakespeare as well as by the afterlives of the play itself.

The first comes from an account by a devoted friend of Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, who on visiting the site of Shakespeare's family home, New Place, on 9 May 1934 was captivated by what a man said to her there: "That was where his study windows looked out when he wrote *The Tempest*" (1982, 209), and Woolf later reflected: "to think of writing *The Tempest* looking out onto that garden: what a rage and storm of thought to have gone over any mind. No doubt the solidity of the place was comfortable. No doubt he saw the cellars with serenity" (210). That *The Tempest* formed part of Shakespeare's life at New Place is a creative and critical meme that continues. On the entrance to New Place are engraved Prospero's words "To thee and to thy company / I bid a hearty welcome" (5.1.110-11). Visitors to the site today can see a beautiful sculpture of a Renaissance galleon, representing the sea in Shakespeare's imagination – even though Stratford-upon-Avon is one of the places furthest from the coast in England. In the great garden of New Place there is a sculpture by Greg Wyatt inspired by Prospero's epilogue.

The second connection is about Shakespeare's depictions of fathers and daughters in his late plays. In 2004, in his biography *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*, Stephen Greenblatt suggested that "the woman who most intensely appealed to Shakespeare in his life was twenty years younger than he: his daughter Susanna" (2004, 389). In the film *Prospero's Books* there is mention of the name of Prospero's deceased wife, a character entirely absent from Shakespeare's play: the film tells us she was named Susanna. But René Weis in his 2007 book *Shakespeare Revealed*, a biography of Shakespeare's inner life, looks in a different direction and considers:

> the daughter behind Miranda, Marina, and Perdita was probably

> Judith rather than Susanna, married mother of three-year-old Elizabeth Hall. And if the literary magician from New Place is Prospero on his island, who might Ariel, Caliban, Ferdinand and Antonio be? Clearly Shakespeare did more than just import his own household into his archly self-conscious play, which almost from the first was seen as his most personal work. (2007, 337)

But what about Miranda when she is depicted playing chess with her new husband, Ferdinand, the future King of Naples? Does the as-yet-unmarried Judith as Miranda turn into the married Susanna as Miranda by the end? In light of Susanna Hall's biography, the novelist Margaret Drabble has noted of this scene "you need a good education to be able to play chess" (2015, 337). But we might suppose both of the Shakespeare's daughters to have been well educated. The game of chess reveals not only an educated daughter, but also one keen to learn the habits of her new husband, Ferdinand, the future King of Naples: Naples was considered to be the centre of chess-playing (Shakespeare 1999, 274). Prospero, too, has been playing his own game of chess in assembling the courtiers around him from different directions and by different moves.

The third and final connection we should like to make takes us back to Prospero's epilogue. It is metrically distinctive, being written in iambic tetrameter. If we seek Prospero in Stratford-upon-Avon then we might find him not only in New Place, but also in Holy Trinity Church. The recent, ground-breaking research of Lena Orlin suggests that Shakespeare oversaw the making and modelling of his own funerary monument above his grave. Perhaps he also authorised his own epitaph, which is not only cast in the same meter as Prospero's epilogue, but also is written in rhyming couplets:

> And my ending is despair
> Unless I be relieved by prayer,
> Which pierces so, that it assaults
> Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
> As you from crimes would pardoned be,
> Let your indulgence set me free.
>
> Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
> To dig the dust enclosed here.

> Blessed be the man that spares these stones,
> And cursed be he that moves these bones.

Or, let's say this: that whoever chose those lines to be engraved on Shakespeare's gravestone might well have had the magician Prospero in mind. When the novelist Sir Walter Scott visited Shakespeare's grave on 8 April 1828 he referred to it as "the tomb of the mighty wizard" (1998, 509).

How did Shakespeare write *The Tempest*? Through his belief in the power of narrative driven by empathy, his own experience, his own profound reading, his theatrical entrepreneurship, and his imagination; he wrote it through his self-determination not only to entertain and to make money but also to open and possibly to change the minds and hearts of his audiences; and he wrote it through his own self-trust. As a mature artist he was confident enough to body forth a drama that – like its predecessor *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – presented a public and creative discussion on what the art that he practised meant to him. His faith in the redemptive power of art was his inspiration, his guiding spirit, his Ariel-muse. There is nothing "rough" about Shakespeare's "potent" and self-empowered magic in *The Tempest*.

## Works Cited

Bate, Jonathan. 1992. *The Romantics on Shakespeare*. London: Penguin.

Burrow, Colin. 2013. *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Drabble, Margaret. 2015. "Afterword". In *The Shakespeare Circle: An Alternative Biography*, edited by Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells, 335-9. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Greenblatt, Stephen. 2002. *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Ovid. 1961. *Shakespeare's Ovid Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses*, edited by W.H.D. Rouse. London: Centaur.

Shaheen, Naseeb. 1999. *Bible References in Shakespeare's Plays*. London: Associated University Press.

de Grazia, Margreta. 1981. "*The Tempest*: Gratuitous Movement or Action Without Kibes and Pinches". *Shakespeare Studies* 14: 249-65.

Keats, John. 2014. *Selected Letters*, edited by John Barnard. London:

Penguin.
Montaigne, Michel de. 1965. *Essays*. 3 vols, translated by John Florio. London: Dent.
Prosser, Eleanor. 1961. "Shakespeare, Montaigne and the 'Rarer Action'". *Shakespeare Studies* 1: 262-6.
Scott, Walter. 1998. *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*. Edited by W.E.K. Anderson. Edinburgh: Canongate Books.
Shakespeare, William. 2005. *The Complete Works*. Edited by Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett, and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
– 1999. *The Tempest*. Edited by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. London: Thomas Nelson.
– 1987. *The Tempest*. Edited by Stephen Orgel. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
– 1954. *The Tempest*. Edited by Frank Kermode. London: Methuen.
– 1902. *The Tempest*. Edited by Morton Luce. London: Methuen.
Strachey, Lytton. 1906. *Books and Characters*. London: Chatto and Windus.
Weis, René. 2007. *Shakespeare Revealed: A Biography*. London: John Murray.
Wells, Stanley. 1972. "Shakespeare Without Sources". *Stratford-upon-Avon Studies* 14: 58-74.
Woolf, Virginia. 1982. *A Writer's Diary*. Edited by Leonard Woolf. London: Harcourt, inc.

2

# Navigating Time: Memories of Mediterranean Worlds in *The Tempest*

Silvia Bigliazzi

Abstract

As Frank Kermode has aptly summarised, *The Tempest* starts where other romances end (2000, 286), and this demands long expositions and recapitulations. Narratives articulate memories and give them new shapes. *The Tempest* accommodates within its romance frame memories of the ancient past as well as of contemporary Mediterranean models and archetypes. It develops through a continuous display of theatrical spectacle and narrative rhetoric, which, while inhibiting dramatic action, parallels, and competes with, visual gesture and pageantry. This essay concentrates on the role of memory within the play and in the dynamic relation with other memories of the Mediterranean past. Special attention is devoted to Prospero's painful memorising in relation to Aeneas's own woeful story-telling in book 2 of the *Aeneid*, and questions are raised on the role of sources and their positions in relation to reception stances. By exploring narrative intricacies at an intertextual level as well as within the play itself, the essay offers a reflection on human capacity to make sense of time and memory in un unstable world of deluding appearances.

Keywords: Shakespeare; *The Tempest*; Virgil; *The Aeneid*; memory

## 1. Time Castaways

In Book 5 of Lucretius' *De Rerum natura*, man's birth is famously likened to a shipwreck on the shores of light ("Tum porro puer, ut saevis projectus ab undis / navita, nudus humi iacens . . . in luminis oras / nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit luminis oras"; "Then further the child, like a sailor cast forth by the cruel waves lies naked upon the ground . . . as soon as nature has spilt him forth with throes from his mother's womb into the regions of light"; 1924, 222-3, 224-5). Lucretius was not fully translated into English until 1682 by Thomas Creech, but his poem was reprinted many times in the course of the

sixteenth century, and attempts have been made to show similarities between his materialism and Shakespeare's own materialism of nature.[1] Shakespeare does not use exactly the same image as that of a shipwreck, but in sonnet 60 he similarly depicts nativity as an entrance into the "main of light" (5), evoking the sense of a voyage through time which will gradually lead man to his own death:

> Nativity, once in the main of light,
> Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned
> Crookèd eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
> And time that gave doth now his gift confound. (5-8)[2]

For both Lucretius and Shakespeare, to be born is to enter the sea of light, but while for Lucretius light is the shore upon which we are castaways on a voyage through darkness – a sailing away from not-being-yet towards being-no-more – for Shakespeare light is the sea of being: through it we navigate under the malign influences of heaven, and we gradually decay under the power of Time, in a perilous voyage as a nostos to nothingness.

As Hans Blumenberg reminds us, the traditional metaphorical poignancy of sailing and shipwreck is built on two premises: that the sea is a "naturally given boundary of the realm of human activities" and is also demonised "as the sphere of the unreckonable and lawless, in which it is difficult to find one's bearings" (1997, 8). In *The Tempest*, the sea is where Prospero is set with his daughter at the mercy of unpredictable waves and an uncertain fortune. His voyage is one of potential death and rebirth – like the child Lucretius sees being tossed ashore by the cruel waves. It is a political space as it also is for the King of Naples on his return from Tunis where his daughter has been married to the King. The Mediterranean is in both cases a politicised space where Antonio expels Prospero, and across which Naples and Tunis are connected; it separates but also liaises, and at the beginning of the play it is the "lawless" sea where tempests, natural and artful, may reserve unexpected surprises capable of producing a cut in time.

1 As Shoaf calls it (2014); on the relevance of Lucretius in humanist thinking see Greenblatt 2011.

2 All Shakespearean quotations are from Shakespeare 2005.

This beginning is both fantastical and potentially tragic. From the start it connotes the play's temporality as sharing in the finiteness, irreversibility and linear directionality typical of tragic time, fraught with tensions and anxieties.[3] But we will soon learn that it is only instrumental in turning this temporality into one of pacification and resolution. It is the time of romance, tragicomedy and reconciliation in a drama where the performance and the action roughly coincide, although the story covers a much longer period evoked through the characters' memories. The present is replete with, and conditioned by, a thick sense of the past that translates into an obsessively repetitive dramatic pattern which plays around with Prospero's painful remembrance of his own past, ambivalently combining a sense of guilt for his own political negligence in Milan, and a wish to revenge on his enemies. His story of dispossession is repeated twice in the play by Sebastian and Antonio, and the Caliban team, respectively, and twice fails. The present is when Fortune furnishes Prospero with the occasion finally to punish those who have made him suffer; it is a cut in time similar to the ancient *kairos*, or right moment, that Prospero refers to an auspicious star, thus appropriating that ancient model through the language of Renaissance providential thinking. It is his own zenith, he says, and yet it is not entirely dependent on a higher design but on whether or not he will miss the opportunity:

> By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,
> Now my dear lady, hath mine enemies
> Brought to this shore; and by my prescience
> I find my zenith doth depend upon
> A most auspicious star, whose influence
> If now I court not but omit, my fortunes
> Will ever after droop. Here cease more questions.
> Thou art inclined to sleep; 'tis a good dullness,
> And give it way: I know thou canst not choose.
> (1.2.179-87)

This ancient idea belongs to a qualitative, rather than a quantitative conception of time, as instead *chronos* does. It is a non-measurable

3 See my discussion in Bigliazzi 2019; see also Frye 1996; Kastan 1982; Bushnell 2016 and 2018; Wagner 2014 and 2018.

temporality independent of a transcendental will, entailing individual agency and responsibility. In this sense, it is an ethically-imbued conception. It is up to Prospero to grasp this opportunity and to make up for the past. He must remember himself now and be ready for the action. His language recalls this ancient model, but Prospero speaks of stars, fortune and Christian values. The need not to forget and to act accordingly is part of a punishment-and-repentance frame which is deeply Christian and concerns Prospero and his enemies alike. As William Fulwood, among others, wrote in his translation of Guglielmo Gratarolo's *De memoria reparanda, augenda servandaque*, which was published in 1562 with the title of *The Castel of Memorie*, "Take memory away, what is a man? what can he doe, or else what can he say?" (Av*v*). As I have argued elsewhere (2013), Prospero's revenge through memory proves to be a step in the reconstruction of his own identity. But what remains to be discussed is how memorisation becomes further problematised once it is set against other examples of ancient representations of Mediterranean acts of memory. Hulme (1982) and Hamilton (1990) are among those who have long pointed out the intricacies of classical stratifications in this play, which, as in the case of the Virgilian echoes, "rather than appearing as shadowy outlines beneath the words of the text, satisfactory reminders of generic and ideological continuity . . . [break] through the surface of the play to become a subject for discussion by the characters" (109). Hulme's reference here is to the "widow Dido" episode in 1.2, which explicitly connects the play with the Roman poet. But when we think about Prospero's traumatic memorisation of his own past in 1.2, and Aeneas' similarly traumatic remembrance in book 2 of the *Aeneid*, we are faced with a different form of dialogue, which is neither a neutral reminder of classical continuities, nor does it establish an explicit analogical ground. In the following pages I will interrogate what this ground may be, and will consider how a dialogue across different genres and stories as well as different receptions of Virgil may affect our perception of Prospero's memorial position within the play as well as the impact of memory on narrative and playacting.

## 2. Memory

Sixteenth-century theories of memory were at the heart of an intense debate on its cognitive role, its somatic position in the brain, and its religious and political functions. It is no surprise that, as Andrew Hiscock has noted, "Prospero seeks to restrain those around him with a *grand narrative* of the past" so that "the play urges us repeatedly to consider the desperate struggle that is being enacted to establish what should be remembered and to consider the very partial nature of any human act of memory" (2011, 3). The reason why intellectuals were obsessed with theories of memory and ways to retain it, from the arts based on repetition by rote or on loci and visual models, to later Ramist logical and dialectical ordering, was an awareness that the sense of the past is ephemeral and that it may be subjected to revision. Montaigne is probably the best and most acute writer about the fallibility of memory in this period. In "On presumption", for instance, he avows his own incurable propensity to forgetting:

> Memorie is an instrument of great service, and without which, judgement will hardly discharge his duty, whereof I have great want . . . if I must remember a discourse of any consequence, be it of any length, I am driven on this vile and miserable necessitie, to learne every word I must speake, by rote: otherwise I should never doe it well or assuredly . . . Memorie is the receptacle and case of knowledge. Mine being so weake, I have no great cause to complaine if I know but little. I know the names of Artes in generall and what they treate of, but nothing further. I turne and tosse over books, but do not studie them . . . The Authors, the place, the words, and other circumstances, I sodainely forget: and am so excellent in forgetting, that as much as any thing else I forget mine owne writing and compositions. (1613, 367, 368)

Aristotle's epistemology, differently from Plato's notion of a prenatal knowledge conversing with the Ideas, was rooted mostly in the ordinary and material experience. His theory was highly influential on Renaissance thinking, which also distinguished between memorial response to sense-perception and the conscious act of recollection, a process conceived of as a form of inference

from data assimilable to "a sort of investigation" (Hiscock 2011, 12). But traces of a Platonic ontology of memory also lingered on in Christian thinking, particularly in Augustine's legacy, whose conception of spiritual identity involved some form of epiphanic "remembering and reappraisal" (21). As Hiscock again points out,

> In this radical rescripting of human experience in the *Confessions*, Augustine's speaker appeals not only for a renewed sense of spiritual direction from the Godhead, but interrogates some of the fundamental axes through which we organize temporal existence: "Thus my boyhood, which is no longer, lies in the past which is no longer . . . neither future nor past exists . . . The present considering the past is the memory, the present considering the present is immediate awareness, the present considering the future is expectation. (Ibid.)

The connection between memory and spiritual renewal would affect the debate in subsequent centuries, including the reception of Cicero's moralisation of *memoria* as for instance presented in *De Inventione* (book 2):

> [160] Prudentia est rerum bonarum et malarum neutrarumque scientia. Partes eius: memoria, intellegentia, providentia. Memoria est, per quam animus repetit illa, quae fuerunt; intellegentia, per quam ea perspicit, quae sunt; providentia, per quam futurum aliquid videtur ante quam factum est. Iustitia est habitus animi communi utilitate conservata suam cuique tribuens dignitatem. Eius initium est ab natura profectum; deinde quaedam in consuetudinem ex utilitatis ratione venerunt: postea res et ab natura profectas et ab consuetudine probatas legum metus et religio sanxit. (1949, 326-7)
>
> [Wisdom is the knowledge of what is good, what is bad and what is neither good nor bad. Its parts are memory, intelligence and foresight. Memory is the faculty by which the mind recalls what has happened. Intelligence is the faculty by which it ascertains what is. Foresight is the faculty by which it is seen that something is going to occur before it occurs.]

In turn, Aquinas was to argue that "it is in the nature of prudence that prudent people are directed through those courses of action which are at hand by a consideration not only of the present

circumstances but also of past events" (qtd in Hiscock 2011, 22). The political implications of cultivating the art of memory were not immune to such thinking and through intellectuals such as Vives and Erasmus they reached Henry VIII's court and then circulated widely afterward. Erasmus was among the most eminent thinkers in this respect, suggesting a cognitive frame that combined the need for artificial memory and for achieving intellectual apprehension. In his *De ratione studii* (1528), he remarked that

> Although I do not deny that memory is aided by 'places' and 'images', nevertheless the best memory is based on three things above all: understanding, system, and care. For memory largely consists in having thoroughly understood something. Then system sees to it that we can recall by an act of recovery even what we have forgotten. Furthermore, care is of the highest importance, not only here but in all things. That being so you must repeatedly re-read very carefully what you want to remember. (Qtd in Hiscock 2011, 24)

It is not coincidental, therefore, that the sixteenth century witnessed a new emphasis on national history with a special attention to its crises, and a whole host of narratives were published in the second half of the century, culminating in Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* first published in 1577. Shakespeare was to rely heavily on them.

Prospero's concern about memory is related to this complex scenario. Memory is unstable and unable to fully restore the truth of the past, but man must strive to this end as this conception of memory bridges the cognitive and the ethical, the religious and the political, in ways that make it central to both private and public life.

## 3. *The Tempest*: Navigating Memory

This ambivalent attitude towards memory, aware of both its necessity and its limits, is possibly nowhere as clear as in the first opening duologue between Prospero and Miranda, where, I will argue, not only does Prospero navigate through time to reach back to his own past and probe his own and Miranda's capacity to conjure up their

own individual memories, but Shakespeare also navigates through literary models implicitly to evoke and deconstruct them.

In 1990 Donna B. Hamilton was among the first critics to emphasise the relevance of Virgilian symbols and style in the play's texture. Shakespeare, she argued, reworked "the chiefly contested issues of national politics by rewriting some major sections of the *Aeneid*" (x), and in this way he interrogated the ideology of royal power, also with regard to colonisation practices. His naturalisation and problematisation of "the Virgilian idiom" eventually brought "the Virgilian text into dialogue with the problems of power as they were being experienced in its own time" (66). One of her foci of interest was the last scene where we can find "all of the central elements of [the] reunion of the Trojans with their king" (130). In words similar to those used by Aeneas with Dido, "Prospero steps forward and speaks to the group 'Behold, sir King, / The wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero' (5.1.106-7)", and "as Aeneas grasps the hands of his men, so Prospero embraces Gonzalo, thereby assuring him that what he is seeing has a corporeal reality". And eventually, "like Dido welcoming the Trojans, Prospero welcomes his visitors (5.1.110-11)" (130-1). On the initiative of Prospero with the cooperation of the Alonso group, the final reunion, as in the *Aeneid*, re-establishes the lost order. But more interestingly, in this last scene Shakespeare writes into the dialogue "several reminders that a new story has been told – or, as the dialogue has it, that Prospero now has a new story to tell. The pattern for all these lines is that ancient moment when, at Dido's banquet, Aeneas at last responds to her urgings and finally recounts the tale of the destruction of Troy" (131). As Dido encouraged Aeneas to recount the story from the beginning and in full details, so Alonso insists that Prospero tells the story, which is an act of memory:

> "Immo age, et a prima dic, hospes, origine nobis
> Insidias", inquit, "Danaum casusque tuorum
> erroresque tuos".
> (1900, 1.753-5)

> ["Come, illustrious guest, / begin the tale", she said, "begin and tell / the perfidy of Greece, thy people's fall, / and all thy wanderings". (1910)]

this must crave . . .
. . . a most strange story
(*The Tempest* 5.1.116-17)

Give us particulars of thy preservation;
How thou hast met us here.
(*The Tempest* 5.1.135-6)

. . . I long
To hear the story of your life, which must
Take the ear strangely.
(*The Tempest* 5.1.311-13)

But beyond superficial similarities, their narratives have different formats and functions: while Aeneas's tale may be told in its entirety at the end of the banquet, Prospero says that his is "a chronicle of day by day, / Not a relation for a breakfast, nor / Befitting this first meeting" (165-7), and he then invites everybody to enter his cell where he will eventually tell "the story of my life" (308) – a story which will not be "a replication of the tragic narrative Aeneas told to Dido", but rather "of the renovation of a mind and the union of self and society that is made possible thereby" (Hamilton 1990, 131-2).

This final remark invites further rethinking of Hamilton's suggestive comments. The pattern of repetition of an assumedly literary model of recollection at the invitation of an eager listener concerns radically different memorial acts in qualitative terms. Aeneas's long narrative is of a deeply painful past with which he has not reconciled himself yet, as his proverbial opening lines clarify. Aeneas's remembering is a re-suffering that brings up a trauma, it is the awakening of a grievous past he is resistant to return to and rather prefers to keep dormant, if not strategically to forget.

But let us look at it more closely. In book 2 of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas pours out his passion in a long tale covering the whole book (3-804), premised on a prologue where he voices his anguish and announces a story that would make even his Greek enemies weep, and the tale ends up being so moving that Dido will fall in love with him. This was a very famous tale at the time. As Colin Burrow has pointed out, "The first 4 books of the *Aeneid*, particularly books 2 . . . and 4, seem to have been more frequently read in Tudor grammar schools

than any other passage from Virgil's epic" (2013, 56). Its first 7 books were translated by Thomas Phaer in quantitative verse in 1558 (the whole 12 books were first published in 1573), and in the same heroic Latinate meter Richard Stunyhurst translated the first 4 books in 1582:

A dolefull worke me to renew (O Quéene) thou doost constraine,
To tell how *Greekes* the *Troiā* welth, & lamētable raigne
Did ouerthrow, which I my self haue seen and béen apart
No small thereof, but to declare the stories all: what hart
Can of the *Greekes* or soldiour one of all *Vlisses* rout Refrayne to
wéepe? and now the night with hie heauen goth about,
And on the Skies the fallyng Starrs doo men prouoke to rest:
But if such great desier to know, such longyng haue your brest
Of *Troy* the latter toyle to here, to speake or yet to thinke
For all that it my mynde abhors, and sorows make me shrinke:
I will begin . . .
(Phaer 1558, 2.3-13)

You me byd, O Princesse, too scarrify a festered old soare
How that thee Troians wear prest by Graecian armye.
Whose fatal misery my sight hath wytnesed heauye:
In which sharp byckring my self, as partye, remayned.
What ruter of Dolopans weare so cruel harted in harckning,
What curst Myrmidones, what karne of canckred Vlisses
That voyd of al weeping could eare so mortal an hazard?
And now with moysture thee night from welken is hastning:
And stars too slumber dooe stur mens natural humours.
How be yt (Princelye Regent) yf that thy affection earnest
Thy mynd enflameth, too learne our fatal auentures,
Thee toyls of Troians, and last in fortunat affray:
Thogh my queazy stomack that bluddy recital abhorreth,
And tears with trilling shal bayne my phisnomye deepely:
Yeet thyn hoat affected desyre shal gayn the rehersal.
(Stunyhurst 1582, 2.3-17)

Books 2 and 4 were translated in blank verse by Henry Howard Early of Surrey already in 1557:

Infandum, regina, iubes renovare dolorem,
Troianas ut opes et lamentabile regnum
ereuint Danai; quaeque ipse miserrima vidi,
et quorum pars magna fui. Quis talia fando
Myrmidonum Dolopumve aut duri miles Ulixi
temperet a lacrimis? Et iam nox umida caelo
praecipitat, suadentque cadentia sidera somnos.
Sed si tantus amor casus cognoscere nostros
et breviter Troiae supremum audire laborem,
quamquam animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit, incipiam.
(Vergil 1900, 2.3-13)

Thus gan to speak. I Quene, it is thy wil,
I shold review a woe cannot be told:
Now that the Grekes did spoile, and ouerthrow
The Phrygian wealth, and wailful realm of Troy,
Those ruthful things that I my self beheld,
And wherof no small part fel to my share.
Which to expresse, who could refraine from teres?
What Myrmidon? Or yet what Dolopes?
What stern Ulysses waged soldiar?
And low moist night now from the welkin falls,
And sterres declining counsel vs to rest.
But sins so great is thy delight that here
Of our mishaps, and Troyes last decay:
Though to record the same my minde abhorres,
And plaint eschues: yet thus will I begyn.
(Surrey 1557, 2.3-17)

In 1594 Christopher Marlowe possibly in collaboration with Thomas Nashe presented the same narrative in *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, offering an almost literal translation of the initial lines,

except that in this play Aeneas proves radically different from Virgil's: he is a hesitant and an apparently shattered hero. And yet his tale is likewise announced as a tearful narrative that will make the listeners weep:

> AENEAS A woeful tale bids Dido to unfold,
> Whose memory, like pale death's stony mace,
> Beats forth my senses from this troubled soul,
> And makes Aeneas sink at Dido's feet.
> DIDO What, faints Aeneas to remember Troy,
> In whose defence he fought so valiantly?
> Look up, and speak.
> AENEAS Then speak, Aeneas, with Achilles's tongue,
> And, Dido, and you Carthaginian peers
> Hear me, but yet with Myrmidons' harsh ears,
> Daily inured to broils and massacres,
> Lest you be moved too much with my sad tale.
> (1999, 2.1.114-25)

If we compare Virgil with Marlowe, we sense that, as Colin Burrow has argued, Virgil's "idiom is that of the set-piece declamation, the performance of rhetorical artistry rather than of exchanges between people" (2013, 55). We also perceive why "Virgil is not concerned with conversation but with the affective force of speech" (56). The first four books and this particular tale in the *Aeneid* could not possibly be models "of theatrical conversations but of what might be called situated effect", for instance showing "the powerful influence of Aeneas's act of narrating on Dido" (ibid.) – an example that would be taken up by Shakespeare in *Othello* when Desdemona is likewise charmed by Othello's narratives of his life events.[4] Aeneas's tale in Virgil is a typically epic narrative which, for all its passion, remains hardly adaptable to the stage, so that Marlowe has Dido interrupt it several times in order to suggest a conversation replete with emotional engagement, eventually leading up to her request of ending the tale ("O end, Aeneas! I can hear no more", 2.1.243). Shakespeare would again recall this passage in Polonius's

4 For a longer discussion of the function of narratives in *Othello* see e.g. Macaulay 2005.

similar request to the actor's playing Aeneas in *Hamlet*'s Hecuba scene ("Prithee no more!" 2.2.523). But to return to this narrative in Virgil and its dramatised version by Marlowe, what can be safely argued is that it was very famous, that it was a marker of the epic genre – although at the time epic narratives could also be defined as tragedies – and that at this point Aeneas's passion shows him coming to terms with a trauma memory.

Laurie Maguire and Emma Smith have rightly contended that Aeneas and Prospero are very similar in their response to a trauma which in both cases is of dispossession and exile, and treat Marlowe's Aeneas as a haunting presence in Derrida's terms, a ghost that "engineers a habitation without proper inhabiting", a lingering spectre which is and is not there, "neither dead nor alive" (2015, 26). In somewhat similar yet not identical terms, Colin Burrow has remarked that Virgil is neither central nor peripheral, but "shimmers across the work rather than shaping it, repeatedly providing options and possibilities for a larger understanding of the story" (2013, 82). What remains to be elucidated, though, is how to interpret and pin down such a shimmering presence (77). In other words, we are confronted with the problem of how to make sense of the interplay between models and texts from the double perspective of what they may have meant then, and what they mean for us now. This is a question to which Robert Miola could probably respond as follows: "one scholar's echo, signaling indebtedness, is another scholar's coincidence, signifying nothing" (2000, 13-14; see also Miola 2004, 23; Maguire and Smith 2015, 18).

My own sense of this shimmering, ghostly presence is that of a meaning-generative intertextual and infracontextual engine which may add layers of signification while not being indispensable for the play to signify. Following Claes Schaar, Barbara Mowat has contended – and Maguire and Smith with her – that "the intertexual moment is one of recognition first and then of understanding, when 'surface contexts, operating as a signal, trigger a memory of the infracontext'" (2000, 28). What this implies is a shift in "focus from the source-reading author (and from the source-hunting critic) to the source-recognizing reader" (27). Of course, infracontextuality as here defined raises a whole series of related questions about how to reconcile source and reception studies which the 'vertical'

infracontextual approach does not tackle but skips by placing critical emphasis on individual receptions and responses. What is of interest in this context, though, is that, as Mowat points out, there is a stratified network of implications that invites reflection on the meaning-making potential of their signifying density. To bring just one example, the opening storm "triggers memories of the *Aeneid* and of Strachey's 'True Reportory' . . . [which in turn] recalls the *Aeneid* and *Clitophon and Leucippe*, and perhaps the *Metamorphoses* and the *Arcadia* as well" (32). The same intricate implications were pointed out by Peter Hulme with regard to the "widow Dido" passage recalled above:

> To recall Carthage is to bring to mind several centuries of punishing wars with Italy, not the happiest memories when presumably – though this is only implied – Claribel has been a gift to fend off a dangerous new power in the central Mediterranean. After all Dido, the Carthaginian virago, died sooner than marry an African king, the fate that has been imposed upon Claribel to the evident distress of the whole party, including the father who forced her into the marriage. Antonio has his own reasons for over-emphasizing the distance between Naples and Tunis ('Ten lineages beyond man's life' (II.i.242)), but Alonso also talks of his daughter as 'so far from Italy removed / I ne'er again shall see her' (II.i.106-7). Since Tunis is closer to Naples than Milan is, the distance must be predominantly the cultural one implied in Sebastian's bitter remark that Ferdinando's presumed demise is the punishment due to Alonso, 'That would not bless our Europe with your daughter, / But rather lose her to an African' (II.i.119-21), despite her 'loathness' for the match. It is perhaps no longer possible – if it ever was – to fully untangle the skeins of this Mediterranean labyrinth. (1986, 112)

In the "widow Dido" phrase there are several layers of implication that can hardly be entirely unfolded,[5] and this is something that the Prospero-Aeneas parallel does not evoke in the same way while activating the meaning-making intertextual engine. Prospero's story does not respond to an epic design, as Aeneas's does, and his 'sin' does not reflect the *felix culpa* model to which Aeneas's own

5 For a fuller discussion of this passage, see Hulme 1986, 109-12.

belongs in causing Dido's death – an event which follows his tale. This difference begins to move the engine contrastively. Prospero must atone for his sin of forgetfulness. The neglect of his duties is morally and politically condemnable, as we have just recalled, and this makes him co-responsible for the loss of the Dukedom.

As Stanley Wells and Paul Edmondson point out in this volume, *The Tempest* "comes closest to a religious ritual", and this level of rituality is very much attuned to the sense of atonement pervading the whole play. The length of Prospero's initial narrative is unquestionably exceptional in a play replete with magic and spectacle, and it is its very length and complicated unfolding that raise questions about its function. It has also been remarked that the play's labyrinthine structure has a fragmented plot featuring repeated narratives and suspended actions, alongside the characters' temporary loss of identities – overall a stagnant plot.[6] But if we go back to Prospero's initial narrative and set it side by side with Aeneas's tale in Marlowe's play, it suddenly appears incomparably more intriguing, and not because Miranda's interjections are more interesting than Dido's: it is because Prospero's personality and his own self-narratisation abound with more complex implications unrelated to a foundational epic but referable to a tragic experience whose gradual unfolding needs the interaction of different narrative and (meta)theatrical worlds on stage eventually to reach a comic ending.

## 4. In the Loop of Time

In *The Tempest* the access to plural time-space worlds is grounded on an awareness that recollections are subject to time's erosion and self-delusion, a question consonant with contemporary reflections on the mysteries of the mind's capacity to assemble and retain numberless forms. In 1601 Thomas Wright posed precisely this question:

> How can possibly be conserved, without confusion, such an infinite number of formes in the soule, as we see Learned men and Artificers retain? in what tables are they painted? in what Glasses are they to

6 See for instance Bigliazzi 2014 and Serpieri 2014.

> be seene? why doth not the huge mountaine darken the little moaths in the Sun? the formes of fire fight with the formes of water? How, when we would remember can we single a Flie from the university or beasts, soules, and fish? how a Violet from the infinite varietie of flowers, hearbes and trees?[7]

Martin Butler has rightly noticed that in *The Tempest* what "you take to be wonderful depends on where you stand to look at it" (2007, xxvi), but it is likewise arguable that the sense of the real depends very much 'on how you are told to look at it', which is a typically narrative problem. How complex this issue is here emerges in Prospero's initial tale whose lacunae raise questions on his narrative intentions. Memories are always fabrications to some extent, they may be changed over time, they may be eroded or invented anew. Prospero's tale in 1.2 is addressed to Miranda, and yet it shows the stylistic obscurity of monologuing, a private discourse pointing to an urgent need to validate his own memory. Miranda wants to know about the nature of the storm, and shows painful sympathy for those she has seen suffer in the shipwreck. But Prospero evades her question, and his avoiding it foregrounds ellipsis as a prominent figure endowed with psychological urgencies.

Soon after inviting his daughter to open her ear, obey, and be attentive (37-8), he inquires whether she can remember a time before their arrival at the cell. Miranda's comment on her dream-like remembrance of the women tending her when she was a little child (45-6) is the first hint at the dubious trustworthiness of memory, a topic which will soon become a major preoccupation of the play. Prospero's following image of "the dark backward and abysm of time" in which he urges her to see (49-50) draws a dizzying figure of temporal vertigo expressing his passionate concern about time and memory, and implicitly about narratives as well. It is only at this point that his tale takes off, a speech that bears the signs of a plea for verification and assurance: as Magnusson has rightly pointed out, his "style depicts the thinking of a man pestered, even baffled, by complications and qualifications", showing "the causes of events to

7 Questions 68 and 69 from "Problems concerning the substance of our Soules" (Wright 304-5); see also Tribble 2006.

be obscure, undecidable" (1986, 57).[8] But however dark the causes may be, there is no doubt that Antonio and himself are crucial to those events. Miranda does not intervene with interjections in Dido's style, but it is her father who calls on her to make sure that she pays attention to him when he talks about her "false uncle" (77), and then again after summing up his brother's subtle usurpation of his own powers and his avowal of his own guilt in awakening Antonio's evil nature:

> Prospero *I pray thee mark me.*
> I, thus *neglecting* worldly ends, all dedicated
> To closeness and the bettering of my mind
> With that which, but by being so retired,
> O'er-prized all popular rate, *in my false brother*
> *Awaked an evil nature*; and my trust,
> Like a good parent, did *beget* of him
> A *falsehood* in its contrary as great
> As my trust was, which had indeed no limit,
> A confidence sans bound. He being thus lorded
> Not only with what my revenue yielded,
> But what my power might else exact, *like one*
> *Who having into truth, by telling of it,*
> *Made such a sinner of his memory,*
> *To credit his own lie, he did believe*
> *He was indeed the Duke.* Out o' th' substitution,
> And executing th'outward face of royalty
> With all prerogative, hence his ambition growing –
> *Dost thou hear?*
> Miranda Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.
> (1.2.88-106; emphasis mine)

Prospero did not simply forget his political duties, he neglected them, and this neglecting is imbued with moral contempt. Nor did

8 According to Tribble, mnemonic rivalry sets off a "competition of two memories of the past: Prospero's powerful narrative of his exile from Milan and Miranda's shadowy, partial memory of a scene from her early childhood" (2006, 156). As I have already argued, however, "Miranda's memories are reduced almost to nil and can hardly be considered as an alternative to her father's monadic account" (2014, 131n15).

he passively allow Antonio to take his place, but he actively begot his brother's falsehood through excess of trustworthiness in him. Prospero's confession implies self-reproach and a tacit wish for atonement. It also implies an awareness of the shaping power of lies to spread falsity and induce self-deceit: Antonio ended up believing to be the legitimate Duke by repeating that he was so, and thus he made a "sinner of his memory" (101). As Perkins Wilder puts it, "Antonio's problem is not that he snatched the dukedom from his brother but that he did not preserve the distinction between fiction and reality" (2010, 180). Does this suggest a move away from conscious pretension and lying to role-playing in life with a final loss of the sense of the game? Here Shakespeare seems to offer a variation on what Lanham (1976) and later Altman (2010) defined as a situated, central self as opposed to a rhetorical one, in ways that point to the scripting of one's subjectivity through role-playing and self-deception. This point is central for an understanding of the moral, in fact Christian, frame of sin and punishment pervading the whole play, connected with Prospero's original guilt of forgetfulness. As we have seen, memory has cognitive, ethical, religious and political resonances. At this point it is also presented as an agent of falsification: telling false stories, as in Antonio's case, got him into the habit of believing them, retrospectively modifying the past and affecting the present. Memory is repetition, and by repeating unreal narratives, it begets a new state of affairs. From sinful lack of memory to memory as the begetter of a false reality, from Prospero to Antonio, the line of memory-the-sinner extends from the original act of forgetfulness and usurpation of the Dukedom to the present rituals of individual and collective reminiscences enacted on the enchanted island, where just memory must be restored for expiation to follow.

There is a last moment when Prospero calls for Miranda's attention after speaking of her crying during the abduction from Milan (133-4) – one piteous detail that causes her to burst into tears:

> Hear a little further,
> And when I will bring thee to the present business
> Which now's upon's; without the which, this story
> Were most impertinent.
> (1.2.135-8)

The keyword here is "impertinent": Prospero is worried that his message may not be brought home to her, and yet he does not say in respect to what his story would be irrelevant if she were not attentive. What follows does not refer to his revenge, but rather explains why they were not killed, praises Gonzalo's gentleness, and for no apparent reason depicts himself as a good schoolmaster of Miranda on the island. Finally, he mentions that his enemies have been brought ashore by good Fortune (168-86) and leaves all the rest out – what he is going to do and how. Prospero's rehearsal of his own past is clearly very much a self-address, albeit aimed at Miranda. He neither fully responds to her initial question (his avenging plot), nor does he always provide details consistent with his presentation. His style is tortuous and this betrays emotion and confusion, as also the apparently unnecessary mention of having been a good teacher suggests: does he perhaps need to demonstrate that on the island, if not in Milan, he is – and has been – a good father and teacher? This is an issue which he will soon resume in his encounter with both Ariel and Caliban in 2.1. A confused and over-anxious narrator, he appears eager to prove to himself, before anybody else, that he is a good man and remembers the past well, despite his earlier sin of forgetfulness. Indeed, this is no secondary issue, as it contains as in a nutshell the whole tragicomic story of the drama he will soon direct. Thus, he will shortly provide the circumstances to authenticate Antonio's malice on stage, a scene which no-one will be aware of except himself – and the audience. There is probably no better clue than this scene of Antonio's temptation of Sebastian for understanding the self-enclosed and self-referential, solitary tragicomic experience of Prospero in this play.

## 5. Conclusion

According to Giraldi Cinthio in his "On the composition of comedies and tragedies" (1543), epic poems such as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were both considered to be tragedies, one with a tragic and the other with a comic ending (1554, 225). As Jonathan Gibson (2009) has pointed out in his study of tragical histories and tales,

the terms "tragic" ("tragical") and "tragedy" ("tragedy") at the time also identified a number of genres, including various types of narratives that can be grouped into three main categories: tales of martyrs of the Protestant faith (such as John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, 1563); unfortunate affairs of princes along the lines of Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*; and stories of unhappy love affairs similar to those told in the fourth day of the *Decameron* "under the reign of Philostratus". There was no normative theorisation clearly differentiating a narrative epic poem from a tragic drama, except that Aristotle distinguished the two on the basis of their length and the use of the narrative form in the epic genre (*Poetics* 1449b). Criticism has shown the combinatory possibilities offered by the contemporary model of pastoral tragicomedy behind the complex architecture of *The Tempest* (see e.g. Henke 1997), and I believe that it is along those lines that we can also perceive Shakespeare's re-use of the well-known example of Aeneas's epic tale to deconstruct it. For Aeneas, remembering goes unquestioned. For Prospero, it does not. He needs to repeat his trauma experience over and over again, narratively and metatheatrically. This is what makes it potentially tragic, before the comic resolution. This is what Aeneas brings to Prospero, if we are alert to hearing his voice.

As I have tried to suggest, Prospero's own narrative has a potentially epic allure, but displaces the attention to its lacunae and contradictions, indirectly questioning the reliability itself of his own memory, which needs to be confirmed by the visitors' repetition of past actions. Antonio's temptation scene for the sake of Prospero's eyes only obsessively iterates and confirms Prospero's own anxiety about brotherly and political betrayal.

Thus, while the play does not need the memory of Aeneas's tale to signify, once that memory is activated it shows how strongly and deeply that model may be evoked and questioned. Meaning-making resides in this questioning and in dramatising the loop of time Prospero is in, his fears of mis-remembering and his need to have them verified through drama, thus opening creative routes around an interrogation of time and story-telling on stage. This is entirely new in respect to Aeneas's substantial confidence in his own memory. Prospero's drama will eventually move away from revenge tragedy to comedy, as his final discarding of vengeance in

favour of pardon demonstrates ("The rarer action is / In virtue, than in vengeance", 5.1.27-8). The play is already over before the final recapitulations and his repeated refusal to tell his story.[9] Memory has been restored and passion cathartically purified – Prospero no longer needs to navigate time, he is eventually out of its maze.

## Works Cited

Altman, Joel B. 2010. *The Improbability of Othello. Rhetorical Anthropology and Shakespearean Selfhood*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Bigliazzi, Silvia. 2019. "Time and Nothingness: *King Lear*". In *Oedipus at Colonus and King Lear: Classical and Early Modern Intersections*, edited by Silvia Bigliazzi, 291-315. Verona: Skenè.

— 2014. "'Dost thou hear?' On the Rhetoric of Narrative in *The Tempest*". In *Revisiting* The Tempest. *The Capacity to Signify*, edited by Silvia Bigliazzi and Lisanna Calvi, 111-33. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Blumenberg, Hans. 1997. *Shipwreck with Spectator. Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*. Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press.

Burrow, Colin. 2013. *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bushnell, Rebecca. 2018. "Time and Genre". In *Time and Literature*, edited by Thomas M. Allen, 44-56. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

— 2016. *Tragic Time in Drama, Film, and Videogames. The Future in the Instant*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Butler, Martin ed. 2007. *William Shakespeare. The Tempest*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Cicero. 1949. *On Invention. The Best kind of Orator. Topics*. Vol. 2. Trans. H.M. Hubbell. Loeb Classical Library 386. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

de Montaigne, Michel. 1613. *Essays . . . done into English, according to the last French edition, by Iohn Florio*. London: Edward Blount and William Barret.

Frye, Northrop. 1996. *Fools of Time. Studies in Shakespearean Tragedy*

9 Incidentally, it may be noticed that Prospero's self-disclosure renders the final recognition less effective in Aristotelian terms compared to other forms of anagnorisis relying on signs, memories or logical deduction (syllogism) (*Poetics* 1454 b 20-35, 1455a 5-20).

(1967). Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press.
Gibson, Jonathan. 2009. "Tragical Histories, Tragical Tales". In *Tudor Literature, 1485-1603*, edited by Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank, 521-36. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Giraldi Cinthio, Giovambattista. 1554. *Discorsi intorno al comporre de i Romanzi, delle Comedie, e delle Tragedie, e di altre maniere di Poesie.* Vinegia: Appresso Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari et fratelli.
Gratarolo, Guglielmo. 1562. *The Castel of Memorie . . . Englished by Willyam Fulwod.* Printed at London: Rouland Hall.
Greenblatt, Stephen. 2011. *The Swerve. How the Renaissance Began.* London: The Bodley Head.
Hamilton, Donna B. 1990. *Virgil and The Tempest: The Politics of Imitation.* Columbus: Ohio University Press.
Henke, Robert. 1997. *Pastoral Transformations: Italian Tragicomedy and Shakespeare's Late Plays.* Newark: University of Delaware Press.
Hulme, Peter. 1986. *Colonial Encounters. Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797.* London: Methuen.
Hiscock, Andrew. 2011. *Reading Memory in Early Modern Literature.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kastan, David Scott. 1982. *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time.* Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.
Kermode, Frank. 2000. *Shakespeare's Language.* New York: Farrar – Straus – Giroux.
Lanham, Richard A. 1976. *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Lucretius. 1924. *On the Nature of Things.* Translated by W.H. Rouse, revised by Martin F. Smith. Loeb Classical Library 181. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Macaulay, Marcia. 2005. "When Chaos Is Come Again: Narrative and Narrative Analysis in *Othello*". *Style* 39 (3): 259-76.
Magnusson, A. Lynne. 1986. "Interruption in 'The Tempest'". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37 (1): 52-65.
Maguire, Laurie, and Emma Smith. 2015. "What is a Source? Or, How Shakespeare Read his Marlowe". *Shakespeare Survey. Shakespeare, Origins and Originality*, edited by Peter Holland, 68: 5-31.
Marlowe, Christopher. 1999. *Dido Queen of Carthage.* In *Christopher Marlowe. The Complete Plays*, edited by Mark Thornton Burnett. London: Everyman.
Miola, Robert S. 2004. "Seven Types of Intertextuality". In *Shakespeare, Italy, and Intertextuality*, edited by Michele Marrapodi, 13-25. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

— 2000. *Shakespeare's Reading*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
Mowat, Barbara. 2000. "'Knowing I loved my books': Reading *The Tempest* Intertextually". In *The Tempest and Its Travels*, edited by Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman, 26-36. London: Reaktion Books.
Perkins Wilder, Lina. 2010. *Shakespeare's Memory Theatre: Recollection, Properties and Character*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Shakespeare, William. 2005. *The Complete Works*. Edited by Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett, and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Shoaf, R. Allen. 2014. *Lucretius and Shakespeare on the Nature of Things*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press.
Serpieri, Alessandro. 2014. "The Labyrinth and the Oracle". In *Revisiting* The Tempest. *The Capacity to Signify*, edited by Silvia Bigliazzi and Lisanna Calvi, 95-110. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Tribble, Evelyn B. 2006. "'The Dark Backward and Abysm of Time': *The Tempest* and Memory". *College Literature* 33 (1): 151-68.
Vergil. 1910. *Aeneid*. Trans. by Theodore C. Williams. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
— 1900. *Bucolics, Aeneid, and Georgics Of Vergil*, edited by J.B. Greenough. Boston: Ginn & Co.
— 1582. *Thee first foure bookes of Virgil his Aeneis translated intoo English heroical verse by Richard Stanyhurst* . . . Leiden: Iohn Pates.
— 1558. *The Seuen books of the Eneidos of Virgil, conuerted in English meter by Thomas Phaer* . . . London: Richard Jugge.
— 1557. *Certain bokes of Virgiles Aeneis turned into English meter by the right honorable lorde, Henry Earle of Surrey*. London: Richard Tottell.
Wagner, Matthew. 2018. "Time and Theatre". In *Time and Literature*, edited by Thomas M. Allen, 57-61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
— 2014. *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time*. New York: Routledge.
Wright, Thomas. 1971. *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*. A reprint based on the 1604 edition with an Introduction by Thomas O. Sloan. Urbana, IL, and London: University of Illinois Press.

# Part 2

# *The Tempest* and the Mediterranean Myth: from Resources to Afterlives

3

# Prospero, or the Demiurge. Platonic Resonances in Shakespeare's Mediterranean

Cristiano Ragni

Abstract

In recent years, a growing body of scholarship has stressed the relevance of the multifaceted Mediterranean world for any comprehensive interpretation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Reading *The Tempest* as a Mediterranean play implies, as Geraldo de Sousa maintained, exploring "the centrality of the classical tradition" (2018, 908) to that specific context. In this regard, *The Tempest* stands out as a sort of "echo chamber" – to borrow Stephen Greenblatt's words (1997, 3047) – of the preeminent myths of Graeco-Latin civilisation. Building on such studies, this essay will put forward evidence of the hitherto little acknowledged similarities between Shakespeare's Prospero and the divine-like Demiurge that Plato depicts in the *Timaeus*, one of his most influential philosophical dialogues, in which the origin and purposes of the universe are discussed.

Keywords: *The Tempest*; Mediterranean; Plato; *Timaeus*

## 1. Introduction

Since classical antiquity, the Mediterranean has been the multifaceted setting of cultural formation and transformations; a region "both within and without the borders of Europe", as Geraldo de Sousa explains, which the English especially perceived at the same time "familiar and strange" (2018, 137). It was the "arena" par excellence, to put it in Peter Burke's words, "of interaction, of encounters, and exchanges" between different peoples and cultures (2002, 136). It is of little surprise, therefore, that Shakespeare should look at the diverse Mediterranean world as the perfect setting for many of his plays, and indeed make deft use of what it had to offer.

Shakespeare's engagement with the richness of such multicultural context in *The Tempest* has been increasingly emphasised since the 1990s. After a period dominated by what Paul Cantor has called the "Americanization of Shakespeare studies" (2006, 897), which shifted the focus of attention onto the certainly meaningful reflections of the New World explorations in the play, scholarship has started to go back to *The Tempest*'s unmistakable Mediterranean setting, exploring not only the wide variety of 'Mediterranean' sources that Shakespeare likely consulted, but also the socio-political and cultural implications that the varied and hybrid nature of the *mare nostrum* brought with itself (Mason Vaughan and Vaughan 2011, 47-54, 98-108; Charry 2014, 66-78). From the analyses of the Virgilian and Ovidian subtexts of the play (Hamilton 1990; Bate 1993; Tudeau-Clayton 1998; Whittington 2014) and the scholarly contributions on its engagement with early modern European politics (Willis 1989; Kastan 1998; 2000) to the works which have highlighted its relationship with the civilisations of the North-African and Middle Eastern countries (Fuchs 1997; Wilson 1997; Brotton 1998; Hulme and Sherman 2000), a growing body of scholarship has stressed the relevance of the multidimensional Mediterranean world for any comprehensive interpretation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. "Despite Columbus and the rapidly increasing European presence in the Western hemisphere in the sixteenth century", Cantor aptly reminds us, "the Mediterranean was the center of the world Shakespeare lived in, and his plays reflect that fact . . ." (2006, 896).

Reading *The Tempest* as a Mediterranean play implies, as de Sousa maintained, exploring "the centrality of the classical tradition" (2018, 908) to that specific context. Jonathan Bate has convincingly demonstrated how "[Shakespeare's] imagination and his sympathies were shaped above all else by forms of thinking derived from what the character of Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* calls 'antique' (or 'antic') 'fables'" (2019, 15). Undeniably, the Mediterranean was the cradle of these "antique fables", and a poet-playwright as imbued with classical knowledge as Shakespeare was certainly knew that well. Small wonder then that *The Tempest*, set as it is on a presumably Mediterranean (if imaginary) island, stands out as a sort of "echo chamber" – to borrow Stephen Greenblatt's words (1997, 3047) – of the preeminent myths of Graeco-Latin

civilisation. From the utopian tradition inaugurated by Plato to the love story between Dido and Aeneas, as well as Medea's ambiguous incantations, *The Tempest* does indeed resonate with a wide variety of classical models, which testify to the complex texture of the play's cultural backdrop, and to the 'mythopoetic' nature of the Mediterranean world.

Building on this context, this essay will particularly put forward evidence of the hitherto little acknowledged similarities between Shakespeare's Prospero and the divine-like Demiurge that Plato depicts in the *Timaeus*, one of his most influential philosophical dialogues, in which the origin and purposes of the universe are discussed. Shakespeare's possible knowledge of and recourse to Greek texts has been the object of an increasing number of scholarly works in recent years. Reassessing the long-held view about his poetic and dramatic output being "cut off from Greek poetry and drama", as A. D. Nuttall famously wrote (2004, 217), Tania Demetriou and Tanya Pollard have recently pointed out that

> [Greek] texts circulated in early modern England in Greek, Latin, and vernacular languages; as elaborately annotated folios, portable parallel-text editions, and accessible vernacular octavos; in the form of originals, imitations, and adaptations; as books, performances, and songs. They were studied closely by many of Shakespeare's colleagues, by the young wits, hacks, and lawyers who frequented the playhouses. Most importantly, the conversations spurred by these newly available texts left ubiquitous traces in early modern English culture, including — perhaps especially — in its theatres. (2017, 3-4)

Whatever his direct sources were, in any case, whether the original Greek texts or their translations, not to mention the intellectual mediations provided by self-consciously learned colleagues and friends such as Ben Jonson or George Chapman, Shakespeare did obviously come to know various aspects of Greek culture in general, and of Plato's philosophy in particular (Medcalf 2004; Roe 2004; Demetriou and Pollard 2017). It is not too far-fetched to argue, therefore, that his *Tempest* does indeed play with some of the most popular aspects of Plato's *Timaeus*.

## 2. Plato in Early Modern Europe and England

All scholars agree on the crucial role played by the Italian humanists in the history of the receptions of Plato and Neoplatonism in the early modern period. From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni, those humanists were the first who read and commented extensively on the only Platonic dialogues which circulated in Europe in various Latin translations: *Timaeus*, *Phaedo*, and *Meno*. This interest was further boosted both by the visits to Italy of eminent Byzantine personalities, such as Manuel Chrysoloras (1355-1415), Gemisthus Pletho (1355-1452), or Cardinal Bessarion (c.1403-1472), just to name a few, and the sojourns in Constantinople of Italian intellectuals like Francesco Filelfo (1398-1481), which made the circulation of the Greek editions of Plato's works between the two countries possible. These fruitful cultural exchanges promoted the general advancement of Greek studies, and would later be reinforced after the 1453 fall of Constantinople, when Greek scholars poured into the West, and started teaching their prestigious cultural heritage to other Europeans (Hutton 1994; Jayne 1995; Bellamy 2015).

Europe's renewed interest in Plato and Neoplatonism stimulated a fundamental translation process, which resulted in the 1484 *editio princeps* of Plato's *Opera*, realised by Marsilio Ficino, who played, as is known, a crucial in role in the Western (mis)understanding of the philosopher's thought. As Elizabeth Jane Bellamy has maintained:

> Marsilio Ficino's knowledge of Greek inaugurated a more philologically grounded stage in Western receptions of Plato—receptions that were also misconceptions. Ficino's 1464 *Phaedrus* commentary *De amore* erroneously dated the dialogue as Plato's first—hence, foregrounding divine rapture as central to Plato's metaphysics. Ficino's acontextual focus on two speeches from the *Symposium* . . . exaggerated the centrality of love in Platonic thought. Ficino's decontextualization became, nevertheless, a tenet of Renaissance Neoplatonism—that is, love as the desire for beauty . . . Despite Ficino's decontextualized Plato, his concepts of love and beauty cohered into a compelling system of thought. (2015, 503-4)

The coherence of Ficino's model was also assured, as Sarah Hutton puts it, by the fact that it "harmonised Plato and Neoplatonism

with Western Christianity and endowed them with philosophical respectability in his own time" (Hutton 1994, 69). Of course, this does not mean that such a model faced no opposition; however, thanks primarily to the fortune of Ficino's successful interpretation of the Platonic doctrine of love, this model would flourish among European courtiers and poets at least until the late seventeenth century (Baldwin and Hutton 1994; Jayne 1995; Celenza 2007; Bellamy 2015).

That Plato was generally known in early modern England is undoubted. His works started circulating at the beginning of the fifteenth century in (continental) Greek editions and Latin translations, as well as commentaries, compendia, and commonplace books, thanks to the learned interests of wealthy Churchmen and aristocrats, such as the Archbishop of York, George Neville (c.1432-1476) or Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (1390-1447) (Jayne 1995, 13-21). English awareness of the momentous operation brought about by Ficino in Italy is also testified by persistent traces of book acquisitions and scholarly debates in the universities, until the explosion of what Sears Jayne has defined a "modish enthusiasm" for Plato's philosophy during the Elizabethan Age (1995, 97). Plato's praise of love and beauty, as it had been interpreted by Ficino, was popularised by the poets of this generation, all the more so because it informed such a widely popular work as Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, which Sir Thomas Hoby translated into English in 1561. Jean de Serres and Henri Estienne's 1578 three-volume Latin edition of Plato's *Opera*, "ambitiously intended to replace Ficino's long-dominant Latin translation" (Bellamy 2015, 506), is also worth mentioning. Its first book was famously dedicated to Elizabeth I, and at least parts of it are known to have ended up in both Sir Philip Sidney's hands, as his *Defence of Poesy* seems to testify (Heninger 1983), and Edmund Spenser's (Jayne 1995, 115-16). Besides the circulation that Plato's works among academics, his dialogues, as the *Private Libraries in Renaissance England* (PLRE) database shows, do also appear among the belongings of private owners, including personalities as varied as members of the Parliament, court officials, or diplomats. Among early modern English intellectuals, probably the one who engaged with Plato most closely was John Milton, who proved particularly interested in the debates about the

relationship between the mind and the body originating from the philosopher's works (Samuel 1947; Baldwin 1994). Chronologically, the seventeenth century also saw the burgeoning of an influential Plato-inspired philosophical movement, which opposed the so-called Cambridge Platonists to the predominant Aristotelian cultural milieu. "With the Cambridge Platonists", Hutton noted, "the Renaissance Neoplatonic synthesis is put to the service of religious peace in an age of religious strife. What distinguishes them as a group is their theological optimism, their latitudinarian spirit and their antipathy to the harsh predestinarian theology of Calvinism" (1994, 74). This was the last truly active intellectual engagement, it can be said, with Neoplatonism before the definitive change of paradigm in favour of the New Science (Bellamy 2015, 511-12; Hedley and Leech 2019).

Of course, as has been variously pointed out, in early modern England such multifaceted receptions of Plato never resulted in a deep-seated understanding of his philosophy, but they did contribute to what has been defined as an unmistakably widespread 'Platonising' trend, which particularly prospered under Elizabeth I and during the early Stuart period, before declining towards the close of the seventeenth century (Sears 1995; Hedley and Sutton 2008; Bellamy 2015; Hedley and Leech 2019).

## 3. Plato's Demiurge

Among the most widely read, studied, and influential of Plato's dialogues in the early modern period, and the one whose echoes can be detected between the lines of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is the *Timaeus* (c.360 BC). As Anna Somfai has explained: "The *Timaeus* is the only one of Plato's dialogues to have been continuously available in Latin translation in the West from the time of classical antiquity. Two Latin versions, both incomplete, circulated in the period prior to the Renaissance: one by Cicero from the first century BC . . . the other by Calcidius from around 400 AD . . . accompanied by his Latin *Commentary* . . ." (2002, 1). The fortune and value of this dialogue remained undisputed throughout the early modern age, when access to the original Greek text spurred

further debates on its main aspects, and especially the myth of the Demiurge, as well as its century-old heterodox interpretations, and its surprising influence on the birth of the New Science, as both Kepler and Newton's knowledge of Ficino's commentary on the *Timaeus* seemingly testifies (Reydams-Schils 2003; Celenza 2007).

In his *Timaeus*, Plato put together and explained his ideas about the origin of the visible universe and the nature of humankind. Before outlining such complex processes, however, the four men involved in the dialogue - Socrates, Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates - appear to be focused on a topic already discussed in the *Republic*: the characteristics of the ideal city state and society. Such discussion causes them to evoke the Athens of ancestral times, whose memory, they acknowledge, had been preserved after the last great flood by the Egyptians. Playing with the well-established *topos* of natural catastrophes such as floods, which cyclically allowed for new forms of civilisation to be born, the four remember Athens's celebrated enterprise against the haughty inhabitants of Atlantis:

> αὕτη δὴ πᾶσα ξυναθροισθεῖσα εἰς ἓν ἡ δύναμις τόν τε παρ' ὑμῖν καὶ τὸν παρ' ἡμῖν καὶ τὸν ἐντὸς τοῦ στόματος πάντα τόπον μιᾷ ποτ' ἐπεχείρησεν ὁρμῇ δουλοῦσθαι. τότε οὖν ὑμῶν, ὦ Σόλων, τῆς πόλεως ἡ δύναμις εἰς ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους διαφανὴς ἀρετῇ τε καὶ ῥώμῃ ἐγένετο· πάντων γὰρ προστᾶσα Ceὐψυχίᾳ καὶ τέχναις ὅσαι κατὰ πόλεμον, τὰ μὲν τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἡγουμένη, τὰ δ' αὐτὴ μονωθεῖσα ἐξ ἀνάγκης τῶν ἄλλων ἀποστάντων, ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐσχάτους ἀφικομένη κινδύνους, κρατήσασα μὲν τῶν ἐπιόντων τρόπαια ἔστησε . . . ὑστέρῳ δὲ χρόνῳ σεισμῶν ἐξαισίων καὶ κατακλυσμῶν γενομένων, Δμιᾶς ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς χαλεπῆς ἐλθούσης, τό τε παρ' ὑμῶν μάχιμον πᾶν ἀθρόον ἔδυ κατὰ γῆς, ἥ τε Ἀτλαντὶς νῆσος ὡσαύτως κατὰ τῆς θαλάττης δῦσα ἠφανίσθη . . . (Plato 1929, 40-3)

> [So this host [of Atlantis], being all gathered together, made an attempt one time to enslave by one single onslaught both your country and ours and the whole of the territory within the Straits. And then it was, Solon, that the manhood of your State showed itself conspicuous for valour and might in the sight of all the world. For it [Athens] stood pre-eminent above all in gallantry and all warlike arts, and acting partly as leader of the Greeks, and partly standing alone by itself when deserted by all others, after encountering

> the deadliest perils, it defeated the invaders and reared a trophy . . . But at a later time there occurred portentous earthquakes and floods, and one grievous day and night befell them, when the whole body of your warriors was swallowed up by the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner was swallowed up by the sea and vanished . . .]

Immediately afterwards, Critias suggests moving on to the discussion on the very beginning of the universe; an explanation, he proposes, that the philosopher and astronomer Timaeus should be made in charge of carrying out. In so doing, as Francis M. Cornford puts it, they successfully manage "to link the morality externalised in the ideal society to the whole organisation of the world" (1997, 5), which Plato justified by resorting to the myth of the Demiurge.

The Demiurge is not described as the creator of the cosmos, but as a craftsman, a divine Reason, that imposes order to the universe because, as Thomas K. Johansen pointed out, "he wants to create something which as far as possible is his equal such that it can enjoy, as far as possible, the same goods as he" (2008, 479):

> τούτου δ' ἐκτὸς ὢν πάντα ὅ τι μάλιστα γενέσθαι ἐβουλήθη παραπλήσια ἑαυτῷ. ταύτην δὲ γενέσεως καὶ κόσμου μάλιστ' ἄν τις ἀρχὴν κυριωτάτην παρ' ἀνδρῶν φρονίμων ἀποδεχόμενος ὀρθότατα ἀποδέχοιτ' ἄν. βουληθεὶς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγαθὰ μὲν πάντα, φλαῦρον δὲ μηδὲν εἶναι κατὰ δύναμιν, οὕτω δὴ πᾶν ὅσον ἦν ὁρατὸν παραλαβὼν οὐχ ἡσυχίαν ἄγον ἀλλὰ κινούμενον πλημμελῶς καὶ ἀτάκτως, εἰς τάξιν αὐτὸ ἤγαγεν ἐκ τῆς ἀταξίας, ἡγησάμενος ἐκεῖνο τούτου πάντως ἄμεινον. (Plato 1929, 54-5)

> [. . . and being devoid of envy He desired that all should be, so far as possible, like unto Himself. This principle, then, we shall be wholly right in accepting from men of wisdom as being above all the supreme originating principle of Becoming and the Cosmos. For God desired that, so far as possible, all things should be good and nothing evil; wherefore, when He took over all that was visible, seeing that it was not in a state of rest but in a state of discordant and disorderly motion, He brought it into order out of disorder, deeming that the former state is in all ways better than the latter.]

According to Plato, Christina Hoenig has explained, the universe is thus "formed by the demiurge from the materials at his disposal in the likeness of an intelligible paradigm, the 'eternal living being', perhaps best understood to represent the totality of intelligible forms whose physical counterparts are to form our universe" (2018, 16). This means that the universe is itself a divine creature, whose various components are divided and allocated by the Demiurge according to exact mathematical and geometrical proportions, and it is endowed with soul and intellect:

> Τῆς ἀμερίστου καὶ ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ἐχούσης οὐσίας καὶ τῆς αὖ περὶ τὰ σώματα γιγνομένης μεριστῆς, τρίτον ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ἐν μέσῳ συνεκεράσατο οὐσίας εἶδος, τῆς τε ταὐτοῦ φύσεως [αὖ πέρι][1] καὶ τῆς θατέρου, καὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ξυνέστησεν ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ τε ἀμεροῦς αὐτῶν καὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὰ σώματα μεριστοῦ. καὶ τρία λαβὼν αὐτὰ ὄντα συνεκεράσατο εἰς μίαν πάντα ἰδέαν, τὴν θατέρου φύσιν δύσμικτον οὖσαν εἰς ταὐτὸν ξυναρμόττων βίᾳ. μιγνὺς δὲ μετὰ τῆς οὐσίας καὶ ἐκ τριῶν ποιησάμενος ἓν πάλιν ὅλον τοῦτο μοίρας ὅσας προσῆκε διένειμεν, ἑκάστην δὲ ἅπτε ταὐτοῦ καὶ θατέρου καὶ τῆς οὐσίας μεμιγμένην . . . (Plato 1929, 64-7)

> [Midway between the Being which is indivisible and remains always the same and the Being which is transient and divisible in bodies, He blended a third form of Being compounded out of the twain, that is to say, out of the Same and the Other; and in like manner He compounded it midway between that one of them which is indivisible and that one which is divisible in bodies. And He took the three of them, and blent them all together into one form, by forcing the Other into union with the Same, in spite of its being naturally difficult to mix. And when with the aid of Being He had mixed them, and had made of them one out of three, straightway He began to distribute the whole thereof into so many portions as was meet; and each portion was a mixture of the Same, of the Other, and of Being . . .]

The same soul and intellect which make the universe alive are also attributed to mortal creatures. Fundamental though he thinks humankind to be, Plato's Demiurge does not however participate in their creation, but hands it over to other 'minor' divine agents, created by him and partaking of his own divine reason: τὸ δὲ μετὰ

τὸν σπόρον τοῖς νέοις παρέδωκε θεοῖς σώματα πλάττειν θνητά, τό τε ἐπίλοιπον ὅσον ἔτι ἦν ψυχῆς ἀνθρωπίνης δέον προσγενέσθαι, τοῦτο καὶ πάνθ' ὅσα ἀκόλουθα ἐκείνοις ἀπεργασαμένους ἄρχειν . . . ("He delivered over to the young gods the task of moulding mortal bodies, and of framing and controlling all the rest of the human soul which it was still necessary to add, together with all that belonged thereto . . ."; Plato 1929, 92-3).

While illustrating the Demiurge's ordering scheme, Timaeus also mentions the works of Necessity, which stands out "both as a constraining and as an enabling cause in relation to the divine cause" (Johansen 2009, 483). Despite the apparent ambiguity of this term, Necessity is not an obstacle to the Platonic craftsman's design. In fact, it contributes to its realisation. This is hardly surprising. "The Timaean narrative", as Hoenig concludes,

> portrays the universe as a teleologically structured whole. Chaos is transformed into orderly beauty, an aesthetic feature that reflects the purposeful cooperation of the world's harmoniously arranged components. The universe is as beautiful and as good as it can be, exhibiting a kinship of aesthetic and ethical value that coincides in the Greek word καλός". (2018, 17)

## 4. Prospero, or Shakespeare's Demiurge

An alert playwright and poet such as Shakespeare did have several opportunities, as has been discussed above, to get to know if not the essence of Plato, certainly the most popular aspects of his philosophical thought, by resorting to the various editions, translations, and adaptations of his works that circulated widely in early modern England. Other studies have underscored Shakespeare's (more or less) direct allusions to or acquaintance with Plato's *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, or *Phaedo* (Cantor 2000; Parker 2004; Gray 2006; Rowe 2010; Kaytor 2012; 2019), so much so that R.W. Rowe concluded that "it is hard to resist the thought that the Platonic inheritance was a vital source of inspiration" for him (2010, 189). Therefore, it is not too far-fetched to argue also for the resonance of the myth of the Demiurge as presented in the *Timaeus* between the lines of *The Tempest*. This play stages Prospero's

attempt at a political and moral reform, which eventually allows him to restore order to his world, and provides both himself and his former enemies with a second chance, in ways which can indeed be reminiscent of the Platonic Demiurge's endeavours.

After staging the storm that shipwrecks the most eminent members of the courts of Naples and Milan, in 1.2 Shakespeare offers his audience two insightful perspectives on the apparently tragic event they have just witnessed. The first one emerges from the exchange between Prospero, former Duke of Milan, and his daughter Miranda, which takes place on the coast of the Mediterranean island where they have been exiled. Since Miranda appears much distressed about the fate of the people she has just seen drowning offshore, Prospero reveals:

> The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touched
> The very virtue of compassion in thee,
> I have with such provision in mine art
> So safely ordered, that there is no soul –
> No, not so much perdition as an hair,
> Betid to any creature in the vessel
> Which thou heard'st cry, which thou sawst sink . . .
> (1.2.26-32)[1]

As a reply to Miranda's concerns, Prospero thus makes the audience understand that the terrible storm was not real, but a magical trick that he has somehow performed thanks to his "art" (1.2.28). A trick, he explains, that he has orchestrated for Miranda's own good ("I have done nothing but in care of thee . . .", 1.2.16), so that she would eventually learn the truth about her own aristocratic origins, and the usurpation of Prospero's dukedom on the part of his brother Antonio and the latter's ally, the King of Naples: the very people, in other words, that "by accident most strange, bountiful fortune" (1.2.178) brought off the coast of their island, thus giving him the opportunity to redress their wrongdoing (Ragni, forthcoming).

A few lines below, what happened to the shipwrecked vessel and the people onboard is further clarified, when the airy spirit Ariel,

1 All references to *The Tempest* are from Shakespeare 2005 and will appear parenthetically in the text.

Prospero's agent, enters the stage and provides details about the storm that, we learn, he himself created:

PROSPERO Hast thou, spirit,
Performed to point the tempest that I bade thee?
ARIEL To every article . . .
PROSPERO Why, that's my spirit!
. . . But are they, Ariel, safe?
ARIEL Not a hair perished;
On their sustaining garments not a blemish,
But fresher than before; and, as thou bad'st me,
In troops I have dispersed them 'bout the isle.
(1.2.193-220)

What the audience understands after these two crucial passages is that Prospero is a former sovereign, endowed with magical knowledge, that makes him stand out as a 'divine-like' figure. He is presented as one who is willing and able of tame the chaos that the usurpation of his throne has caused in his and his daughter's life, and thus bring order back to their world. These facts alone would have been enough to make many among Shakespeare's Jacobean audience think about Plato's famous cosmological work. It is thus possible to claim that in a play so concerned with imposing order onto a situation which is perceived as chaotic by a 'divine-like' character, evidently eager to craft a 'new' world according to his own desires, Shakespeare may have been playing with the myth of the Platonic Demiurge, one of the most popular myths of that Mediterranean civilisation against whose background his story is set.

At a close reading, numerous similarities between Prospero and the Demiurge do indeed emerge. Let's start from the attitude towards control they both show. Commenting on *The Tempest*'s structure, Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan note that its tight symmetry is "an appropriate characteristics for a story in which the central character is so concerned with disciplining his minions" (2011, 14). Prospero's controlling scheme applies not only to the sphere of action but also to time. Unsurprisingly, it is precisely in his illuminating analysis of Prospero's "time-controlling magic" that Alessandro Serpieri noted his evidently demiurge-like nature.

Prospero's ordering action, Serpieri argued, is introduced by the tempest itself:

> The word 'tempest' derives from the Latin *tempestas* that means: (1) time, period, epoch (OED 'tempest', 4); (2a) weather (OED 1), (2b) hostile, unfavourable time (OED 2a); (3) danger, calamity, accident (OED 2b); and in the acceptation (1) it coincides with *tempus*, that comes from the Indo-European root TEM, "to cut", as in Greek τε'μνω = to cut, separate, divide, implying the ideas of section, period, epoch, season. The action of dividing is coessential with all cosmogonic myths, where chaos is the primeval, amorphous and undifferentiated condition, and where neither time nor space have yet intervened to create order. Order is produced only by the creative action of dividing and separating the elements, identifying their qualities, and assigning them different functions and aims. This is how the primordial event of creation is presented in the opening passages of both *Metamorphoses* and *Genesis* (1:1-17). (2014, 101)

This is exactly how creation is presented in Plato's *Timaeus* as well, where the Demiurge's design, as has been discussed above, involved a careful engagement in a complex series of actions of dividing and allocating the various elements of the universe. And this is what Shakespeare's Prospero too does, scattering the shipwrecked characters in different parts of the island and making sure that order be brought back by enacting the different stages of his plan. If the Demiurge's goal was to impose order to the chaos he found in the universe so that "so far as possible, all things should be good and nothing evil" (Plato 1929, 54), Prospero's design aims instead at correcting the wrongs of the 'old' world and thus make sure that what he deems to be good and right would prevail in his universe; "a demiurgical act", Serpieri commented, that, in the play, "is made possible by the magical illusion of theatre" (2014, 101).

Another feature that these two figures share is their common effort to bring order back to the(ir) world. As written above, Plato's craftsman took what "was . . . in a state of discordant and disorderly motion" in the universe and "brought it into order out of disorder, deeming that the former state is in all ways better than the latter" (Plato 1929, 55). Likewise, Shakespeare's Prospero orchestrates the

events so that the order disrupted by his brother's usurpation twelve years before be restored. Despite the various plots which threaten his plan (a sign, it could be suggested, of the forementioned Platonic necessity at work), with his magical "art" Prospero successfully manages to direct what "was . . . in a state of discordant and disorderly motion" – his and Miranda's life, but also those of his shipwrecked enemies – and, at least from a political point of view, his reform thus seems to succeed (Cantor 2000; Camerlingo 2020). "Some heavenly power", Prospero's loyal friend, Gonzalo, exclaims at some point, "guide us / out of this fearful country!" (5.1.105-6). This is indeed what Shakespeare's divine-like demiurge eventually does—he restores himself to Milan's throne, and the marriage between Miranda and Ferdinand, heir to the King of Naples, ensures the future union of the two countries and, hopefully, no more political usurpations:

> . . . and so to Naples,
> Where I have hope to see the nuptial
> Of these our dear-belov'd solemnized;
> And thence retire me to my Milan . . .
> (5.1.308-11)

In *The Tempest*, as Cantor put it, "Prospero . . . has the opportunity to reconstitute the society as he sees fit, to refound its regime. He disperses its elements in order to work on each party separately in a fashion appropriate to its nature. The greed and ambition of these more or less representative human beings must be moderated so that the common good . . . prevail[s] under Prospero's wise direction" (2000, 247). This is exactly what Plato's Demiurge does in the *Timaeus*.

Prospero's design, however, could not be successful without Ariel's aforementioned assistance. Again, like Plato's Demiurge, Prospero hands the 'material' realisation of his plan over to his faithful airy agent. In the *Timaeus*, as has been shown above, the Platonic 'artifex' asks for the assistance of lesser divinities to complete his work. In Shakespeare's play, Ariel "perform[s] to point the tempest" (1.2.194), spies on the dispersed royals, refers to Prospero where they are and what they are doing, and most of all constantly sings and plays music, which charms them and makes them do exactly what

Prospero has planned. This association between Ariel and music is especially significant when it comes to discussing Shakespeare's connection to (Neo)Platonic philosophy, since music was one of its tenets. As Francesco Pelosi has summarised:

> [In Plato's works] Music is conceived as a means of curing the soul . . . It concerns moulding a young *psychē*, that does not have a well-developed rationality and therefore is at the mercy of the body's needs; it also concerns leading or restoring an adult *psychē*, exposed to the negative conditioning . . . encountered in life, to a correct equilibrium, which permits it to properly manage the connection with the sensible dimension. (2010, 9)

Such a crucial role played by music within Plato's philosophical thought depends on the fact that, as is explained in the *Timaeus*, the very structure of the universe is musical, based as it is on numerical proportions to which "harmonious" values are assigned: καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀναλογιῶν περί τε τὰ πλήθη καὶ τὰς κινήσεις καὶ τὰς ἄλλας δυνάμεις, πανταχῇ τὸν θεόν . . . ταύτῃ πάντη δι' ἀκριβείας ἀποτελεσθεισῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ξυνηρμόσθαι ταῦτα ἀνὰ λόγον ("And, moreover, as regards the numerical proportions which govern their masses and motions and their other qualities, we must conceive that God realized these everywhere with exactness . . . and thus ordered all in harmonious proportion"; Plato 1929, 136-7). Set against this background, Ariel's recourse to music does contribute to reinforcing the claim that Shakespeare likely had Plato and his *Timaeus* in mind when he ideated his own version of a Demiurge. If the Platonic artifex turns to what Pelosi has defined "musical mathematics" (2010, 193-5) to impose order to the universe, Shakespeare's demiurge-like Prospero turns to Ariel's music to direct the other characters' fates: it guides Ferdinand to Miranda in 1.2, prevents regicide in 2.1, and foils a possible plot in 4.1. In so doing, Ariel's music ensures the success of Prospero's design, and contributes to bringing order back.

## 5. Conclusion

"To set *The Tempest* in its comprehensive context", as has been maintained, "is to work spatially from Shakespeare's personal milieu

(the King's Company at the Globe and Blackfriars theatres) outward to Jacobean London, to the rest of the British islands, to continental Europe and on to the outer perimeter . . ." (Mason Vaughan and Vaughan 2011, 37). This "outer perimeter" is largely outlined by the Mediterranean Sea. After all, even though "the placelessness of [Shakespeare's] island", as Bate put it, "encourages the spectator to pick it up like Gonzalo's apple and scatter the seeds so that other islands—Caribbean, Irish, and so forth—grow magically from it" (2004, 304), the numerous references to Naples and Tunis, Milan and Carthage cannot be ignored, and they do place Shakespeare's unnamed island within the pan-Mediterranean world. In this regard, it is significant that one of the only two occurrences of the term "Mediterranean" in all of Shakespeare can indeed be found in *The Tempest*. In 1.2, when Ariel reports to Prospero after dispersing the Milanese and Neapolitan royals "'bout the isle" (220), he adds:

> And for the rest of the fleet,
> Which I dispersed, they all have met again,
> And are upon *the Mediterranean float*,
> Bound sadly home for Naples,
> Supposing that they saw the King's ship wrecked
> And his great person perish.
> (2.1.232-7, emphasis mine)

Relevant as it is to the understanding of the multiple meanings of the play, this Mediterranean setting has been shown to reveal strong ties with classical antiquity. "For Shakespeare", de Sousa noticed, "the call of the Mediterranean was the call of the past, and classical culture was an integral part of the multicultural Mediterranean" (2018, 910). Therefore, it is not surprising, as has been argued in this essay, that between the lines of *The Tempest*, one of Shakespeare's most Mediterranean plays, the influence of one of the most influential classical philosophers, Plato, can be detected.

In early modern England, thanks especially to the fortune of the Neoplatonic doctrines elaborated by Marsilio Ficino in Quattrocento Italy, Plato's philosophy could be variously accessed via Greek editions, translations, commentaries, and commonplace books. Among his most famous and widespread dialogues was the *Timaeus*, in which the Greek philosopher explained the coming into

being of the cosmos as the result of the ordering action of a divine Artifex, the Demiurge. In light of the *Timaeus*' fortune, what have been presented in this essay are the various traces that contribute to arguing that when it came to creating a demiurge-like character such as Prospero, intent on bringing order back to his world, Shakespeare likely had Plato's 'artifex' on his mind, and that the 'enterprises' of the Platonic Demiurge do indeed seem to resonate behind Prospero's attempts at reform on his Mediterranean island.

## Works Cited

Baldwin, Anna, and Sarah Hutton. 1994. *Platonism and the English Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baldwin, Anna. 1994. "Platonic Ascents and Descents in Milton". In *Platonism and the English Imagination*, edited by Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton, 151-62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bate, Jonathan. 2019. *How the Classics Made Shakespeare*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

— 2004. "Shakespeare's Islands". In *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean*, edited by Tom Clayton, Susan Brock, and Vicente Forés, 289-307. Newark: University of Delaware Press.

— 1993. *Shakespeare and Ovid*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bellamy, Elizabeth Jane. 2015. "Plato". In *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature. Volume 2: 1558-1660*, edited by Patrick Cheney and Philip Hardie, 503-16. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brotton, Jerry. 1998. "'This Tunis, sir, was Carthage': Contesting Colonialism in *The Tempest*". In *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, edited by Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, 23-42. New York: Routledge.

Burke, Peter. 2002. "Civilizations and Frontiers. Anthropology of the Early Modern Mediterranean". In *History and Social Sciences. Testing the Limits of Braudel's Mediterranean*, edited by John A. Marino, 123-41. Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press.

Camerlingo, Rosanna. 2020. "Prospero's Rainbow. Political Miracles in *The Tempest*". In *The Art of Picturing in Early Modern English Literature*, edited by Camilla Caporicci and Armelle Sabatier, 215-29. London and New York: Routledge.

Cantor, Paul A. 2006. "The Shores of Hybridity: Shakespeare and the Mediterranean". *Literature Compass* -4: 896-913.

— 2000. "Prospero's Republic: The Politics of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*". In *Shakespeare as Political Thinker*, edited by J.E. Alvis and T. West,

241-59. Wilmington: ISI Books.
Celenza, Christopher S. 2007. "The Revival of Platonism". In *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, edited by James Hankins, 72-96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Charry, Brinda. 2014. "Recent Perspectives on *The Tempest*". In *The Tempest. A Critical Reader*, edited by Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, 61-92. London: Bloomsbury.
Clayton, Tom, Susan Brock, and Vicente Forés, eds. 2004. *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean*. Newark: University of Delaware Press.
Cornford, Francis D. 1997. "Introduction". In *Plato's Cosmology. The* Timaeus *of Plato*, edited by Francis D. Cornford, 9-20. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.
de Sousa, Geraldo U. 2018. "Introduction: Shakespeare's Mediterranean". *Mediterranean Studies* 26 (2): 137-44.
Demetriou, Tania, and Tanya Pollard. 2017. "Homer and Greek Tragedy in early modern England's theatres: an Introduction," *Classical Receptions Journal* 9 (1): 1-35.
Fuchs, Barbara. 1997. "Conquering Islands: Contextualizing *The Tempest*". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48 (1): 45-62.
Gray, Ronald. 2006. "Will in the Universe: Shakespeare's Sonnets, Plato's *Symposium*, Alchemy and Renaissance Neoplatonism". *Shakespeare Survey* 59: 225-38.
Greenblatt, Stephen. 1997. "Introduction to *The Tempest*". In *The Norton Shakespeare*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al., 3047-54. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
Hamilton, Donna B. 1990. *Virgil and* The Tempest*: The Politics of Imitation*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
Hedley, Douglas, and David Leech. 2019. *Revisioning Cambridge Platonism: Sources and Legacy*. Dordrecht: Springer Nature, 2019.
Hedley, Douglas, and Sarah Sutton. 2008. *Platonism at the Origins of Modernity. Studies on Platonism and Early Modern Philosophy*. Dordrecht: Springer.
Heninger, S.K. 1983. "Sidney and Serranus' Plato". *English Literary Renaissance* 13: 146-61.
Hoenig, Christina. 2018. *Plato's* Timaeus *and the Latin Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hulme, Peter and William H. Sherman. 2000. *'The Tempest' and Its Travels*. London: Reaktion Books.
Hutton, Sarah. 1994. "Introduction to the Renaissance and seventeenth century". In *Platonism and the English Imagination*, edited by Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton, 67-75. Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press.

Jayne, Sears. 1995. *Plato in Renaissance England*. Dordrecht: Springer Science-Business Media.

Johansen, Thomas K. 2008. "The *Timaeus* on the Principles of Cosmology". In *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*, edited by Gail Fine, 463-82. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kastan, David Scott. 2000, "'The Duke of Milan / And His Brave Son': Old Histories and New in *The Tempest*". In *The Tempest – A Case Study in Critical Controversy*, edited by Gerald Graff and James Phelan, 268-86. Boston: Bedford.

— 1998. "'The Duke of Milan and his brave son': Dynastic Politics in *The Tempest*". In *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's* The Tempest, edited by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, 91-103. New York: G. K. Hall.

Kaytor, Daryl. 2019. "On the Kinship of Shakespeare and Plato". In *The Routledge Companion to Shakespeare and Philosoph,* edited by Craig Bourne and Emily Caddick Bourne, 102-17. London and New York: Routledge.

— 2012. "Shakespeare's Political Philosophy: a Debt to Plato in *Timon of Athens*". *Philosophy and Literature* 36 (1): 136-52.

Leask, Ian. 2016. "Performing Cosmic Music: Notes on Plato's *Timaeus*". *REA: A Journal of Religion, Education and the Arts* 10: 14-27.

Medcalf, Stephen. 2004. "Shakespeare on Beauty, Truth and Transcendence". In *Platonism and the English Imagination*, edited by Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton, 117-25. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nuttall, A.D. 2004. "Action at a Distance: Shakespeare and the Greeks". In *Shakespeare and the Classics*, edited by Charles Martindale and A.B. Taylor, 209-22. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Parker, Barbara L. 2004. *Plato's* Republic *and Shakespeare's Rome. A Political Study of the Roman Works*. Newark: University of Delaware Press.

Pelosi, Francesco. 2010. *Plato on Music, Soul and the Body*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Plato. 1929. *Timaeus. Critias. Cleitophon. Menexenus. Epistles.* Translated by R. G. Bury. Loeb Classical Library 234. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ragni, Cristiano, forthcoming. "Shakespeare's Demiurge. New Origins and Old Tricks in *The Tempest*". In *Myths of Origin as Patterns of Literary Creation*, edited by Emilia Di Rocco and Chiara Lombardi. Leiden: Brill.

Reydams-Schils, Gretchen. 2003. *Plato's Timaeus as Cultural Icon*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Roe, John. 1994. "Italian Neoplatonism and the Poetry of Sidney, Shakespeare, Chapman and Donne". In *Platonism and the English Imagination*, edited by Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton, 100-16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rowe, M. W. 2010. "Iago's Elenchus: Shakespeare, *Othello*, and the Platonic Inheritance". In *A Companion to the Philosophy of Literature*, edited by Garry L. Hagberg and Walter Jost, 174-92. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Samuel, Irene. (1947). *Plato and Milton*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Serpieri, Alessandro. 2014. "The Labyrinth and the Oracle". In *Revisiting* The Tempest. *The Capacity to Signify*, edited by Silvia Bigliazzi and Lisanna Calvi, 95-110. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Shakespeare, William. 2005. *The Complete Works*. Edited by Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett, and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Somfai, Anna. 2002. "The Eleventh-Century Shift in the Reception of Plato's *Timaeus* and Calcidius's *Commentary*". *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 65 (1): 1-21.

Tudeau-Clayton, Margaret. 1998. "Shaking Neptune's 'dread trident': *The Tempest* and Figures of Virgil". In *Jonson, Shakespeare and Early Modern Virgil*, edited by Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, 194-293. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Whittington, Leah. 2014. "Shakespeare's Virgil: Empathy and *The Tempest*". In *Shakespeare and Renaissance Ethics*, edited by P. Gray and J. D. Cox, 98-120. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Willis, Deborah. 1989. "Shakespeare and the Discourse of Colonialism". *Studies in English Literature* 29 (2): 277-89.

Wilson, Richard. 1997. "Voyage to Tunis: New History and the Old World of *The Tempest*". *English Literary History* 64 (2): 333-57.

# 4

# Auden and the 'Myth' of *The Tempest*

Erin Reynolds

Abstract

This essay focusses on W.H. Auden's 1944 poem *The Sea and the Mirror*, against the background of changing interpretations of *The Tempest*, particularly those relating to ideas of the Mediterranean 'Sea' and the portrayals of Ariel and Caliban. Shakespeare's Mediterranean is distinct from the ideas about the Mediterranean as representing an ideal life and culture that surrounded Auden. Auden's Ariel and Caliban are similarly influenced by the ideas of the two as codependent opposites which developed around *The Tempest*, though not present in the text of the play. This essay explores how Auden consciously or unconsciously relates to these themes, in connection with his own understanding of 'myth' and of *The Tempest* as a 'mythical' play, and uses them and their disconnect from the text of the play to articulate the dualist, Kierkegaard-influenced Christian philosophy which he was interested in at the time he was writing 'The Sea and the Mirror'.

Keywords: *The Tempest*; W.H. Auden; myth; nature; art

In his 1947 lecture on *The Tempest*, W.H. Auden called it Shakespeare's only success "in writing myth" – his explanation for the enormous number and diversity of reinterpretations, continuations, and appropriations of the play throughout its history. This idea of 'myth' is as a "pattern of events" or a basic essence of a work, distinct from its poetry. Auden quotes C. S. Lewis to aid his explanation of it: "In poetry the words are the body and the 'theme' or 'content' is the soul. But in myth the imagined events are the body and something inexpressible is the soul". Expanding on this, Auden says that apart from some "accidental" parts of it which are "dependent on poetry", such as the masque and Ariel's songs, "you could put *The Tempest* in a comic strip". The effect of *The Tempest* being a work of 'myth' in this sense, according to Auden, is that it "inspire[s] people to go on for

themselves". He points out Browning's *Caliban on Setebos* and Renan's *Caliban: Suite de "La Tempête"* as examples, and also mentions that he has "done something with it [him]self": his 1944 poem *The Sea and the Mirror*. Here Auden seems to assume that there is a single 'myth' of a work, to which writers add their own "extension[s]" (Auden 2019, 296-7), but of course different people in different contexts and times will understand a work differently. *The Tempest* is particularly notable for how understandings of it have changed through time, with interpretations originating in works derived from often feeding back into criticism and popular ideas about the original play and changing people's 'myth' of it.[1] It therefore makes a very good lens through which to examine Auden's idea of 'myth', as reflected in *The Sea and the Mirror* and articulated in his lecture on *The Tempest*. For example, the first two chapters of *The Sea and the Mirror* take place before and during the voyage of the principal characters back to Milan, on the explicitly Mediterranean 'Sea' of *The Tempest*, but Auden uses the Mediterranean to represent nature or all life, as in the central metaphor in the title of the poem, with the "Sea" as nature and the "Mirror" as art. In this way Auden uses the presence of the Renaissance Mediterranean in *The Tempest* as an example for his 20th-century dualist philosophy. He does not just write an 'extension' to the play, since he is influenced by his own context and wants to express his own ideas takes the idea of the Mediterranean as a powerful life-giver and place of opportunity present in *The Tempest* and which evolved around it in the Renaissance, and combines it with his own dualist philosophy in the poem.

As I will explain in this essay, several pervasive critical ideas became attached to popular perceptions of the 'myth' of *The Tempest* in the centuries between Shakespeare writing it and Auden writing *The Sea and the Mirror*, which influenced Auden's ideas about the play in that poem. The most famous of these is the idea of Prospero representing Shakespeare or the artist, but Ariel also came to

1 For example how the explicitly monstrous Caliban in Dryden and Davenant's *Enchanted Isle* was often present in early criticism of *The Tempest* during the post-Restoration time when the original play was not performed, or (though this is after Auden) how Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* led to a proliferation of interpretations of *The Tempest* in a colonial setting with a more heroic Caliban.

represent not just a magical spirit of the air, but all knowledge and art, with Caliban his counterpart in nature and primitive or basic humanity, and these are the roles which these characters play in *The Sea and the Mirror*. These ideas are so inextricably connected to the play and criticism of it, as well as the poem, that Arthur Kirsch wrote in his otherwise excellent introduction to the 2003 Princeton edition of *The Sea and the Mirror* that "Caliban is in constant counterpoint with Ariel in *The Tempest* – they cannot exist without each other – and their opposition informs or reflects everything else in the play" (Auden 2003, xiii) – though this seems like quite an extreme exaggeration, and there is certainly no suggestion of a codependence of Ariel and Caliban in the play. There is a reasonably large pool of criticism on *The Sea and the Mirror* but, despite the poem's subtitle "A Commentary on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*", it rarely engages with how exactly the poem "comment[s]" on the play, instead generally focusing on Auden's life and philosophy when he was writing it. This is because the poem, rather than clearly commenting on the original play, relates to its 'myth' as Auden understood it. When critics talk about the poem and the play together they often, like Auden, work within popular ideas of the 'myth' of the play – Thomas R. Thornburg writes for example that "Probably for both [Auden and Shakespeare], and for Auden certainly, Prospero exists as the poetic persona" (Thornburg 1969, 3), echoing the Prospero-as-Shakespeare trope – or risk being unconvincing, as Kirsch is when he looks for an overarching shared "theme of forgiveness" (Auden 2003, xxxviii) in the poem and the play. The poem responds to and reflects Auden's idea of 'myth' but ultimately also shows the problems inherent in it as part of its theme of the falsity of art, having Ariel and Caliban be merely actors and *The Tempest* with its Mediterranean setting a play within the poem, although it leaks out into the rest of the life of the poem.

## 1. The 'Myth' of *The Tempest* Before and Around Auden

Auden quotes C.S. Lewis in his lecture on *The Tempest*, saying that the "pattern of events" instead of "poetry" is what is important in 'myth' (Auden 2019, 296-7), but what the pattern of events

of a 'myth' is taken to be will be based on reinterpretations and simplifications of it. He partially takes this into account with the idea of new works based on a work of 'myth' being "extension[s]" of the 'myth' (297). Auden's 'mythical' conception of *The Tempest* as shown in *The Sea and the Mirror* is therefore based on the tradition of receptions of the play up until he wrote the poem, so to discuss the poem I will first go through the main elements of interpretations of *The Tempest* which reappear in the poem. Ariel and Caliban are generally the most radically altered figures in works inspired by *The Tempest*. In the Brough brothers' burlesque 1848 *Raising the Wind*, for example, Ariel takes the part of a policeman and Caliban appears as a slave and then a revolutionary, asking "Ain't I a man and a brother" (*Raising the Wind*, in Shakespeare 2003, 315) – a precursor to 20th-century reinterpretations of *The Tempest* sympathetic to Caliban. Interestingly, this Caliban also borrows lines, and perhaps some nobility, from Othello and Hamlet, saying "A round unvarnished tale", and "Ay, there's the rub" (316), at least suggesting a reformatting of his character as tragic hero.

Between the Restoration and 1838 the only version of *The Tempest* performed was Dryden and Davenant's comedy *The Enchanted Isle*, while critics still read Shakespeare's *Tempest*, but the Dryden and Davenant version influenced their criticism of the original play. The first criticism of *The Tempest* was already fascinated with Caliban. John Dryden wrote in 1679 that, in Caliban, Shakespeare 'created a person which was not in nature', with a "monstrous" person and "language as hobgoblin as" it (Dryden 1962, 252-3) and Nicholas Rowe reported in his 1709 *Works of Mr William Shakespear* that "three very great men" (the notable royalists Lucius Cary, Henry Vaughan, and John Selden) "concurred . . . that Shakespeare had . . . adapted a new manner of language for [Caliban]" (Rowe 1948, xxiv-xxv). These ideas about Caliban's language sparked considerable debate, with Samuel Johnson eventually arguing that Cary, Vaughan, and Selden "mistook brutality of sentiment for uncouthness of words" (Johnson 1908). Even in this early critical reaction to *The Tempest*, the 'myth' of the play had already departed from the actual text. Caliban's language is sometimes unusual in comparison to Stephano or Trinculo's (who usually speak in prose in contrast to Caliban's frequent verse), for instance in his "I cried to dream

again" speech (2.3.141), but his speech is not clearly different from Prospero's or Miranda's. As he famously says, "[Prospero] taught [him] language": it is "your [Prospero's] language" that he speaks. Critics viewed Caliban as something less than human, but Prospero explicitly states that he has 'a human shape' (1.2.284). In *The Enchanted Island*, however, Caliban is clearly stated in the Dramatis Personae to be a "Monster of the Isle" (Dryden and Davenant 1670, 10). If critics did not already have the image of Caliban as a monster from performances of the play, perhaps his language would not have seemed so monstrous to them.

Moving into the 19th century, however, interpretations of Caliban became increasingly sympathetic, with William Charles Macready's 1838 production of the original *Tempest* and *Raising the Wind* only 10 years after. Caliban became a vessel for philosophy and politics, such as in Ernest Renan's 1878 *Caliban: Suite de "La Tempête"*, mentioned by Auden in his lecture, a sequel to *The Tempest* in which Caliban learns reason and becomes a representative of powerful but uninspiring democracy, overthrowing Prospero and ultimately leading to the disappearance of Ariel and death of Prospero and the cultured aristocracy he represents. This trend would later lead into the colonial interpretations of the play in the 20th century.

With the rise of Darwinism the enduring image of Caliban as half-man, half-fish led to interpretations of him as a sort of evolutionary 'missing link'. In Robert Browning's poem *Caliban upon Setebos; or, Natural Theology in the Island*, also mentioned in Auden's lecture, Caliban, half-fish, "a sea-beast, lumpish" with "toe-webs" (Browning 1864, 130), tries to conceive the features of his god Setebos through his own behaviours and morality. He is primitive, and has a primitive conception of religion, through which Browning satirises "Natural Theology" and Victorian theologians who tried to understand God as a reflection of themselves. Nine years later, Daniel Wilson wrote *Caliban: The Missing Link*, associating Caliban with 'that imaginary intermediate being between the true brute and man' (Wilson 1873, xi) and appropriating the 'myth' of Caliban to support ideas about evolution.

Ariel has not undergone so many or varied reinterpretations as Caliban. Critics generally found him to be representative of the ideal servant; the obedient and airy spirit to which Caliban is contrasted.

Over time, in conjunction with the popular identification of Prospero with Shakespeare and because of Ariel's various beautiful songs, it became completely accepted to view him as 'the spirit of poetry'. Fanny Kemble regarded him in 1882 as a "spirit of knowledge" (1882, 159), and by G. Wilson Knight's writing in 1929, Ariel had become unquestionably "the 'airy nothing' of poetry" (1947, 25).

The oppositional contrast between Caliban and Ariel had emerged earlier: Ludwig Tieck wrote in 1793: "in every serious scene we are reminded by the presence of Ariel of where we are, and in every comic scene by the presence of Caliban" and "the extraordinary contrast between Ariel and Caliban increases our faith in the wondrous" (trans. mine). To Tieck, Ariel and Caliban being contrasting opposites was central to the structure of the play and the creation of the sense of wonder in it, with the plausible portrayal of both characters "so remote from humanity" convincing the audience that they "had been transported to an utterly strange, as yet unknown world" (Tieck 2004, 695). This idea also appeared in English-speaking criticism – Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote that "Ariel has in every thing the airy tint which gives the name" and "Caliban, on the other hand, is all earth" (Coleridge 1836, 98) – and would endlessly reappear in later criticism of the play. Kemble argued that "Caliban is the densest and Ariel the most ethereal extreme" "of the wonderful chain of being" (Kemble 1882, 132) and Knight wrote that "two creatures serve [Prospero]: Ariel, the 'airy nothing' of poetry; and the snarling Caliban, half-beast, half-man; the embodiment of the hate-theme", and that they "are yoked in the employ of Prospero, like Plato's two steeds of the soul, the noble and the hideous, twin potentialities of the human spirit." (Knight 1947, 25). The critical meme of Ariel and Caliban as opposites, based on the ideas of Ariel representing "poetry" and Caliban being "half-beast, half-man", evolved into their being opposite aspects of humanity or of Prospero, the white and black winged steeds commanded by the charioteer Reason in Plato's allegory in *Phaedrus*.

This opposition between Caliban and Ariel is less obviously present in the play itself, or is at least more complicated. Knight describes both Ariel and Caliban as "creatures", but Caliban has a "human form" and is the child of a human. It is Ariel who is clearly inhuman, with his famous "were I human" line (5.1.20), which makes

portrayals of the two as twin aspects of humanity problematic. Ariel is also a servant, carrying out a fixed and agreed-upon term of service to Prospero – Prospero promised "to bate [him] a full year" for good service and eventually agrees to "discharge" him after another "two days" (1.2.250, 298-9) – whereas Caliban was seemingly raised as something close to family by Prospero and Miranda, having been "strok'[d] … and made much of", and taught "how / To name the bigger light, and how the less", until he tried to rape Miranda, whereupon he was imprisoned in his rock and treated as an "abhorred slave" (1.2.333, 334-5, 350). This complicates the narrative of "two creatures serve him": the dynamics between Prospero and Ariel and Caliban are more complex than just a master with a good and a bad servant.

## 2. Auden and the 'Myth' of *The Tempest*

As previously discussed, W.H. Auden understood *The Tempest* as a work of 'myth'. By the time he was writing *The Sea and the Mirror* in 1941 there had been many expansions and reinterpretations of this 'myth' of *The Tempest*, both in fiction and in criticism. If we base our understanding of the mid-20th-century 'myth' of the play on criticism such as that by G. Wilson Knight, Caliban was less than human, and an embodiment of nature and primitive human traits. Ariel was representative of knowledge and art and the air, and was understood to be diametrically opposed to Caliban; Prospero was Shakespeare, or the master of these two opposite aspects of human nature. This opposition seems to have been one of the main things which attracted Auden to the play. After moving to America in 1939 he had joined the Episcopal Church, a return to his childhood Anglican Christianity inspired by his reading of Christian existentialist philosophy, such as by Søren Kierkegaard and Reinhold Niebuhr. In November 1942 he wrote in the Roman Catholic journal *Commonweal* that he could not "help feeling that a satisfactory theory of Art from the standpoint of the Christian faith has yet to be worked out" (Auden 2003, xii). He became fascinated by the idea of the duality of humanity and finding some sort of perfect unity through religion, saying that "all the striving of life

is a striving to transcend duality" (xix) – in heaven, or through Christian marriage and becoming "one flesh". Since 1939 he had been in a relationship with the poet Chester Kallman which Auden described as a 'marriage', but Kallman ended their sexual relationship in July 1941, not wanting the exclusive relationship which Auden demanded. This personal tragedy, along with the catastrophe of the Second World War, may have turned him more towards religion and dualist philosophy. On Christmas Day 1941 Auden wrote a letter to Kallman comparing their relationship to the Nativity and Christian ideas, ending:

> Because . . . I believe that if only we have faith in God and in each other, we shall be permitted to realize all that love is intended to be . . . As this morning I think of the Good Friday and the Easter Sunday implicit in Christmas Day, I think of you. (xvii-xviii)

As Arthur Kirsch writes, this is "an elegy . . . not an epithalamium" and "Auden's hope of achieving the mystical union of flesh and spirit he yearned for remained unfulfilled" (xviii), just as the freedom from dualism in art and life which it would represent seems almost impossible in *The Sea and the Mirror*.

In 1943 Auden taught a seminar on Romanticism at Swarthmore College and distributed a chart of his worldview to his students (xvi). It has on either side of "This World", defined by "Dualism of Experience", the "Hell of the Pure Deed / Power without Purpose", which is entered by a "Search for Salvation by finding refuge in Nature", and the "Hell of the Pure Word / Knowledge without Power", entered by a "Search for Salvation by finding release from Nature". Paradise is perfectly centred, and can only be entered by going through Purgatory from one of these two Hells, journeying towards the other side of the chart before going back to the centre, "The Voluntary Journey of the corrupt mind" or "the corrupt body", depending on the Hell. On the chart are listed various ideas and aspects of humanity, placed on the spectrum between the two Hells. The "Pure Deed" has "Mutual Irresponsibility", "Blind Superstition", and "Tyranny"; the "Pure Word" "Mutual Aversion", "Lucid Cynicism", and "Anarchy". The centre of the chart has "Civilisation", "Faith", and "Marriage", but also "Anxiety"; its "Heroes" are

Dostoevsky's "Idiot" and "Don Quixote". So, for Auden, both a life of art and seeking knowledge and a life dedicated to nature or to gaining power would lead you to a "Hell", but staying in the middle was also not ideal, since a person would ultimately have to go through both "Hell[s]" to enter heaven.

In *The Tempest*, and the ideas associated with Prospero, Ariel, and Caliban in the 'myth' of it, Auden found examples to create his own "theory of Art" demonstrating the worldview shown in the Swarthmore chart, in *The Sea and the Mirror*. John Fuller writes that Auden's interpretation of the play is heavily influenced "by the allegorical interpretations of *The Tempest* which circulated in the nineteenth century, that Prospero is the artist, Ariel his imagination, Caliban his animal nature" (Fuller 1998, 357). In accordance with this, Auden has Ariel represent the "Pure Word" of the Swarthmore chart, Caliban the "Pure Deed", and Prospero an old disciple of the "Pure Word" trying to reach "This World". The title of the poem itself is an expression of Auden's ideas about duality, with the "Sea" representing nature and the "Mirror", of course, art. This "Sea" is of course the Mediterranean, the sea of *The Tempest*. For the Victorians, the Mediterranean represented a natural ideal life, and also the origins of their lifestyle. As John Pemble discusses in *The Mediterranean Passion*, Victorian tourists followed Samuel Johnson's famous statement that "All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean", and went to the Mediterranean "as regular visitors coming to a home from home" (Pemble 1988, 2), and in doing so "passed from the circumference to the centre of things", dwelling "on roots, origins, essentials, and ultimate affinities". Auden could not have avoided this historical context viewing the Mediterranean as the most natural possible sea, and presumably it partly played into his choice to use *The Tempest* for the poem. Chapters[2] 1 and 2 take place in the immediate context of this Mediterranean "Sea", within the play or the world of it, and chapter 3 suddenly taking readers out of the story, onto the stage after the play has finished; as it were,

2 Auden requested that the parts of *The Sea and the Mirror* be labelled chapters, although most editions do not do this (Kirsch 2003, xli).

on the other side of the "Mirror". It is notable that there are no mirrors in *The Tempest*, but the sea is very prominent, so the close association of the first two chapters with the "Sea" and the third with the "Mirror" reflects the actual structure of the poem, first demonstrating Auden's philosophy within the world of the play and then discussing it more explicitly outside the play. In the poem, Auden also continually draws into question how far the poem, or any art, can show true human experience or be fully understood, and through that deconstructs his own idea of 'myth', portraying an audience's understanding of a work of art as a simplified fantasy based on their own circumstances and expectations. To understand what is happening in *The Sea and the Mirror*, a reader needs to have a knowledge of the 'myth' of *The Tempest* in Auden's terms, but the poem ultimately dismantles that conception of myth.

Alonso's poem in chapter 2, "The Supporting Cast, Sotto Voce", a message to Ferdinand on how to rule wisely, is a clear example of Auden's dualist philosophy in *The Sea and the Mirror*. It is set fully within the world of the play, as the characters sail back to Milan over the Mediterranean, and the idea of the "Sea" as nature is extremely prominent in it, but this natural Mediterranean is significant mainly as one of the two "Hell[s]" of Auden's Swarthmore chart. Alonso says "Only your darkness can tell you . . . Which you should fear more – the sea . . . or the desert", and:

> As in his [a prince's] left ear the siren sings
> Meltingly of water and a night
> Where all flesh had peace, and on his right
> The efreet offers a brilliant void
> Where his mind could be perfectly clear
> And all his limitations destroyed:
> Many young princes soon disappear
> To join all the unjust kings. (Auden 1979, 142)

It is difficult to imagine Shakespeare's Alonso saying this, but Auden's Alonso is relevant only for being a wise and successful ruler, and, in passing down his wisdom, repeats almost exactly Auden's own philosophy, transposed into a political philosophy to show its universality: the dualism of human experience and the tight-rope walk of life between the temptations of the flesh, or

actions, and the temptations of the spirit, or knowledge, with the necessity of maintaining a perfect balance for success.

Chapter 1, "Prospero to Ariel" shows an example of a ruler who didn't have Alonso's advice: the powerful and learned but disillusioned Prospero preparing to live out his dying days in insignificance and normality, no longer the mighty sorcerer. It deals with an aspect of the play that responses have frequently found problematic or unbelievable: that Prospero forgives everyone unconditionally and then completely gives up his power. Auden's explanation for this is to make him someone who sought "release from Nature" and entered the "Hell of the Pure Word". Auden considered this the fate of artists, and this section parallels the message to artists in "Caliban to the Audience", said "at his [Shakespeare's] command" (Auden 1979, 158).

Auden portrays Prospero as disillusioned with power, with his only path to happiness being a Kierkegaardian leap of faith to accept normality – "The silent passage / Into discomfort", or, with another metaphorical use of the "Sea", "Sailing alone, out over seventy thousand fathoms"[3] (135, 134). He says:

> I am glad that I did not recover my dukedom till
> I do not want it; I am glad that Miranda
> No longer pays me any attention; I am glad I have freed you,
> So at last I can really believe I shall die.
> For under your influence death is inconceivable. (129)

Prospero regrets his search for learning and fame, the "magic" he "made" to "blot out forever / The gross insult of being a mere one among many" (130), because, in Auden's philosophy, only a balance between "Word" and "Deed" can lead to happiness. This Prospero in the "Hell of the Pure Word" is closely connected to the popular interpretation of Prospero as Shakespeare which became part of the 'myth' of *The Tempest*, and critics interpret him in this context. As Sophie Ratcliffe writes, this section, "suggests to the reader the

3 The strange use of "fathoms", said twice in *The Tempest*, is one of many fragments of quotations from the play in this chapter, perhaps a reminder that we are still 'in' the play. It also emphasises the depth of the water (and the danger of falling) over the distance of the journey.

need for a poet to consider the ethical implications of creativity, and, possibly, to reject the narcissistic artistic enterprise" (2008, 126): the path of magic or poetry will inevitably conflict with the humility and normality necessary to access heaven. Prospero says that Ariel "will be off now to look for likely victims" (131), even though Ariel in *The Tempest* wanted freedom from human rule – another example of how Auden uses the 'myth' built around *The Tempest* rather than just the text of the play. The Ariel in the play is a spirit of the air wanting freedom, but Auden's Ariel had become over centuries the spirit of poetry and art, and, to him, the "Pure Word", so Ariel must by nature seek out new artists and knowledge-seekers. Caliban, representative of the "Hell of the Pure Deed", is mentioned only once in this chapter, as Prospero's "impervious disgrace", a "wreck / That sprawls in the weeds and will not be repaired", created by Prospero's "wish / For absolute devotion" (132). This objectification of Caliban – a "wreck" that needs to be "repaired" – contrasts with the articulate Caliban later in the poem, which is perhaps a reminder of this chapter still being within the world of *The Tempest*, or of the 'myth' of Caliban as representative of the "Pure Deed" and therefore unable to fit within any construction of the "Pure Word".

In chapter 3, "Caliban to the Audience", the illusion of the world of the play is immediately and very deliberately shattered, with the previous characters dismissed as "hired impersonators" (Auden 1979, 148) – 'myths' of characters instead of real people – and Caliban suddenly speaking directly to the audience of the play (or the readers of the poem) in an imitation of Henry James, making a stark contrast to the previous verse in the poem and also strangely echoing the ideas in early criticism about Caliban having a unique and alien language. The "Sea" and the Mediterranean are conspicuously absent here: the setting is now an English theatre with an English audience, and the focus is on the mirror. Caliban, missing in the earlier chapters, replaces the Mediterranean as the representative of Nature, perhaps suggesting that the mythologised idea of the Mediterranean as an ideal natural life is just as false as the rest of the 'myth' of *The Tempest* which Auden deconstructs in this chapter. The setting outside the play and the prose style allow Auden to state relatively directly his "philosophy of Art" and life, but they also reflect his ideas about Ariel and Caliban: he wrote in a letter to the American poet and

Shakespeare critic Theodore Spencer about the poem that Caliban "doesn't fit in; it is exactly as if one of the audience had walked onto the stage and insisted on taking part in the action" (Auden 2003, xxxi), and that he "tried to work for this effect in a non-theatrical medium" in *The Sea and the Mirror*, through the juxtaposition of the world of the play in chapters 1 and 2 with 'real life' in chapter 3. Caliban also "*echo*[*es*]*"* (Auden 1979, 149) the audience, talking about the "Muse" of English literature as a hostess giving "famous, memorable, sought-after evenings" (ibid.) and accusing Shakespeare, "one of the oldest habitues at these delightful functions", "of the incredible unpardonable treachery of bringing along the one creature … whom she cannot and will not under any circumstances stand" (151) – Caliban himself. This idea about Caliban would be strange to interpret just from the text of the play[4], but fits perfectly with the combination of the 'myth' of it and Auden's own philosophy. If Caliban represents uncivilised nature and the "Pure Deed", he cannot "fit in" in a play, a piece of poetry and an example of the "Pure Word" – Ariel's territory. Now Caliban really has "walked onto the stage", but it is after the play is over. Auden is influenced by the 'myth' of Caliban, but also implicitly problematises it by having it be unable to exist within the actual *Tempest*.

Although the chapter is titled "Caliban to the Audience", Auden portrays Ariel and Caliban as mutually dependent opposites, so the chapter also focuses on Ariel. One of the clearest examples of Auden's belief in this is the stylistic imitation of Henry James: Auden wrote in his letter to Spencer that he wanted "(a) A freak 'original' style (Caliban's contribution), (b) a style as 'spiritual', as far removed from Nature, as possible (Ariel's contribution) and James seemed to fit the bill exactly". Caliban's voice in the poem is a combination of his and Ariel's. Even outside of the world of the play, Caliban the personification of nature needs Ariel's help to address the audience, though in *The Tempest* he is easily capable of beautiful poetry without Ariel – but the Caliban here is the 'myth' of the wild man, the embodiment of the flesh and not the mind. This mimicry of James is what Auden calls in his letter a "truc", or a poetic trick, and Kirsch

4 The main piece of evidence that could support this idea in the text alone is probably that Caliban stays on the island at the end – perhaps as the audience are left behind as the actors leave the stage.

notes that the "conception of art" as "fundamentally frivolous", which his taste for "trucs" reflects, "is critical to all of Auden's later work", helping "account for his attraction to Kierkegaard's distinctions of the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious" (Auden 2003, xxxi). In the poem Auden repeatedly emphasises the limits and frivolity of art, advocating for faith instead.

After the "*echo*", Caliban restates many of the ideas from chapter I with a message from Shakespeare to those in the audience who "have decided on the conjurer's profession" (Auden 1979, 158). The metaphor of writing being "the conjurer's profession" clearly connects these two parts of the poem, as well as reinforcing Auden's use of the Prospero-as-Shakespeare trope. The "conjurer" partners with Ariel to great success, though "the eyes, the ears, the nose, the putting two and two together are, of course, all His [Ariel's]" (160), but eventually begins to fail and tries to dismiss Ariel, who however "refuses to budge" and, looking in his eyes, the "conjurer" sees reflected "a gibbering fist-clenched creature" (161), Caliban. Unlike the example of Prospero in chapter I, however, for whom Caliban and Ariel are real spirits, since he is within the world of the play or the Mediterranean, Caliban and Ariel here are entirely metaphors for the "Pure Deed" and the flesh and the "Pure Word" and poetry – Caliban is literally the "conjurer's" body and Ariel the spirit of poetry.

Later in the chapter, Auden gives Ariel and Caliban more personhood, but separates them further from their characters in *The Tempest*, making them agents of a sort of cosmic order guiding people to Auden's two "Hell[s]". When the "dim chorus" asks Caliban to "take [them] home" (166), he has "no option but to be faithful to [his] oath of service and instantly transport [them], not indeed to any . . . specific Eden which [their] memory necessarily but falsely conceives of as the ultimately liberal condition, . . . but directly to that downright state itself" (167), the "Hell of the Pure Word", an unchanging and empty, but free, desert of inevitable existential despair. "Important persons", ask Ariel to transport them to their own conception of heaven, at which, "obliged by the terms of His contract", Ariel takes them to "a nightmare which has all the wealth of exciting action and all the emotional poverty of an adventure story for boys, a state of perpetual emergency and

everlasting improvisation where all is need and change", the "Hell of the Pure Deed".

This Caliban then describes the paradox facing the artist, "who, in representing to you your condition of estrangement from the truth, is doomed to fail the more he succeeds, for the more truthfully he paints the condition, the less clearly can he indicate the truth from which it is estranged, the brighter his revelation of the truth in its order, its justice, its joy, the fainter shows his picture of your actual condition in all its drabness and sham" (171). Thornburg writes that by this Auden means that an artist "can only show people what they are . . . But the danger of art becoming magic [which is to say entrancing] is omnipresent" (Thornburg 1969, 33). Thornburg decides that the artist's best option is to only show the "condition" and rely on readers to deduce the "truth", but in the text this is portrayed to be just as bad as focusing only on conveying the "truth". Instead, this is a complaint about the ultimate futility of art, through the lens of Kierkegaardian ideas about the necessity of accessing God (or "truth") through uncertainty. Caliban and Ariel, becoming more like people, no longer seem to entirely represent the diametric opposites of "Word" and "Deed". Distanced from the first two chapters, the play of *The Tempest* and the Mediterranean, they also become separate from the ideas of them in the 'myth' of the play, showcasing how art, or the 'myth' of art, can never accurately portray both "truth" and "condition" and will always be a simplification.

Building on this, the Caliban figure then explains that the "performance" (172), is now "over"; that he and Ariel can hear "the real Word", and, despite their flaws:

> are blessed by that Wholly Other Life from which we [they] are separated by an essential emphatic gulf . . . so that all our meanings are reversed and it is precisely in its negative image of Judgement that we can positively envisage Mercy. (173)

The solution to Auden's paradox of life and art is religion, a "Wholly Other Life", and Caliban and Ariel, escaping the two "Hell[s]" understand, in Kierkegaardian fashion, that this religion is inherently paradoxical and accessible only through its inaccessibility. It is still the fictional character of Caliban speaking, however, in his "true"

imitation of Henry James, a reminder that, though the characters of Caliban and Ariel have escaped the 'myths' of themselves in the play-within-the-poem, the reader is still reading a poem, with the falsity inherent to Auden's view of art.

A final reminder of this is the "Postscript", "*[Ariel to Caliban. Echo by the Prompter]*", the first speech from Ariel in the poem, but with an ". . . *I*" from the "*Prompter*" after each stanza, reestablishing the fact that *The Sea and the Mirror* is art and therefore false, just like the chapter headings and the overall structure of the play-within-the-poem. Ratcliffe writes that the "*Prompter*" shows the "difficulty of establishing an unscripted self": "this Ariel will never be free – his words will always be written for him" (Ratcliffe 2008, 157-8). Having had his characters of Ariel and Caliban assert their individuality and the imperfection of art, Auden reminds the audience that they are still metaphorically actors following a script – that is to say fictional characters written by an author – and that the poem is also subject to the impossibility of perfect expression, or of having a single perfect 'myth' representing a character or thing.

W.H. Auden's idea of 'myth' in his lecture on *The Tempest* was a sort of basic story or set of ideas that make up a work, which responses to that work can follow and build upon. However, different readers of a work, in different contexts and with different preconceptions, will interpret it differently, and so the 'myth' of a work is necessarily vague and mutable. Auden quotes C.S. Lewis saying that "Myth does not essentially exist in *words* at all . . . [it] is a particular pattern of events, which would equally delight and nourish if it had reached [him] by some medium which involved no words at all – say by a mime, or a film. Any means of communication whatever which succeeds in lodging those events in our imagination has, as we say, 'done the trick'" (Auden 2019, 296). Popular ideas about *The Tempest* have changed enormously throughout its history, and therefore the 'myth' which people receive of it, through the criticism or re-imaginings of it which they read, the performances of it which they watch, and the socio-political circumstances and ideas they are involved with, changed and evolved from Shakespeare's time to when Auden was writing *The Sea and the Mirror*, with Caliban being cast as a representative of nature and Ariel his opposite in art, and Prospero becoming representative of Shakespeare and the poet. A

significant reason why Auden chose to use *The Tempest* for *The Sea and the Mirror* was presumably how well this 'myth' of the play fit into his philosophy of dualism, allowing him to transform Ariel and Caliban into representatives of the two "Hells" on either side of Auden's "This World" and then subvert the 'myth' by making them actors playing roles of themselves to demonstrate the limitations of knowledge in life and art. He uses the fictionalised Mediterranean setting of *The Tempest* and its 'myth' to express his philosophy of life, but takes care to show its inherent falsity: the necessarily imperfect and biased understanding of a text as its 'myth' mirrors Auden's belief in the impossibility of fully understanding the world or religion, and the need for acknowledgement of that ignorance and a Kierkegaardian 'leap of faith' to reach a semblance of the truth. Rather than a "Commentary on" *The Tempest*, then, *The Sea and the Mirror* is an exploration, response to, and deconstruction of the 'myth' of the play in Auden's sense of the word.

## Works Cited

Auden, W.H., and Arthur C. Kirsch. 2019. *Lectures on Shakespeare*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Auden, W.H. 2003. *The Sea and the Mirror*. Edited by Arthur C. Kirsch. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

— 1979. *Selected Poems*. Edited by Edward Mendelson. New York: Random House.

— 1962. *The Dyer's Hand*. New York: Random House.

Browning, Robert. 1864. *Dramatis Personae*. London: Chapman and Hall.

Coleridge, Henry Nelson, ed. 1836. *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 2. London: W. Pickering.

Dryden, John. 1962. *Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays*, edited by George Watson, vol.1. London: J.M. Dent & Sons.

Dryden, John, and William Davenant. 1670. *The Tempest: Or, The Enchanted Island*. London: printed for J. Tonson.

Fuller, John. 1998. *W.H. Auden: A Commentary*. London: Faber.

Johnson, Samuel. 1908. *Johnson on Shakespeare*. Edited by Walter Raleigh. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Knight, G. Wilson. 1947. "Myth and Miracle (1929)". In *The Crown of Life*, 9-31. London: Methuen.

Kemble, Fanny. 1882. *Notes upon Some of Shakespeare's Plays*. London: Richard Bentley & Sons.

Pemble, John. 1988. *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pope, Alexander, and William Warburton, eds. 1747. *The Works of Shakespear in Eight Volumes*, vol 1. London: Printed for J. & P. Knapton et al.

Ratcliffe, Sophie. 2008. *On Sympathy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rowe, Nicholas. 1948. *Some Account of the Life of Mr William Shakespear*. Ann Arbor: Augustan Reprint Society.

Shakespeare, William. 2003. *The Tempest*. Edited by Peter Hulme, and William H. Sherman. New York and London: Norton.

Tieck, Ludwig. 2004. *Band 1. Schriften 1789-94*. Edited by Achim Hölter. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Thornburg, Thomas R. 1969. *Prospero, the Magician-Artist: Auden's The Sea and the Mirror*. Muncie: Ball State Monograph.

Vaughan, Alden T., and Virginia Mason Vaughan. 1991. *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, Daniel. 1873. *Caliban: The Missing Link*. London: Macmillan.

# Part 3

# From the Mediterranean to the Mediterranean: *The Tempest*, Italian Music and Cinema

# 5

# Ariel's Music in Italian and English Madrigal Forms

Shira F. Melcer

Abstract

The relationship between William Shakespeare's plays and music is easily discernible, given the numerous references to music in his stage directions, in characters' line and in the natural musicality reciting words in iambic verse carries. Several of Shakespeare's plays involve music and directly mention it. "*The Tempest*, however, can be considered the most musical of Shakespeare's plays, as "unity of plot and lyric and musical allusion [are] far greater than in any other play" (Welch 1922, 526). Particularly noteworthy is the dominant character of Ariel, who is often staged communicating in song-form. This paper aims to examine the history of different musical compositions of Shakespeare's plays, focusing on those written by Robert Johnson and Thomas Morley, and suggest that Shakespeare's songs within plays, mainly those of Ariel in *The Tempest*, can be considered as madrigals. A thorough examination of the madrigal's history both in Italy and Great Britain dating back to the Fourteenth Century, will facilitate the exploration of different musical forms when reading Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. This paper will conclude with my original composition which exemplifies different key elements of music composition in Shakespeare's time.

Keywords: madrigal; Ariel; "Full Fathom Five"; Robert Johnson; Thomas Morley

William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is a play in which the lines between reality and fiction, the ordinary and the fantastic are blurred, a play whose ambiguous settings often create the feeling of a dream sequence. True to the play's inherent uncertainty and confusion, Ariel is portrayed as one of Shakespeare's most enigmatic, elusive characters; his gender, visibility and even the extent to which he can be considered a human are constantly brought into question. In this essay, I will explore Ariel, focusing on his connection to music. Additionally, I will compare different Italian and English musical art

forms and discuss their common traits. Using these comparisons, I will propose an original composition of Ariel's song.

From the onset of the play, it is made clear that Ariel is an unusual character, and possesses impressive magical abilities. Ariel is the one who conjures the tempest as demanded by Prospero and seems to take pride in his power. He is the vehicle of Prospero's ambitions, setting the plot into action, seemingly from the background. He goes as far as to say that "Jove's lightnings, the precursors / O' th' dreadful thunderclaps, more momentary / And sight-outrunning were not" (1.2.201-3). Ariel's true power stems from his ability to become invisible whenever he chooses to do so, a power that allows him to exist among all other characters while remaining completely detached from them. One can consider Ariel as a sort of muse, perhaps Prospero's muse, particularly since Prospero cannot execute his ambitions without him, and Ariel can choose whether he wishes to exist on the same plane as the rest of the characters.

Ariel is not only conspicuous for his magical abilities, and indeed he is the sole provider of magic in the play, but also for being a performer of music. Against the other characters' idiosyncratic verbal expression, Ariel stands out as an exalted character, because he is the one who communicates through music, without necessarily being visible while he does so. All lines written in verse have a natural musicality, a rhythm. When Ariel is singing the song "Full Fathom Five" however, there is another emphasis on music, as Shakespeare separates his verse by clearly asserting that it is a song, using rhyme and a repetitive impression of the sound of the bell. This use of the sound of a bell in Ariel's song creates a feeling of bewitchment, as if Ariel's power lies not only in the actual abilities of disappearing or causing natural disasters, but also in a far deeper, mysterious and even incomprehensible plane. The mere reading of Ariel's song proves hypnotising, causing one to reread it several times and detach, for a moment, from the rest of the play.

Robert Johnson II had his own interpretation of what Ariel's song would sound like. Johnson composed his melody for "Full Fathom Five", in 1611. It is therefore possible that his was the version used in the first performance of *The Tempest*. Whether or not that is the case, considering Johnson's composition provides a unique interpretation of Ariel's song, as enigmatic as the play

itself. Johnson did not compose Ariel's song to sound eerie, but rather sweet-sounding, and particularly enchanting. As I listened to this music, I sensed that this song might be a madrigal, as I will endeavour to clarify below.[1]

## 1. What is a Madrigal?

The madrigal, in its prime, was a product of the high humanistic age – the *Cinquecento* era. Aside from any other defining qualities, it was a secular form of music that would never be performed in a church. The madrigal was meant for entertainment and self-expression, at times even used to convey political criticism. The madrigal uses a lofty literary register, when put to music, that changes in each verse (Rubsamen 2013, 58). Very briefly, madrigals became extremely popular in Italian social gatherings, their musical components gradually becoming more complex.

It was *Musica transalpina,* a collection of madrigals edited by Nicholas Yonge, which introduced the madrigal in England in 1588, originating from the Alps, as the name suggests. This single music book essentially caused an earthquake in the English music world. Up until then, music in England was predominantly religious, very far from the secular madrigal in both content and style. Religious music, however, was not the only musical genre in England, and the madrigal was not the first kind borrowed from Italian culture. Researchers point to a significant reciprocal relationship between Sicily and parts of today's England dating back as early as the eighth century (Chaney 1998, 25). This relationship became a prolific breeding ground for centuries of cultural exchanges between these territories – including the Madrigal. Unlike other works of art that were adapted to local customs and language requirements, the madrigal, once embraced, generally kept its shape in its first years in England, as English madrigal composers kept the Italian texts in their new musical compositions. Although the madrigal was revolutionary when it reached England, translations of *Musica*

1 I am greatly indebted to Professor Bella Brover-Lubowsky, for her guidance and assistance in the writing of this article.

*transalpina* into English eventually emerged, making the madrigal accessible to a larger crowd (Kerman 1951, 127). The madrigal increased in popularity as the language barrier was broken, and the use of English allowed for further innovation.

## 2. The Difference Between the Italian and English Madrigal

The Italian madrigal first appeared in Venice in 1501, having reached the city from Flanders, where it originated. The first music to be considered a madrigal written in England was published in 1560, decades after the madrigal's arrival in Italy (Sticks 1910, 90-2). By the time *Musica transalpina* reached England, there were already hints of the madrigal forming there as well (Kerman 1951, 125). Naturally, the journey the madrigal had made from Italy to England meant that this genre would change significantly.

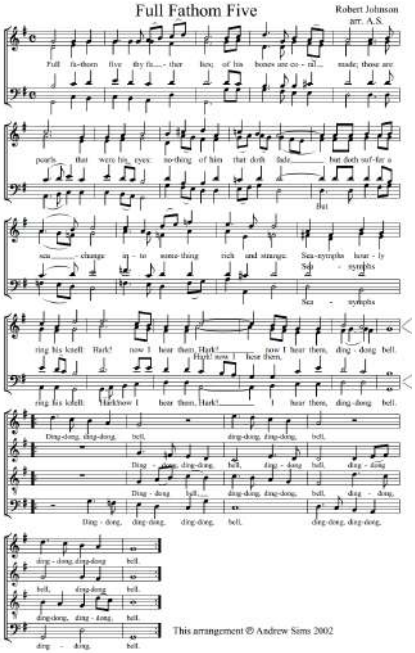
Two centuries after the rather abrupt demise of the *Trecento* artistic style in Italy, in the early sixteenth century, Italians moved on to a more refined artistic form. This form was based on a movement that rediscovered Petrarch's texts and was influenced by the *frottola*, a short, light musical piece (Fenlon and Haar 1988, 5). The Italian madrigal was usually comprised of five or six voices, accompanied by a *basso continuo* instrument echoing the melody without having its own independent melodic line; the emphasis remained on the text and the human voices singing it.

The secular madrigal's text usually revolved around classic Petrarchan themes such as nature and love. Later in its development it often included political criticism. One prominent example of a political English madrigal is found in Thomas Morley's work, an English composer and an activist who had ties to Catholic scholars in England, some of whom were his patrons and were mentioned in his madrigal collections (Ruff and Wilson 1969, 15). This general form of the madrigal and its themes already existed in the works contained in *Musica transalpina,* used as a kind of manual by English madrigal composers.

English composers' work was interesting and unique, although still heavily reliant on Italian origins. As Alfred Einstein describes,

> [t]he dependence of the Elizabethan texts appears to be even greater if one considers the indirect influences, the similarities and the resemblances of subjects found in the common literary bases: the poetry of antiquity and the fashionable literary complaint of the time – the pastoral. Neither Tasso's nor Shakespeare's compatriots could in the long run manage without Venus and Cupid, Thyrsis and Mopsa or Mirtillo and Amarillis.
>
> Yet . . . the Elizabethan madrigal composers were no mere imitators, even when they set to music naked and unashamed translations. They are national musicians . . . by no means wholly Italianized, in the sense that in the [18th century] Handel and Hasse and Mysliveček were, for instance. (1944, 76)

Thus, there were significant, distinctly English changes made to the madrigal upon its arrival to the isles. I find this particularly interesting when examining Robert Johnson's above-mentioned composition of Ariel's song, "Full Fathom Five" (1611):



When looking at this music sheet, one thing immediately catches one's attention: the correlation between Shakespeare's iambic meter and the madrigal's musical measure. The Italian madrigal, which largely developed with adherence to Petrarch's texts at first, enjoyed almost limitless freedom when it came to time measurement and rhythm, since the goal was to write music completely bound to the text and its meter (Mace 1969, 75), and the words were its centrepiece. This tendency can be seen in Johnson's composition, as the time measurement of the music is written in accordance with the iambic pentameter of the text. The steady heartbeat-like rhythm that is so prevalent in Shakespeare's texts was translated by Johnson into musical form. As evident already in the first line of the madrigal, there is a constant pattern of long-short, or long-short-short beats. Despite the visible reduction from half notes to dotted quarter notes, the pattern remains, along with the original rhythm that existed in Shakespeare's verses originally, which is perhaps one of the reasons Ariel's song is so captivating.

Nonetheless, one major difference between Italian and English madrigals is the meter, or, musically speaking, the division of music according to the stressed and unstressed syllables in the madrigal's text. In the Italian language, the traditional meter that was used for centuries, including in Dante's famous *terza rima* form and in subsequent centuries, is the *endecasillabo* meter. This meter is intimately tied to English poetry, as the iambic pentameter is derived from it (Duffel 2003, 62). It is, however, inherently different – while there is a similar pattern of a stressed syllable following unstressed syllables, there are a few possibilities, including but not limited to: - - / x - / - x / and so on. Italian is not as symmetric as English, and unlike it, the syllable before the last is the stressed one. The strictest rule of *endecasillabo* is that it must include eleven syllables with a stressed tenth syllable in each line. However, as Stefano Versace points out, unlike English, in Italian

> regulation of stress placement is instead more varied, giving rise to a number of different possible stress patterns. There is a very strong tendency for [the fourth or sixth syllable] to be stressed, and there is also a tendency for other stressed syllables to fall on even positions. As in all other known iambic meters of comparable

> length, [the tenth syllable] must obligatorily be stressed. (2014, 2)

This difference in the range of possibility and flexibility of meter may seem small, yet it is quite the opposite, especially in music. A change of meter, when translated into music composition, completely changes the tempo, the time measurement and even the style and genre of the piece. The Italian madrigal is not only visually different, but it also sounds different from its English sibling, even when one only considers this change in meter. The Italian madrigal, logically, is mostly written in odd time signature to fit the non-symmetrical form of words and sentences, unlike the English madrigal which is usually written in compound time signature due to the even iambic meter. Such is the case in Robert Johnson's madrigal as well as many others'. A distinct time signature makes music sound completely different, a dissimilarity that can be easily noticed by any listener.

It is particularly interesting and even humorous that the music written for *The Tempest* employs a borrowed genre. In a play written about foreigners, the music itself is foreign as well, which seems quite apt. Not only is a madrigal borrowed, but it is also borrowed from the Mediterranean area, specifically the Italian peninsula. In *The Tempest,* there is a constant tension between locals and invaders. The English noblemen's interference with life in a Mediterranean Island is an issue the play is postulated upon the madrigal is a very subtle, yet poignant incorporation of this idea. It is Ariel, an inhabitant of the island, who sings to the Englishmen the kind of music that can be considered as madrigals.

Another important quality of the madrigal is the register of the human voice it is written for. It was highly fashionable in Italy to write for very high registers when writing madrigals sung by men, such as countertenor or even *castrato* singers. Johnson's madrigal is no different, the voice is indeed a male voice, but it is so high in tone that it can be easily confused with a woman's voice. For a character with such significant gender ambiguity, it is only right that Ariel's song be sung in this intriguing male voice register, accompanied by the soft, quiet notes of a lute or a mandolin, instruments that were used instead of the accompanying *basso continuo* role.

### 3. Could Ariel's Song Be Written in a Different Musical Form?

While Robert Johnson's idea of composing Ariel's song as a madrigal makes perfect sense, even if it was not this specific madrigal that was originally performed in 1611, any performance of the song, as we shall see, was necessarily some sort of a madrigal and could not belong to any other genre of the time. Since it was a form of art meant to be presented at the Queen's court, Ariel's music would not be performed as a gigue or a nursery rhyme which are other examples of forms of secular music in England at the time, because they were not considered artistic forms. Ariel's song would also definitely not be written in accordance with religious music genres performed in religious functions, as those pieces strictly adhered to religious texts and themes and had to be performed in a chapel. The madrigal represented the perfect middle ground, since it was considered a higher art form than a sailor's gigue, and at the same time it could include both religious and secular themes without being bound to a church. In addition, the choice of a madrigal fit not only Shakespeare's plays in general, but specifically *The Tempest*'s plot that abounds in political allusions, alongside the classical themes of love and nature, that were the bread and butter of madrigal writers, similarly to the pastoral drama (Chater 1975, 231).

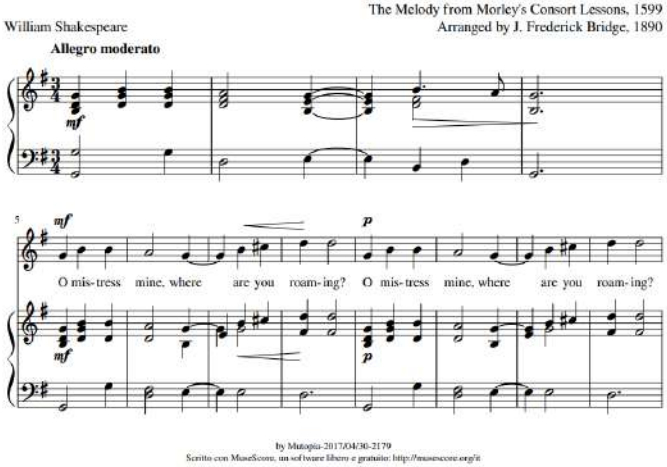
### 4. Did Anybody Actually Compose Madrigals Using Shakespeare's Texts?

Shakespeare's texts were not common material for madrigals, perhaps because composers liked using quotes from Italian texts and poems. One example of a composer who did use text written by Shakespeare other than Robert Johnson, is Thomas Morley. Morley was a unique composer not only in his use of Shakespeare's words for his compositions, but also because he tended to write in accordance with the Italian madrigal, rather than the English. As Daniel Christopher Jacobson writes,

> [the] anglicization of the Italian madrigal and its related forms ranks among the greatest achievements of the English Renaissance; however, modern scholars have questioned the accuracy of this

> musical transliteration. While it is true that some Elizabethan composers and printers were disinterested in preserving the musical and poetic structures that distinguished the continental *madrigale* . . . Thomas Morley . . . was a strong advocate of the Italian style. (1996, 80)

Thomas Morley is an exceedingly interesting composer when it comes to mixing Italian and English conventions of writing. An example of his tendency to combine the two can be seen in his madrigal written using Shakespeare's famous passage from *Twelfth Night*'s 2.3, "O Mistress Mine". Here, the opening of the piece (Morley 1599):




Graphically, Morley's creative choice immediately becomes evident when reading the sheet music, as he in fact took Shakespeare's words that were confined so neatly in a beautiful iambic verse and stretched them to fit a distinctly Italian meter pattern – notice the odd time signature, as well as the longer half notes, accenting the fourth and then sixth syllables of the line. Morley created a mixture of the two cultures in this elegant, simple way, providing a new interpretation and context for Shakespeare's words. He maintains an Italian meter using Shakespeare's text throughout this madrigal, as well as two other madrigals he composed with the playwright's texts. Having

examined this alteration of Shakespeare's work, I cannot help but think that this obvious blending which is the product of a fusion of cultures is most fitting for *The Tempest*. As established, the madrigal suits the play as it is a foreign form, however, Robert Johnson's madrigal could be experienced as a generic English piece of music by the unsuspecting listener, because he forced the madrigal to contain an English meter pattern. Thomas Morley mixed the two traditions and created a strange hybrid, and it is therefore likely that Morley's madrigal would have sounded strange to the theatre-goers in Shakespeare's time, and that they would therefore hear the blunt change created by Morley. In a play opposing invaders and inhabitants, portraying a constant blurring of identity and ideals, the use of the madrigal form is thus not only appropriate, but it is Thomas Morley's madrigal that fits it best.

## 5. Was Shakespeare a Musician?

Using music in plays was a typical, ordinary practice in Elizabethan England. While it is tempting to look at Shakespeare's use of music as another validation of his genius, his knowledge of music was regarded as elementary at the time. Shakespeare was not unique in his musical knowledge, but rather in his vast use of musical allusions, more than any other literary artist of the time (Welch 1922, 512; Duffin 2004). From *Twelfth Night* to *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Love's Labour's Lost,* to *Hamlet* and *Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare's plays are adorned in music, as a rhetorical tool used by characters in dramatic monologues, as entertainment in social events, as well as in many other forms. Uses of common musical terms of the time, such as 'catch' 'key' and 'madrigal,' are abundant in the plays. R. D. Welch points out that we do not know whether Shakespeare believed that the two arts should be combined, such as in the works of Tasso and other Italians, or whether he merely employed yet another popular art form of his time to communicate his dramatic plots. Regarding this question, Welch claims that when considering *The Tempest* specifically,

> we find a unity of plot and lyric and musical allusion far greater than in any other play. The Tempest almost induces us to believe that its author sensed the possibilities of a play in music – *Opera in musica*, as the Italians called it . . . Rarely, if ever, has music been used incidentally in a play with greater cogency or more apt suggestiveness. The atmosphere of mystery and magic is suffused with music. (1922, 526)

Accordingly, there is ample validation to treat the music of *The Tempest* as equally important to its non-musical dramatic part. Moreover, it is necessary to do so in order to fully understand the play, especially when Ariel is concerned:

> Light, whose source we cannot trace, is full of mystery: much more so music, since it not only suggests the supernatural, but speaks to the emotion as well. "Singing," "Soft and solemn music," are often indicated in the stage directions, and Ariel rides continually on the wings of song. Moreover, there is not a lyric in the whole play that is not an integral part of the action and atmosphere. (Ibid.)

Music is the driving force of the play. It is Ariel's tool of expression, intimidation and magic. Ariel's use of music creates a play with an inseparable connection between drama and music, soliloquy and song, particularly since he is the main developer of action in the play.

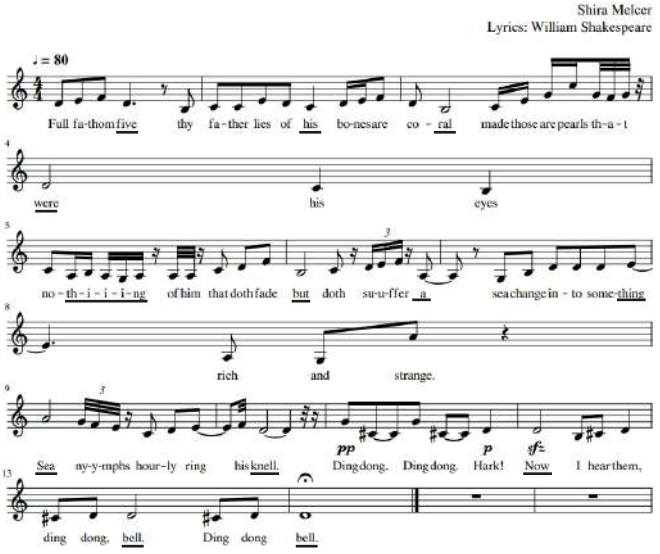
## 6. After All is Said and Done: a Proposal for a New Conception of Ariel and His Song

I set to work wishing to create my own version of Ariel's song a "Full Fathom Five" madrigal, wishing to create a combination of elements from many elements discussed thus far, thus resolving to incorporate the Italian meter pattern like Thomas Morley did, using Johnson's version of Ariel's song. Unlike Johnson's madrigal, which is harmonious and sweet, I decided to go according to what I felt when I first read the words sung by Ariel in the play, and I gave the madrigal an eerie tone. For example, using the famous dissonant triton interval, helped turn the words 'ding dong bell' ominous, instead of sweet and light. I also decided to write a slow

tempo, as indicated in the upper left corner, with a quarter note equalling eighty beats per minute, in the manner of a rather slow andante, which adds to the tension of the piece.

In addition, I used some classic madrigal elements such as a *grupetto* trill, and composed with the feeling of a mode, rather than a scale, imitating composition styles of the Seventeenth Century, when music was still not written in modern scales. I also chose to add repetitions of the bell dinging, as Johnson did, to enhance the feeling achieved by the use of the bell's sound. Attached here is the sheet music of my composition, with markings showing the long, accented notes according to the meter I chose.

*Full Fathom Five*




I chose a few variations of ways to bring forth the accented syllables through the music, such as using the dynamic of a surprising *sforzando*, or a trill, adding decorative elements to match the meter. I find it extremely interesting to look at "Full Fathom Five" through the lens of an Italian meter. Iambic pentameter naturally accentuates some words that 'would make sense' to be accented in this English text, which also means that the more 'dramatic' words are often accented, as Shakespeare most probably intended. Using Italian meter allows a new perspective on English, as soon as words like

'sea', 'five' and 'now' are more emphasised. This game of shifting and changing meter patterns opens new venues of interpretations of the same text.

## 7. *The Tempest's* Masque: Another Italian Inspiration

Another related form of Italian art borrowed and used in English culture is the masque. More than any literary component, the masque was first and foremost a musical dance, and, "spectacular entertainment," as "[only] in the third place was the masque literature, whereby the song-text with its music, easily maintained a certain degree of preponderance over monologue or dialogue . . . the trimmings of the cake were of a literary nature, while the cake itself is dance and dance music" (Gombosi 1948, 3). In other words, Shakespeare's insertion of a masque into *The Tempest* not only adds another layer to the theme of cultural borrowing from Italy, but it also justifies a deep discussion of *The Tempest*'s music and further solidifies its importance in the work. The masque was historically treated as "a rather unimportant subdivision of the drama; but it may almost be said to have been less closely related to dramatic literature than to music" (Welsford 1923, 394). Similarly to the English madrigal, many libretti of English masques were directly taken from Italian festivities in the early Seventeenth Century (ibid.). One important Italian festivity which completely changed European culture was right at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century. In 1600, what is now considered a pastoral was performed in Florence. This was not just any musical piece, but the start of a revolution: it was *Eurídice*, written by Ottavio Rinuccini and composed by Jacobo Peri, to be performed at the wedding of Enrique IV of France to Maria de' Medici. For many years, it was considered to be the first opera in Europe. This is not exactly the case, as it was a very early manifestation of what would become the opera decades later. 'Opera' is a later development of the genre invented by Peri's *Eurídice*, which was called *Dramma per musica*. The cause of a veritable cultural upheaval in northern Italy, the *dramma per musica* was a new form of a play accompanied by music. It was completely new, a product of members of the *Camerata Fiorentina*, Peri and Rinuccini among

them, who wished to revive Greek-inspired theatre. It later reached Venice as well and was developed further as an artistic genre. It gave writers a chance to heavily criticise their political leaders while dancing, singing and taking part in a musical piece that at times resembled a banquet, or a masque., which, similarly to the *Dramma per musica*, involved dancing, music, reciting of text and more. In addition to the music, the masks and the costumes allowed for fresh artistic freedom of expression.

Peri's musical piece comes to mind when one reads the masque scene in *The Tempest*. It is easy to picture Ferdinand and Miranda as actors in a cheerful scene, such as the scene in Peri's piece in which Orpheus is seen celebrating his marriage right before the play takes a dark turn, with people dancing around and singing in clear, cheerful voices.

Many similarities can be drawn between this *stile monodia*[2] form developed by Peri and Rinuccini and established in the growing *Dramma per musica* genre, and the masque, as the masque was in fact another form of Italian culture adopted by the English. Edward Dowden writes: "The conditions under which the masque existed, the circumstances which determined its character, can be easily comprehended. It was a flower of Italian culture, but grafted on an English stem of the same family" (1899, 102).

Not only is the masque rooted in Italy, but it is also another foreign form of art that made its way into *The Tempest*. Shakespeare was certainly merely one of many writers who incorporated the masque form into their works, but in the case of *The Tempest* this borrowing bears another special meaning, another hidden layer of foreignness in a play all about foreigners.

Not every Italian form that reached England succeeded in taking root there. Such was the case with the composer Georg Friedrich Händel, a German composer who worked both in Italy and in England and tried to bring the already-developed 18th-century

2 *Stile monodia* is a musical piece comprised of one singular voice, with no other voices accompanying it, similar to the term 'monophony,' accompanied by an instrumental basso continuo part. *Stile monodia* specifically is a term which, as quoted in Baron's article, refers to "an ancient Greek manner of solo singing that was revived in Florence in the 1580s" (Baron 1968, 463).

Italian opera to London. By then, English music was "at a low ebb," as "[the] quaint beauty of the madrigalist's art of the Elizabethan period . . . were all but forgotten" (Crowest 1896, 620). It may seem like this was the perfect time for new music to arrive, yet Händel's attempt of importing the Italian opera was not successful. He failed where the madrigal and the masque succeeded, since he failed to recognise that the act of importing art forms to other countries must include a level of integration into the local culture. He failed because he refused to include any English ingredient in his Italian art, something that English writers and madrigal composers had wisely intertwined in their works, as in the creation of a harmonious blend of both in the conclusion of *The Tempest*. Händel did later achieve enormous success by better understanding the English audience and incorporating its taste to his compositions, gradually developing an entirely unique English variant of the Italian *oratorio* not yet known in England at the time (Zöllner 2009).

But what about Ariel himself? As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Ariel is a very ambiguous character. When I first read *The Tempest*, the image of Ariel constantly shifted in my mind. From a man, to a woman, to a sprite. Ultimately, his image settled as the muse introducing the plot in the above-mentioned musical piece, namely Peri's *Eurídice,* as presented in a specific adaptation. In this adaptation, the muse singing in the *prologo* is completely covered by a semi-sheer black cloth, holding out a generic mask that indicates nothing of her appearance. This performance is especially powerful because while the voice heard singing is clearly a female voice, the combination of the mask, the slight dance movement and the black cloth allow the audience to entertain a modicum of doubt. This confusion fitted Ariel's character well, and when I first listened to Johnson's madrigal after I had already read *The Tempest*, Peri's muse and her enchanting, confusing and even scary appearance immediately came to mind. It is this representation of Ariel that I tried to bring forth through my composition. I hope that the combination of text and music has the ability to further convey intentions and perhaps suggest new interpretations.

This journey experimenting with different musical possibilities in *The Tempest* comes to an end. Travelling through centuries, countries and cultures. Ariel remains a mystery; What did he look

like? How human was he? Why exactly did he cooperate with Prospero to such an extent? Ariel may be invisible at times, but his music, and his enchanting presence, remain ever present, floating in the background of the play, as I attempted to demonstrate.

## Works Cited

Baron, John H. 1968. "Monody: a Study in Terminology". *The Musical Quarterly* 54 (4): 462-74.

Chater, James. 1975. "'Cruda Amarilli': a Cross-Section of the Italian Madrigal". *The Musical Times* 116 (1585): 231-4.

Chaney, Edward. 1998. *The Evolution of the Grand Tour.* London: Routledge.

Crowest, Frederick. 1896. *Handel's English Experience and Influence.* London: Good Words.

Dowden, Edward. 1899. "The English Masque". *The Nineteenth Century: a Monthly Review* 46 (269): 334-50.

Duffel, Martin J. 2003. "The Iambic Pentameter and Its Rivals". *Rhythmica* 1 (1): 61-85.

Duffin, Ross W. 2004. *Shakespeare's Songbook*, 2 vols. New York and London: W.W. Norton.

Einstein, Alfred. 1944. "The Elizabethan Madrigal and 'Musica Transalpina'". *Music & Letters* 25 (2): 66-77.

Fenlon, Iain, and Haar, James. 1988. *The Italian Madrigal in the Early Sixteenth Century: Source and Interpretation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gombosi, Otto. 1948. "Some Musical Aspects of the English Court Masque". *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1 (3): 3-19.

Jacobson, Daniel Christopher. 1996. "Thomas Morley and the Italian Madrigal Tradition: a New Perspective". *The Journal of Musicology* 14 (1): 80-91.

Johnson, Robert. 1611. *Full Fathom Five*, arranged by Andrew Sims (2002): https://www.cpdl.org/wiki/images/a/a3/Johnson_Full_fathomAS.pdf (Accessed 24 December 2022).

Kerman, Joseph. 1951. "Elizabethan Anthologies of Italian Madrigals". *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 4 (2): 122-38.

Mace, Dean T. 1969. "Pietro Bembo and the Literary Origins of the Italian Madrigal". *The Musical Quarterly* 55 (1): 122-38.

Morley, Thomas. 1599. *O Mistress Mine*, arranged by J. Frederick Bridge (1890), https://www.cpdl.org/wiki/images/9/94/Morley_-_O_Mistress_Mine_-_letter.pdf (Accessed 24 December 2022)

Rubsamen, Walter H. 2013. "From Frottola to Madrigal: the Changing Pattern of Secula Italian Vocal Music". In *Chanson and Madrigal, 1480-1530 Studies in Comparison and Contrast, A Conference at Isham Memorial Library, September 13-14, 1961*, edited by James Haar, 51-87. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.

Ruff, Lillian M., and Arnold D. Wilson. 1969. "The Madrigal, the Lute Song and Elizabethan Politics". *Past & Present* 44: 3-51.

Shakespeare, William. 1998. *The Tempest*. Edited by Robert Langbaum. New York: Signet Classic.

Stocks, C.L. 1910. "The English Madrigal". *The Cremona* 4 (44): 58-9.

Versace, Stefano. 2014. "A Bracketed Grid Account of the Italian *Endecasillabo* Meter". *Lingua* 143: 1-19 .

Welch, R. D. 1922. "Shakespeare – Musician". *The Musical Quarterly* 8 (4): 510-27.

Welsford, Enid. 1923. "Italian Influence on the English Court Masque". *The Modern Language Review* 18 (4): 394-409.

Zöllner, Eva. 2009. "Handel and English Oratorio". In *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Music*, edited by Simon P. Keefe, 441-55. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# 6

# *The Tempest* in Italian Dialects

Emanuel Stelzer

Abstract

This essay aims at analysing a number of translations and adaptations of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* which make use of one or multiple Italian dialects. Examples include Eduardo De Filippo's 1984 Neapolitan translation, Davide Iodice's 1999 adaptation *La Tempesta. Dormiti, gallina, dormiti*, and Gianfranco Cabiddu's 2016 film *La stoffa dei sogni*. This is an attempt at considering these translations and adaptations within a complex and still understudied category which I would like to call 'dialect Shakespeare'. I will expose some of the sociocultural and ideological questions that are posed by this phenomenon which can consolidate, as well as complicate, one's sense of belonging to regional and national communities and interrogate cultural hegemony and authority, with dialect sometimes working as a cultural reagent, and other times serving the agenda of various political and cultural movements. *The Tempest* is a play that focuses on the power of language to control and define ownership and identity, and it makes sense that it has been chosen by many authors and directors as a testing ground to explore the dynamics between dialect(s) and the standard, dominant language.

Keywords: *The Tempest*; dialect Shakespeare; Italian dialects; translation; adaptation; Eduardo De Filippo

## 1. Introduction

The multitude of stagings, translations, and adaptations of Shakespeare's works that make use of one or more Italian dialects which every year are produced across the Peninsula is a phenomenon that still remains understudied. No one knows when it actually started. I could not find any trace of it before the early twentieth century but it is possible to suggest that the flourishing development of local *filodrammatiche* (amateur dramatics) which characterised

the *fin de siècle* must have been a contributing factor, hand-in-hand with a certain reaction against the imposition of Italian (previously a literary idiom based on the Florentine of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio) as the standard language when the country became a unified political entity in 1871 (see Puppa 2007). Two of the earliest examples are Vittorio Betteloni's and Berto Barbarani's poetic rewritings of *Romeo and Juliet* in Veronese (*Zulieta e Romeo* and *Giulieta e Romeo*, both published in 1905), although their nature is much more that of an attempt at re-appropriation and prioritisation of the local tradition than an adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy,[1] unlike Goffredo Galliani's 1903 Bolognese play based on *The Taming of the Shrew*, entitled *La Taraghè(g)gna* (*The Stubborn One*), staged multiple times at the Politeama Ariosto theatre in Reggio Emilia and the Teatro Principe Amedeo in Bologna.[2] On the other hand, the staging of dialect Shakespeare can be a messy as well as a more enduring process than one may expect: for example, Giulio Svetoni's 1933 parodic adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew, Il Castigamatti* (meaning both 'The Cudgel' and 'The Martinet'), written in Florentine vernacular, has been regularly staged since its composition and was translated into standard Italian in 1936 and into Bergamasco dialect in 1983. Guido Perale and Adriano Lami's adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* in Venetian starring Cesco Baseggio as Shylock premiered in Rome, at the Teatro Odescalchi, in 1927, but was then performed into the 1950s. A more recent instance is represented by Alessandro Serra's adaptation of *Macbeth* in Barbaricino dialect (that is, the variety spoken in the Barbagia area of central Sardinia), *Macbettu* (Compagnia TeatroPersona), which has proved an astounding success winning multiple awards, including the Premio Ubu in 2017 (Italy's most renowned prize for performing arts), the Grand Prix 'Golden Laurel Wreath Award' at the 58th MESS International Theatre Festival (Sarajevo, 2018), and

1 Barbarani's Veronese is also quoted in a section of Arturo Rossato's libretto of Riccardo Zandonai's opera *Giulietta e Romeo* (1921), a programmatically anti-Shakespearean work privileging the Italian sources of the story instead (see Bousquet 2011).

2 This is a contemporary reviewer's evaluation of Galliani's adaptation: "Shakespeare holds out against the translations, too, and even against dialect adaptations" (qtd in Lucchini 2006, 64).

Best Show at the Baltic Theatre Festival in Saint Petersburg (2021). These cultural products elicit many questions: why Shakespeare in dialect? Why Shakespeare in dialect today? Which and whose Shakespeare? Which dialects and for which sociocultural purposes?

In general, one can agree with Anna Maria Cimitile who writes that: "Such dialectal translations of Shakespeare aim to consolidate a sense of belonging to regional communities, raising questions of cultural authority that concern both Shakespeare and the regional dialect and culture appropriating it" (2021, 39). The aim of this essay is to analyse a number of translations and adaptations of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* which make use of one or more Italian dialects and consider the different functions and purposes such dialects can serve and exert.

## 2. Dialect(s) and Shakespeare: Questions

First of all, it is important to define what is meant here by 'dialect Shakespeare', and I feel that, when one considers this potentially elusive and chaotic phenomenon, I have to position myself. I am originally from Trentino, in the North-East of Italy, and my native language is, specifically, the variety of dialect spoken in the Alta Valsugana Valley. Both my parents speak Trentino dialect in their everyday life and I was first exposed to standard Italian mainly through the media and education in school. This means that, when I watch a theatre production or read a text written in Neapolitan or Pugliese, my understanding will be limited. However, this personal challenge can be useful in order to broach questions of intercommunication and accessibility when it comes to dialect Shakespeare.

It should be remembered that Italian dialects are *not* regional varieties of standard Italian: standard Italian is the institutionalised continuation of the Florentine variety of the Tuscan dialect,[3] while the other dialects are the 'siblings' of that dialect. As experts of

3 It makes sense that the title page of the first published, full-length Italian translation of a Shakespeare play, Domenico Valentini's *Il Giulio Cesare* (1756), reads: "*Tradotta dall'Inglese in Lingua Toscana*" (translated from English into the Tuscan language).

the field argue: "Italy holds especial treasures for linguists. There is probably no other area of Europe in which such a profusion of linguistic variation is concentrated into so small a geographical area" (Maiden and Parry 1997, 1). Since the Italian Peninsula is an antenna projected into the Mediterranean, it has experienced, from time immemorial, invasions and settlements of several civilisations and centuries of political fragmentation, and these factors have produced the dozens of local dialects spoken in the country. According to a 2017 survey carried out by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), 45,9% of the Italian population over 6 years of age still speaks mainly in Italian with their family; 32,2% both in Italian and in a regional dialect; 14% mainly in dialect. However, these data are changing quickly due to processes of rapid linguistic erosion: many dialects are facing extinction.

Dialect is often regarded as the language of affection and of the family, as well as the vehicle of a rich, although subaltern, literary and theatrical culture in its own right.[4] It can serve as popular resistance against linguistic hegemony, *sensu* Antonio Gramsci, but is also a social class marker associating its speaker with ignorance and poverty. Dialect is a resource which has often been politicised by regional autonomist movements and/or romanticised as the mouthpiece of a kind of *Volksgeist* (consider, for instance, Luigi Bonaffini's description of Neapolitan having a "happy tonality . . . expressing love for live" versus "the rather somber, melancholy sounds of Sicilian", 1997, 285), but, generally speaking:

> Dialect is posited . . . as the language of concreteness and difference, in direct opposition to the flat homogeneity of the language of TV and advertising, and therefore offers a greater potential for individual creativity. The strength of dialect, in fact, lies in its essential 'otherness', in its position of eccentricity with respect to the national language, in its different history, predominantly oral. (279)

4 Fascism regarded dialects as detrimental to nationalism and as a potential vehicle of subversive messages, but even in the difficult climate of the 1930s, dialect theatre productions still constituted more than 11% of all productions (Ferrara 2004, 74).

There are dialects which can boast of long-lived theatrical traditions going back to the early modern period (see, for instance, Pietro Antonio Caracciolo's farces from Neapolitan in the 1510s through the 1530s; Ruzante's *mariazos* and pastorals written in Pavano, the rural dialect spoken around Padua; Carlo Maria Maggi's Milanese comedies in the second half of the seventeenth century, etc.). And, of course, *commedia dell'arte* made special use of dialects, associating masks with specific vernaculars (Arlecchino comes from Bergamo, Balanzone from Bologna, the Capitano from the South of Italy, etc.), creating a polyglot system made up of different argots, dialects, and foreign languages. Shakespeare may have known something about the array of dialects spoken in Renaissance Italy: we know that he probably read *A World of Words* by John Florio (see Elam 2008, 66-7), who wondered, in the dedicatory epistle: "How shall we, naie how may we ayme at the Venetian, at the Romane, at the Lombard, at the Neapolitane, at so manie, and so much differing Dialects, and Idiomes, as be used and spoken in Italie, besides the Florentine?", (1598, A4*r*; see Wyatt 2005, 227ff.). And in the following quotation from *Othello*, Shakespeare seems to know that Neapolitans speak in a different way from how other Italians speak (besides making a snide reference to syphilis which was also known as the Neapolitan disease): "Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' the nose, thus?" (3.1.3-4).[5] Shakespeare must have been interested in such matters: in a number of plays, he used British regional varieties to portray and problematise power relations (see Blank 1996 and Massai 2020).

Staging a play in dialect always expresses an ideological positioning. As Pier Mario Vescovo puts it when discussing his translation into several dialects of the Veneto region of *The Taming of the Shrew* which premiered at the Roman Theatre of Verona in July 2009: "The translation of a play into a certain dialect . . . is a sort of 'cultural reagent'" (2014, 120)[6] and enables the author to use the resources of a prosody and set of registers which are

5 All quotations from Shakespeare's works other than *The Tempest* refer to Shakespeare 2005. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from *The Tempest* refer to Vaughan and Vaughan 2011.

6 All translations, unless otherwise stated, are mine.

different from those of the standard language. But when it comes to translating Shakespeare, unlike minor or extra-canonical authors, the ideological uses of dialect can become even more marked. Very often, productions of Shakespeare plays set in specific Italian cities will employ the local dialect: for instance, there have been various productions of *Much Ado About Nothing*, which is set in Messina, in Sicilian (the most famous one is Andrea Camilleri and Giuseppe Dipasquale's 2009 *Troppu trafficu ppi nenti*, staged in multiple locations in Sicily and at the Gigi Proietti Globe Theatre in Rome). But while comedies seem to be the genre most often resorted to for dialect productions, examples of tragedies are not few, as already seen.[7] On the other hand, reviews of such productions seem to insistently repeat the same evaluations: most of them use phrases expressing surprise ("even a Shakespeare play" in dialect, Schiavina 2015) at this perceived mixture of "earthy culture" with "high motifs" (Surianello 2000), which would entail an engagement with the Bard denoting "a rebel spirit" (ibid.) by way of expressing a "primordial sound" (Francabandera and Scolari 2017) capable of harnessing the "realistic and empathic power" (Ciofini 2023) of dialect in order to enhance a sense of verisimilitude. More specifically, the use of multiple dialects in Shakespeare productions has attracted critical attention. For instance, in the case of the Taviani brothers' 2012 *Cesare deve morire* (*Caesar must die*), a mock documentary of a 'prison Shakespeare' staging of *Julius Caesar* shot in the Rebibbia prison of Rome, the interns who act the Shakespearean roles were allowed to use their native dialects. As Maurizio Calbi argues, such a mix of languages can elicit different responses. Most Italians have watched *Cesare deve morire* with subtitles and the dialects

> continually shift from more formal to less formal registers; they refract and 'rewrite' each other in a kind of Bakhtinian heteroglossia. In fact, they displace not only the English 'original' but also 'standard' Italian translations of the play. In short, the

7 As for the romances, I have been unable to find examples of dialect productions of any except for *The Tempest*, although in the 2010-11 production of *The Winter's Tale* of Teatro dell'Elfo (Milan), which toured all across the country, the Gentlemen of 5.2 were replaced by gossipy servants, chefs, and lackeys who spoke in several different dialects.

> 'Shakespeare' they embody may be said to be a 'Shakespeare-in-translation', a 'Shakespeare' that remains in translation. (2014, 240-1)

Dialect Shakespeare can thus foreground processes of inter- and intralingual comprehension, communication, and inclusivity. Let us now turn to productions and adaptations of *The Tempest* making use of dialect.

## 3. Neapolitan *Tempests* and Occasional Uses of Other Dialects

When taking into consideration the history of dialect Shakespeare, it seems natural to imagine that there have been several productions and adaptations of *The Tempest* making use of the dialects which would be spoken by the characters in real life: Neapolitan (the ship's crew, King Alonso, Sebastian, Ferdinand, Gonzalo, Adrian, Francisco, Trinculo, and Stephano) and Milanese (Antonio, Prospero and Miranda, and perhaps Caliban, since his master and mistress "took pains to make [him] speak", 1.2.355). This has indeed often been the case, although, of course, such a decision erases the Anglocentric perspective of the play and, even disregarding the fictional nature of the text, is incorrect from a historical point of view: the ruling class of Milan in the Renaissance would speak French, Castilian and even German, besides Italian (the city was a French dominion from 1499 to 1529, with some intermissions, and since 1535 had come under the control of the Habsburg Empire), while the rulers of Naples in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would speak a mixture of Neapolitan, Castilian, and Catalan (besides French – the Capetan House of Anjou ruled Naples from 1266 to 1442). However, many Neapolitans have felt a profound connection with *The Tempest* and the most interesting productions and adaptations in dialect of the play are indeed Neapolitan.[8] Benedetto Croce (who was originally

8 Naples was one of the first cities in Italy which welcomed Shakespeare's reception (see Piazza and Spera 2020), and proof of such enduring popularity is Ruggero Cappuccio's play *Shakespea Re di Napoli* (1994), regularly produced in recent years (for instance, at the Teatro Franco Parenti, Milan, in 2020, starring Claudio Di Palma and Ciro Damiano) which imagines that Shakespeare himself visited Naples, fell in love with Desiderio, a local young man, taking him back to England and making him the secret dedicatee of his Sonnets.

from Abruzzo but spent most of his life in Naples) even tried to prove that the name Trinculo, usually thought to derive from the verb *trincare*, to swill down, actually comes from a Neapolitan street cry:

> It is likely that Trinculo's name and country were suggested [to him] either by the performances of wandering players or by reading comedies featuring the character of the funny Neapolitan. *Tringole e mingale, chi accatta lazze e spingale* [approx. 'trinkets and knick-knacks, who wants to get some strings and brooches?'] is the cry of those who sell gewgaws and women's jewels. (1911, 303n2)

On the other hand, there have also been *Tempests* in other dialects: for instance, one in Palermitan (a translation by Franco Scaldati, staged at the Cantieri Culturali della Ziza and at the Teatro Biondo in Palermo, 1998, directed by Cherif), an adaptation mixing Milanese and Neapolitan (*Viaggio, naufragio e nozze di Ferdinando principe di Napoli* by Carlo Presotto, Real Albergo dei Poveri, Naples, 2008), and one partly in Sicilian and Neapolitan (Roberto Andò, Teatro Biondo, Palermo, 2019).

A typical situation is to have the characters representing the lower classes to speak in dialect. For example, in Ferdinando Bruni and Francesco Frongia's production of *The Tempest* at the Teatro dell'Elfo (Milan, in 2005 and 2019), Stephano and Trinculo speak in Salentino (a Pugliese dialect), a deliberate choice on the part of Bruni, who, as Prospero, gave voice to all the characters which were literal puppets in his hands. Already in Giorgio Strehler's landmark productions (Giardini di Boboli, Florence, 1948; Piccolo Teatro, Milan, 1977-1978), Trinculo was a Pulcinella figure (the Neapolitan *commedia dell'arte* mask *par excellence*) while Stephano channelled Arlecchino and Brighella (the two masks of servants from Bergamo). Such a choice was not praised by Salvatore Quasimodo (who would be awarded the Nobel prize in Literature eleven years later), whose Italian translation had otherwise been used by Strehler for the 1948 production.[9] Quasimodo commented: such linguistic choices

9 Strehler used Agostino Lombardo's translation for the 1978 production instead. Trinculo and Stephano spoke in Neapolitan also in Giacomo Colli's 1960 production of *The Tempest* at the Giardini di Palazzo Reale in Turin,

> have diminished Caliban's humanity . . . Sometimes, Caliban, placed between those two drunken devils speaking in argot, could barely pierce through the clownish air hovering over his wretched figure; he became a melancholy fool. Some of his words seemed 'literary' compared to the others' dialectal violence. (1948, 14)

Similarly, in Alessandro Serra's 2022 production,[10] Caliban, played by the only Black actor of the company, spoke in standard Italian (the language used by Prospero and Miranda), although clearly not a native speaker, as well as, quite surprisingly, English, at the end of the play, when he was forced to perform, wearing a tuxedo, in a sort of freak show managed by Trinculo and Stephano and regretted "tak[ing] this drunkard for a god, / And worship this dull fool" (5.1.297-8), while the Trinculo actor mixed Pugliese dialect with standard Italian and Stefano mainly spoke in heavy Neapolitan. In similar cases, dialect is more than a residual trace of *commedia dell'arte* aimed at inviting spectators to relate to the characters, besides being a social marker of ignorance and poverty. Caliban speaking English was not an extraneous bravura speech: there was only one other character speaking in English in that production: Ariel, who sang *Full Fathom Five*. Caliban's RP English speech aligned him with Prospero's other servant, besides exploding questions of colonialism and imperialism: when and under which circumstances has Caliban learned to speak that language? In the next section, we will see what happens instead when Caliban himself is made to speak in dialect.

The prime example of a Neapolitan adaptation of *The Tempest* (and the most studied one)[11] is Eduardo De Filippo's, which he wrote at the very end of his career, and never saw staged, because he died before it premiered at the Teatro Goldoni of Venice on 4 October 1985. De Filippo had been commissioned by one of Italy's leading publishers, Giulio Einaudi, to produce a Neapolitan translation for the series *Scrittori tradotti da scrittori* (*Authors translated by authors*), but

which otherwise used Quasimodo's translation.

10 I warmly thank Alessandro Serra for sending me the script of his production, which I saw performed at the Teatro Sociale of Trento on 22 January 2023.

11 See for example Lombardo 2004; Tomaiuolo 2007; and Nigri 2013.

the dramatist had been interested in writing it for decades, because Shakespeare's play reminded him of the seventeenth-century *féeries* which had been revived in Naples in the 1920s and in which he had performed as a young actor (De Filippo 1984a, 185). From the start, De Filippo had envisaged his *Tempest* as a puppet show, in which all characters were voiced by himself (his recordings are extant), except for Miranda. The play was first translated *verbatim* into standard Italian by his wife, the author and critic Isabella Quarantotti, then he put it in verse and made the very interesting choice of translating it not into contemporary Neapolitan, but into the Neapolitan of the seventeenth century (that of Giambattista Basile, for instance) "as a person living today can write it" (187):

> How beautiful this ancient Neapolitan is! It is so 'Latin', with its paroxytone words, not oxytone, with all its musicality, its sweetness, its exceptional ductility, and with the ability to animate magical and mysterious facts and creatures, which no modern language has retained! (Ibid.)

Not surprisingly, De Filippo identified himself with Prospero and believed that language has the power to reanimate the past and change the world like magic. When he presented his translation at Sapienza University of Rome on 29 May 1984 (De Filippo 1984b), he stated that he wanted to "serve the world's greatest poet" who "had chosen his words well", and that what he needed to do was simply to apply "la tavolozza napoletana" ("the Neapolitan palette"). In his afterword, he clarifies the process:

> I have tried to be as faithful to the text as possible . . . I haven't always succeeded. Sometimes, especially in the comical scenes, the actor in me rebelled against puns which time has made meaningless: then I have changed them; other times, I felt the need to add some lines to better explain to myself and to the audience some concept. (1984a, 186)

It is not just a question of a different lexical level,[12] but of cultural discourse. De Filippo's Ariel is a *scugnizzo* (an underprivileged,

12 Einaudi's anxiety that the published translation would not sell may have motivated the insertion of several footnotes.

Neapolitan street urchin trying to scrape a living): "Ariel maintains his impish and poetical character, but it felt natural to me to make him occasionally behave like a sly and waggish *scugnizzo*" (187). And, as Saverio Tomaiuolo notes, "[a]mong the culture-bound references De Filippo includes in his peculiar translation, the most important one is the typically Neapolitan concept of the "family" as the moral and ideological centre of society" (2007, 122).

There are numerous examples of domestication which become evident already from the start. When translating the Boatswain's cry "Heigh, my hearts; cheerly, cheerly, my hearts! Yare, yare! Take in the topsail. Tend to the master's whistle! Blow till thou burst thy wind, if room enough" (1.1.5-8), De Filippo adds a reference to the Madonna della Catena (lit., of the Chain, i.e. the liberator): "Facivete curaggio: a' Maronna a' Catena nce aiuta" (5, "Take courage, the Madonna della Catena is going to help us"). Moreover, the Boatswain is made to shout a cry of encouragement that leaves no doubt where these characters come from: "Guagliú, facímmece annòre: simmo Napulitane!" (ibid., "Guys, let's defend our honour: we're Neapolitans!"), to which all the sailors answer in chorus, "Símmo Napulitane!" ("We're Neapolitans!"). An allusion to San Gennaro, Naples' revered patron saint, could not possibly be missing. In Shakespeare's text, Gonzalo tries to comfort the king with these words:

> Beseech you, sir, be merry. You have cause
> (So have we all) of joy, for our escape
> Is much beyond our loss. Our hint of woe
> Is common . . .
> (2.1.1-4)

And this is how Eduardo De Filippo renders them:

> Majestà, si ve lu ddico,
> è pe' lu bene vuosto:
> ccà nuje, cumpreso voi,
> dobbiamo rummanere addenucchiate
> nu pare d'anne,
> e forse forse cchiúne,
> nnanz'a a lu protettore

> San Gennaro,
> ca 'nce ha fatto la grazia.
> (1984a, 64)
>
> [Your majesty, if I say this to you / It's for your own sake: / Here, we all, you included, / Should kneel and stay so / For a couple of years, / And perhaps even longer, / Before our protector, / San Gennaro, / Who has bestowed his grace upon us.]

Similarly, Prospero portrays Sycorax as a *janara*, one of the witches traditionally said to haunt the city of Benevento, taking shelter from the storm "sott'a n'albero 'e noce 'e Beneviento" (38, "under a walnut tree in Benevento"), while the air which Adrian describes as "breath[ing] upon us here most sweetly" (2.1.49) becomes "doce cumm'a na caramella" (67, "as sweet as candy"), which prompts Antonio to protest: "Meglio na sfugliatella o nu babà!" ("I'd much rather have a *sfogliatella* or a *babà*", typical Neapolitan sweets). Even the geography of the island changes. While Shakespeare's Ariel says that he has left Ferdinand "in an odd angle of the isle" "cooling of the air with sighs" (1.2.223, 222), De Filippo's evokes Capri's Blue Grotto, explaining that "Don Ferdinandino" is lying in

> . . . lu posto cchiù bello 'e tutta l'isola:
> sott'a la grutticella blu zaffiro
> addò ce trase 'o sole e lu sospiro
> d'ostriche, fasulare e lattarule. S'è sdraiato
> 'ncopp'a a nu matarazzo d'erb' 'e mare.
> (33-4)
>
> [ . . . the fairest place of all the island, / Under the little sapphire-blue cave / Where the sun and the outbreaths enter / Of oysters, big clams and mussels. He's lying / On a mattress of seagrass.]

De Filippo probably decided to accept Einaudi's proposal not just because he had a life-long interest in the play, but because he was fully aware of the phenomenon of linguistic erosion. He saw dialect theatre as a testament to cultural vulnerability, as he wrote as early as 1939:

> We know very well that the dialect will disappear . . . my [siblings] and I will play for only a few years, because dialectal elements are

> disappearing day by day. And it is thinking about this epilogue that I am more and more convinced that we need to print dialect plays. Not everything in them deserves to sink into oblivion. There are types, characters, moods and feelings … [that] represent a living document in the history of custom. Posterity will be very interested in learning and studying them, especially to understand on what generous and fertile soil the new climate that reshapes the Italian life could plant its roots. (Qtd in Segnini 2017, 6)

What can the effect be on the spectators of watching a production of De Filippo's *Tempest*? Lucia Nigri argues that this translation is

> a 'domesticated Shakespeare', but in a way that 'foreignises' the text to audiences who do not speak the dialect as well as to those who speak only the contemporary dialect and are bound to perceive different rhythms or lexical choices with a defamiliarizing effect making for 'otherness'. (2013, 106-7)

Indeed, defamiliarisation does not equal obscurity: it can make the spectator more interested in the action on stage. And yet, it is interesting to consider why productions in Milan, Venice, and Rome have been successful. There are many factors to be taken into account (besides bardolatrous ideas of Shakespeare's universality). It certainly helps that some spectators are already familiar with *The Tempest* before going to see De Filippo's play and the fact that De Filippo is a most prestigious dramatist in his own right has contributed to ensuring a good reception. Moreover, the non-verbal, visual dimension of puppetry surely helps to communicate information to people who neither speak Neapolitan nor understand seventeenth-century archaisms.

The road taken by Eduardo De Filippo with his translation lies behind later stage adaptations of *The Tempest* in Neapolitan:[13] for example, Davide Iodice's 1999 *La Tempesta. Dormiti, gallina, dormiti* (*The Tempest. Sleep, chicken, sleep!*), which was awarded

13 And not just in Naples: Glauco Mauri's 1995 production which premiered at the Roman Theatre in Verona used Dario del Corno's Italian translation but employed De Filippo's for the exchanges between Stephano and Trinculo.

the Premio Ubu as well as the Premio Teatro a Napoli (2000).[14] Iodice was inspired by Vicienzo o' Pazzo, a figure who haunted his childhood: a poor, Neapolitan *sceneggiata*[15] comedian whose main trick was that of hypnotising chickens (something that Ariel tries to accomplish in this play). This adaptation is meant to be a "tradimento votivo" ("votive betrayal", qtd in Sorge 2019-2020, 159) of De Filippo's translation: a homage to the earlier translation but one that constitutes a rewriting in "napoletano basso", the sociolect of the Neapolitan underclasses. It is an adaptation played by old and tawdry *sceneggiata* actors in which the fourth wall is repeatedly broken. The aim is to further domesticate Shakespeare's play, turning it into prose and infusing it with Neapolitan popular songs and music, and touches of everyday life, making it much closer to the intended addressees than, Iodice argues, De Filippo's archaic language. In fact, from my personal point of view as someone coming from Trentino, I have found De Filippo's text much more accessible than the script of Iodice's play, and not just in terms of vocabulary, but of the cultural references which are immediately clear to Neapolitans only.

In *Dormiti, gallina, dormiti*, Miranda and Ferdinand speak in standard Italian (perhaps because they represent the new, 'modern' generation), while the other characters speak most of the time in Neapolitan, with interesting alternations. For instance, dialect can be employed for comic effect. When Gonzalo, rather sanctimoniously, says to Antonio and Sebastian in Italian, "Ridete, e abbracciatevi pure al vostro fasullo potere" ("Go on, laugh, cling to your fake power"), the other two reply in chorus, in dialect, punning on "fasullo" (fake) which sounds a bit like "fasule" (beans): "E' [sic] fasule! Comme 'e vuò, a zuppa o che pacchere?" (2.1, "Beans! How

14 Director: Davide Iodice; text: Silvestro Sentiero; music: Nino D'Angelo. I thank Davide Iodice for providing me with the script of the play and additional materials (pictures of his notebook and sketches). The pages of the script are not numbered. Besides in Naples, *Dormiti, gallina, dormiti* was performed all over the Peninsula, including in Rome, Volterra, Trento, Matera, Potenza, and Cagliari.

15 *Sceneggiate* are the Neapolitan popular spectacle *par excellence*, in which music accompanies short theatre performances that take their cue exactly from a song which constitutes the emotional core of the show.

would you like them, in your soup or with your *paccheri*?" – a type of pasta). The adaptation is domesticated also when it comes to non-verbal components. For instance, in 3.2, one finds the stage direction "*Calibano porta sulle spalle Stefano come un dio pagano (o un S. Gennaro)*" ("Caliban carries Stephano on his shoulders like a heathen god or a San Gennaro"). But by virtue of the deliberate lowering of the register chosen by the director, Prospero's plea in the Epilogue ("Now my charms are all o'erthrown", 1ff.) acquires an ever louder note of desperation:

> Ogni tarantella è fernuta . . . Me specchio d'into o munne e me sento scunsulato e sulo, nu pover'ommo. Pe tant'anni abbandunate n'coppa a stu piezze e terra sperduto aggia fatte o calle a nustalgia. Pe piacere, mo ca e prete a dint'e e scarpe me l'aggia luvate a una a una, purtateme a Napule! Me fa male o' stomaco . . . Me crerevo e essere filosofo, me pensavo e sapè campà, invece n' coccio ancora cu a capa e tengo a nziria e nu creaturo . . .
>
> [Now my tarantellas are all over . . . I look at my reflection in the world and I feel disconsolate and alone, a poor man. Stranded for many years on this remote piece of land, I've got callously used to homesickness. Please, now that I've removed the pebbles from my shoe, one by one, bring me to Naples! My stomach hurts . . . I believed I was a philosopher, I thought I knew how to live, and instead I still stubbornly fixate on the same things and have a child's exasperating disposition to whims . . . ]

## 4. *The Tempest,* Dialect, and the Primordial

The last adaptation of *The Tempest* making use of dialect I would like to discuss in this essay is *La stoffa dei sogni* (*The Stuff of Dreams*), a 2016 film directed by Gianfranco Cabiddu produced in Italy and France. It is loosely based on De Filippo's 1964 play *L'arte della commedia,* features excerpts from his translation of *The Tempest* and plays with it on multiple levels. In *L'arte della commedia*, a company of actors remains blocked in a small town in Abruzzo after the designated place for their performance catches fire. The theatre company lead has an argument with the freshly arrived, new prefect

who issues an expulsion order. The actor steals the list of the people who have scheduled a hearing with the prefect who will now have to understand whether the people who appear in front of him are real citizens or the actors pretending to be them: the lead calls his colleagues not Pirandellian "personaggi in cerca di autore ma attori in cerca di autorità" (De Filippo 1995, 267, "characters in search of an author, but actors in search of authority"). Cabiddu's film takes this basic plot and grafts Shakespeare's and De Filippo's *Tempests* onto it.

The film is set after World War One and opens with the wreck of a ship carrying four dangerous *camorristi* to the prison of the Asinara, a small island off the western coast of Sardinia, as well as a few members of a modest theatre company, also from Campania, who were the captain's guests. During the storm, the captain is shot by one of the criminals but everyone ends up in the sea and reaches the shore. The boss of the *camorristi*, Don Vincenzo, is desperate because he thinks he has lost his son, who, instead, is found by Miranda, the daughter of the prison warden (and the two youngsters inevitably fall in love). The *camorristi* threaten the actors: they must not reveal their identity. The warden needs to tell apart the actors from the *camorristi* and asks them to put on a production of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. The actors try to teach the convicts the lines in Italian, but soon the boss understands that this will not be feasible: his fellows find the Italian translation of the play difficult to follow and also try to improvise, which is something that infuriates Campese, the leader of the company, who says that Shakespeare "è una specie di Vangelo" ("is like a kind of Gospel"). That night, Don Vincenzo goes to Campese and says:

> DON VINCENZO Alzatevi. Abbiamo a riscrivere il copione.
> CAMPESE O' copione? E che c'azzecca o' copione?
> DON VINCENZO Noi recitiamo 'na schifezza perché non sono parole nostre. Dobbiamo parlare più naturale.
> CAMPESE Ma che volete fare, il mestiere che facc'io? Questo è Shakespeare. Ch'ammo a fa', 'a sceneggiata?
> DON VINCENZO . . . Io non voglio fare il buffone per nessuno . . . Questo Shakespeare, se capisce ch'è persona intelligente. E quindi non s'offenderà se gli cambiamo la scorza delle cose.[16]

16 The script was authored by Gianfranco Cabiddu, Ugo Chiti, and

> [Don Vincenzo Get up. We need to rewrite the script. / Campese The script? What do you mean 'the script'? / Don Vincenzo We are acting lousily because these are not our words. We need to speak more naturally. / Campese Do you want to do my job? This is Shakespeare. What do you want us to do, put on a *sceneggiata*? / Don Vincenzo I don't want to be anyone's fool . . . This Shakespeare – it is clear he's a smart person. So he won't get offended if we change the rind of his things.]

The effect of this exchange is slightly paradoxical. The actor playing Don Vincenzo (Renato Carpentieri) speaks in Italian, although with a few shifts into light dialect, and his speech is marked by a cadence and pronunciation typical of Campania. It is Campese (played by Sergio Rubini) who uses many more dialectal forms, at the same time that he resists tampering with what he perceives as the sacredness of the standard Italian translation of *The Tempest* he would like to use. The result of their discussion is that Campese translates the play in dialect (which turns out to be actually De Filippo's Neapolitan translation), and the spectators must suspend their disbelief in believing that the *camorristi* really find De Filippo's archaic translation closer to their world than the text in standard Italian with which they initially had to deal with.

The film plays with *The Tempest* on multiple levels: the warden is the Prospero figure, of course, Don Vincenzo's son is Ferdinand, etc., but I would like to concentrate on the Caliban figure. Two of the *cammoristi* end up attacking Antioco, an illiterate shepherd who lives on his own with his goats, Polyphemus-like. He manages to defend himself and imprisons them in his shed (to later free them and offer them the alcohol he receives from one of the guards in exchange of cheese). It is clear that the shepherd feels lonely and seeks contact and companionship with all these people who have come to live on, and change, the island the nature of which he knows in every detail. Antioco has been described as "an archaic Caliban . . . Cabiddu expresses in this character . . . all the pain felt over the violation of his land" (Casella 2016); "the prototype of a Sardinian shepherd who perhaps no longer exists, but who still lives on in the thousand-year-old memory of the islanders"

Salvatore De Mola.

(Giraldi 2016). Reviewers have written that "he expresses himself in a language he alone understands" (Casella 2016). But his is not a made-up idiom (one could say "'tis new, or obscure, to thee"): as Sardinians point out, Antioco rigorously speaks *limba*, i.e. the local language. Cabiddu himself has stated in an interview:

> The actor who plays Antioco the shepherd speaks in heavy Sardinian. He understands his condition by recognising his own reflection in the theatre. It is exactly by realising this, and consequently, learning the culture [*imparando la cultura*], that one understands one's own situation . . . When he whistles and makes those natural noises,[17] one feels exactly as if nature were calling you and that beauty can be something that can be felt by the simplest people. We can say it's a message of hope. I needed poetry: there's a pain in his difficulty in communication, and when he understands the instruments of theatre it's as if he wanted to fit in. (Donato 2016)

These pronouncements reveal the contradictions in the film. By watching the play and empathising with Caliban, Antioco "impar[a] la cultura': but whose culture does he learn? The one imposed by those who have invaded the world he has known his whole life? Was Antioco's own culture not enough? Is he, as a Sardinian, really able to understand De Filippo's Neapolitan or would he have preferred a text in Italian? No one has asked him that, he remains an outsider on the island where he has spent his whole life. If the director were not from Sardinia, the portrayal of Antioco could be seen as very problematic, as it risks rehashing the stereotype of the wild Sardinian in a portrayal that merges brutishness with the *noble savage* myth. One of the big issues when dialect is romanticised is that, at best, one embraces dialect as the mouthpiece of a 'primordial' counter-culture which has been censured as non-culture, while, at worst, dialect becomes the language of a group of yahoos. Cabiddu's nostalgia of a world that has been destroyed by capitalism and the tourism industry appears genuine, but this is a

17 This refers to a moment in the film when the actors, immediately after the "The isle is full of noises" speech, try to recreate the sounds of various animals, but they are bested by Antioco who stands up and manages to perfectly imitate the sound of birds.

tricky territory to navigate. In Serra's *Macbettu*, for example, the misery and brutality of the ancestral world in which the characters live are addressed and explored and folklore is not introduced as an end in itself, despite the intention of seeing the themes of *Macbeth* from a universalising perspective.

In conclusion, the translations and adaptations of *The Tempest*, given their sheer number, provide a fruitful case study to explore the inherent sociocultural implications and ideological issues of the extremely varied phenomenon that is dialect Shakespeare. These cultural products have been interpreted from the point of view of the dynamics between hegemonic and subaltern cultures and show how Shakespeare's play has proved an ideal vehicle for such interrogations.

## Works Cited

Blank, Paula. 1996. *Broken English: Dialects and the Politics of Language in Renaissance Writing*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bonaffini, Luigi. 1997. "Translating Dialect Literature". *World Literature Today* 71 (2): 279-88.

Bousquet, Emmanuelle. 2011. "Le *Giulietta e Romeo* de Riccardo Zandonai: une création nationaliste en ordre de marche". Revue *LISA* 9 (2): 68-77.

Calbi, Maurizio. 2014. "'In states unborn and accents yet unknown': Spectral Shakespeare in Paolo and Vittorio Taviani's *Cesare deve morire* (*Caesar Must Die*)". *Shakespeare Bulletin* 32: 235-53.

Casella, Paola. 2016. Review of *La stoffa dei sogni*. *Mymovies.it*, November 22. https://www.mymovies.it/pdf/?recensione=698287 (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Cimitile, Anna Maria. 2021. "'Venice' is Elsewhere: the Stranger's Locality, or Italian 'Blackness' in Twenty-First-Century Stagings of *Othello*". In *Shakespeare's Others in 21st-century European Performance*, edited by Boika Sokolova, and Janice Valls-Russell, 29-48. London: Bloomsbury.

Ciofini, Elisa. 2023. "Un gioco di maschere: traduzioni dialettali da Shakespeare". *Il rifugio dell'ircocervo*, January 30. https://ilrifugiodellircocervo.com/2023/01/30/un-gioco-di-maschere-traduzioni-dialettali-da-shakespeare/ (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Croce, Benedetto. 1911. *Saggi sulla letteratura italiana del Seicento*. Bari: Laterza.

De Filippo, Eduardo. 1995. *Cantata dei giorni dispari*, vol. 3. Edited by Anna Barsotti. Torino: Einaudi.

— 1984a. *La Tempesta di William Shakespeare nella traduzione in napoletano di Eduardo De Filippo*. Torino: Einaudi.

— 1984b. *Eduardo De Filippo presenta La Tempesta nell'aula magna della Sapienza*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DANpYZ01OtA (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Donato, Rosanna. 2016. "*La stoffa dei sogni*. Intervista col regista". *FilmUp.com*, November 29. http://filmup.com/speciale/lastoffadeisogni/int01.htm (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Elam, Keir, ed. 2008. *Twelfth Night*. Arden Shakespeare. London: Bloomsbury.

Ferrara, Patrizia, ed. 2004. *Censura teatrale e fascismo (1931-1944). La storia, l'archivio, l'inventario*. Roma: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello Stato.

Florio, John. 1598. *A Worlde of Wordes, or Dictionarie of the Italian and English Tongues*. London: Edward Blount.

Francabandera, Renzo, and Elena Scolari. 2017. "Inverness di Barbagia: il *Macbettu* di Alessandro Serra". *PAC Magazine di Arte & Culture*, June 11. https://teatropersona.it/assets/STAMPA/MACBETTU%20paneacquaculture.pdf (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Giraldi, Massimo. 2016. "*La stoffa dei sogni*, un omaggio al grande teatro". *RomaSette.it*, December 5. https://www.romasette.it/la-stoffa-dei-sogni-un-omaggio-al-grande-teatro/ (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Iodice, Davide. 1999. *La Tempesta. Dormiti, gallina, dormiti*. Text: Silvestro Sentiero. Company: Libera Mente. Unpublished Script kindly provided by the play's director.

ISTAT. 2017. *Anno 2015. L'uso della lingua italiana, dei dialetti e delle lingue straniere*. https://www.istat.it/it/files//2017/12/Report_Uso-italiano_dialetti_altrelingue_2015.pdf (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Lombardo, Agostino. 2004. *Eduardo e Shakespeare. Parole di voce e non d'inchiostro*. Roma: Bulzoni.

Lucchini, Arrigo. 2006. *Cronache del teatro dialettale bolognese: dalle origini ai nostri giorni*. Newly edited by Davide Amadei. Bologna: Pendragon.

Maiden, Martin, and Mair Parry. 1997. "Introduction by the Editors". In *The Dialects of Italy*, edited by Martin Maiden and Parry Mair, 1-4. London and New York: Routledge.

Massai, Sonia. 2020. *Shakespeare's Accents: Voicing Identity in Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nigri, Lucia. 2013. "From the Peninsula Westward: a Journey Among Translations". In *Theatre Translation and Practice*, edited by Silvia

Bigliazzi, Paola Ambrosi, and Peter Kofler, 97-110. London and New York: Routledge.

Piazza, Antonella, and Silvia Spera, eds. 2020. *Theatrum Mundi: Shakespeare e Napoli*. Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane.

Puppa, Paolo, ed. 2007. *Lingua e lingue nel teatro italiano*. Roma: Bulzoni.

Quasimodo, Salvatore. 1948. "Tempesta in una vasca". *Bis*, June 15: 14. https://archivio.piccoloteatro.org/include/pdf.php?ID=5530 (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Schiavina, Daniela. 2015. "Il teatro dialettale bolognese". *Storia e memoria di Bologna*. https://www.storiaememoriadibologna.it/il-teatro-dialettale-bolognese-818-evento (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Segnini, Elisa. 2017. "Global Masterpieces and Italian Dialects: Eduardo De Filippo and Luigi Meneghello's Rewritings of Shakespeare". http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/145245/1/145245.pdf (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Serra, Alessandro. 2022. *La Tempesta* (Compagnia TeatroPersona). Unpublished script, kindly provided by the author.

Shakespeare, William. 2005. *The Complete Works*. Edited by Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett, and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sorge, Marina. 2019-2020. *La poetica teatrale di Davide Iodice*. PhD diss.: Università degli studi di Napoli L'Orientale.

Surianello, Mariateresa. 2000. "Una tempesta per ristabilire l'ordine. Prosegue la tournée dell'ultimo spettacolo diretto da Davide Iodice". *TuttoTeatro* 1 (1), March 22. https://www.tuttoteatro.com/numeri/a1/3/a1n1gallina.html (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Tomaiuolo, Saverio. 2007. "'Something rich and strange': Eduardo De Filippo Translating *The Tempest*". *In Through Other Eyes: the Translation of Anglophone Literature in Europe*, edited by Richard Trim and Sophie Alatorre, 121-32. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Vaughan, Virginia Mason, and Alden T. Vaughan, eds. 2011. *The Tempest*. The Arden Shakespeare. London and New York: Bloomsbury.

Vescovo, Piermario. 2014. "*The Taming of the Shrew*: un'esperienza di traduzione da Shakespeare, tra Verona, Padova e Venezia". *TheMA: Open Access Research Journal for Theatre, Music, Arts* 3 (1-2): http://archive.thema-journal.eu/thema/2014/1-2/vescovo (Accessed 1 June 2023).

Wyatt, Michael. 2005. *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# Part 4

# Ecocritical and Postcolonial Readings of *The Tempest*

7

# Shakespeare's Nature in Time. Contextualising Ecocritical Readings of *The Tempest* (1611)

Magdalena Gabrysiak

Abstract

This article focuses on Shakespeare's portrayal of the marine environment in *The Tempest* (1611). Building on existing ecocritical studies, the paper adapts ecocritical methodologies to examine the significance of the ancient world in Shakespeare's poetic imagination of the ocean. Focusing on *The Tempest*, I contend that Shakespeare's reception of the classics in his portrayal of the ocean is mediated by the essential physicality of his sea, an ecological, non-anthropocentric understanding and poetic portrayal of the marine environment. In this way, the paper seeks to assert the importance of recognising Shakespeare as an example for thinking about a human, cultural past in ecological terms.

Keywords: *The Tempest*; ecocriticism; blue studies; classical reception; ocean

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands:
Curtsied when you have, and kiss'd
the wild waves whist.
Foot it featly here and there,
and sweet Sprights bear the burthen . . .
Full fathom five thy Father lies
Of his bones are Corrall made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a Sea-change
Into something rich & strange:
Sea Nymphs hourly ring his knell.
(2.1.438-44; 460-6)[1]

1 All following citations from *The Tempest* refer to Bate and Rasmussen's

"What does the sea in Ariel's 'sea-change' mean?" – asks Steve Mentz in his ecocritical study of the marine environment in Shakespeare's oeuvre, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* (2009, 1). By establishing the physical sea as the *locus* of meaning, Mentz's question controverts a tradition of aesthetic readings that confine the oceanic imagery of Ariel's song to a blanket metaphor for poetry, artistic practice, or theatrical illusion and, in turn, emphasises how specifically these lines engage with the ocean's characteristics. "Poetry that contains the sea leaves a taste in the mouth, a sharp tang of nonhuman immensity" (ibid.), Mentz continues in correspondence with critics such as Dan Brayton, or Joseph Campana who consider Shakespeare's representation of the ocean ecocritically by referring it to the historical realities of mercantile and military seafaring as well as the developing fishing trade of the poet's time (Brayton 2012; Campana 2016). In this way, the ecological perspective on Shakespearean criticism seeks to redress anthropizing readings of the sea as a blank canvas for metaphor and attempts to recognise the ocean's significance to the early modern poetic imagination. And so, Ariel's evoked "sea-change / Into something rich and strange' comes to describe 'salt water's transformative impact on human flesh", harbouring both the threatening vision of Ferdinand's father's death that Ariel aims to unsettle Ferdinand with, as well as hinting at salt's preservative chemical components that enable the magical 'sea-change' and prefigure that the king of Naples is still alive.

Much like the ocean's salty water, which not only prevents food and flesh from rot or infection, but also retains the power to erode the rock of the sea-shore, however, this critical process of excavation erodes and disregards a myriad of specifically poetic meanings layered into Shakespeare's sea (Allaby 2013, 203). In the case of Ariel's song, it glosses over the appropriations of Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (1598) and Thomas Lodge's *Scillaes Metamorphosis* (1558) that imbed the poetry into both a poetic contemporaneity as well as a classical, epic past, which inform the verse's understanding of the relationship between humanity and the marine environment (Donno 1963, 23, 57). Building on existing ecocritical studies such as the work of Gabriel Egan (2006) or David

2007 edition.

Gray (2020), this paper adapts ecocritical methodologies to examine the wider temporal frameworks and cultural allusions present throughout Shakespeare's marine imagination. Focusing on *The Tempest*, I contend that Shakespeare's reception of the classics in his portrayal of the ocean as well as the referentiality of his oceanic poetics is mediated by the essential physicality of his sea, the, to recall Mentz's words, "real taste of ocean" (2009, 1). In this way, I assert the importance of recognising Shakespeare as a, in Brayton's phrase, "model *for* environmental criticism", an example for thinking about a human, cultural past in ecological terms (2012, 5).

## 1. "When the Sea Is": Mapping Temporal Tensions onto *The Tempest*'s Sea

Though, as Rachel Carson remarks, "the sea has always been around us", and an anthology of mapping human meaning onto the global ocean would, as she observes, comprise the history of Western culture, in the past two decades Shakespeare has held a particular place in this new vein of marine-focused ecocritical scholarship and *The Tempest*, his last solo-written play and the only one that opens with a staged shipwreck, has remained a core-text for this area of study (Carson 1951; Morrison 2014). Mentz justifies this expressed "need" for "Shakespeare's Ocean" by arguing that post-industrial visions of the maritime environment along with technological advances of the modern era have "frayed our connections to the sea" (2009, ix). Brayton, on the other hand, asserts the importance of Shakespeare to ecocritical scholarship by framing the global environmental crisis as "the product of past ways of seeing", that, inevitably, "leads us to rethink the literary and cultural history of the seas", which Shakespeare, as national poet, had a significant part in shaping (2012, 1). Such ecocritical readings, then, assert their relevance as works of excavation, of critical archaeology driven by a need to remember a pre-modern ocean, and in their focus on a distant past and their interest in memory, they echo key themes of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Akin to Prospero who asks Miranda if she can "remember / A time before we came unto this cell?" (1.2.45-6), the critics call for the excavation of Shakespeare's sea, filling

the gaps of collective cultural memory just as Prospero proceeds to complement his daughter's faint recollections.

Echoing the ecocritical interest in remembering and restoring our past, "frayed" connections to the sea, *The Tempest* is, in its overall dramatic structure and poetry, woven into a similarly complex web of different and frayed memories about a shared past, from its adherence to an Aristotelian temporal unity, to the characters' frequent narration of their shared past and Shakespeare's allusions to the classical world. As Silvia Bigliazzi notes, this play is "an investigation of the limits of knowing through remembering" (2014, 127), – a phrase that might also aptly describe the project that both Brayton and Mentz (amongst others) embark on. The material, Mediterranean Sea, as a central presence in *The Tempest*, is thus also overladen with a complex interplay of temporalities and, as a result, with an amalgamation of different human meanings. It becomes inflected with political connotation (King Alonso's lament over the loss of his daughter as a possible heir to his kingdom, because she is separated from his country by the sea [2.1.91] and the expressed loss of his son Ferdinand who the King believes to be dead [2.1.106-11]), the classical past (Prospero evocation of "the ebbing Neptune" [5.1.40]), as well as a vision of the future, since the play ends with the characters about sail back to Italy on their restored ship.

Shakespeare's reception of the Classics is of particular significance in this respect. In his introduction to the edited collection *Deep Classics*: *Rethinking Classical Reception* (2016), Shane Butler, the editor, illustrates the meaning of the proposed, titular methodology by comparing it to chronostratigraphic units in a body of rock, visual manifestations of geological "deep time". "A basic aim of *Deep Classics*", he goes on, "is to re-propose Classics as an early species, and partial origin, of Deep Time thinking itself. For what is 'antiquity' . . . if not precisely a word for depth of time?" (4-5). Butler's approach proposes the notion that poetic reception of the classical past constitutes a conceptualisation of 'Deep Time'. In this way, Shakespeare's portrayal of the marine environment, composed at a moment in history when science-based ecological discourse did not exist, becomes ecocritically significant. Brayton, therefore, provides an ecocritical framework through which to consider the classical influences present in Shakespeare's Sea in *The*

*Tempest*. In other words, the perspective of 'Deep Classics' enables an ecocritical reading of Shakespeare's reception of the ancient world in his poetic vision of the ocean – a perspective which, in turn, provides frameworks for relating the poet's presentation of the sea to a contemporary ecological discourse.

In themselves, theorisations of time contemporary to Shakespeare were already infused with classical connotation. As Bigliazzi remarks, sixteenth-century theories of time and memory have pervaded the period's scientific discourse (2014, 129); whereas James E. Robinson notes that "time is involved in the classical design of [*The Tempest*] . . . and a central element of the form and meaning of the play" (1964, 255). In it, time is both inaccessible, as Prospero mentions the "dark . . . abysm of time" to his daughter (1.2.131), and material, when he describes his cell as a "chronicle of day by day" (5.1.180) of the years spent on the island. This dual conception of time appeals to a similarly double understanding of time in the ancient world, consisting of *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos*, indicative of a quantitative, broad-scale passage of time, reflects a distant view of past and future generations. *Kairos*, meanwhile, indicates a dynamic, momentary, and qualitative reception of time (Liddel and Scott 1843).

In its adherence to Aristotelian dramatic modes, *The Tempest*'s dramaturgy, the action of the play is compressed and concise, already recalling a classical past in its fundamental aspects. The structure of the drama does not defer to the story by enacting the moments most significant to the narrative on stage, but instead allows the characters (most notably Prospero) to contextualise the presently unfolding action within their shared past. In this way, the play's action becomes imbedded within the realm of *kairos*. It constitutes a dynamic enaction of a day in the characters' lives. The players' largely versified speech, however, the poetry of the drama, filled with accounts of narrativized memory and plans made for the far-off future, is enclosed into a wide-ranging *chronos*. The one element that remains a central fixture of both temporal dimensions and that binds them together is the sea.

At once physically present, surrounding the island on which the play's action ensues, and overladen with classical allusion, the sea's dual, interconnected existence in both temporal frameworks

becomes evident in *The Tempest*'s opening scene of shipwreck. Here, the storm constructs the entirety of the play's dramaturgy and is the catalyst of its dramatic action. Before any character is able to speak, the Folio play-text's stage direction calls for "a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning". In other words, the sea momentarily dominates the stage-action, the dramatic *kairos*, putting the characters into an immediate nowness that arrests social protocol and deconstructs political hierarchy amongst the people on board ("What cares these roarers for the name of king?" [1.1.14]) (Mentz 2020).

As it is revealed in the second scene, however, the storm is not a non-human, meteorological occurrence, but the inauguration of Prospero's meticulous plan to restore himself as the Duke of Milan. The delay of this disclosure suspends the acknowledgement of human involvement in the ocean's movements, as if to say that a physical relationship between humanity and the marine environment can only exist in a world that pre-dates human interference into deep time, the geological period known as the Anthropocene. Moreover, this dramatic structure aligns the aforementioned realisation with the development of Shakespeare's classical allusion. The opening image of shipwreck echoes the beginning of Virgil's *Aeneid*, in which the Trojan fleet is devastated in a sea-storm stirred up by Aeolius, King of the Winds, on Juno's behalf. As the storm in *The Tempest* is revealed, in the second scene, to be caused by Ariel acting on Prospero's behalf, the classical allusion emerges as, to recall Butler, the deeper, chronostratigraphic layer of the play's narrative.

The reference to an ancient, poetic past (Virgil) becomes part of the play's *chronos* as Prospero, akin to a god of classical epic, reveals his intention to punish those at sea for a past grudge by means of manipulating their present environment. In other words, the logic of a classical mythology is translated onto *The Tempest*'s narrative structure, the evocation of a distant past is made dramatically significant to the events unfolding on stage. Contrary to the referenced epic, however, Shakespeare's work obscures the boundaries of the theatrically witnessed reality, as the tempestuous storm, though it strands the characters on the island and sets of the fulfilment of Prospero's plan, is revealed to be a dream, a magical revelry that does not cause any mortal harm and that leaves the

stranded ship entirely intact. In this way, the classical allusion is mediated by the physical presence of the sea as it allows the text to acknowledge the human involvement in shaping discourses around the marine environment and the tangible consequences thereof (Prospero's plan becomes resolved and he sails home with the expectation to be restored as the Duke of Milan), whilst simultaneously relegating the vision of the human as master of this ecology as mere phantasy and an act of theatrical magic. The crucial role the sea plays in both temporalities, then, fashions its character as both a tangibly physical presence in Shakespeare's poetics, the driving-force of *kairos*, as well as a mediator of the text's ancient past, its central presence within *chronos* (Brayton 2012, 1).

Starting from the play's opening, the sea continues to mediate the text's imagination around its various temporalities. Antonio, Prospero's brother and the usurping duke of Milan, evokes the ocean when employing a dual logic of time for his own private gain as he attempts to convince Sebastian to kill his father, the King of Naples:

> Antonio We all were sea-swallow'd, though some cast again,
> And by that destiny, to perform an act
> Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come
> In yours and my discharge.
> (2.1.253-6)

Here, the experience of shipwreck, of being "sea-swallow'd" suspends and transforms established cycles of time that determine a line of succession to the throne of Naples and shape the potential 'destiny,' the dynamically changing present (*kairos*) of those surrounding the king. The marine environment remains here a nonhuman entity that creates different opportunities for human action (regicide) without shaping narrative outcomes (the decision whether to illegally ascend the throne remains to be made by Sebastian). The only thing, then, that can turn this catastrophic past into a 'prologue' for, in Antonio's words, "yours and my discharge", is not nature itself, but the performance of an 'act' of regicide. Once again, the power of the ecological environment within the human realm is confined to the immediate, momentary *kairos*, offering the potential for calculated human action to influence a broad-scale, generational *chronos*, to turn the destruction of shipwreck

into the creation of a new royal lineage for Naples. By enabling two potential, contradictory narratives (both Prospero's plan and Antonio's scheme), Shakespeare's ocean lies beyond the play's socio-political themes of proper governance and justice, thereby maintaining Mentz's declared 'nonhuman immensity.' Thus, the temporal tensions at work within *The Tempest*'s duality of the sea as both nonhuman, physical presence and the mediator of the play's classical heritage are revealed as interconnected in the poet's imagination around human existence within and around the marine environment.

## 2. Seeing and Reading 'Nature' in *The Tempest*

"In his vividly imagined depictions of the marine environment as spaces in which humans partially belong, Shakespeare imagines a profound ontological relationship between humanity and the sea that is not merely metaphorical but material" writes Dan Brayton in his recent book on *Shakespeare's Ocean* (2012). The critic's use of the word 'metaphorical' refers to the tradition of aesthetic readings, also discussed by Mentz, in which the sea is transformed into a formless, fluid, and all-encompassing symbol for the unpredictability and mystery of human endeavour. The term 'material,' in turn, opposes this anthropocentric mode of criticism and describes an approach that, to recall Mentz's words, maintains the sea's "nonhuman immensity" present in Shakespeare's verse. For Brayton, then, the excavation of this 'material' ocean in Shakespeare creates "a profound ontological relationship between humanity and the sea", which informs and enriches contemporary models for human engagement with the ecological environment. Brayton justifies his turn towards Shakespeare in this critical project by noting that contemporary modes of human engagement in ecology are most strongly influenced by a modern, post-industrial and post-Romantic literary imagination, that envisions an ecology, creates a 'nature', that is entirely conducive to human processes of identity making. By looking to Shakespeare, Brayton seeks to uncover a pre-modern portrayal of the ecological that is distant from these modern conceptions of individuality. A comprehensive discussion

of the word 'nature', however, is conspicuously missing throughout Brayton's (and Mentz's) analysis of Shakespeare's 'material' ocean, leaving implicit a recognition of the ways in which Shakespeare's ecology and the human existence within is different from a post-Romantic 'nature' (2012, 4).

In one of the foundational text of ecocriticism, Timothy Morton's *Ecology without Nature* (2007), the word 'nature' becomes, as the title suggests, crucial to the critic's argument that an ecological environment infused with just human meaning cannot formulate an environmental aesthetic, a 'material' vision of ecology, that might harbour the potential to construct an, in Brayton's words, "ontological relationship" between humanity and the environment. For Brayton, then, Shakespeare's marine aesthetic maintains this potential precisely because it pre-dates a Romantic mode of mapping human meaning onto ecology, a 'nature' created by Romanticism and, as a result, the critic himself states that the word 'nature' itself does not interest him (2012, 7). There is reason for Brayton's omission, since Shakespeare does not employ the word 'nature' as ubiquitously as the Romantic poets. Ironically, however, it is only by examining the ways in which Shakespeare's use of this word both differs from and resembles a Romantic poetics, that the 'material' power (as well as its limits) to create an ecological ontology of the human can be revealed.

The eight times that 'nature' does appear in the Folio text of *The Tempest*, it is largely in reference to a *human* nature associated with ideas of education and discipline that do not have a clearly stated connection with ecology and emerge as Prospero talks of Caliban "on whose nature / nurture can never stick" (4.1.204-5). Unsurprisingly perhaps, it is Prospero who most frequently employs the word in this context, when he criticises his 'false brother' in whom ambition "Awak'd an evil nature" (1.2.109), later expelling "remorse and nature" (5.1.81), or to discipline Caliban whose "vile race . . . had that in't which good natures / Could not abide to be with" (1.2.419-20). The decidedly human 'nature' of these utterances begins to function as a reference point for describing a character that does not adhere to it, either because they have succumbed to excessive ambition (Antonio), or because their 'vile race' makes it impossible to become "good natured" (Caliban) – the latter utterance further

layers the word with ethical connotations that additionally alienate the word from a 'material,' nonhuman ecology. Prospero's use of this vocabulary, which semantically references a humanist conception of human disposition, emphasises his authoritative position as the one person who delineates the boundaries of a good, human nature. It also creates an intriguing parallel between Caliban and Antonio as the two characters in reference to whom the word is used, which is complicated even further once Miranda, trying to comfort Ferdinand, tells him that her father is "of a better nature . . . / Than he appears in speech" (1.2.584-5) than he might seem. In this moment, it is Prospero whose 'nature' suffers critique as he treats Ferdinand with the same indignation he has inflicted upon Caliban, ultimately elaborating on the colonial discourses that the play participates in.

The island's native inhabitants, Ariel and Caliban, do not employ the word in any context and the two times the word 'nature' may be read as connoting the ecological environment, it has a distinct contextual resonance. At the close of the play, Alonso describes "this business" of Prospero's as a "strange maze" and something "more than nature", suggesting that only "some oracle" can "rectify our knowledge" (5.1.275-8). The whole of Prospero's and Ariel's magic is here figured as belonging to a decidedly human realm, a "business", something "more than nature". It is the human spheres of myth and magic, then, which become the domain of meaning and 'knowledge,' as it remains ambiguous whether the word 'nature' in this context refers to the ecology of the island, or a general set of human abilities, that do not habitually include Prospero's magical practices.

Gonzalo is the second character to refer to 'nature' in the context of ecological environment, when he imagines a utopian society after being stranded on the island:

> GONZALO All things in common nature should produce
> Without sweat or endeavour; treason, felony,
> Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
> Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
> Of it own kind, all foison, all abundance,
> To feed my innocent people.

(2.1.148-53)

The first mention of 'nature' connotes a collective communality and refers to custom. These are imagined to reproduce and function in a society "[w]ithout sweat or endeavour; treason, felony" etc. The second referral to 'nature', connotes an ecological environment that "should bring forth . . . all abundance". As Charlotte Scott observes, this is an anthropocentric nature that is defined in terms of the possibilities for human cultivation that it offers, its value lies in the 'abundance' it can bring forth "to feed . . . innocent people" (2014, 191). This is the one instance in The Tempest in which the word is unambiguously used to connote the ecological environment and it is significant that, as various critics acknowledge, the fragment of Gonzalo's speech constitutes a poetic appropriation of John Florio's translation of Montaigne's "Of Cannibals". The one-time Shakespeare employs the term in Morton's Romantic sense, then, is when he echoes the way in which Montaigne employs 'nature' in his text. As in the opening scene of shipwreck caused by Prospero, the imposition of an anthropological perception of ecology once again converges with the practice of poetic allusion – the ecological environment is appropriated by a human 'nature' as the poetry reveals its own constructed-ness and referentiality.

In this context, it becomes further significant to consider the aspects of Montaigne's vision that Shakespeare omits in his appropriation. As Montaigne writes: "All things (as saith Plato) are produced either by nature, by fortune, or by art", and he continues to extensively employ ideas of a "original naturalitie" and "the lawes of nature" (Montaigne 1998, 867). Shakespeare, in contrast, limits the use of the word and omits completely Montaigne's ideas about a 'law of nature' in Gonzalo's vision. Though Gonzalo's utopia is, like Montaigne's, a society where "letters should not be known" (2.1.139) nature is not as explicitly figured as the *locus* of all wisdom and knowledge as it is in "Of Cannibals". Montaigne's perfect nation is a society whose illiterate "experience" exceeds "all the pictures wherewith licentious Poesie hath proudly imbellished the golden age" (1998, 867). This is a rhetoric in which nature and knowledge become synonymous. Akin to a Romantic poetics, all spirituality and 'art' come to be expressed by a 'pure' and 'original'

natural world – an image that Shakespeare rejects even in Gonzalo's utopian vision, in which a 'nature' that provides the means to "feed . . . innocent people" (ibid.) is part of a constructed, consciously poetic vision that has little baring on the play's further action.

Moreover, the extended enumeration on which Gonzalo's utopian vision is structured, but is endemic of the focus on the spatial dimension throughout utopian thinking. As Brayton argues, the island of *The Tempest* is a "poetic geography", a "projection of familiar ways of seeing onto the unknown in order to give alterity recognizable shape and meaning" (2012, 170). From this perspective, both Shakespeare's and Gonzalo's vision of the island are equally real, and the utopian narrative becomes just as empirically founded as Caliban's vividly poetic descriptions of the island – also marked by a frequency of enumeration and a focus on space-relations. The key difference between Caliban's and Gonzalo's descriptions, however, is in their temporal dimensions. Where the growing "crabs", "pig-nuts", and "clustering filberts" (3.1.128-30) of the former's landscape are composed into the present tense, the latter projects future expectations onto the natural environment, onto a cultivated 'nature', saying that it "should bring forth . . . all abundance".

In this way, *The Tempest's* utopia differs from both the English translation of Montaigne's "Of Cannibals", who (in Florio's translation) writes of his ideal society in the present tense ("It is a nation that hath no kind of traffic" [Montaigne 1998, 866]); and bears closer resemblance to Plato's *Republic* written in the Greek future tense. Familiar with the echoes of Plato that Shakespeare absorbed through Florio's translation of Montaigne, the classical world once again emerges out of the text revealing another one of its chronostratigraphic layers. The embellishment of an ecological, in Brayton's words, 'material' nature with the vision of anthropocentric cultivation, then, is paralleled in the process of the poetry becoming layered with a tissue of different temporalities that are at once latently present and yet elusive. To read this fragment of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* ecocritcally through the lens of Butler's model of deep classics, then, is to recognise the text's consciousness of the different, converging temporalities in the human understanding of environment – a consciousness that is, as Butler observes, realised in the century-long process of the play's reception.

The deep time of classical allusion further manifests itself into Shakespeare's utopian vision through the permeating presence of Plato in Montaigne. The aforementioned Greek notions of time, *chronos* and *kairos*, are distinctly at play in Gonzalo's speech. As Frank Kermode notes in his book *The Sense of an Ending* (2000), the interval between the two temporal realities "must be purged of simple chronicity" because it is the end, the final destination of *chronos* that "will bestow upon the whole duration and meaning" (46). In Gonzalo's speech, this final locus of meaning is found within a quantitative *chronos*, the domain of a human 'nature'. Whereas the kind of 'nature' that connotes an ecological environment is enclosed into the context of *kairos*, an area of non-meaning for Kermode, that solidifies the immediacy of the connection between human and its environment that Brayton's oceanic ontology implies. This utopia, then, is one constructed not on the 'laws of nature' but a 'common' condition of humankind which organises and determines its surrounding environment, much like it is now in the Anthropocene era of human intervention into geological deep time.

The fact that neither Ariel, nor Caliban employ the word 'nature', even though the latter especially frequently describes the island's environment, is particularly telling. The latter is arguably the character whose ontological as well as genealogical connection to the island's environment and the marine ecology is made most explicit in *The Tempest* – from the island being his birthplace, to Trinculo's vivid comparison of Caliban to a fish ("What have we here? A Man or a fish? . . . A fish, he smells like a fish, a very ancient and fish-like smell" [2.2.22-3]) it becomes clear that it is a 'nature' beyond human understanding and language that nourished and brought Caliban into existence. Moreover, Caliban himself gives clear expression to Brayton's oceanic ontology. His description of nature is untainted by metaphor and suffused with a keen understanding of the ecological processes at work in the island's environment: "All the infections that the sun sucks up / From bogs, fens, flats" (2.2.1-2). His connection to this nature is immediate and he employs faunal imagery to communicate a pure phenomenology of experience rather than fashion a poetic emotion: "lead me like a firebrand in the dark . . . like hedgehogs, which / Lie tumbling in my barefoot way and mount / Their pricks at my footfall" (2.2.1-12). This, in turn, creates

the distinct feeling that, whilst ontologically linked, ecology and the human provide for Shakespeare very different poetic possibilities and interact very differently with language. Human nature and ecological nature, then, are distinct and contextually separated in *The Tempest*, creating a sense of Shakespeare's awareness of the anthropomorphic bias of those speakers who employ the word in reference to ecological environment. It is important to remember, however, that this anthropomorphic bias prevails, for Shakespeare, as the location of civilizational progress and the development of a humanist, to return to Brayton, 'transhistorical' nature as the character's eventually set out to return to the mainland.

## 3. Shakespeare's 'Nature' as Distant Past – *The Tempest*'s 'Material' Sea Today

In recent ecocriticism, the significance of recognising in Shakespeare the existence of a pre-Romantic poetics of nature has inspired a celebration of the dramatic poet's writing as having the potential to liberate our current ecological discourse from its anthropocentric bias. This, in turn, sparked a renewed interest in both cinematic (Julie Taymor's *Tempest* from 2010) (Sibley-Esposito 2011) and theatrical adaptations (Krzysztof Warlikowski's 2008 *Burza*) that looks towards Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as a countermeasure against Romantic models for human engagement with the environment. With Shakespeare's growing status in contemporary ecocriticism and theatrical discourse, it is all the more important to contextualise Shakespeare's marine ontology and identify the wider philosophical implications at work in his anthropocentric 'nature'-poetics in order to avoid falling into an unquestioning enthusiasm about this newly rediscovered vision of nature.

Julie Taymor's 2010 cinematic adaptation of *The Tempest* with Helen Mirren in the role of Prospera, a female Prospero, sparked conversations about the text's relevance to a contemporary ecological discourse (Ebert 2012). Partially shot on-location, the film is set amongst a vast and open landscape – the island often resembling a dead and threatening, rocky wasteland, destroyed and apocalyptic. The magic of Prospera, visually represented by

fire and intense wind, harms the limited greenery even further, providing a powerful commentary of the character's exploitation of ecology and Ariel himself, whose connection to the island's nature is emphasised with the work of special effects. What is inevitably lost in this adaptation, however, is the poetic resonance of Caliban's descriptions of the abundance of the island's environment. It becomes clear, that the main function of a Shakespearean nature here is to contradict a utopian vision of tranquillity nature, to emphasise the human destruction of the environment and, with the example of Ariel, emphasise its subjectivity as a character. Consequently, the sense of an anthropomorphic nature throughout *The Tempest* is hyperbolised, yet, the delicate and potent ontological connection between the human and the sea that Brayton identifies in the ocean's 'material' presence throughout the poetry, is lost, as the sea in this film remains in a constantly tempestuous state. There is no sense that, in the process of destroying her inhabited environment, Prospera is consequently destroying herself and the possibility of a comfortable home for her and Miranda's descendants.

The Polish director, Krzysztof Warlikowski's internationally acclaimed *Burza* (2008), on the other hand, adapts a very different approach. Limited by the close space of the theatre, Warlikowski makes no specific visual reference to a natural environment. The opening scene of shipwreck is performed in audio only with distinguishable sounds of a plane crash, rather than a shipwreck, present in the background, providing material for direct and explicit ecological commentary. The production's limited lighting, surrenders the island's ecological abundance entirely to the audience's imagination. In rare moments when the stage is visible, it is revealed to be a hall of mirrors, reflecting and multiplying the characters on stage. This, once again, amplifies the anthropologic awareness of the original text's poetics of 'nature' and emphasises the patina of classical references constructed onto the sea in the original play- text, as they sharply stand out amongst the modern costuming and modernised translation Warlikowski used. Once again, however, Brayton's ontological connection between the human and the marine is entirely lost. Caliban's speeches are veiled into a child-like innocence that not only glosses over his plots against Prospero as well as the violence of his attempted

rape, but equally diminishes his affection for a material, ecological environment. In consequence, whilst Warlikowski masterfully adapts *The Tempest* as a poetic space for a contemporarily relevant ecocritical commentary (the shipwreck of the original text is here transformed into a plane crash, introducing a further critique of the destructive environmental impact of air travel), he does recognise in it any possibility for establishing a coherent pre-Romantic model for human engagement in the 'natural' environment.

## 4. Conclusion

Recent ecocriticism of Shakespearean poetics embarks on a wide-ranging and productive project of excavation, which has re-discovered, in Shakespeare's writing, a maritime ontology providing models for human engagement in a 'material' oceanic environment. The next step of this remembering, however, must be a search for established frameworks that will enable us to relate Shakespeare's ecological poetics to our contemporary understanding of the global ocean and, indeed, the global environment. Looking to ecocritical methodologies in reception studies like Shane Butler's conception of 'deep classics' provides frameworks for analysing Shakespeare's source-material ecocritically – a framework that ultimately allows us to recognise Shakespeare's full potential as providing a model, in Brayton's words, 'for environmental criticism.' In this way, an analysis of the sea's temporal dimensions in *The Tempest* alongside a close-reading of Shakespeare's use of the word 'nature' identifies the ways in which his vision of ecological environment differs from post-Romantic 'natures' and provides historicized models for making Shakespeare's 'material' poetics of the sea relevant to twenty-first century discourses of climate change. Thus, Brayton's asserted 'material' presence of the sea in Shakespeare can only be fully realised into an ontology once it interacts with the ocean's, inevitable, 'metaphoric' presence and is situated within time, the time of Shakespeare's classically influenced poetics as well as a more contemporary temporality which has, by virtue of the looming climate catastrophe, brought ecocriticism into existence.

## Works Cited

Allaby, Michael, ed. 2013. *A Dictionary of Geology and Earth Sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bigliazzi, Silvia. 2014. "'Dost thou hear?' On the Rhetoric of Narrative in *The Tempest*". In *Revisiting The Tempest: The Capacity to Signify*, edited by Silvia Bigliazzi and Lisanna Calvi, 111-36. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bonneuil, Christophe, and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz. 2017. *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History and Us*. Trans. by David Fernbach. London: Verso.

Brayton, Dan. 2012. *Shakespeare's Ocean: an Ecocritical Exploration*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Butler, Shane, ed. 2016. *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Campana, Joseph, and Scott Maisano. 2016. *Renaissance Posthumanism*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Carson, Rachel. 1951. *The Sea Around Us*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Donno, Elizabeth. 1963. *Elizabethan Minor Epics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Ebert, Roger. 2012. "A Little Too Much Sound and Fury". December 15. https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-tempest-2010 (Accessed 13 September 2022).

Gabriel Egan. 2006. *Green Shakespeare: from Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Gray, David. 2020. '*Command these elements to silence*: Ecocriticism and *The Tempest*' in *Literature compass* 17 (3-4): 125-66.

Kermode, Frank. 2000. *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Liddel, Henry-George, and Robert Scott. 1843. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mentz, Steve. 2020. "'We split!': Shipwreck in Early Modern European History and Culture". In *The Routledge Companion to Marine and Maritime Worlds, 1400-1800*, edited by Claire Jowitt, Craig Lambert, and Steve Mentz, 580-97. New York and London: Routledge.

– 2009. *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean.* London: Continuum International Publishing.

Montaigne, Michel de. 1998. "Of Cannibals". In *Montaigne's Essays*, trans. by John Florio and edited by Ben R. Schneider. Wisconsin: University of Oregon Press.

More, Thomas. 2012. *Utopia* (eBook). Planet PDF.

Morrison, James V. 2014. *Shipwrecked and Transformation in Homer, Shakespeare, Defoe, and the Modern World*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Morton, Timothy. 2007. *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Robinson, James E. 1964. "Time and *The Tempest*". *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 63 (2): 255-67.

Scott, Charlotte. 2014. *Shakespeare's Nature: From Cultivation to Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shakespeare, William. 2007. *The Tempest*. In *William Shakespeare's Complete Works*, edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, 1-51. London: Random House.

Sibley-Esposito, Clare. 2011. "Becoming Ariel: Viewing Julie Taymor's *The Tempest* through an Ecocritical Lens". *Babel* 24: 121-34.

Virgil. 1910. *The Aeneid*. Trans. by Theodore C. Williams: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0054%3Abook%3D1%3Acard%3D723 (Accessed 12 September 2022).

Warlikowski, Krzysztof, dir. 2008. *Burza*: https://zaq2.pl/video/kdpzf (Accessed 10 September 2022).

8

# Mediterranean Echoes in *The Tempest*: the Rape of Miranda between Race and Politics

Anmol Deep Singh

Abstract

Critical works on *The Tempest* commonly acknowledge rape as one of the key elements in the play's prehistory, in particular, as the cause for Caliban's subjugated position. Nevertheless, this aspect seems to have been downplayed. Caliban's post-colonial construction as a mere victim has rendered him an innocent creature, but precisely the accusation of rape questions the traditional polarized construction of Caliban and Prospero as either good or evil characters. This paper aims to demonstrate how Caliban's attempted rape needs to be relocated in the Mediterranean cultural context, and reveals deep interconnections with Early Modern discussion of race, specifically of miscegenation, in connection with women's body as a site of political power. For this reason, Caliban's rape may be read as a highly connoted political act.

Keywords: *The Tempest*; the Mediterranean; rape law; race; politics

> Qu'est-ce que la Méditerranée? Mille choses à la fois, non pas un paysage, mais d'innombrables paysages, non pas une mer, mais une succession de mers, non pas une civilisation, mais des civilisations entassées les unes sur les autres . . . C'est plonger au plus profond des siècles . . . Tout cela, parce que la Méditerranée est un très vieux carrefour. Depuis des millénaires tout a conflué vers elle, brouillant, enrichissant son histoire: homme, bêtes, voitures, marchandises, navires, idées, religions, arts de vivre . . . la Méditerranée carrefour, la Méditerranée hétéroclite, se présente dans nos souvenirs comme une image cohérente, comme un système où tout se mélange et se recompose en une unité originale . . . Plus qu'aucun autre univers des hommes, la Méditerranée ne cesse de se raconter elle-même, de se revivre elle-même.
>
> Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée* (1977)

## Introduction

It has become common knowledge that since the 1980s post-colonial readings have dominated the treatment of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Friedman 2013, 431), with the result of drawing a clear-cut, if simplistic, distinction between Prospero as the evil colonizer, and Caliban as the "emblem of oppressed natives" (Vaughan and Mason 1991, 144). Authors such as Hilb felt the need to write what he defines as a "Defense of Caliban",[1] while Bloom questioned the entire post-colonial reading of the play by claiming that "*The Tempest* is neither a discourse on colonialism nor . . . [Shakespeare's] mystical testament" (Bloom 1998, 662) and wondered why "feminist critics join in . . . Caliban's defense" (665). Apparently, Prospero's main justification for subjugating Caliban as a punishment for his attempted rape has been downplayed by post-colonial criticism. This essay aims at exploring precisely the role of rape in the play by investigating the play's historical dimension,[2] focusing in particular on the Early Modern discourse on rape and how it intersects with the issue of race in connection with the Mediterranean setting of the play. I will argue that Caliban's failed attempt to rape Miranda is racially framed and that Miranda, as well as Claribel's, potential sexual intercourse with a non-European man echoes the anxieties caused by the Mediterranean's reputation as a place linked to sexual violence against Christian women,[3] including issues of miscegenation (Loomba 2015). The aim of this essay is to demonstrate that Caliban's failed rape of Miranda read against the Mediterranean setting as well as issues of race and Early

1 Hilb in his essay counterpose to Prospero's accusation toward Caliban, and further notices that Caliban "should be declared innocent" (2020, 145).

2 In line with Jauss's reception theory, my aim will be to reconstruct the set of "conventions, expectations, and beliefs that existed at the time" (De Man 2005, xi), focusing specifically on rape. See Jauss 2005. The aim of this article is also in line with the 'hermeneutics of recovery', which "seeks to reconstruct the original context of production (the circumstances and intentions of the author and the meanings a text might have had for its original readers)" (Culler 2000, 68).

3 On how eastern Mediterranean was associated with sexual violence, see Öktem 2020.

Modern discussions of female bodies as sites of power, unveils its inherently political dimension.

## 1. *The Tempest* in the Mediterranean: Political Inflections in the Rape of Miranda

Located between Tunis and Naples, Shakespeare's island is firmly placed in a highly culturally resonant setting. Where it may actually be situated has been the object of much critical debate mainly in a postcolonial perspective. Sometimes defined as "Shakespeare's American play" (Richmond 2002, 28; cf. also Hilb 2020, 144), it has often been interpreted as an allusion to the colonial ventures that were taking place in the Early Modern period, thus locating the island "both in the geographical and cultural context of . . . colonial enterprises across the Atlantic" (Bigliazzi and Calvi 2014, 8). Hess, Brotton, and Kastan[4] have pointed out the obstruction of knowledge caused by colonial readings which have downplayed the "significance of the Mediterranean world for Elizabethan and Jacobean England" (Hess 2000, 121).[5] De Sousa as well wonders how "Shakespeare's Mediterranean has received relatively little scholarly attention" (2018, 140), although most of his plays are set in the Mediterranean. Hamilton's represents one of the first attempts to relocate the island within an Old World context "pav[ing] the way for *The Tempest*'s 'home journey' towards a European and Mediterranean context" (Bigliazzi and Calvi 2014,

4 See Bigliazzi and Calvi 2014.

5 This does not aim at dismissing the importance of the New World dimension of the play and the colonial enterprises that were taking place during Early Modern England, but at shedding light on the importance of the Old World dimension of the play. The play seems to point out both aspects, but the Old Word dimension has sometimes been minimized by post-colonial approaches. This essay aligns with Wilson-Okamura's argument that *The Tempest* "may not be a play about the New World, but without the New World, The Tempest would be a different play" (2003, 715). Nevertheless, if the allusions to the New World in the play have been the object of consistent studies mainly by post-colonial approaches, now what "literary criticism is . . . called for . . . [is] giv[ing] justice to the play's Mediterranean setting without neglecting obvious references to Atlantic exploration and colonization" (2003, 709).

10) by focusing on the "pivotal importance of Vigilian symbols and idiom in the play's configuration and understanding" (ibid.). Since then, the relationship between the *Aeneid* and Shakespeare's last play has become a major topic in criticism.[6] Even so, Hamilton's attempt focuses on the Mediterranean mainly as a conduit for an analysis of classical echoes and few studies have focused on other Mediterranean echoes.

It should be here recalled that Ferdinand Braudel defined the *mare nostrum* as a palimpsestic "vieux carrefour" (1999, 9) made of "non pas une civilisation, mais des civilisations entassées les unes sur les autres" (8) and where "tout a conflué vers elle, brouillant, enrichissant son histoire: homme, bêtes, voitures, marchandises, navires, idées, religions, arts de vivre" (9). Clement also describes the Mediterranean islands as "political, cultural, and religious crossroads" (2012, 115) and as "meeting points for different cultures and religions" (116), which turned it into "an arena of interaction, of encounters, and exchanges out of which the richness of Shakespeare's imaginative world grew" (Burke 2002, 136; cf. also Bigliazzi 2022, 16). While historically the Mediterranean has always represented "a barrier or frontier between cultures" (Clement 2012, 115), it has been noted that specifically in the Early Modern period "the Mediterranean Sea marked the borders between Christianity and Islam" (ibid.), rendering it a space of encounters and conflicts, "raising questions of race, ethnicity, class, gender, civilisation and barbarism" (Bigliazzi 2022, 15). This clearly applies to a period deeply characterized by cross-cultural awareness due to mercantile and colonial expansion, which resulted in both fascination and anxiety. As Loomba remarks, "contact with outsiders became more attractive as well as more threatening for Europeans" (2002, 6), a way to intensify "expressions of European and Christian superiority" (4) which would deeply mark "racial thinking over the next 400 years" (ibid.).

6 The relationship between *The Tempest* and *The Aeneid* has been the object of scholarly debates. In his groundbreaking work on *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Bullough omitted Virgil's epic poem from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*'s analogues and sources (Kallendorf 2007, 103). On the relationship between Virgil's epic poem and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* see Kallendorf 2007; Wilson-Okamura 2003; Bullough 1975; see also Bigliazzi's chapter in this volume.

In this light, the relocation of *The Tempest* within a Mediterranean setting allows an exploration of the play from a different perspective from the "over-confident" (Öktem 2020, 36) colonial readings which have flattened "the text into the mold of colonialist discourse and [have] eliminat[ed] what is characteristically Shakespearean" (Skura 1989, 47; cf. also Bigliazzi and Calvi 2014, 9). Starting from the fortuitous occasion of the return voyage from Claribel's political marriage which triggers the action, the play echoes Early Modern Mediterranean geopolitical preoccupations.

The brief and yet crucial reference to the absent Claribel "works as a dramatic strategy mirroring the contemporary diplomatically active, but publicly silenced, engagement with the Ottoman empire" (Bigliazzi and Calvi 2014, 10). The action unfolds within a context which bears racial inflections connected with her story, which, although occurring mainly offstage, before the play's beginning, is key for an understanding of the play's "cultural project" (Hess 2002, 128) and its racial politics, framing Caliban's failed attempt to rape Miranda. The king's "fair daughter" (2.1.66) has been given to the African king Tunis as a bride. The king's decision is not devoid of criticism: the king's courtiers "'kneeled' to him and 'importuned' him to not 'betroth' her to 'to an African'" (Kunat 2014, 311) and even the king's brother warned him (ibid.). It has been widely noted that within the Shakespearean canon the interracial, inter-cultural, and inter-religious sexual relations are regarded "with horror by several if not all the characters in the plays" (Loomba 2002, 41), as acknowledged by Sebastian's speech:

> Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,
> That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,
> But rather lose her to an African;
> Where she at least is banished from your eye,
> Who hath cause to wet the grief on't.
> (2.1.118-22)[7]

Nevertheless, the specific reference to Claribel demonstrates that these unions are permissible only with a political aim, and yet they remain problematic. Sebastian and Alonso consider the shipwreck

7 All quotations from *The Tempest* refer to Lindley 2013.

as the divine punishment for this doomed union. Claribel's marriage[8] reveals aspects related to the politics of the play as well as the "intricate dynamics of political power, race, and gender in European contact with Islam" (Öktem 2020, 43), where "the need for political and economic alliance makes the Tunisian king a legitimate husband" (ibid.), in stark contrast with Caliban's sexual desire for a white woman.

The stories of these two young daughters reflect to different degrees the sense of a potentially dangerous and disturbing Mediterranean space characterized by a sense of abuse and sexual violence perpetrated against Christian virgins (ibid.), besides appearing in romances of the time as an "arena of sexual pleasure" (Stanivukovic 2007, 63) often associated with non-normative sexuality; for instance, in *Myrrour of Knighthood* (1585), the English translation by Margaret Tyler of Diego Ortuñes Calahorra's romance *Espejo cavalleros*, the eastern Mediterranean is described as a space of homosocial and homoerotic bonding (ibid.). Stanivukovic notes that precisely the eastern Mediterranean was perceived as a place in "which expanding geographical frontiers meant erasing sexual boundaries" (62) and was often associated with non-normative or deviant sexuality. In McClintock's terms the area appears as "porno-tropic" (1995, 22; cf. also Loomba 2015, 56) for the European imaginary, that is, as Loomba further observes, "a place where Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears" (ibid.).[9]

In a period where the British reign was commercially and politically rivalling with the Ottoman empire, the eastern Mediterranean was often associated with sexual transgression and sexual vices (Stanivukovic 2007, 65), and specifically the "abhorred sexual sins practiced by the infidels" (ibid.), that is, sodomy. Timberlake, for instance, associates rape to sodomy for as

8 Hess notes that "during the early modern period the most familiar [cultural] barrier separating Christians from Muslims was marriage" (2000, 128).

9 This aligns with Loomba's contention: "for European travellers and colonialists the promise of sexual pleasure rested on the assumption that the darker races or non-Europeans were immoral, promiscuous, and always desirous of white people" (2005, 159). On the non-normative sexuality connoting the eastern Mediterranean, see Stanivukovic 2007.

both are "violent and misogynistic" (ibid.) behaviours and reports that the Turks "vse the sinne of Sodom and Gomorah very much . . . whereby the poor Christians that inhabit therein, are glad to marry their daughters at twelve yeares of age vnto Christians, least the Turks should rauish them" (1608; cf. also Stanivukovic 2007, 65). Meanwhile, accounts of Christian virgins victims of abduction, held captive in Eastern Mediterranean to be made wives to Muslims sultans (Öktem 2020, 43) were widespread in London. Popular books "attested the vulnerability of Christian women to Islamic abduction and enslavement in harems" (ibid.) even if some of them – like Claribel – were given by their fathers. Read against the play's topography, the historical and cultural background of Claribel's story resonates with the "hundreds of Christian maidens that populated the Islamic harems in this period" (36) who were the victim of abduction (Barker 2021), while Caliban's rape attempt on Miranda echoes the anxieties caused by the stereotype of the black rapist and the stereotypical image of the Turk characterised by cruelty, sexual aggression, perversion, lewdness, and degeneracy (Tiryakioglu 2015, 22-5) – depravations very much in line with the Mediterranean context.[10]

There is a shared consensus that the failed sexual assault on Miranda constitutes one of the key elements in the prehistory[11] of the play and that rape is a topic which permeates the play (Orgel 1984, 85).[12] Nevertheless, little research has been dedicated to it. As already recalled, in current criticism, Prospero has become the "prototypical English colonizer" (Brotton 2004, 30) and Caliban the

10 "The theatrical representations of Turks and Moors [as negative characters] became predominant on the theater stage when the Ottoman Empire was expanding rapidly and when Islamic power was posing a sustained threat to Christian Europe" (Tiryakioglu 2015, II).

11 Rape appears to be a central and key element in the play, nevertheless it is not staged and consequently the audience can rely only on Prospero's account. Di Maio quoting Catty notes that "although physical rape was central in the plots, it posed problems in terms of staging, for sexual representations would not be allowed. Thus, rape scenes 'must take place off-stage, and therefore between scenes'" (Catty 1999, 208; cf. Di Maio 2023, 184).

12 Orgel argues that even Ferdinand engages with "submerged fantasies of rape" (Orgel 1984, 5) in 4.1.

"emblem of oppressed natives" (Vaughan and Mason 1991, 144) and an "African-Caribbean heroic freedom fighter" (Bloom 1998, 662). Bloom argues that *The Tempest* represents one of the "worst interpreted and performed" (ibid.) plays; in particular, he objects to feminist criticism allying with post-colonial stances in Caliban's defence (665). Critics such as Valdivieso a.o. observe the shared subjugated condition of Caliban and Miranda: "Prospero is not only the white imperialist who subjugates the native islander; he is also the patriarch who uses his daughter for his own purposes… In general, we can say that feminist critics have been much more sensitive to the subjugation of Caliban than materialist critics have been attentive to the subjugation of Miranda in particular and women in general in this play" (1998, 301). On the other hand, recent feminist criticism has alerted us on the implications of rape,[13] and yet Caliban's failed rape of Miranda has never been placed centre stage and has been looked at as Prospero's excuse to justify his rule. Nevertheless, it is precisely the master/servant dichotomy alongside its correlates that is destabilized in the play: Caliban is a victim of Prospero's power but at the same time he is also the offender, the perpetrator of violence. This invites us to revise the common vision of Caliban as an exclusively innocent victim.

It has been argued that Caliban's ignorance of morals is the ground for his attempted rape, in other words, he "cannot be guilty of rape, since his actions were driven solely by sensual knowledge without rational or ethical mediation" (Kunat 2014, 309). All we know about him is that he is the son of Sycorax, an African witch, and, according to Prospero, fathered by the devil himself. [14] After his mother's death, Caliban lived on the island alone, thus

13 Feminist critics have recently addressed what has come to be identified as rape culture. If at beginning of this new inquiry "aspects of misogyny and sexual abuse . . . [have been] confined to activist spaces, academic journals, and select college classrooms" (Holland and Hewett 2021, 2) now these themes are beginning to enter even in popular culture (ibid.). In line with this new wave, rape in literary works has started to come to the forefront in the works of some feminist critics. See Holland and Hewett 2021.

14 "If we credit Prospero's account that Caliban was the son of Sycorax and the devil", as Fiorato writes, "we have to remember that in the early modern period it was believed that the progeny of the devil might have hu-

remaining an uncivilized creature, that is, ignorant of "human laws of common life" (Fiorato 2013, 123), until Prospero arrived and became his "schoolmaster" (1.2.172). However, while Miranda's education turned out to be "profit[able]" (1.2.172) (Akhimie 2018, 152), Caliban's was not. Throughout the play he is presented by Prospero and Miranda as "an uncultivable underclass of subhuman who can labour but who cannot improve" (152) even by way of *cultus animi*, that is, the "cultivation of the soul or the self through good conduct and education" (153), and, as I will argue, such inability and viciousness are traced back to his "vile race" (1.2.358).

On the other hand, if Caliban seems to be unaware of the ideological and moral implications of rape, he seems to recognise its potentially political effect: when Caliban is accused by Prospero of trying to dishonour[15] Miranda, his reference to his future lineage betrays an instinct for self-preservation, which, as primitive as it sounds, does have a political inflection: "O ho, O ho! would't had been done! / Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else / This isle with Calibans" (1.2.349-51). Within the typically patriarchal and political framework represented by Prospero's project, but also by Claribel's story, Caliban's conception of sexual intercourse and of Miranda's body as incubator for his progeny may be read as, *mutatis mutandis*, a failed coup. The Calibans he mentions would have likely outnumbered Prospero and what for Prospero is sexual assault, but for him sexual intercourse, looks like a way to establish political power. Furthermore, Caliban seems aware that in order to assert his dominium, and consequently his status as legal persona, he needs to presents himself as belonging to a "kinship structure where one can inherit and leave property to be inherited" (Fiorato 2013, 124). What may be sensed from Caliban's perspective is an attempt at self-affirmation through procreation and a primitive conception of ownership. This is his own way of redefining himself as the progenitor of a race and the possessor of the island. Moral law defining sexual intercourse as abuse has no place in his vision.[16]

man as well as less than human shape" (2013, 126).

15 The word choice made by Prospero is revealing of his own patriarchal cultural system but also of a Christian moral perspective.

16 However, it must be noted that Caliban seems to acknowledge

Prospero is aware that if Caliban's attempted rape had been successful, it would have impaired any possible plans of regaining his power through a political marriage of his daughter – a project which is not manifest from the outset but gradually becomes clear. According to this perspective, then, Miranda's body and precisely the failed sexual assault are key for an understanding of the play's political message, which makes the failed rape a highly connoted political act.

## 2. 'A most detestable crime': Prospero's Conception of Rape Against Caliban's

Ideas of rape culture in Early Modern England have been fairly investigated. Nevertheless, they were affected by the "anachronistic ideology of the 1970s and 1980s that placed rape in a transhistorical continuum of misogyny and male oppression and left no space for inquiry into the complexities of history" (Barker 2021, 121). Much of the currently available literature on rape in Early Modern England is based on two sources that have become ubiquitous in criticism: Nazife Bashar's *Rape in England between 1550 and 1700*, and the seventeenth-century anonymous treatise *The Lawes Resolutions of Women's Rights*.[17] It must be noted that these two sources have been disproven in recent years for being unrepresentative of how rape was perceived at the time. If the 17th legal treatise – being a trade

Miranda for her beauty: in the subplot of the play, where he advises Stephano to murder Prospero in order to obtain power over the island, Caliban speaks of "The beauty of his daughter" (3.1.91). Such exchange reveals how Caliban seems to acknowledge Miranda as a kind of object of pleasure and as an instrument of self-affirmation; this lets us catch a glimpse of Caliban's perverse morality, mainly based on an unbridled patriarchal and sexist vision of woman as a kind of object, as a kind of prize. In Early Modern England, lust was seen as a natural response to female beauty, and Caliban is represented throughout the play as a bestial creature incapable of controlling his drives.

17 "Speculation . . . still surrounds the origins of the manuscript" (Barker 2021, 92) even the date of publication is unknown; we only know that the earliest copy is dated 1632. On its authorship and the publication dates see Barker 2021.

book, "largely disregarded by the legal profession" (Barker 2021, 95) – has no legal authority and offers no reliable information on the legislation governing rape in the Renaissance, though it could have "a strong claim as a piece of social history" (115), Bashar's essay[18] interprets rape and particularly its rare prosecution cases as mirroring the patriarchal legal system of the time, which prosecuted it only if it affected inheritance and property arrangements. Recent criticism instead has pointed out the complex interrelated reasons that must be taken into account when approaching these numbers, which have been ignored by Bashar. Besides the obvious psychological and physical distress caused by the sexual assault, Barker underlines how in a juridical case what was at stake was a woman's reputation and the reputation of her family and often "punishment falling to a woman was usually greater than to a man" (2021, 24). Even ignorance surrounding sex contributed to this perspective as conception after rape was seen as evidence of consent on the woman's part (ibid.). Di Maio also remarks that:

> accessibility of law courts was way more restricted for women, who also had limited possibilities to file lawsuits on their own. For rape victims, appearing as plaintiffs was rather disadvantageous: the more women's sexuality was exposed during hearings, the more they risked being associated with adultery, whoredom, fornication and immorality. Not unlikely they would be alleged in their turn to be malevolent and revengeful and to seek the destruction of men. (2023, 180)

Under this light Bashar's assertion oversimplifies the way in which rape was treated, though she deserves to be credited with being one of the first scholars to address rape in Early Modern England.

In an age where women represented a "potential asset to be disposed of in an advantageous marriage" (Barker 2021, 7), a woman's loss of virginity, even if forced, meant the "loss of a marriageable daughter, spousal services, and possibly the wife's landed property" (ibid.). This affected especially the aristocracy since their "primary concern was for bloodline and inheritance, but the loss of reputation or the financial implications of bringing

18 On the unreliability of these two sources, see Barker 2021.

up a child fathered by another impacted throughout society" (22).[19] Considering that Caliban's rape would have deflowered Miranda – the daughter of the former Duke of Milan and therefore in principle important for the "dynastic and material fortunes of the family" (60) – as we have already pointed out, it would have affected Prospero's political plan of marrying his daughter to the heir of the kingdom of Naples. Although this should not induce us to think that Miranda is only a political instrument in Prospero's hands, not least because his punishment of Caliban antedates any actual plan of vengeance and recovery of his former political status, we should bear in mind that Renaissance women "were active in forging family and political alliance" (59). This is demonstrated in the passage where Miranda plays at chess with Ferdinand, metaphor of the quest for power, where she cleverly accepts her seemingly subordinate role[20]. Therefore, the love story between the young couple is instrumental for the play's political aims (Bellman 2011, 171).

The play's racial framework, given by Claribel's story, offers an interpretative key to understanding the play's engagement, as previously asserted, with Mediterranean geopolitics and foregrounds Miranda's rape. I have argued that Caliban's sexual assault intersects with political issues: not only does Caliban acknowledge Miranda's procreative function as a collateral effect of his sexual intercourse as an implicit political act, but within the Christian frame of the play her 'unchastity' would have undermined Prospero's logic of male patriarchal power in case an occasion for regaining it had ever presented itself. Caliban's failed rape of Miranda is in principle, if not in practice, an aggression against Prospero, a way for Caliban to assert himself through the propagation of his own race, against

19 In this sense, the play seems to recall *Othello* which depicts, as Drakakis has noted, the "nightmare of patriarchy", that is, the loss of one man's power over his property. In the early modern period, "domestic power" was represented by "the authority of the husband over the wife, the authority of the father on the offspring . . . and of the patriarch on his servants" (2011, 161, trans. mine).

20 This can be acknowledged in 5.1: "MIRANDA Sweet lord, you play me false. // FERDINAND No, my dearest love, / I would not for the world. // MIRANDA Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle, / And I would call it fair play" (5.1.171-4).

Prospero's. In turn, for Prospero, his daughter's loss of virginity is a potential threat to any possible attempt at regaining his political power through her marriage, insofar as Prospero is "the possessor and ruler of Miranda's political potential" (Cieślak 2019, 110). In either case, Miranda is reified: she is Caliban's instrument for self-preservation in a primitive conception of self-affirmation, and Prospero's means to achieve a 'civilized', patriarchal politics of power imbued with a Christian morality of female 'honour'.

## 3. Between Rape and Race

In 1.2 the idea of an exogamous relationship between Caliban and Miranda is explicitly addressed. The already mentioned reply by Caliban to Prospero's accusation of rape in 1.2: "O ho, O ho! would't had been done! / Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else / This isle with Calibans" (1.2.349-51) should be set against Miranda's following comment on Caliban's horrifying "vile race" (1.2.430), which raises fears of miscegenation (Loomba 2015). Shortly afterwards, in one of the few moments when Miranda is allowed to speak, she says:

> . . . Abhorrèd slave,
> Which any print of goodness wilt not take,
> Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,
> Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
> One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage,
> Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
> A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes
> With words that made them known. But thy vile race -
> Though thou didst learn - had that in't which good natures
> Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou
> Deservedly confined into this rock,
> Who hadst deserved more than a prison.
> (1.2.352-62)

Miranda finds in Caliban's "vile race" and his racial inferiority the reason for his capability of "all ill" and inability to learn how to improve himself. I will return to the mention of race in this

passage, but before that we have to observe the anachronism of the discussion itself, insofar as "racial thinking is quintessentially a nineteenth-century product" (Bassi 2016, 13). Nevertheless, as Loomba remarks, the "fear of being anachronistic should not stop us from investigating the history of racial difference" (Loomba 2002, 2). Furthermore, race nowadays "carries overwhelming connotations of skin colour" (ibid.), and "even today, race is a confusing term that does not carry a precise set of meanings but becomes shorthand for various combinations of ethnic, geographic, cultural, class, and religious differences" (ibid.). In the play, Caliban is never explicitly described as black or as a moor.[21] The only mention of his 'darkness' is famously made by Prospero in 5.1.330, but it has different moral connotations increased by the use of the word "thing" ("this thing of darkness", 5.1.271). This remark seems to confirm Caliban's "specifically African lineage" (Brotton 2004, 32).

Caliban's racial connotation plays a central role in the failed sexual assault on Miranda. Firstly, Caliban's Africanness is likely to have induced the audience to take sides with Miranda without questioning her word and the word of her father. As Barker points out, a "male judge and jury would be reluctant to convict a man simply on a woman's word" (2021, 123). In an age where a woman's voice was likely to be unheard and a woman had to demonstrate almost with a theatrical performance her innocence the audience was likely to side with Prospero's accusation and with Miranda precisely because of Caliban's race. In the 13th century Bracton's *De legibus et consuetudinibus Angliae* discussed how a woman's lack of consent had to be demonstrated. The legal treatise reports that a raped woman had to

> go at once and while the deed is newly done, with the hue and cry, to the neighbouring townships and there show the injury done her to men of good repute, the blood and her clothing stained with blood, and her torn garments. And in the same way she ought to

21 There is no clear description of Caliban in the play. Some authors argue that Caliban's name's etymology may be traced back to the "Romany word for Blackness, *caulibon*", though the most credited position is that Caliban may derive from Montaigne's essay which refers to cannibals. On the first position, see Hilb 2020.

> go to the reeve of the hundred, the king's serjeant, the coroners and the sheriff. And let her make her appeal at the first county court . . . Let her appeal be enrolled in the coroners' rolls, every word of the appeal, exactly as she makes it, and the year and the day on which she makes it. A day will be given at the coming of the justices, on which let her again put forward her appeal before them, in the same words as she made it in the county court, from which she is not permitted to depart lest the appeal fall because of the variance, as is true in other appeals. (Bracton 1632, 415; cf. also Barker 2021, 39)

The codified victim of rape had to comply with these features, if not, consent was assumed and consequently sexual assault could not be prosecuted by law. These features of "physical disarray" were even reproduced also in theatrical representation of rape (Pallotti 2012; Barker 2021).

The few recorded Renaissance accounts of a prosecuted rape reveal a justificatory attitude towards a white rapist,[22] yet the perception of rape perpetrated by a black-skinned subject was

22 In early modern pamphlets "the figure of the rapist is constructed in a way to raise sympathy in readers" (Pallotti 2012, 296), who in turn may "question the ways in which the justice system operates" (ibid.). For instance, in a pamphlet of 1688 a man accused having raped a nine-year-old refuses to admit his crime despite the evidence. The pamphlet "focuses on his 'excellent' (3) behaviour, 'much like [of] a Person of a more than ordinary Birth and education' (3), on his pious last speech addressed . . . from the 'cart' and on his final prayer, and it seems to insinuate that perhaps the condemned man was after all a victim of wrongful judgement, an innocent unjustly sentenced to death. The text insists on his religious attitude, as well as his firm refusal to acknowledge the crime he was found guilty of, though he confessed 'all manner of Sin' (3). It also points out that his qualities and the words he uttered 'did very much affect the Spectators, every Person seeming to be very Sorrowful for his Untimely End' (3), his rhetorical ability apparently obfuscating the plain evidence brought against him" (Anonymous 1688, 2 and Pallotti 2012, 296). In another case, in the narrative of a man found guilty of raping a thirteen-year-old child, the focus was not on the victim but on the reason that brought him to commit suicide (297). In modern days we would refer to this attitude as being part of rape culture, while early modern men "often claimed that sex, not rape, had occurred . . . hereby shifting the emphasis back onto female behavior and repositioning culpability" (Di Maio 2023, 180).

different. Pallotti notes how in Early Modern ballads images of women victims of a cultural other[23] circulated widely, thus locating the "responsibility for rape and violence outside the local white community and attributing them to a racial other" (Pallotti 2012, 194). The representation of rape attempt in these ballads also had political implications since it implied "a way to underscore the chastity of Western imperialistic culture" (ibid.).

Lastly, it has long been remarked that the female body was often used in geopolitical discourses of power as a visual and verbal trope for the exploration and colonization of the continents awaiting to be "deflowered" by the Europeans (Loomba 2015, 89), while "native women and their bodies are described in terms of the promise and the fear of the colonial land" (153).[24] Conversely, for a Western audience the dark-skinned native's sexual assault of a white woman, symbolically embodying European culture, was perceived as a threat for its symbolic implications (90), and Caliban's seems to be one of its earliest incarnations.

Blackness was usually associated with viciousness, ferocity, and evil in general. In Renaissance theatre, the Mediterranean "negative stereotypes" (Hess 2000, 123) were often used as a foil to the civilised nature of Western society even "before the staging of *The Tempest*" (ibid.). Moreover, as Loomba further notices, "[w]hite men were represented as 'saving brown women from brown men'" (2002, 155), which served as a philanthropic justification for colonial enterprises: colonizers, as would often be the case in the

23 In *A lamentable ballad of the tragical end of a gallant lord and vertuous lady* (1658-1664) a noble woman is raped by the black servant who "in order to revenge himself on his master's unfair reproach, imprisons the whole family, except the master, rapes the lady, kills the children and their mother in a locked tower of their moated castle, in the full sight of all the townfolks" (Pallotti 2012, 293). In another ballad "The black and heathenish rapist, driven by an aberrant violence, shows no respect for social hierarchy, no emotion nor pity towards any of 'his family'" (ibid.). Pallotti notes how the connection between aggressive behavior and dark skin was "revealing of the fears and anxieties circulating in early modern English society" (ibid.).

24 "The new artwork and the new geography together promised the 'new' land to European men as if it were a woman; not to mention the women of the new land who were regarded as literally up for grabs" (Loomba 2015, 89)

history of civilization, often claimed a 'civilizing mission' against barbarity and oppressive patriarchal domination. Likewise, in *The Tempest* Caliban's failed attempt to abuse Miranda is what causes his enslavement, while catalyzing Early Modern discourses on blackness and its manifold threats.

Thus far I have discussed how rape constitutes a key element in the play, mainly focusing on Caliban's failed rape. It must be noted, however, that also other – white – male characters do objectify Miranda less for procreation purposes, than for purely sexual desire. In this respect, Sundelson points out the exchange between Prospero and Ferdinand, where Prospero warns the prince of Naples against "break[ing] her virgin-knot before / All sanctimonious ceremonies" (4.1.15-16) as Ferdinand seems to "protest too much" (Saundelson 1980, 48):

> . . . As I hope
> For quiet days, fair issue and long life,
> With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,
> The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion.
> Our worser genius can, shall never melt
> Mine honour into lust, to take away
> The edge of that day's celebration
> When I shall think: or Phoebus' steeds are founder'd,
> Or Night kept chain'd below.
> (4.1.23-31)

This dialogue according to Saundelson and Orgel includes "submerged fantasies of rape" (Orgel 1984, 5). Orgel further argues that in the play if "all women are at hearts whores, all men are rapist: Caliban . . . [and] Ferdinand". When Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban plot against Prospero to establish their dominion over the island, Caliban speaks of "The beauty of his daughter" (3.1.91) and tells Stephano that "she will become thy bed, I warrant. /And bring thee forth brave brood" (3.1.97-8). Whereas Caliban speaks of 'brood', Stephano sees her as a possible companion, as his queen and partner in his rule. Nonetheless, Miranda is objectified, seen as a kind of pleasurable prize obtained after and for the murder of Prospero. Miranda is not the main aim of the political coup, but

the idea of her beauty seems to give Stephano a new energy and reason to kill Prospero.[25] The white Stephano who acts as a civilized character toward Caliban, although coming from the same cultural environment and Christian moral code as Prospero, appears not to be civilized but simply wanting to objectify Miranda less for procreation purposes and more for sexual pleasure.

In conclusion, a simplistic good/evil binary consideration of Prospero as the oppressive master/colonizer and Caliban as the servant/colonized does not fully account for political issues referable to a more complex dynamics involving gender, rape and race. It is precisely the rape attempt on Miranda that destabilizes this dichotomy, a question inadequately addressed in criticism of the text. As I have tried to demonstrate, Caliban's failed sexual assault on Miranda needs to be read against the play's historical and cultural topography of the Mediterranean background: within that context and rape discourses belonging to the relevant Early Modern perspective on this subject, Caliban's sexual aggression reflects asymmetries of class, politics and race. The play's mobile perspectivisim on this question disrupts clear-cut oppositions showing the complexities of female bodies at a time when they were perceived as potential sites of power. This essay argues that rape in *The Tempest* may be read as a highly politically connoted act. To a certain extent and within a somewhat primitive system of power based on ideas of self-propagation as self-affirmation, as well as a logic of sexual enjoyment as male potency, Caliban seems to suggest an alternative form of political power, very disturbing for a Western 'civilized' society speaking the language of Christian morality.

25 It seems that Stephano is interested in Caliban's proposal of killing Prospero, in order to obtain power over the island but when Caliban speaks of Miranda's beauty Stephano seems to be moved by a new enthusiasm: "STEPHANO Monster, I will kill this man. His daughter and I will be king and queen save our Graces! And Trinculo and thyself shall be viceroys. Dost thou like the plot, Trinculo?" (3.2.99-101).

## Works Cited

Akhimie, Patricia. 2018. *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference: Race and Conduct in the Early Modern World*. New York: Routledge.

Anonymous. 1688. *The Last Speech and Confession of Edward Altham*. London: Emsley Clive.

Barker, Helen. 2021. *Rape in Early Modern England: Law, History, and Criticism*. London: Springer Link.

Bashar, Nazife. 1983. "Rape in England between 1550 and 1700". In *The Sexual Dynamics of History: Men's Power, Women's Resistance*, edited by London Feminist History Group, 28-42. London: Pluto.

Bassi, Shaul. 2016. *Shakespeare's Italy and Italy's Shakespeare: Place, "Race", Politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Benjamin, Hilb. 2020. "In Defense of Caliban: *The Tempest* and the Myth of the Black Rapist". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 71 (3-4): 143-70.

Bigliazzi, Silvia, and Lisanna Calvi. 2014. "Introduction". In *Revisiting The Tempest: The Capacity to Signify*, edited by Silvia Bigliazzi and Lisanna Calvi, 1-30. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bigliazzi, Silvia. 2022. "Introduction". In *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean 1: Romeo and Juliet*, edited by Silvia Bigliazzi and Emanuel Stelzer, 15-24. Verona: Skenè.

Bloom, Harold. 1998. *Shakespeare and the Invention of the Human*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Bracton, Henricus. 1968. *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Braudel, Ferdinand. 1999. *La Méditeranéee: l'Espace and l'Historie* (1977). Paris: Flammarion.

Burke, Peter. 2002. "Civilizations and Frontiers. Anthropology of the Early Modern Mediterranean". In *History and Social Sciences. Testing the Limits of Braudel's Mediterranean*, edited by John A. Marino, 123-41. Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press.

Catty, Jocelyn. 1999. *Writing Rape, Writing Women*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Cieślak, Magdalena. 2019. *Screening Gender in Shakespeare's Comedies: Film and Television Adaptations*. London: Lexington Books.

Culler Jonathan. 2000. *Literary Theory. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

de Sousa, Geraldo U. 2018. "Introduction: Shakespeare's Mediterranean". *Mediterranean Studies* 26 (2): 137-44.

Di Maio, Myriam. 2023. "'Farewell My Sweet Virginia' – 'Die, Die Lavinia': Defiled Roman Maidens in Webster and Heywood's *Appius and*

*Virginia* and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*". *Pólemos* 17 (1): 177-98.

Drakakis, John. 2011. "Il sogno di Bramantio: Othello e il potere del patriarcato". In *Iconologia del Potere*, edited by Daniela Carpi and Sidia Fiorato, 141-63. Verona: Ombre corte.

Fiorato, Sidia. 2013. "Ariel and Caliban as Law-conscious Servants Longing for Legal Personhood". In *Liminal Discourse*, edited by Daniela Carpi and Jeanne Gaakeer, 113-28. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter.

Henry, Timberlake. 1608. *A trve and strange discourse of the trauailes of two English Pilgrimes*. London: Thomas Archer.

Hess, C. Andrew. 2000. "The Mediterranean and Shakespeare's Geopolitical Imagination". In *The Tempest and Its Travels*, edited by Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman, 121-30. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Holland, K. Mary, and Heather Hewett. 2021. *#MeToo and Literary Studies: Reading, Writing, and Teaching about Sexual Violence and Rape Culture*. London: Bloomsbury.

Kallendorf, Craig. 2007. *The Other Virgil: 'Pessimistic' Readings of the* Aeneid *in Early Modern Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kunat, John. 2014. '"Play Me False': Rape, Race, and Conquest in 'The Tempest'". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 65 (3): 307- 27.

Loomba, Ania. 2015. *Colonialism and Post-Colonialism* (1998). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nerozzi, Patrizia. 2011. "Il gioco dei re". In *Iconologia del Potere. Rappresentazioni della sovranità nel Rinascimento,* edited by Daniela Carpi and Sidia Fiorato, 164-71. Verona: Ombre corte.

Öktem, Öz. 2020. "'We know little of the king's fair daughter, Claribel': The Challenge of Islam in *The Tempest*". In *English Studies in Africa* 63: 36-47.

Pallotti, Donatella. 2012. "'A most detestable crime': Representations of Rape in the Popular Press of Early Modern England". *LEA - Lingue e letterature d'Oriente e d'Occidente* 1 (1): 287-302

Richard, W. Clement. 2012. "The Mediterranean: What, Why, and How". *Mediterranean Studies* 20: 114-20.

Richmond, Hugh Macrae. 2002. *Shakespeare's Theatre: a Dictionary of His Stage Context*. New York: Continuum.

Shakespeare, William. 2013. *The Tempest* (1623). Edited by Lindley David. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Skura, Meredith Anne. 1989. "Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in 'The Tempest'". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1): 42-69.

Stanivukovic, Goran, ed. 2007. *Remapping the Mediterranean World in*

*Early Modern English Writings*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Tiryakioglu, Nevsal Olcen. 2015. "The Western Image of Turks from the Middle Ages to the 21st Century: the Myth of the 'Terrible Turk' and 'Lustful Turk'". Ph.D. diss. Nottingham: Nottingham University.
Valdivieso, Sofía. 1998. "Double Erasure in 'The Tempest': Miranda in Postmodern Critical Discourse". *Sederi* 9: 299-304.
Vaughan, Alden, and Virginia Mason. 1991. *Shakespeare's Caliban: a Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Wilson-Okamura, David Scott. 2003. "Virgilian Models of Colonization in Shakespeare's Tempest". *ELH*: 709-37.

# Index

## Skenè. Texts and Studies

Founded in 2014 by Guido Avezzù, Silvia Bigliazzi, and Alessandro Serpieri as a supplement to *Skenè. JTDS, Skenè. Texts and Studies*, *Skenè. Texts and Studies* is a peer-reviewed online and print-on-demand series of volumes including annotated editions of drama texts and primary sources as well as critical studies on the theory, practice, and history of theatre and drama. The series also aims at furthering original research by producing texts hitherto unpublished.

*Texts*: scholarly and annotated editions:

1. Maria Serena Marchesi, *5 November 1866: The Story of Henry Irving and Dion Boucicault's Hunted Down, or, The Two Lives of Mary Leigh*, 2016 (pp. 158)
2. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Was ist eine attische Tragödie? What is an Attic Tragedy?*, Introduction and Notes by Gherardo Ugolini, Translation by Lisanna Calvi and Stefan Rabanus, 2016 (pp. 266)
3. Silvia Bigliazzi, *Julius Caesar 1935: Shakespeare and Censorship in Fascist Italy*, 2019 (pp. 406)
4. Emanuel Stelzer, *Shakespeare Among Italian Criminologists and Psychiatrists, 1870s-1920s*, 2021 (pp. 238)
5. Marco Duranti, *"Ecclesiae et Rei Publicae": Greek Drama and the Education of the Ruling Class in Elizabethan England*, 2022 (pp. 148)

*Texts DA*: texts also published in digital archives:

1. Fabio Ciambella, ed. *War Discourse in* Four Paradoxes: *the Case of Thomas Scott (1602) and the Digges (1604)*, 2022 (pp. 226)
2. Marco Duranti and Emanuel Stelzer. eds. *A Feast of Strange Opinions: Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes on the English Renaissance Stage • 1.1*, 2022 (pp. 279)

*Studies I*: original book-length studies:

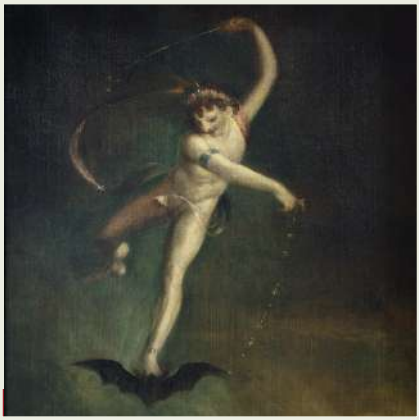
1. Silvia Bigliazzi, Francesco Lupi, Gherardo Ugolini, eds. *Συναγωνίζεσθαι: Studies in Honour of Guido Avezzù*, 2018 (pp. 1089)
2. Silvia Bigliazzi, ed. *Oedipus at Colonus and King Lear: Classical and Early Modern Intersections*, 2019 (pp. 450)
3. Silvia Bigliazzi and Emanuel Stelzer, eds. *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean • 1: Romeo and Juliet*, 2022 (pp. 296)
4. Fabio Ciambella, ed. *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean • 2: The Tempest*, 2023 (pp. 200)

*Studies II*: shorter publications:

1. Andrew L. Brown, *The Length of the Prologue of Aeschylus's* Choephori, 2015 (pp. 101)
2. Alessandro Serpieri, *Shakespeare's Drama in Poetry*, 2018[2] (pp. 201)
3. David Schalkwyk, *Words in the World: The Bakhtin Circle*, 2016 (pp. 127)
4. Giovanna di Martino, *Translating and Adapting Aeschylus'* Seven Against Thebes *in America*, 2020 (pp. 184)
5. Alessandro Grilli and Francesco Morosi, *Action, Song, and Poetry. Musical and Poetical Meta-performance in Aristophanes and Ben Jonon*, 2023 (pp. 169)
6. Micha Lazarus, *Leon Modena's* Kinah Shemor, 2023 (pp. 140)

Is Shakespeare's *The Tempest* a Mediterranean play? This volume explores the relationship between *The Tempest* and the Mediterranean Sea and analyses it from different perspectives. Some essays focus on close readings of the text in order to explore the importance of the Mediterranean Sea for the genesis of the play and the narration of the past and present events in which the Shakespearean characters participate. Other chapters investigate the relationship between the Shakespearean play, its resources from the Mediterranean Graeco-Latin past and its afterlives in twentieth-century poems looking at the Mediterranean dimension of the play. Moreover, influences on and of *The Tempest* are investigated, looking at how Italian Renaissance music may have influenced some choices concerning Ariel's song(s) and how *The Tempest* has shaped the production of twentieth-century Italian directors. Finally, other chapters try to reaffirm the centrality of the Mediterranean Sea in *The Tempest*, bringing to the fore new textual evidence in support of the Mediterraneity of the play, by adopting and/or criticising recent approaches.

Fabio Ciambella is researcher of English Linguistics at Sapienza University of Rome. He also collaborates with the University of Verona and Skenè Research Centre on a number of projects, i.e., CEMP, SENS, and OMIC.



Cover:
Diogo Homem, *Portolan chart* (sixteenth c.);
Henry Fuseli, *Ariel* (c. 1800-1810).

25,00 € ISBN 978-884676736-3 ISSN 2464-9295