

TEACHING  
THE

# TEMPEST

IN WISCONSIN





# Teaching *The Tempest* in Wisconsin: A Guide for Educators

## 2016-2017 Great World Texts Program of the Center for the Humanities



**Prepared by:**

**Devin M. Garofalo**, Dept. of English

**Faculty Advisor:**

**Karen Britland**, Dept. of English



320 University Club, 432 East Campus Mall, Madison, WI 53706  
<http://humanities.wisc.edu/public-projects/gwt/about-gwt>



## CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| “Teaching <i>The Tempest</i> in Wisconsin”: How to Use this Guide | 3  |
| Unit 1 • Nation, Globe Author                                     | 5  |
| Unit 2 • Empire, Race, Gender                                     | 16 |
| Unit 3 • Science, Specimens, Sorcerers                            | 30 |
| Unit 4 • Theatre, Music, Masque                                   | 44 |
| Unit 5 • Genre, Form, Language                                    | 62 |
| Unit 6 • Making Shakespeare                                       | 72 |
| Unit 7 • The Annual Student Conference                            | 82 |
| <i>The Tempest</i> : A Preliminary List of Adaptations            | 86 |
| What is Close Reading?  | 88 |

## **"TEACHING *THE TEMPEST* IN WISCONSIN": HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

### **READING ACROSS TIME & SPACE**

*The Tempest* is a work of fiction. While its sociocultural and geopolitical contexts are integral to its impact, and to our critical reflections on the text, it is important to remember that this is a work of literature and not a historical document. While literature can help us teach culture, history, politics and so on, no one text can bear the burden of representing an entire nation, culture, or people. As you teach this play, please keep in mind and emphasize where you can the cultural specificities that make it unique. Doing so in a clear and explicit way will also help you and your students appreciate the text's ability to speak across time and space.

### **HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

The material in this guide is intended to provide all you will need to teach William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and its many contexts. We believe that the historical and cultural background is necessary for understanding this work, the characters presented therein, and their decisions, but we encourage you to teach the text thematically as well, tying it into other disciplinary issues and regular features of your core curriculum wherever possible.

**READINGS & HANDOUTS:** The readings in the guide are intended for teachers, but many should also be accessible to students. These include readings that provide further background information for instructors as well as a variety of materials that might aid instructors in creating handouts. You are encouraged, where possible, to use the materials in this guide as handouts for your students, and to adapt the handouts available for student use. All materials are available electronically at the Great World Texts website or, in the case of all recommended handouts, online. Links are provided in the "Handouts" section of each unit.

**PREPARATORY & RECOMMENDED READING** indicates readings and resources essential for the Unit under consideration. **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES** indicates recommended readings and resources that *may* be of interest should a particular topic intrigue you or your students or seem particularly interesting in terms of how *you* are trying to teach the text. Don't be overwhelmed by the abundance of additional relevant material! The most essential sources to the teaching of each unit are those categorized as preparatory.

**POINTS FOR DISCUSSION, ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVITIES:** The recommended points for discussion, assignments and activities provided in this guide are designed to allow you the opportunity to tailor the way you teach the text to your own course, time constraints, interests, and goals. The individual units could be taught over one or several days, or over the course of a few weeks. You can mix and match ideas from the various sections to create your own syllabus. Each section includes a theme, followed by a set of points for lecture and discussion, suggestions for close reading, specific quotes from the text or other readings, as well as in-class activities and assignments that might be used to further discussion. Each section also includes suggested preparatory readings and a list of additional recommended resources.

## CLOSE READING STRATEGIES

The guide assumes that you will have read the entire text, but all units also offer suggestions for specific passages within the text that would benefit from careful and attentive reading, analysis and discussion; these will be areas in the text from which the major ideas and themes of that unit are drawn. During discussion and for assignments, students should be encouraged to support their interpretations with evidence from the text. Close reading lends itself well to both group work and small-group discussions, and is an excellent way for students to develop their critical thinking skills as they make connections, use evidence to support their views, and discuss the impact of various literary techniques. For close reading to work successfully, it's important that the teacher always remind the students to point to the passage, line, or occurrence that supports their position when they're sharing their ideas. Close reading teaches students the difference between "opinion" or "personal reaction" and "analysis." It also helps teach students to assess the text on its own merits, and avoid essentializing the cultural components of the text or stereotyping based on generalizations.

Reading a portion of text out loud as a class or small group, followed by discussion, can be an excellent way to develop close reading skills in the classroom. The guide includes a handout on close reading that we encourage you to use in your classes.

## TEACHING TOWARD THE STUDENT CONFERENCE

Your students will come to the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the spring of 2017 to present their work to their peers, listen to lectures from experts on the text, and workshop with faculty, graduate students and undergraduates from the university. At the conference, they will have the opportunity to meet and listen to Margaret Atwood speak about *The Tempest* and her novelistic adaptation of it, called *Hag-Seed*. Unit 7 in this guide is explicitly devoted to preparing students for this visit and for the student conference. Prepare them for a successful conference by encouraging them to challenge themselves with projects that provide critical interpretations of the text in unique and complex ways. There is no limit to the type of project they might prepare. Past projects have included essays, painting, sculpture, weaving, culinary projects, photography, film and other multimedia, dramatic performances, song, dance, and more. The only requirement is that the students' projects must present a critical analysis of the text. Students will be required to write a short summary of their projects, which will be submitted to Devin Garofalo ([greattexts@humanities.wisc.edu](mailto:greattexts@humanities.wisc.edu)) approximately one month before the student conference.

Each school will select one student, or group of students, whose work is exemplary, to present at the **plenary session** on stage. It's recommended that the students themselves select (by voting) the "best" project for this presentation, which will be about 5 minutes in length. It is our expectation that these presentations will be polished, rehearsed and timed, and that they will provide an opportunity for your school to feel pride and investment in its participation in the program. *All other students* are expected to present their work in poster sessions during the conference, and will have the opportunity to stand next to their projects and answer questions about them from other students and conference participants. Every student who attends the conference should present her/his work at the conference.



## UNIT 1 • NATION, GLOBE, AUTHOR

**OBJECTIVE:** To consider questions of nation and globality in *The Tempest*; early modern conceptions of monarchy, power and empire; and William Shakespeare as a historically situated individual and a transhistorical figure.

**HANDOUTS** John Speed, “The Kingdome of England” (David Rumsey Map Collection)  
<http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~285199~90057872:The-Kingdome-of-England-?qvq=q:author%3D%22Speed%2C%2BJohn%2C%2B1542-1629%22;lc:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=17&trs=230>  
— —. “The Kingdome of Great Britaine and Ireland” (David Rumsey Map Collection)  
<http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~285195~90057868:The-Kingdome-of-Great-Britaine-and-?qvq=q:author%3D%22Speed%2C%2BJohn%2C%2B1542-1629%22;lc:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=1&trs=230>

### PREPARATORY & RECOMMENDED READING

- Kristiaan P. Aercke. “‘An Odd Angle of the Isle’: Teaching the Courtly Art of *The Tempest*.” *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare’s The Tempest and Other Late Romances*. Ed. Maurice Hunt. MLA, 1992. 146-52.
- Anston Bosman. “Shakespeare and Globalization.” *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Ed. Margreta De Grazia. Cambridge University Press, 2011. 285-302.
- Karen Britland. “Politics, Religion, Geography and Travel: Historical Contexts of the Last Plays.” *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare’s Last Plays*. Ed. Catherine M. S. Alexander. Cambridge University Press, 2009. 71-90.
- Alison Games. *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660*. Oxford University Press, 2008.
- John Gillies. “Globe/*Theatrum Mundi*.” *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare’s World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). Ed. Bruce R. Smith. Cambridge University Press, 2016. 60-5.
- Stephen Greenblatt. “The Traces of Shakespeare’s Life.” *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. 1-14.
- Kim F. Hall. *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Donna B. Hamilton. “Shakespeare’s Romances and Jacobean Political Discourse.” *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare’s The Tempest and Other Late Romances*. 64-71.
- Introduction to “The Sixteenth Century” in the *Norton Anthology of British Literature*: Volume 1, 485-513.
- James I. “A Speech to the Lords and Commons of the Parliament at White-Hall.” *The Political Works of James I*. Ed. Charles Howard McIlwain. Harvard University Press, 1918. 306-25.
- Carole Levin. “The Society of Shakespeare’s England.” *Shakespeare: An Oxford Guide*. Ed. Stanley Wells and Lena Cowen Orlin. Oxford University Press, 2003. 93-102.
- Preface to “William Shakespeare” in the *Norton Anthology of British Literature*: Volume 1, 1058-60.



Jeffrey A. Rufo. "'He needs will be Absolute Milan': The Political Thought of *The Tempest*." *The Tempest: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan. 137-64.

Alden T. Vaughan. "Introduction." *The Tempest: A Critical Reader*. 13-38.

Peter Whitfield. "Mapping Shakespeare's World." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare's World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). Ed. Bruce R. Smith. Cambridge University Press, 2016. 1-13.

## UNIT ORGANIZATION

This unit is divided into five sub-sections: "Opening Questions"; "Monarchy"; "Nation"; "Globe"; and "Author" Together, these sub-sections develop points for use in lecture, which are followed by suggested passages for class discussion and questions for further inquiry. The unit concludes with ideas for in-class activities and student projects.

## OPENING QUESTIONS

- What is England? What do you know about it? Its literature? What comes to mind when you hear "early modern," "Tudor," "Elizabethan" or "Stuart"? What about "Great Britain"?
- What is monarchy? Who is a ruler? What does a ruler look and act like? What is the relationship between a ruler and the government? Or the people? What does it mean to think of history in terms of dynastic family lineages (rather than sequential years, decades or centuries)?
- What is literature? What is world literature, in particular? Is English literature ever world literature? Why read English literature in a global context? How would it change your understanding of and assumptions about English literature to read it as world literature?
- What is a tempest? What does it evoke? To what does it refer beyond climate? For example, what are its historical and political connotations? Its emotional valences?
- Who is William Shakespeare? What do you know about him? To which historical period and to whom does he belong? How might a play like Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or *The Tempest* have resonance elsewhere in the world? Why? What might people who have never traveled to England learn from such literature? And what might they not learn?

## MONARCHY

Performed for the first time in 1611 and published as the first play in the First Folio of 1623, William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* emerged during a moment of profound historical change in England. Some of the most transformative of changes centered on the monarchy, which are sketched briefly here: Shakespeare wrote the play in the years following the end of the Tudor dynasty and decades of battle over the throne in England. The Tudor dynasty began when Henry Tudor (later called Henry VII) rose to power following what are now called the Wars of the Roses: "a vicious, decades-long struggle for royal power between the noble houses of York and Lancaster." His ascent to the throne marked the consolidation of "a much stronger central authority" in England. Following Henry VII, Henry VIII took the throne. Two of his children would rule England following his death. With Katherine of Aragon—a Spanish-Catholic and the first of his eight wives—he fathered Mary I, who would become Queen of England in 1553. During her reign, Mary would burn hundreds of Protestants at the stake—an undertaking that would earn her the moniker "Bloody Mary." With the Protestant Anne Boleyn (who was later executed) Henry VIII had a second daughter, Elizabeth I. She would become queen following Mary's death. Elizabeth ruled from 1558-1603, and was succeeded by James VI of Scotland, who would as the King of England assume the title of James I.

This history of monarchical succession is significant on at least two counts. First, it is distinguished by the rise to power of not one, but two queens. The majority of Shakespeare's career coincided with the reign of Elizabeth, a woman whose virginity and unmarried status were topics of heated public debate. As Carole Levin notes, Elizabeth's reign "destabiliz[ed] the structure of a society that had always expected a king who would be father to his people as well as, it was hoped, father of the son who would be the next king. Elizabeth, an unmarried woman, did not fulfill either of these objectives" (93-4). But this is not to say that the people did not love their queen, or that she was an unsuccessful ruler. On the contrary, Elizabeth was a shrewd monarch. She "ruled through a combination of adroit political maneuvering and imperious command, all while enhancing her authority in the eyes of both court and country by means of an extraordinary cult of love." This "cult"—which Elizabeth cultivated by establishing at court "an atmosphere of romance, with music, dancing, plays, and the elaborate, fancy-dress entertainments call masques"—helped her to transform her gender from "a potential liability into a significant asset" (*Norton Anthology* 494). Dressed in fine clothing and rich jewels, "she often took the court on 'progresses' throughout the country side"—a move that allowed her to "see and be seen by her subjects" in all of her glory and power (Levin 94). Elizabeth was also known for warding off potential threats to her power by employing "new men"—rather than "old nobility"—as her advisors (Levin 95), and by "playing off one dangerous faction against another," preventing the possibility that those seeking to usurp her power or seize the throne would consolidate power (*Norton Anthology* 494). Shakespeare thus lived in a moment when the norms surrounding the possession of power, marriage and gender dynamics were overturned at the highest echelons of English society. Why, then, is *The Tempest* almost entirely bereft of women, whether present in the action or only in the memory of its characters? Why is Miranda, the play's one female character, the image of everything that Elizabeth I and, before her, Mary I were not? This is a question to which we will return at greater length in Unit 2.

This monarchical history is also significant because of the questions it raises about the relationship between the sovereign and the people. These questions intensified in the years following the death of Elizabeth and the royal succession of James I—these are the years which immediately precede and coincide with Shakespeare's writing of *The Tempest*. James envisioned the role of the monarch as akin to that of "the wise, peace-loving Roman Augustus Caesar, who autocratically governed a vast empire." Kings, in this formulation, "derive their powers from God rather than people"—a tenet that would become a persistent "sourc[e] of friction through James's reign" (*Norton Anthology* 1236). This "friction" intensified as James and Parliament struggled to come to an agreement that would settle the Crown's finances, which were in increasing disarray in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. When "James summoned the Parliament in 1610"—by which time Shakespeare was likely, or would very soon be, at work on *The Tempest*—"to secure a financial settlement," he "was interested in increasing not only his revenues but his prerogative" or, rather, his power (Hamilton 66). Comparing kings and gods, James wrote the following to argue that he should not have to consult with Parliament before exercising his royal authority:

The State of MONARCHIE is the supremest thing upon earth: For Kings are not onely GODS Lieutenants vpon earth, and sit vpon GODS throne, but euen by GOD himselfe they are called Gods. There bee three principall similitudes that illustrates the state of MONARCHIE: One taken out of the word of GOD; and the two other out of the grounds of Policie and Philosophie. In the Scriptures Kings are called Gods, and so their power after a certaine relation compared to the Diuine power. Kings are also compared to Fathers of

families: for a King is trewly *Parens patriæ*, the politique father of his people. And lastly, Kings are compared to the head of this Microcosme of the body of man (*The Political Works of James I* 307).

But the members of Parliament did not acquiesce to James's request, nor did they accept his argument on behalf of absolute monarchical power. Instead, they submitted a Petition of Right and a Petition of Temporal Grievances. The former affirmed the right of Parliament "to debate freely the king's use of his prerogative," while the latter reminded the king that he "was subject to restraint by Parliament." While restraint "did not mean that the king was not absolute, it did mean that the absolute power of the king existed not in the king by himself but in the king in parliament" (Hamilton 68-9). These tensions remained unresolved and intensified following James's reign. They would culminate with outbreak of civil war and the execution of Charles I in 1649, who had "attempted to rule without summoning Parliament at all between 1629 and 1638" (*Norton Anthology* 1236).

### CLOSE READING

Already we can see how these conflicts are at issue in *The Tempest*, a play that is concerned with the balance of power between ruler and ruled, as well as the threat of regicide. Kristiaan Aercke, for instance, argues that the something of the "omnipotent and omniscient" James is to be found in Prospero, "the absolute ruler of the island-stage." Likewise, the relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda "is developed in terms of dynastic regeneration" and, as such, calls to mind the norms surrounding power, marriage and gender that traditionally define monarchy, but which queens such as Elizabeth I put into question (148). To explore the dynamics of ruler and ruled in *The Tempest*, have students close read passages wherein Prospero wields and negotiates power with Caliban or Ariel (see, for instance, Prospero's exchange with Ariel and then with Caliban in Act 1, Scene 2). To consider the interrelationship of monarchy, dynastic reproduction and gender, they might turn to Prospero's commanding exchange with Miranda (Act 1, Scene 2) or the marriage plot he devises for Miranda and Ferdinand, which unfolds over the course of the play. See the questions that follow for possible points of discussion.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does the word "tempest" suggest about the play as a work of art? What might Shakespeare's title, *The Tempest*, thus tell us about the process of interpreting the play and its meanings? Does the sense of flux and indeterminacy with which the play begins—and which permeates its story and its title—tell us something about reading and analyzing literature? Does it tell us something about the historical and political contexts of the play itself?
- As it engages with the institution of monarchy and the possibility of absolute power, *The Tempest* raises some important questions about the relationship between ruler and ruled: What makes a good ruler, according to the play, and what distinguishes a bad one? How would you describe the relationship between Prospero and Ariel? How does it compare to the dynamic between Prospero and Caliban? Is Prospero a successful ruler? Does this remain the same over the course of the play or is there a turning point at which Prospero changes, either for the better or the worse? What makes a good subject and what makes a bad one? How does Prospero manage unruly subjects and does he do so rightly? Does the play ever justify the notion of absolute power? Or is absolute power always unjust?
- How might the word "tempest" resonate with the play's historical and political contexts? Consider, for instance, the Wars of the Roses, the rise and fall of dynasties, the sometimes rapid

and unpredictable succession of kings (or queens). What does the title of Shakespeare's play suggest about power, its dynamics and its transfer?

- Why does Shakespeare, an English author, center his play on a feud between Italian aristocrats? Why not make Prospero a deposed English monarch? What do we learn about monarchy from this European—as opposed to national—context?
- Why, in a moment distinguished by strong, powerful, willful female monarchs, does Shakespeare write a play in which there are almost no women (whether present in the action or imagined), and in which the one woman who is present would seem relatively powerless (and disinterested in power)? What do we make of this contradiction? What does the play tell us about the relationship between dynastic power, marriage and gender?

## NATION

James I was not English, but Scottish. While his succession put at ease those who were concerned about the “[c]ontroversies created by an unmarried and childless female monarch,” it also provoked new questions about Englishness, the boundaries of the nation-state, and empire (Rufo 138). Thus, as Kim F. Hall argues, “metaphors of marriage and union took on a different cast than they had under the virgin Elizabeth, not only because James was himself already married with a growing family but also because of the ideological work needed for the incorporation of England, Scotland, and Wales into one political entity” (124). 1603—the year in which James ascended to the throne—marked the beginnings of what we now call Great Britain. James had high hopes this merger would go smoothly: “in making a plea for his pet project, the creation of ‘Great Britain’, he described that union as a marriage” (Hall 124). But many were concerned about the implications of a union with Scotland. According to Karen Britland, “the Scots were perceived by many in England as poor and backward and there was resistance on both sides to integration” (71). These efforts toward the establishment of a multinational union at home were in this way part of a colonial project we might otherwise identify with European interventions in the Americas or Africa.

The fantasy of unification extended not only to Scotland, but also to Ireland. These contexts are at issue in *The Tempest*. As Alden T. Vaughan argues, “one need not leave the British isles to find pejorative prototypes for Caliban, or an example of English imperialism” (51). What example, after all, could be closer to home than Ireland? “In the same year that Shakespeare’s play opened,” Vaughan notes,

the historian-cartographer John Speed’s comprehensive study of the “British Empire” described profusely the regions “now in actual possession,” including England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and even the Isle of Man, but barely mentioned the fledgling colony in Virginia. For it was in Ireland, of course, not Virginia, that England’s major efforts at “plantation” had long been invested. (51)

Here, we can begin to see how cartography was an important instrument for the colonial project: it rendered legible new and unknown lands and, in so doing, made them more readily available for colonial appropriation.<sup>1</sup> Like the Scots, the Irish were represented in “defamatory” terms. For the

---

<sup>1</sup> See the Unit 1 handouts (links above) for late seventeenth-century reprints of Speed’s original maps of the nation and the empire, which make visible a sense of nation and empire that was quite new in Shakespeare’s time. Unit 3 includes an in-depth exploration of early modern cartography and aesthetic representations of space, time and peoples across the globe.

English, they “epitomized” the problems of “incivility, unruliness and political disorder.” As critics have noted, there is much in common between Shakespeare’s representation of Caliban and the “perceptio[n] of Irish men as uncouth, unlettered, rebellious and intoxicated.”

Thus, the borderlines of the nation-state turned increasingly porous over the course of Shakespeare’s lifetime. As the fantasy of a unified “Great Britain” proliferated, there were increasing questions and concerns about Englishness: what it was, where it was located and what it would become as England, Scotland and Ireland became increasingly intertwined. The language of union, as Hall puts it, “prove[d] highly contested and fraught with anxieties over the ramifications of crossing borders as well as over the resiliency of internal boundaries” (124).

#### CLOSE READING

*The Tempest* is very much concerned with the possibilities and problems of nation, union and border-crossings. Critics have drawn parallels between the enslavement of Caliban and Ariel, for instance, and English colonial intervention in Ireland. Likewise, the entire play turns upon Prospero’s plan to marry Miranda and Ferdinand—a union that will put an end to his exile and restore him to power. To explore the notions of nation, international union and anxiety about boundaries, students might close read the following passages: the story of how Prospero was deposed and exiled from the nation he called home (Act 1, Scene 2), Prospero’s descriptions of marriage as a mechanism of political unification, Gonzalo’s vision of the island as a utopian nation over which he would preside as king (Act 2, Scene 1) or the moment when Prospero reveals Caliban’s attempted rape (Act 1, Scene 2). See the questions that follow for possible points of discussion.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is England? What is Great Britain? What is the difference between the two? Do they invoke different kinds or scales of power? What does *The Tempest* tell us about the question of nation in the early modern period? How does it imagine borders and boundaries, as well as border-crossings or other mechanisms which complicate a sense of boundary?
- How does *The Tempest* imagine union? Who or what is united (or re-united) over the course of the play and to what end? Are unions ever dangerous and do they ever fail? How do these unions resonate with the play’s historical contexts—the transfer of power from an unmarried English queen to a married Scottish king, the dream of a unified Great Britain in which England is the centralized authority, the anxiety that the nation will lose its identity through such union?
- Compare and contrast Prospero’s description of his exile from Milan—and his reign over the island—with Gonzalo’s vision of a “commonwealth” or nation in which he is king. What are the similarities between Prospero’s island nation and the one Gonzalo envisions? What are the differences and what do we make of them? On what grounds is a nation established (for example, physical commonalities between people, political alliances, geography, etc)? What might they together tell us about the nation-state as a concept and a marker of global space and power in the seventeenth century? Do nations always subordinate and exclude others to establish power? What do we make of the fact that both Prospero and Gonzalo understand colonial “plantation” or intervention as the means by which to establish the nation-state?
- Prospero suggests that Caliban attempted to rape Miranda—a claim that Caliban does not refute. The topic of rape is, of course, a sensitive one, and it remains frustratingly difficult to parse in *The Tempest*—its meanings are ambiguous, multiple and sometimes contradictory. One

way to help students understand the presence of sexual violence in the play is by situating it in relation to anxieties about national identity. In *The Tempest*, rape might convey, among other things, the possibility that national identity will be diluted by and through the transnational union or “marriage” of England, Scotland and Wales that James I hoped to establish during his reign. What do Prospero’s allegations of rape help us to understand about English perceptions of non-English outsiders? About the perception of and anxieties surrounding the possibility that England might expand to become Great Britain?

## GLOBE

The excitement and anxieties surrounding the possibility of an expanded English nation-state heightened in response not only to developments of a more domestic or localized character (such as colonial intervention in Ireland), but also the rapid growth of global markets of exchange and the exploration of distant lands around the world. “Markets expanded significantly” during the early modern period as “international trade flourished, and cities throughout the realm experienced a rapid surge in size and importance” (*Norton Anthology* 487). For this reason, some historians argue “that globalization began in the year 1571, when the Spanish established Manila as an entrepôt finally connecting Asia and the Americas, and William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon turned 7” (Bosman 285). Globalization—“the compression of the world and the intensification of the world as a whole”—not only connotes the networks of communication and exchange through which travel and exploration were made possible, but also refers to the emergence of a new, more interconnected, totalized sense of the world. Shakespeare came of age in a moment when “[g]lobal processes knit the early modern world together” for the first time, “enabling people to perceive in its entirety a world once experienced only in fragments” (Games 5).

Thus, even as they unfolded elsewhere on the globe, these developments effected dramatic change—both imaginative and otherwise—within the English nation. As trade expanded and London became an increasingly cosmopolitan center of exchange, the population of the city boomed: it increased from “60,000 in 1520 to 20,000 in 1550, to 375,000 a century later, making it the largest and fastest-growing city not only in England but in all of Europe.” Historians have learned that “[e]very year in the first half of the seventeenth century about 10,000 people migrated to London from other parts of England”—a truly extraordinary figure (*Norton Anthology* 487). Notably, the population in London changed not only in size, but also in demographics. “Elizabethan London had a large population of resident aliens” from various European countries, as well as “a small African population whose skin color was the subject of pseudoscientific speculation and theological debate” (*Norton Anthology* 496 and 497). “African slaves were brought to England from the 1570s onward in small numbers,” and most “were household servants” (Levin 101). As poverty increased and anxiety about national identity spread, the presence of European outsiders and racial others became a heated topic of debate. As Levin notes, “[b]y the end of the century, in fact, Queen Elizabeth had begun to be ‘discontented’ that a number of Africans were in England.” In response to a decade “of inflation, bad harvests, and destitution,” she would issue an edict in 1601 that claimed “Africans were taking jobs away from needy Englishmen” and thus “were to be expelled from the country” (Levin 101). But Africans were not the cause of these problems and, as Levin notes, their expulsion was most certainly not a solution. If anything, what the 1601 edict makes clear is that with a heightened sense of globality there emerged not only a deep sense of imaginative possibility, but also one of resentment, distrust and insularity. In *The Tempest*, the relationships between Prospero, Miranda and Caliban register these complexities.

The imaginative possibilities made available by and through this newly expanded sense of the globe are perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the name Shakespeare's acting company chose for their theatre: The Globe. Bringing together a diversity of spectators to see plays populated with a fantastic array of beings and set in far-flung places—to see plays in a space whose architecture and aesthetics invoked not only the globe but the cosmos—"Shakespeare's theater was the world in microcosm" (Whitfield 7). The theater's name invoked "an early modern commonplace"—the *theatrum mundi*—and while evidence is scarce, it is believed that the Globe "was adorned with a sign of Hercules carrying a globe under which was written the motto *Totus mundus agit histrionem*, or 'All the world's a stage'" (Gillies 60). Figuring the theater as "a place in which one could learn useful lessons about the world," the Globe's sign invokes a trend in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cartography: that of figuring the world as a theatrical space upon which the grand events of history unfold. In its name, the Globe imagines the theater as a globalized space wherein otherwise distant people and places are more intimately interconnected. It also serves as a reminder that, while some might have envisioned the theater as a venue in which to explore more egalitarian ways of thinking about the world, it—like a map—offers a mediated *representation* of the world. Such representations are complex and often contradictory, and they inevitably commit their own exclusions and erasures. We need only look as far as Caliban to see these kinds of representational prejudices in action.

#### CLOSE READING

Set on an unnamed desert island and steeped in the politics of monarchy and an expanded sense of the globe, *The Tempest* affords an opportunity to explore early modern conceptions of the world and its relationship to the English nation-state. To do so, students might close read the following passages: Antonio and Sebastian's exchange about the enlarged scale of the globe (Act 2, Scene 1), and the constrained worldviews of Miranda (Act 3, Scene 1) and Caliban (Act 3, Scene 2). See the questions that follow for possible points of discussion.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This guide will offer more context for the island setting of *The Tempest* in the next unit. For now, consider the play's setting without this context in mind. Where does *The Tempest* take place? What sense of global space and time does the island setting convey? What about the island itself? Do you have a good sense of its topography or size? What are its features and how does it impact the action of the play (or not)? What do we make of its elusivity? What do your answers to these questions tell us about the early modern experience of global space? About early modern attempts to imagine or represent that space? Does the play suggest there is anything particularly challenging about such attempts?
- Compare and contrast Antonio and Sebastian's discussion of the globe as enlarged and fragmented with the sense of constraint at issue in Miranda's and Caliban's experience of the world. How are these ways of imagining the globe different and from what do these differences stem? What do we make of the play's vision of global space as, on the one hand, profoundly interconnected (that King Alonso's ship comes close enough to the island for Prospero to work his magic upon it suggests that global space is not as fragmented or disconnected as we might assume) and, on the other, enlarged and expansive?
- Reflect on the name of the Globe theater. What does the interconnection of theater and planet suggest about the role of drama in thinking about the world? What does it mean to envision the



theater as a space in which the world as whole might be contained? How might the staging of a play like *The Tempest* in a space like the Globe impact or affect meaning? How might it, for instance, clarify or complicate the relationship between interconnected and expansive global space as imagined in the play? What does it mean that the Globe—a theater that makes a claim upon the world—was located in London? In England or the colonial union of Great Britain? Does this inform our understanding of the world it invokes or imagines, who it includes and to what end it strives?

## AUTHOR

While we know much about the early modern world, we know very little about William Shakespeare, the man behind *The Tempest*. As Stephen Greenblatt puts it, [t]he [biographical] traces are, for the most part, frustratingly inert, and those that are not inert are frustratingly ambiguous” (12). What we do know is this: “Shakespeare was baptized in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon on 26 April 1564” (4). His family was of relatively modest means. His father was a glover. His mother was not wealthy, though she did own some property. The next “documentary trace” of Shakespeare is “in the marriage license bond recorded on 28 November 1582,” which permitted him to marry Anne Hathaway. Together, they had three children. There is no record of his life from 1585 to 1592—biographers call these the “Lost Years” (6). In 1592, a rival playwright, Robert Greene, published an “attack” that, though it does not mention Shakespeare by name (Greene calls him only an “Upstart Crow”), alludes to him using a line from one of his earlier plays (6). Thus, by 1592 Shakespeare “had made his way from Stratford to London,” and had become established enough “to excite the anger of an envious contemporary” (7). He would eventually become an owner of the Globe theater, where his acting company put on plays. “[A]t around the time he wrote *The Tempest*,” Shakespeare left London for Stratford. Why is still unclear. He “dr[e]w up his last will and testament” in 1616 (11). The exact date of his death is unknown, but we know he was buried on 25 April 1616, at Holy Trinity Church. His epitaph reads:

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 my bones.

There are, however, non-biographical traces that help us to track Shakespeare’s movements in the world. These records document the production of his plays. Perhaps surprisingly, “the first Shakespeare recorded outside Europe” dates to the years before his writing of *The Tempest*. There are reports that “an English merchant ship off the coast of what is now Sierra Leone became in 1607 a stage for *Hamlet*, with an African guest providing a running translation in Portuguese (and possibly Temne)” (Bosman 287). These traces litter the annals of seventeenth- eighteenth- and nineteenth-century world histories. *The Tempest* has a long history of adaptation outside of England, its musicality resonating in and translating particularly well into the operatic traditions of East Asia. (This is a topic to which we return in later units.) While William Shakespeare, the man, may not have traveled beyond the borders of England, William Shakespeare, the author, has traveled far and wide across both global space and historical time. This history of performance, adaptation and translation unsettles our assumptions about who Shakespeare was, for whom he wrote and to whom he belongs.

### CLOSE READING

Have students close read the prefatory material published in the First Folio of 1623. As they do so, have them consider the discussion questions that follow.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The First Folio collected in one place Shakespeare's dramatic works for the first time. It was published posthumously. Shakespeare had no involvement in the making of the volume. With this in mind, consider the following questions: What information does the prefatory material of the First Folio offer with respect to Shakespeare's biography? Do we learn anything about him as an individual—about his life, family or personal convictions? What do we make of the fact that the First Folio offers very little in the way of biographical information about the author it celebrates? Is this surprising and why? What might this suggest about the motivations behind the production of the volume? Why would someone have chosen to read the First Folio? To put this another way: if the purpose of the volume is not to celebrate Shakespeare as an individual, what is its purpose?
- We might be inclined to assume that a play like *The Tempest* is full of its author's personal convictions, and that we can only interpret its meaning by taking those convictions—or biographical context—into consideration. The First Folio, however, implies something quite different. In providing little to no information about Shakespeare, what does the First Folio tell us about the project of reading and analyzing literature? If analysis does not necessarily consist of researching an author's background and then projecting those findings onto the literature that author produce, what does it involve? What does the omission of biographical information from the First Folio tell us about literature and how it produces meaning beyond the particular intent of its author?
- Consider the way Shakespeare has traveled across the globe, both in his own time and in the present. What does this history suggest about authorship and canonicity? Is Shakespeare English or is he part of a broader canon of world literature? How might this history inform or change our assumptions about who Shakespeare is and to whom he belongs?

### ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECT IDEAS

- Have students make a timeline (or, perhaps, a family tree) of the monarchies of England and Scotland, including the marriages between British and non-British monarchs which were designed to establish unions or alliances across Europe. Doing so will help students develop a sense of the profound instability surrounding monarchical power in the early modern period. While kings made claims to absolute power, the shifting landscape of monarchy undercuts this illusion of unchecked prerogative. This project will also help students gain a better sense of the formative political and religious debates of the period. The reigns of Henry VIII, Mary I and Elizabeth I, for instance, make legible the ways that religious belief was in a profound state of flux, especially as it related to national identity and political policy.
- Have students use Google Maps to create a map of the world as a late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century English reader of Shakespeare might have imagined it. This activity will help students visualize the globe in the context of early modern Britain. To do so, students might research what was actually "on the map" in the early modern period. For example, which

sites should a student include so as to capture the imperial expansion of European powers into various places around the world? Which sites should be included to give viewers a sense of England's governmental structure in the period, as well as its alliances or affiliations with other nations or colonial territories? Where would students locate the island imagined in *The Tempest* and why? Students might offer a rationale for the world their map represents.

- For a two-part project: ask students to create a map of the island on which the action of *The Tempest* takes place. What does it look like? What kinds of flora and fauna live on it? What are its topographical features? Where is Prospero's "cell"? Where is the tree in which Ariel was entrapped and where might Prospero have first met Caliban? Doing so will enable students to develop a better sense of the play's setting, which remains elusive.
- Critics have long identified Prospero with Shakespeare. Both are magicians of a sort—they deal in art and illusion—and wield great power over their subjects or audiences. To explore questions of authorship, students might write an essay that re-imagines Shakespeare's life by way of Prospero's character, convictions and ambitions in mind. If Prospero's story maps onto Shakespeare's biography, what would that biography look like? How, for instance, would Shakespeare understand his role as a playwright? What would his personal convictions consist of? How would he understand the relationship between these convictions and his plays? In a second, reflective part, students might reflect on what they have learned about the relationship between biography, authorial intent and literary analysis. They might consider the problems and challenges that come with reconstructing an account of an author's life and beliefs from a text. By extension, they might then consider what these problems and challenges tell us about how literature makes meaning, often in ways that cannot be explained by an author's biography or that an author cannot foresee and control.

## UNIT 2 • EMPIRE, RACE, GENDER

**OBJECTIVE:** To explore questions of empire and colonial power in *The Tempest*; early modern conceptions of race, gender and sexuality; and William Shakespeare's participation in the rise of global English and linguistic colonialism.

### PREPARATORY & RECOMMENDED READING

- Martin Banham et al. "Shakespeare in Africa." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Last Plays*. Ed. Catherine M. S. Alexander. Cambridge University Press, 2009. 284-99.
- Anston Bosman. "Shakespeare and Globalization." *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Ed. Margreta De Grazia. Cambridge University Press, 2011. 285-302.
- Dympna Callaghan. *Shakespeare Without Women*. Routledge, 1999.
- Herbert R. Coursen. *The Tempest: A Guide to the Play*. Greenwood Press, 2000.
- Anthony Dawson. "Shakespeare on the Stage." *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Ed. Margreta De Grazia. Cambridge University Press, 2011. 233-52.
- John Gillies et al. "Shakespeare on the Stages of Asia." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Last Plays*. 259-83.
- Stephen Greenblatt. "Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century." *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture*. Routledge, 1990. 22-51.
- Kim F. Hall. *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Leah Marcus. "The Blue-Eyed Witch." *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton*. Routledge, 1996. 1-37.
- Patricia Seed. "'This island's mine': Caliban and Native Sovereignty." *The Tempest and its Travels*. Ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman. Reaktion Books, 2000. 202-11.
- Meredith Anne Skura. "Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in *The Tempest*." *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's The Tempest*. Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. G. K. Hall, 1998. 60-90.
- Kay Stockholder. "Shakespeare's Magic and its Discontents: Approaching *The Tempest*." *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's The Tempest and Other Late Romances*. Ed. Maurice Hunt. MLA, 1992. 160-8.
- Ann Thompson. "'Miranda, where's your sister?': Reading Shakespeare's *The Tempest*." *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's The Tempest*. 234-43.
- Alden T. Vaughan. "Introduction." *The Tempest: A Critical Reader*. 13-38.
- Virginia Mason Vaughan. "Literary Invocations of *The Tempest*." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Last Plays*. 155-72.
- Peter Whitfield. "Mapping Shakespeare's World." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare's World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). Ed. Bruce R. Smith. Cambridge University Press, 2016. 1-13.

### UNIT ORGANIZATION

This unit is divided into three sub-sections: "New Worlds"; "Caliban, Sycorax, Miranda"; and "Global English" Together, these sub-sections develop points for use in lecture, which are followed by suggested

passages for class discussion and questions for further inquiry. The unit concludes with ideas for in-class activities and student projects.

## NEW WORLDS

As explored briefly in Unit 1, Shakespeare lived in a time of then-unprecedented global expansion wherein England was increasing its involvement in colonial enterprise and Europeans were aware perhaps more than ever before that the world contained a heterogeneity of people and cultures, as well as flora and fauna. We cannot understand a play like *The Tempest* without taking this context into account. As Anthony Dawson observes: “From the beginning, Shakespeare has occupied an international space. If we exclude the histories, almost all his plays are set beyond the borders of England—all but one comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, one tragedy, *King Lear*, and one romance, *Cymbeline*. And in all three of these, as indeed in the histories and in *Macbeth*...national and extra-national loyalties encounter each other” (176). *The Tempest* is thus not unique in this regard. It, like many of Shakespeare’s plays, takes place elsewhere on the globe. Likewise, it considers the complexities of intra- and international “loyalties” in its consideration of monarchy, marriage as a political tool, and the threats of regicide and rape.

But *The Tempest* is unique on at least a few counts and, as such, affords the opportunity to explore the challenges that come with assessing Shakespeare’s imaginative engagement with globality, empire and an expanding (and at the same time strictly policed) sense of humanity. Critics have long debated which specific colonial locale the play considers—America, the Caribbean and Africa are perhaps the most likely analogs for the island—and this presents particular challenges for understanding the play’s indigenous characters, including Ariel and, of course, Caliban. That the island on which the action takes place remains unnamed heightens this uncertainty—and it is possible, and worth considering further, whether Shakespeare envisioned the island as a foil for multiple colonial contexts, or for imagining imperial control in a more generalized or systemic sense. The play is also notable for how this ambiguity conditions its consideration of racial and gender identity. Scholars have tended to explore these questions separately. Analyses of *The Tempest*’s representation of gender, in particular, are relatively rare—perhaps because Miranda is a relatively “flat” character or because of the general absence of women altogether. But it is crucial that students understand that race, gender and sexuality are inextricable from one another in *The Tempest*—that Prospero accuses Caliban of attempting to rape Miranda and then uses this as leverage against him demonstrates this fact. Thus, this unit explores the topics of race and gender together, rather than separating them out for individual consideration. Students who consider their interrelationship will discover that it raises more questions than it answers. If there is one thing upon which most scholars agree in their readings of *The Tempest*, it is that the politics of colonial intervention, as well as individual and national identities, are anything but clear. Though it might seem paradoxical, this ambiguity offers students an especially exciting opportunity to consider these questions, and the issue of how literature does (or does not) stake out, foreclose and make meaning.

The remainder of this sub-section offers a broad overview of *The Tempest*’s most immediate colonial contexts. First: the New World. One of the play’s potential colonial analogs is America. Observing “[t]he temptation to see Caliban as an American Indian,” Alden T. Vaughan suggests that this “stems partly from *The Tempest*’s ambiguous geography,” which leaves open the possibility that “the play is set in America or is metaphorically about New World colonization.” But scholars agree that if there is one

locale in the New World that Shakespeare had in mind when imagining his unnamed desert island its magical character it was the Bermuda islands, to which Ariel refers directly when he mentions “the still-vexed Bermoothes” (1.2.72). “In the summer of 1609 an English ship smashed against the uninhabited Bermuda islands” (A. Vaughan 6). Scholars suspect that “Shakespeare probably wrote *The Tempest* between the arrival” of “several narratives of that accident and its fortunate aftermath” (A. Vaughan 6). These narratives—referred to by scholars as the “Bermuda Pamphlets”—tell the following story of shipwreck and survival:

In May 1609, nine ships with five hundred colonists aboard set out from Plymouth under the command of Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Summers to join John Smith’s beleaguered colony at Jamestown. The *Sea-Adventure*, with Gates and Summers aboard, was separated from the rest of the fleet in a storm and driven toward Bermuda. While the ship was lost, all on board came safely to shore. The story of the storm reached England in 1609, but it was not until the autumn of 1610 that news of the arrival of the colonists in Jamestown—after they had built boats on Bermuda—got to England. (Coursen 7)

Herbert R. Coursen hypothesizes that Shakespeare saw a letter narrating the accident by William Strachey dated 15 July 1610 and published in 1625 under the following title: *True Repertory of the Wracke*. Though the letter was made public after Shakespeare’s death, Coursen believes it “highly probable” that Shakespeare saw it because “[h]is patron, the Earl of Southampton, was an officer of the Virginia Company”—the joint stock company that chartered the ill-fated voyage (7). Whether Shakespeare saw the letter or not, word of the accident traveled far and fast. It seems likely that *The Tempest*, with its opening scene of storm and shipwreck, directly invokes the apparently loss and then seemingly miraculous survival of the colonists aboard the *Sea-Adventure*.

This sense of miraculousness—of possibility and an almost magic resilience—permeates *The Tempest*, and may very well be inspired by the play’s New World contexts. The shipwrecked colonists were, after all, assumed dead and they did not turn up until the year following the storm—the kind of ending one would expect to hear in a fairy story. Meredith Anne Skura notes, too, that the Bermudas were shrouded in exotic mystery: the islands were “believed demonically dangerous” at the time of the accident and were later “found to be providentially mild and fruitful.” The story of the *Sea-Adventure*—and the discourse of voyage in general—“stressed the romance and exoticism of discoveries” precipitated by European colonial intervention across the globe. Thus, even seemingly “factual” accounts of worldwide travel “were themselves colored by the romance of the situation.” *The Tempest*—a play which unfolds through “stylized allegory” that we now categorize as romance—“abstracts the romance core of all voyagers’ experience” (61). This imagining of globe’s unknown regions as supernatural and perilous, on the one hand, and exotic and romanticized, on the other, is an important part of imperial discourse, both in the early modern period and in the present. Together, these perceptions fuel European colonial fantasies of a world that is unpeopled, abundant and waiting to be domesticated, appropriated and consumed.

Beyond the New World, *The Tempest* might be understood to invoke “encroachments by various European nations, including England,” into Africa (A. Vaughan 47). As Vaughan notes, “for more than half a century before 1611, Englishmen had traveled intermittently to the Barbary coast and increasingly to sub-Saharan regions, where they seized and carried to England small numbers of natives as early as 1555 and where they joined in the transatlantic slave trade as early as 1562” (49). The play is littered

with direct references to the African continent. Scholars have observed that, “if plotted literally” using information contained within the play itself, the desert island “must have been within a hundred or so miles from a line between Naples and Tunis.” This reading reaches at least as far back as the nineteenth century, when “literary critics debated the most likely Mediterranean isle” on which the action could have taken place. “[T]opographical clues,” too, indicate a setting “not very far from the African coast”—“Corfu, perhaps, or Pantalaria, or Lampedusa” (A. Vaughan 48). Beyond these subtle references, there is the moment when we discover that Sycorax hails from the northern African city of Algiers (or “Argier,” as Ariel calls it in the play) and, of course, Prospero’s description of Caliban as a “thing of darkness” in the final act—a phrase that might refer not only to his character (as Prospero perceives it) but also his skin color.

It is critical that we keep in constant view the play’s colonial contexts. They serve as a constant reminder that *The Tempest* is at least in part the product of an age in which European empires seized lands from indigenous peoples around the world and justified doing so through the rhetorical capacities of language and of aesthetic representation—by figuring colonial territories as untenanted and wild; as available for the taking and in need of domestication. Part of this rhetorical strategy included the depiction of indigenous peoples like Ariel or Caliban as “barbarous, lustful and prone to intoxication” (A. Vaughan 44)—as more animal than human. Non-white skin was perceived by Europeans as either a “physical defect” or an “exotic curiosit[y]” to be fetishized. Such fetishization was on display at the marriage of James I (then James VI of Scotland), who “command[ed] four naked black youths to dance before him in the snow” for his entertainment. They later died of exposure. To celebrate his son’s baptism in 1594, James commissioned a range of festivities, including “a ‘Black-Moor’” who “entered pulling an elaborately decorated chariot that was, in the original plan, supposed to be pulled by a lion” (*Norton Anthology* 497). Here, the European view of non-European Others as objectified, sub-human and disposable sources of labor, entertainment and derision is on full display. While such views do not dictate the entirety of Prospero’s worldview or the representation of indigenous peoples, such as Caliban, in *The Tempest*, their presence is undeniable. Identifying them requires a watchful eye—a skeptical mode of reading.

#### CLOSE READING

*The Tempest* is steeped in and inseparable from early modern discourses of travel and empire. The play affords students an opportunity to explore how texts are interwoven with the assumptions and prejudices of their times, whether their presence is intended or unintended by the author. At the same time, the play also illustrates how contradictory a text can be—how difficult it is to locate, for instance, *The Tempest*’s stance on colonial politics or, rather, to read its engagement with colonial politics in black-and-white terms. To explore these questions and challenges, students might close read the following passages: Prospero’s dialogue with Ariel in Act 1, Scene 2, wherein he justifies his taking of the island and the institution of slavery or Gonzalo’s monologue in Act 2, Scene 1, in which he imagines a desert island he might claim for himself. See the questions that follow for possible points of discussion.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In what ways does the ambiguity of *The Tempest*’s setting—its unnameability and foreignness, its magical character and exotic mystery—align with, invoke or imagine the colonial history in which it is situated? What does it mean, for instance, that Gonzalo envisions a similar island as a vehicle through which to achieve dreams of monarchy or virtually unlimited power? How is the



generality or romantic non-specificity of the island in *The Tempest* part of the European colonial project?

- Now, consider how that very same ambiguity might enable a critique of imperial intervention. Scholars have argued that the island's non-specificity allows readers to consider simultaneously a range of colonial contexts: America, Bermuda, Africa, Ireland. Why might it be important for readers—whether in the early modern period or now—to consider these contexts together? Does the island's generality invite readers to think across or consider imperial power on a systemic level—or, to put it another way, as a global institution whose operation is not isolated to particular locations in time and space, but rather is organized or coordinated in its operation? What does this generalized or enlarged perspective tell us about empire? For instance, how does the play's setting help us think across colonial contexts that involve not only the English Crown, but also other European monarchies and powers? What does the unnamed island of *The Tempest* and its possible referents tell us about the imperial project and the relationship between the various players through which it unfolds?
- Have a general discussion with students about how to read a text skeptically or suspiciously. What does it mean to read a work of literature with a critical, skeptical eye? How does one, for instance, identify and respond to meanings that a text authorizes, but which are nevertheless problematic (such as Prospero's endorsement of slavery)? What do readers do with meanings like these? Should they simply be disavowed? Are they ever useful—do they ever help us to understand something important about a given text's historical or political contexts?
- Ask student to read Prospero's dialogue with Ariel in two ways. First, have them read the dialogue for surface-level meaning. What is the nature of Prospero and Ariel's relationship? How does Prospero perceive Ariel and how does this inform his approach to their relationship? What are Prospero's reasons for employing Ariel as a slave? Now, ask students to read the passage skeptically. What is disturbing about Prospero's relationship to Ariel? About his perception or characterization of Ariel, who is presumably indigenous to the island and certainly arrived there first? What do these unsettling details tell us about Prospero as a character and as an embodiment of European colonial power? How is it that, on the one hand, Prospero is the main character and hero of the play and, on the other, perhaps one of its greatest villains? What does this exercise show us about the way texts make and situate themselves in relation to meanings that are contradictory or problematic? About how we as readers should navigate these contradictions or problems?

### **CALIBAN, SYCORAX, MIRANDA**

Whether we read Caliban as Native American, Afro-Caribbean, African or Irish, one thing is certain: Prospero's description of him as a "thing of darkness"—a fallen, sub-human, monstrous being—is representative of the assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices inherent in early modern European perceptions of non-white and colonial Others. We must remember that Caliban is shaped in powerful ways by such perceptions as they are represented in *The Tempest*. Whether the play endorses those perceptions is a deeply ambiguous question. Scholars have argued that the character of Caliban is "symptomatic" of a colonial worldview (A. Vaughan 48). His name, for instance, is an anagram of "cannibal"—a direct reference to the widespread perception that indigenous peoples engaged in "the practice of cannibalism" and were prone to unbridled "savagery" (Whitfield 6). Colonial "policy," as Whitfield argues, "was justified by the savagery of the natives, in particular by travelers' tales that dwelled on the practice of cannibalism" (Whitfield 6). These sensationalized accounts and the misguided

assumptions they promulgated were used to argue that indigenous peoples lacked “souls”—that they were less than human (Whitfield 6). Caliban’s name thus connotes a set of strategic stereotypes that were mobilized by European nations to justify the taking of lands and resources that were not theirs—to naturalize this project of appropriation on the basis of “pejorative,” “vituperative” and dehumanizing racial stereotypes (A. Vaughan 50). Prospero himself employs precisely these kinds of stereotypes in his interactions with Caliban, calling him “a malignant thing” (1.2.308)—“[a] freckled whelp” whose dark skin, physical features and parentage do not conform with the “human shape” (1.2.36-7) insofar as it is perceived and represented by the European colonizer. How *The Tempest* was taken up in the centuries following its publication demonstrates that Caliban is in part the product of a colonial worldview whose implications are insidious. For instance, as colonial rule expanded in the nineteenth century to encompass more “subjugated peoples around the world, particularly in Africa and India,” European writers and readers “often identified with Prospero’s drive to educate his subalterns, especially Caliban.” As an example, Virginia Mason Vaughan points to Daniel Wilson’s *Caliban: The Missing Link* (1873), which “identified Caliban as an evolutionary intermediary who, under Prospero’s tutelage, had the potential to crawl up the developmental ladder toward true humanity” (156). Bound up in this evolutionary fantasy are beliefs that indigenous peoples like Caliban are sub-human, of another species, in need of civilizing and as such ripe for assimilation and exploitation.

But to read Caliban strictly as a colonial caricature is to overlook the ways he resists Prospero’s control and, by extension, racialized justifications for empire. “If Caliban is the center of the play,” as Skura argues, he is so not simply “because of what he reveals about man’s timeless tendency to demonize ‘strangers’” (62). To argue this is to “flatte[n] the text into the mold of colonialist discourse” and to ignore the many facets of Caliban’s character—the rebellious, anti-colonial and ambiguous—which have made him an intense subject of debate in literary scholarship (63). Skura notes, for instance, that even “despite his closeness to nature, his naiveté, his devil worship, his susceptibility to European liquor, and, above all, his ‘treachery’...he nonetheless lacks almost all the defining external traits in the many reports from the New World” and other colonial locales (65). He lacks all the trappings of the stereotyped Native American and is most certainly “no cannibal.” His name highlights the extent to which he functions as “a mockery of stereotypes” (67) rather than “one more colonialist representation of the Other” (72). Caliban might thus be read as satirizing those assumptions and prejudices that characterize imperialist worldviews. Where a European reader would expect to find cannibalistic savagery, none can be found. In this way, Caliban makes visible the ugliest and most unquestioned or seemingly naturalized aspects of colonial power, making them the object of critique and even ridicule. Adaptations of *The Tempest* such as Aimé Césaire’s *Une Tempête* (1968)—in which Caliban revolts against the institution of slavery and rejects his name in favor of “X,” which invokes the radical politics of the great human rights activist Malcolm X—illustrates how even as Shakespeare’s controversial character would seem to conform to European colonial thinking, he at the same time invites anti-colonial imaginings.

Whether we accept this subtle reading of Caliban’s failures as a colonialist stereotype, we must at the very least acknowledge how *The Tempest* undercuts Prospero’s repeated claims that his nemesis and slave is in his blackness (or non-whiteness) less than human. These claims, the play tells us again and again, cannot be taken at face value. When Miranda tells Ferdinand he is “the third man that e’er I saw” (1.2.?), for instance, she implicitly counts Caliban among the three men she knows. In this way, “the bulk of the evidence points to a Caliban who is...essentially human” (A. Vaughan 34). And the picture gets even more complicated when we consider that Caliban, like Prospero, is a colonist. Ultimately, Ariel is

the only being who is truly indigenous to the island and possesses any rightful claim upon it. As Skura notes, “Sycorax, Caliban’s mother...came from the Old World herself, or at least from eastern-hemisphere Argier.” As such, “[s]he is a reminder that Caliban is only half-native, that his claim to the island is less like the claim of the Native American than the claim of the second generation Spaniard in the New World” (66). Over the course of the play, Caliban utters a number of lines that, though they protest against Prospero’s imperial rule, might be read as reproducing the very same colonialist discourse of power and property that justifies his own enslavement—and which his mother unleashed upon the island when she arrived and enslaved Ariel. In the play’s first act, for instance, Caliban lays claim to the island: “This island’s mine by Sycorax, my mother, / Which thou tak’st from me” (1.2.396-7). Later, he will regret not having “peopled” his “isle with Calibans” upon whom he could call to do battle against Prospero (1.2.420-21). The rhetoric of peopling, Patricia Seed argues, is intertwined with “English colonial desire” and, as such, suggests the possibility that Caliban is an agent of “English colonial ambition[n]” (205), even as he is also its victim. Is Caliban an uncritical colonialist caricature or a satire of that worldview and its racist assumptions? Is he a symbol for the colonized or colonizer, the indigenous or the settler? Is he something of both, and what do these ambiguities tell us about empire and race the early modern period? The answers to these questions are difficult to pin down.

The waters grow murkier when we consider *The Tempest*’s women who, though they play very minor roles in the action, are integral to its consideration of empire and its discontents. Sycorax, as already mentioned, is the first colonist to arrive at the island. She is also racially ambiguous—a detail that, while seemingly minor, opens up interpretive possibilities beyond those which Caliban conveys on his own. Given that Sycorax hails from Algiers, it is reasonable to assume she is of African descent. A witch accused of an unnamed, presumably terrible “thing” (1.2.319), she is banished from her home. As Prospero narrates it, the “blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child / And here was left by th’ sailors” (1.2.322-3). Sycorax’s blue eyes have incited much debate, primarily because they put into question conventional assumptions about blackness and beauty. Leah Marcus argues this point in her extensive and wide-ranging reading of annotated editions of *The Tempest*, many of which—like Prospero—present an edited version of Sycorax’s story that represents her eyes not as blue in color, but rather as “rimmed with blue and black” due to “pregnancy or fatigue,” a common meaning in early modern England (15 and 14). Why does this matter? Because, Marcus argues, “blue-eyed” also describes eye colors, though that usage was not yet as common. By emphasizing pregnancy—by editing Sycorax’s story with only one connotation in mind—critics have chosen to depict her as monstrously pregnant, and to cover over how, as a presumably black woman with blue eyes, she “fail[s] to fit our racial stereotypes,” which “tend not to think of Africans as blue eyed, even though North Africans of ‘Argier’ and elsewhere sometimes are” (6). The point, here, is that “[t]o imagine Sycorax as ‘blue-eyed’ in any positive sense”—to acknowledge the possibility that she was beautiful in “mysterious,” “uncanny” and unconventional ways—is “to violate deeply engrained cultural assumptions” about racial identity (8 and 16). To take this possibility seriously is important not only because it suggests a dichotomy of race that resists colonialist stereotypes, but also because it affords “rather a different perspective” on Sycorax’s “inheritor,” Caliban. Here, we find another way in which “the play itself” internalizes “a sense of dissonance”—it acknowledges “the difficulty” or, perhaps, the impossibility “of using physical characteristics to separate the cultural ‘self’ from the other” (16). In so doing, the play also reveals how we cannot necessarily take at face value the information we receive “secondhand” from Prospero, for that information—like Sycorax’s blue eyes—has been carefully curated to “promulgate” and naturalize a particular logic of perception—of ideology (6 and 16).

Sycorax's eyes might suggest yet another possibility that complicates the play's relationship to empire: that is, the possibility that Sycorax is of multiracial heritage and, thus, so is Caliban. Whether or not this is the case, *The Tempest*—or, at the very least, Prospero—is deeply concerned with virginity and marriage. These obsessions justify Prospero's dispossession of Caliban and give voice to English anxieties about the purity of Englishness and the dangers of miscegenation (or the sexual union of people of different races). “[M]arriage was important,” as Ingram notes, for not only financial but also dynastic and, sometimes, political reasons” (118). Wilson argues that “[t]he marriages that mend the plots of Shakespeare's early and late comedies promise a return of paradisiacal happiness for individuals and society” (47). This is most certainly the case in *The Tempest*. The union of Miranda and Ferdinand is a vehicle for Prospero to escape from exile and reclaim his rightful seat of power. It upholds the traditional gender norms and relations upon which English society and transnational European political relations so often depend. In *The Tempest*, however, this stability—and the promise of a return to “paradisiacal” order—is unsettled by the threat of rape. According to Ann Thompson, “the image of Miranda as a rape victim interferes disturbingly with the image of Miranda as a chaste and fertile wife”—it unsettles the “quasi-mythical power” of her “chastity,” upon which her eligibility for marriage is contingent (238 and 237). Thompson argues that “the play allows Miranda no way out of this situation”—it casts “the contradictory position of Miranda as typical of that of all white women in the colonial adventure: the nature of her participation confirms her subordination to white men” (241 and 242). That scholars have tended to downplay or ignore the threat of rape illustrates how “the specific repression of Miranda has been neglected” (242). To ignore the politics of marriage and Miranda's predicament—both as a potential victim of rape and as a woman beholden to her father's wishes—is to ignore how gender and sexuality are caught up in *The Tempest's* colonial politics. It is to ignore how women are employed as tools for extending imperial power and, as such, are also victims of subjugation.

That we receive a report of Caliban's attempted rape secondhand from Prospero raises the possibility that it might not have occurred at all. Prospero is, after all, an unreliable and motivated narrator. In a move that might be interpreted either as impassioned, protective and vengeful or as convenient and opportunistic, he uses the attempted rape as justification for his colonial occupation of the island and Caliban's enslavement. Increasing this confusion is the fact that Caliban neither confirms nor denies Prospero's accusation. Whether that is because Caliban did, in fact, attempt to rape Miranda or because he lives under the constant threat of physical and psychological torture is unclear. Though he does verbalize a regret that he did not rape Miranda and thus “people” the island with Calibans, even this does not constitute an admission of guilt—his regret is repulsive, most certainly, but corroborate Prospero's allegations it does not. The threat of sexual violence in *The Tempest*—whether it is imagined or real—makes visible the perceived “threat of interracial desire” (Hall 141). “[R]ead alternatively as black African, Afro-Caribbean, and Native American,” Caliban “is continually read as dark other.” As such, he is that “against which a European social order is textured and proved.” As the embodiment of innocence and purity, Kim F. Hall suggests, Miranda “is the grounds of this struggle: the contest for access to her reveals a concern over the purity of the aristocratic female body that symbolically assures the integrity of aristocratic bloodlines and an orderly disposition of property” (142). That Caliban is depicted as a rapist thus makes visible the racist stereotypes and anxieties at issue in the early modern colonial context. Susan Griffin has argued that “[t]he image of a dark man raping a fair woman embodies all that the racist fears” (qtd. In Hall 142-3), while Callaghan notes how “[t]he threat of rape” became “a

standard colonialist sexual trope that thus presented miscegenation as always already an act of sexual violation”—an act which desecrates Englishness, undercuts national identity and thus opens up the empire to instability (126).

Even as *The Tempest*'s women are objects of colonial control and subjugation, however, they push back against the more problematic of its colonial politics and offer feminist alternatives. Sycorax, for instance, is undeniably powerful, though she is present only in memory. She—not Caliban—is “Prospero’s most powerful antagonist,” as well as his “only competitor for the magical control of the island” (Stockholder 162). Scholars have also read Miranda, however surprisingly, in feminist terms. She disobeys her father on more than one occasion, “clandestinely (she thinks) meet[ing] Ferdinand without permission” and then “reveal[ing] her name” against his orders. She levels a “stinging rebuke” against Caliban as well—a rare but powerful moment of “outspokenness” (A. Vaughan 27). Together, Sycorax and Miranda complicate *The Tempest*'s colonial and anti-feminist tendencies. Sycorax undercuts the racial stereotypes used to police beauty and power; her magic is, it would seem, nearly as—if not equal to or more—powerful than Prospero’s. Miranda, on the other hand, conveys the possibility that even the meekest and most dependent of women might wield a commanding authority, speak out against injustice and take control of her circumstances in subversive, consequential ways.

#### CLOSE READING

To explore the nuances of race and gender as they intersect with *The Tempest*'s global scope and imperial politics, students might close read the following passages: Ariel’s exchange with Prospero in Act 1, Scene 2; Caliban’s exchange with Prospero and Miranda in Act 1, Scene 2; and Trinculo’s and Stephano’s first encounters with Caliban in Act 2, Scene 2. See the questions that follow for possible points of discussion.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Compare and contrast the relationship between Prospero and Ariel and Prospero and Caliban. What are Ariel’s and Caliban’s strategies for managing or responding their enslavement, and how do they differ from one another? Does Prospero treat them the same despite these differences? What does Ariel’s pacifist approach, on the one hand, and Caliban’s rebellious one, on the other, tell us about colonization and the institution of slavery in the early modern period?
- Consider the various descriptions of Caliban offered first by Prospero, and then Trinculo and Stephano. How do these descriptions agree and where do they differ? What do they tell us, whether individually or together, about European perceptions of race and of difference in Shakespeare’s time? Does the play ever endorse, accept or naturalize these perceptions? Or does it critique them and, if so, how? What about Caliban’s perception of Prospero, Trinculo and Stephano—how does the play by way of Caliban represent indigenous people’s responses to Europeans? Can we sympathize with Caliban’s response and, if so, on what grounds? Do you think Caliban would have inspired such sympathy in its early modern readers?
- Sycorax remains a shadowy figure even at the play’s conclusion. Using textual evidence, debate the following questions: Does Sycorax embody female empowerment or failure? Is she purely evil, or does the text suggest otherwise? How are she and Prospero similar, and how are they different? What do we make of the many traits she and Prospero hold in common—what does that tell us, for instance, about Prospero? What is significant about Sycorax’s function as an

analog, or foil, or double for Prospero? What does this tell us, for instance, about the play's gender politics?

- Is Miranda a symbol for obedient, docile femininity or not? How is she similar to or different from one of Shakespeare's more visibly powerful female characters? When and how does she disobey Prospero or wield her own power, and to what end? What do we make of the almost universal absence of women in *The Tempest*? How do we understand the relationship between the fictional character of Miranda and a historical figure like Elizabeth I? How is that such different women are the products of the same age?

## GLOBAL SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare's plays not only consider the globe, but are also a global phenomenon. "The globalization of Shakespeare," Anston Bosman observes, "began with performance." As briefly mentioned above, *Hamlet* was performed off the coast of Sierra Leone in 1607. "Troupes crossing Europe before the Thirty Years' War (1618-48)," too, "used a bilingual clown to summarize the unfolding action for an audience that knew no English." Over time, these performances—which Bosman likens "to today's sports commentary or simultaneous interpreting"—solidified and emerged in print (287). Shakespeare has a rich performance, translation and adaptation history in Africa. "*Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest* and *Julius Caesar* have all been translated into Kiswahili—a language spoken extensively throughout East Africa—perhaps most interestingly by" none other than "the distinguished statesman Julius Nyerere," independent Tanzania's first president (Banham et al 284). Until 1961, Tanzania was under British colonial rule. Nyerere's translations of Shakespeare constitute strategic, political responses to that history of imperial occupation. As Martin Banham and others argue, Nyerere's aim was to showcase "the richness and beauty of the Kiswahili language" by demonstrating how "the major indigenous language of the new nations of East Africa was every bit as sophisticated as the language of the world's greatest poet" (Banham et al 284)—how Shakespeare could come alive just as forcefully, and perhaps in new or unexpected ways, in the language of the indigenous peoples the British empire dismissed as inferior, unsophisticated and without culture. It seems appropriate that Nyerere chose *The Tempest* as one of the plays through which to undertake this project. Beyond Africa, Shakespeare has a vibrant life in East Asia and India. The great Japanese theatre director Yukio Ninagawa staged two versions of *The Tempest* that incorporated elements of *Noh* theatre and Minoru Fujita adapted *The Tempest* in the style of *Bunraku*, a Japanese theatrical tradition that "uses handheld puppets" that are "manipulated by three silent puppeteers" and text which "is chanted by a single chanter to the accompaniment of specially composed *shamisen* music" (Dawson 180-1). Here, "the evident artifice of *Bunraku*" offered an opportunity to explore in new ways "the theatricality of Shakespeare's romances where artifice and deep feeling are compellingly link" (181). It is in this way possible for works like *The Tempest* to take on new life and meaning beyond English.

While the globalization of Shakespeare makes available new and exciting possibilities for our understanding of his plays and their resonances, it provokes some unsettling questions about the relationship between his work and the colonial homogenization of world cultures. In Shakespeare, the British empire found a powerful vehicle through which to extend its power over non-European and indigenous peoples. Shakespeare "belongs to the world," as Dawson and others suggest, but we must also remember that as a "national" or British playwright his work is "ideologically implicated (for better or worse) in a nation-building project inextricably linked to the ambitions of (British) empire" (Dawson 176). The global performance and reading histories surrounding Shakespeare, then, are not always

liberating ones. In India, for instance, Shakespeare was employed by the British government in the nineteenth century “as a mainstay of the entertainment programme for English residents of Bombay and Calcutta.” His plays were also mobilized to help establish English as the language of education, “bec[oming] the center of a curriculum designed to produce ‘a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect’” (Gillies et al 272 and 273). This educational program included “[e]locution and declamation contests” wherein “the highest accolades” were given “for the recitation of Shakespeare” (273). *The Tempest* is complicit in and occupies an important place in this history. Take, for instance, Ninagawa’s *Noh*-inspired adaptation of the play, which English reviewers met with enthusiasm. Tetsuo Kishi argues that in “Japanising” Shakespeare, Ninagawa created a production that decontextualized the traditions of Japanese theatre. In so doing, Kishi suggests, Ninagawa reinforced the worst of his audience’s assumptions and misconceptions—he “whitewashed” *Noh* and, with it, Japanese culture. Ninigawa disagreed with Kishi’s critique, but whether he did so convincingly is beside the point. What students might take away from this discussion is that Shakespeare is implicated in a global imperial project which was gaining momentum in the early modern period and which continues to unfold today. *The Tempest*, in this context, can function as a tool of forceful assimilation—it can and has been mobilized to “whitewash” and even erase indigenous languages and cultures and, thus, to expand colonial power.

But *The Tempest* is not simply a vehicle through which this project unfolds. Rather, this project is an important part of the play’s action. The globalization of Shakespeare coincided with the globalization of English—and the extension of imperial power—not only in the nineteenth century, but also in the early modern period. “At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the English language had almost no prestige abroad, and there were those at home who doubted that it could serve as a suitable medium for serious, elevated, or elegant discourse” (*Norton Anthology* 1240). Shakespeare was a crucial player in the elevation of the English language within England—a phenomenon that helped define and solidify national identity, and by extension the power of imperial Britain. This is also a phenomenon of which the play is aware. In Act 1, Scene 2, Miranda recounts how she taught Caliban English:

Abhorred 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. (1.2.422-34)

Caliban is most ungrateful, telling Miranda: “You taught me language and my profit on ‘it / Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you / For learning me your language” (1.2.437-9). Here is another moment wherein we can see the racism of the colonist on display. Miranda assumes that, prior to Prospero’s arrival, Caliban could only “gabble”—that he possessed neither a language nor a culture of his own. She in this way “replicates the play’s central ethos,” which attributes “meaning (and power)” to “European, aristocratic language,” which is embodied most identifiably in Prospero’s books. And even after teaching Caliban English, Miranda “refuses to accept his use of her discourse on the grounds that it is corrupted



with ‘uncivil’ meanings.” English, here, is not only a tool for “reforming or ‘civilizing’” the indigenous, but also for dismissing as irrational the angry and violent “impulses” which become visible as the colonized protest their colonizers (Hall 144). In *The Tempest*, English is used to establish a “linguistic community” that “enforce[s]” not only “a racial hierarchy” but also “patriarchal authority,” for in it Miranda “performs the proper role of the woman within culture: she teaches a ‘mother language’ to Caliban that is supposed to replace his original mother’s tongue” (Hall 144-5). This is another instance in which the politics of race and of sex are inextricable from one another. It also demonstrates how colonial ideology mobilizes this interrelationship to consolidate imperial power.

But in Caliban’s curses Stephen Greenblatt locates anti-colonial possibilities. “Caliban’s retort might be taken as self-indictment,” he observes, for “even with the gift of language, his nature is so debased that he can only learn to curse.” And yet, Greenblatt argues, “the lines refuse to mean this.” Instead, they make visible how Caliban “achieves for an instant an absolute if not intolerably bitter moral victory”:

What makes this exchange so powerful, I think, is that Caliban is anything but a Noble Savage. Shakespeare does not shrink from the darkest European fantasies about the Wild Man; indeed he exaggerates them: Caliban is deformed, lecherous, evil-smelling, idle, treacherous, naive, drunken, rebellious, violent, and devil-worshipping. According to Prospero, he is not even human...*The Tempest* utterly rejects the uniformitarian view of the human race, the view that would later triumph in the Enlightenment and prevail in the West to this day. All men the play seems to suggest, are *not* alike; strip away the adornments of culture and you will *not* reach a single human essence...And yet out of the midst of this attitude Caliban wins a momentary victory that is, quite simply, an assertion of inconsolable human pain and bitterness. And out of the midst of this attitude Prospero comes, at the end of the play, to say of Caliban, “this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine.” Like Caliban’s earlier reply, Prospero’s words are ambiguous; they might be taken as a bare statement that the strange “demi-devil” is one of Prospero’s party as opposed to Alonso’s, or even that Caliban is Prospero’s slave. But again the lines refuse to mean this: they acknowledge a deep, if entirely unsentimental, bond. By no means is Caliban accepted into the family of man; rather, he is claimed as Philoctetes might claim his own festering wound. Perhaps, too, the word “acknowledge” implies some moral responsibility. (35-6)

### CLOSE READING

To explore the role of the English language in the consolidation and expansion of imperial power, have students read the scene described above in Act 1, Scene 2. They might also compare the different dialects which are used in the play. As they do this, ask them to consider the following questions:

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What work does the English language do in the play? What kinds of power does it permit characters to wield? Against whom? To what end? How do we interpret Caliban’s complaint that all English is good for is cursing? Does Caliban claim a momentary victory in this moment, as Greenblatt argues, and if so, how? Is Caliban able to use English in ways that work to his advantage, even as the language is also a tool employed by those who exploit him?
- Compare and contrast the way different characters speak in the play. Think, for instance, of the Boatswain’s language as it compares to one of Prospero’s monologues—or of how some characters speak in verse while others do so in prose. How would you describe these differences and what do you make of them? Why are they significant? What do they tell us about the play’s

characters, especially as they relate to one another? Do they reveal a hierarchy of power or of value, for example? Are there characters who complicate these relations—who use language in ways that are not appropriate to their station? What do these differences tell us about the power of language in the world?

- Reflect upon the possibilities and pitfalls of translation and the global performance history of Shakespeare's plays. When and how might the circulation of Shakespeare beyond England—whether in text or in performance, in English or in translation—be empowering and for whom? When and how might it be disempowering, and for whom? For example, why would Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, translate Shakespeare, the playwright who was dearest to the English nation and the British empire (which had occupied Tanzania until 1961)? How was Nyerere's act anti-colonial and what did it demonstrate about non-English languages? As a counter-example, consider Yukio Ninagawa's *Noh*-style production of *The Tempest* and Tetsuo Kishi's accusations of "white-washing." What does Kishi's critique tell us about the risks or dangers of appropriating a playwright like Shakespeare, especially for post-colonial authors, translators, performers and directors? How do we come to terms with the reality that Shakespeare, one of the most beloved authors of the English canon, provided the British empire with some of its most powerful tools? Should this history make us skeptical or wary of a play like *The Tempest* and the world it imagines? Should we be more hesitant to claim Shakespeare as our own?

#### ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECT IDEAS

- At the end of the play, Prospero acknowledges Caliban: "this thing of darkness I / acknowledge mine." Hold a discussion in which students are asked to parse this line in as many ways as possible. What does "darkness" describe, here? For example, does it describe skin color, something else or both? Does Prospero identify with Caliban or "acknowledge" him as human? Or does the language of objects—"thing"—and of possession—"mine"—suggest otherwise? What does this line reveal about their relationship? Has it remained the same or has it changed? What do we make of the fact that Caliban's fate at the end of the play is uncertain, while Prospero's is decided and clear? How does the open-endedness or ambiguity of Caliban's narrative inform our reading of this line—how does it contribute to or unsettle whatever meaning we might otherwise take from it?
- Have students write the story of those women whose histories are largely erased in the play. Who was Sycorax? Why was she exiled from her home and how did she come to the island? Why did she enslave Ariel and was she always cruel? If she was not, what or who made her this way? As an alternative, students might write the story of Miranda's mother, to whom the play alludes in passing.
- For a formal essay assignment, students might track the complexities of empire in the text by offering an answer to the following question: who is colonizer and who is colonized? To do so, students will need to wrestle with some of the text's most unsettling contradictions, such as how Caliban is a colonizer of the island even as he is also enslaved by Prospero, and that he is so quick to claim the island as his own, even if that means erasing Ariel's claim upon it.
- Have students watch a performance of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in translation. In small groups (or in a reflective essay), that might consider what elements of the play remain the same even in translation and which are subject to change. What do these similarities and differences tell us about the director's aims? Did students learn or experience anything new about another

world culture—and about Shakespeare—by watching the performance? Was anything lost in translation?

### UNIT 3 • SCIENCE, SPECIMENS, SORCERERS

**OBJECTIVE:** To explore the function of nature in *The Tempest*; the interrelationship of scientific inquiry and colonial expansion in the early modern period; the branch of scientific knowledge called “natural magic” as it is taken up in the play; and the similarities and differences between illusion and artistic creation.

**HANDOUTS**     “A History of the World in Twelve Maps” (*Time*)  
<http://ideas.time.com/2013/11/21/a-history-of-the-world-in-twelve-maps/>  
Joan Blaeu, “Map of Europe” (Wikipedia)  
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/40/1644\\_Europa\\_Recens\\_Blaeu.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/40/1644_Europa_Recens_Blaeu.jpg)  
Joan Blaeu, “Map of Africa” (Princeton University)  
[http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual\\_materials/maps/websites/africa/maps-continent/1644%20blaeu.jpg](http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/maps/websites/africa/maps-continent/1644%20blaeu.jpg)

#### PREPARATORY & RECOMMENDED READING

Raz D. Chen-Morris. “Astronomy, Astrology, Cosmology.” *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare’s World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). Ed. Bruce R. Smith. Cambridge University Press, 2016. 257-65.

Brian Copenhaver. “Magic.” *The Cambridge History of Science: Volume 3, Early Modern Science*. Ed. Park and Daston. Cambridge University Press, 2006. 518-40.

Herbert R. Coursen. *The Tempest: A Guide to the Play*. Greenwood Press, 2000.

Gabriel Egan. “Country.” *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare’s World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). 40-6.

Katherine Eggert. “Alchemy.” *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare’s World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). 309-16.

Mary Fuller. “Geographical Myths.” *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare’s World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). 24-9.

Steven Harris. “Networks of Travel, Correspondence, and Exchange.” *The Cambridge History of Science: Volume 3, Early Modern Science*. 341-62.

Andreas Höfele. “Zoology.” *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare’s World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). 283-88.

Mike Hulme. “Climate.” *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare’s World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). 29-34.

Pamela O. Long. “Science and Technology.” *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare’s World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). Ed. Bruce R. Smith. Cambridge University Press, 2016. 247-57.

Marco Mincoff. *Things Supernatural and Causeless: Shakespearean Romance*. University of Delaware Press, 1992.

William Morse. “A Metacritical and Historical Approach to *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*.” *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare’s The Tempest and Other Late Romances*. Ed. Maurice Hunt. MLA, 1992. 133-8.

- Katherine Park and Lorraine Daston. "The Age of the New." *The Cambridge History of Science: Volume 3, Early Modern Science*. 1-18.
- Valerie Traub. "Cartography." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare's World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). 265-76.
- Alden T. Vaughan. "Introduction." *The Tempest: A Critical Reader*. 13-38.
- Peter Whitfield. "Mapping Shakespeare's World." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare's World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1-13).
- Raymond Williams. "Nature." *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Oxford University Press, 1976. 219-24.

## UNIT ORGANIZATION

This unit is divided into three sub-sections: "States of Nature"; "Cosmos, Globe, Specimen"; and "Magic." Together, these sub-sections develop points for use in lecture, which are followed by suggested passages for class discussion and questions for further inquiry. The unit concludes with ideas for in-class activities and student projects.

## STATES OF NATURE

Though *The Tempest* is a work of literature, it is steeped in the language and culture of early modern science. Disciplines of knowledge did not exist in the early modern period as we know them today. Playwrights and practitioners of science were "members of the same thriving intellectual culture" (Traub 266). In Shakespeare's age "artists explored the significance of scientific discoveries, their aesthetic values informed scientific inquiry, and natural scientists employed aesthetic idioms to express their novel ideas" (Traub 266). That it opens with a tempestuous storm—with an aesthetic rendering of climate and its uncontrollable capacities—demonstrates this point. These scientific contexts deserve close attention, as they are intertwined with some of the most important historical developments to which the play responds. These developments include the expansion of European imperial power, the dispossession of indigenous peoples and the naturalization colonial enterprise as necessary and good. As noted in Units 1 and 2, "Shakespeare lived in a world that was undergoing rapid expansion as ships sailing from Portugal, Spain, England, and Holland reached new worlds in South and North America and sought ever-increasing contacts with Africa, India, Indonesia, Japan, and China." These travels uncovered "[n]ew information, specimens of unheard of plants and animals, strange foods, and news of exotic peoples," expanding Europeans' sense of global space and, with it, knowledge of nature (Long 247). Scientists in this way capitalized upon the routes of travel and exchange that empire forged to increase their knowledge of the natural world.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, Katherine Park and Lorraine Daston speculate that, "had they been asked to give their own epoch a name, they would have perhaps called it 'the new age' (*aetas nova*). New worlds...had been discovered, new devices such as the printing press had been invented, new faiths propagated, new stars observed in the heavens with new instruments, new forms of government established and old ones overthrown, new artistic techniques exploited, new markets and trade routes opened, new philosophies advanced with new arguments, and new literary genres created whose very names, such as 'news' and 'novel', advertised their novelty" (1). This list of novelties makes visible how science is inseparable from and at the heart of these discoveries and

---

<sup>1</sup> The word "scientist" is an anachronism, as it did not exist until William Whewell invented it in 1833. Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity, this unit refers to early modern practitioners of science as scientists, though they did not call themselves the same.

developments. We should not forget, for instance, that the printing press and, for that matter, books are *technologies*. Likewise, “aesthetic techniques” or objects often employ and manipulate scientific processes for the purposes of artistic creation. Had Shakespeare not come of age in the moment when changes in print technology made newly possible the mass production of books, we might not have as many copies of his plays or evidence documenting their performance contexts and histories—and, thus, his art might not have so resiliently withstood the test of time. Had Shakespeare not come of age in a moment of unprecedented scientific discovery, his plays—their characters and plots, imaginings and performances—might have looked very different.

As Park and Daston note, this “dynamic expansion” of scientific knowledge was made possible by “the booming trade with the Far East and the Far West that flooded European markets with new commodities and naturalia, many of them previously unknown to learned Europeans” (14). But of what, exactly, did this “naturalia” consist? Writing at the end of the seventeenth century, a scientist named John Ray gives us a better sense of this “when he offer[s] his readers an inventory of all known animal and plant species: 150 different quadrupeds; 500 species of birds; 1,000 fishes; 6,000 plants; and 10,000 insects” (Harris 344). This might not sound like much to contemporary readers like ourselves. We now know, for instance, that there are an estimated 950,000 species of insects living on this planet and thousands of new animal species are discovered each year. Nevertheless, in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, the numbers Ray cites inspired wonder and awe. They represented a newly diverse understanding of the natural world. They also required organization and management. Scientists began to develop new methods for making sense of this diversity. Taxonomy—or the system of classification that sorts material life into categories such as “kingdom,” “phylum” and “species”—was one of these methods. Another was a pattern of thought or logic that we now call the scientific method. This method took initial shape in the work of one of Shakespeare’s contemporaries, Francis Bacon, who served for a time as Lord Chancellor of England and “did more than anyone to fashion [scientific practice] into an empirical”—or, rather, objective—“methodology with which to investigate the world” (Long 256). It made possible new ways of viewing and knowing the world that seemed true, natural, factual—that seemed to dispel the taint of subjectivity, to neutralize the biases of the observer and to mitigate the limitations of human perception.

It is worth remembering that the *New Organon* (1620), the most famous of Bacon’s works, was published only three years before the First Folio. In it, Bacon outlines a model of rational, objective knowledge” that, as William Morse observes, “is also shot through with a vocabulary of power, empire, and ambition.” Using the language of rationality and objectification, in other words, the *New Organon*—and the method it describes—imagines the world and its contents as things to be anatomized, possessed and instrumentalized for the observer’s purposes. It reduces the world and its beings (including people—particular kinds of people) to objects of knowledge and gain. Bacon’s method, in other words, demonstrates how science did not simply expand through or capitalize on already established colonial networks of exchange. Rather, science helped to establish and expand those networks, and it offered to European monarchies a body of knowledge that could be employed to naturalize and thus justify colonial activity. Thus, “the prosecution of [imperial] ends” such as “trade and territorial conquest” actually “required a range of scientific knowledge” (Harris 350). It is science, of course, which historically has enabled “warfare” to “evolve[e] and becom[e] more deadly” (Long 256). Science gave the early moderns gunpowder and firearms, and it made possible some of the first uses of biological warfare when, in the eighteenth century, there were reports of American colonists

deliberately infecting indigenous populations with smallpox. Science was mobilized to create more efficient forms of killing, such as the machine gun and the atom bomb, as well as chemical warfare in conflicts such as the Vietnam War. In Shakespeare's time, it subjected nature to new forms of mastery and control. These included taxonomic systems of organization, as well as "the reconceptualization of space and ways of fixing locations in space" (Harris 361). That early modern travelers were more equipped than ever before to locate themselves in space and time might seem relatively inconsequential in the context of empire, but as Steven Harris points out it changed how people viewed the world in big ways. Whereas older maps struggle with a case of "tunnel vision"—they "depic[t] only narrow pathways across land and sea"—maps over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries employed an increasingly "peripheral" mode of vision "that embrace the entire surface of the Earth" and made realizable the "possibility of locating terra incognita on a map" (361). Thus, "[o]nce the Earth's surface had been conceived of as a mappable space and conventions for measurement and coordinates had been stabilized," Harris observes, "landmasses and place names could be added indefinitely while still preserving cartographic notions of position and distance" (Harris 361). The world, in other words, could be catalogued and fixed in place. Its places, peoples and things could be mapped in relation to the European empires that so desired to possess them.

What unsettles this history of scientific—and by extension colonial—mastery is the concept of "nature," which was then (as it is now) a moving target. Raymond Williams has shown how the word "nature" has accumulated a plurality of contradictory meanings. It can refer to the "essential quality or character of something," such as human nature, or "the inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both," as well as "the material world itself, taken as including or not including human beings" (219). It can be singular or plural. It can refer to a place such as the countryside (223) or an abstract concept, a "personification" (221)—Mother Nature, a God, an absolute monarch—or an inhuman and impersonal force of law, the "primitive condition before human society" (222)—a prelapsarian innocence—or the brutality of biological "competition" and the quest for "survival" (224). While not all of these meanings may have been operative in Shakespeare's time, the idea of "nature" was most certainly as complex. This complexity was only heightened through scientific enterprise which, even as it discovered and catalogued previously unknown or misunderstood natural phenomena, helped to reveal an unimaginably and even incomprehensibly heterogeneous world. The state of nature was decidedly undecided in the early modern period. We can see these ambiguities on display in Shakespeare's works, wherein "the experience of landscape is subjective." The Shakespearean stage "d[id] not show the environment" and "characters may disagree about it." In these ambiguities and disagreements lurks "an unspoken fear that our systems of perceiving and classifying the world"—nature—"do not so much reflect reality as constitute," or mediate, or obscure it (Egan 40). *The Tempest* is full of such contradictions. Unnamed and unmapped, it offers a view of nature that is plural and challenging—which frustrates readers' attempts to name, locate and map it or rather to master and possess it. Scholars have argued that the island's ambiguities heighten its exoticism and thus cultivate a feeling of colonial romance. But taken in a scientific context, these very same ambiguities suggest how the island makes visible a different and in many ways anti-colonial politics.

### CLOSE READING

To explore the relationship between *The Tempest* and early modern scientific developments, students might consider the following: the play's island setting (look, in particular, at the exchange between Adrian, Sebastian and Antonio in Act 2, Scene 1, as well as stage directions and the characters'



movements over the course of the play); Prospero as a symbol for scientific rationality (see Prospero's account of his intellectual pursuits and subsequent exile in Act 1, Scene 2, as well as his descriptions of Sycorax and Caliban in the same scene, and Caliban's account of Prospero's books in Act 3, Scene 2); and Caliban's indigenous knowledge of the island (see his exchange with Prospero in Act 1, Scene 2). Students should close read these passages with the following questions in mind:

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does nature look like in *The Tempest*, as represented by the island? Do you have a clear picture of it in your mind or is it difficult to imagine? What are its defining characteristics? What about it remains ambiguous or elusive? Do the stage directions tell us anything specific about the island? Or do they heighten the sense of ambiguity? What do we make of exchanges like the one that transpires between Adrian, Sebastian and Antonio, wherein characters frequently disagree about the nature of the island (and here the word "nature" might refer not only to its overall character, but also its natural landscape)? What does the play tell us about nature as a concept, an object of knowledge and a place in the early modern period? In what ways does it refuse to be objectified, imagined or understood? How does it resist the methods of scientific investigation as they were defined by Shakespearean contemporaries, such as Francis Bacon?
- Prospero is a magus, a title that in the early modern period possessed scientific connotations (a topic to which this unit will soon turn in more detail). Can we describe Prospero as a practitioner of science, or of scientific thinking? In what ways does he view the world scientifically (and here "scientifically" might describe both his way of thinking and his understanding of nature)? Is the world for Prospero orderly and controlled—does it unfold through a set of uniform and perhaps natural laws? What kinds of language does he use to describe characters like Sycorax, Caliban and Ariel, and what does that language tell us about his worldview? Is Prospero concerned with his impact on the lives of others, or does he view the world as an object he might instrumentalize for different purposes? Does he remain the same in this regard over the course of the play or does he ever change? Does Caliban imagine Prospero as something like a scientist? How does he describe his books, knowledge and methods? What does Caliban's perspective tell us about the relationship between empire and science?
- Caliban possesses an extensive knowledge of the island and its natural landscape. Of what does this knowledge consist? In what ways does Prospero take advantage of or seize this knowledge? Would Prospero have survived on the island—or, at the very least, have developed such great power—without this knowledge or, rather, without Caliban? What does their relationship tell us about the role science plays in the establishment of empire? Does Caliban's rebellion against Prospero ever involve or capitalize on his knowledge of the natural world and, if so, does it suggest that nature might offer ways to resist colonial power?
- Have students step back from the text to reflect more generally on the following questions: What is the relationship between literature and science? How might students' answers to this question—and assumptions about that relationship—change after learning that what we now call "disciplines" of knowledge did not exist in the early modern period? That Shakespeare, in other words, did not have the same sense that literature and science were distinct, as we do so now? When literature engages with or represents science, does it do so simply by mirroring it—by replicating its findings—or does it do something else? Can literature, for instance, offer commentary on or critique scientific practice and knowledge? Can it repurpose scientific knowledge for aesthetic or imaginative purposes—for non-scientific ends?

## COSMOS, GLOBE, SPECIMEN

Shakespeare lived during what some argue was the greatest scientific revolution of European history. This revolution unfolded not on planet earth, but in the heavens above. While the history of astronomy might seem tangential to *The Tempest*, which rarely invokes scientific advancements in cosmology, it is of central importance insofar as it was part of a broader scientific de-centering of the universe and, with it, of the human species and the planet we call home. While “[f]or almost two thousand years, scientists, philosophers, and theologians of the classical and medieval worlds” had theorized that the universe was geocentric—that it revolved around the earth—Nicolaus Copernicus in 1543 argued for a heliocentric model, wherein “the sun rather than the earth was the center of the cosmos.” Though it took some decades to take hold in intellectual as well as popular culture, this proposal put into question “ancient notions of cosmic, natural, and social order” (Whitfield 1). It challenged the geocentrism which “was accepted by the medieval Catholic Church,” for instance, and thus directly opposed prevailing “Church dogma” (Whitfield 1 and 2). It also, as Peter Whitfield observes, implied that the universe was “vaster, perhaps infinite” and that the stars “were not tiny points of light” fixed in place but rather “fiery bodies like our sun, made less brilliant than the sun only by their immense distance” (2). The implication, in other words, was that there exist other suns and thus other worlds—and, quite possibly, other forms of life—beyond our own. If Copernicus enlarged the cosmos, Galileo Galilei brought it swimming into view. “[H]aving heard of a new optical instrument invented in Holland” and having failed to acquire it, Galileo built a telescope of his own in 1609. He “described (and made drawings of) what he saw” through its lens, including pictures of “the surface of the moon, which he demonstrated was not spherical or perfect but was covered with mountains and valleys” (Long 248). Thus, Shakespeare lived in a de-centered world. While his plays are not always overtly engaged with the science of astronomy, they are packed to bursting with characters who imagine and debate what it means to be human in a world of flux—who ask difficult questions about the nature of human existence, agency and creation in an infinite universe. Prospero—who obsesses over mortality and time, aesthetic production and fate—is one of these characters.

There were other, terrestrial scientific developments which participated in this de-centering of the world. Some of the most important were cartographic. As discussed in earlier units, the early modern period was a moment of travel and exploration. Various European powers deployed fleets of ships around the world on military expeditions and in pursuit of trade. “Such voyages brought about changing navigational methods instrumentation,” including the improvement of the “magnetic sea compass” and instruments “such as the cross staff and the mariner’s quadrant” which were used to determine the position of stars used for navigation and to calculate latitude (Long 251). But perhaps more importantly, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced the first comprehensive maps of England and the globe. Whitfield contends “[i]t is not too much to say that cartography created an image of England where none had existed before, for before around 1550 there was in England almost no topographic art of any kind” (8). One of the greatest mapmakers to have ever lived, Gerardus Mercator, created an oversized map of England that, together with similar maps made by his rivals, ensured that “the image of the map of England was firmly established in people’s minds”—a phenomenon that gave shape to “the nation’s sense of identity” by making available a “miniature” image of England that everyone “could see” and possess in their imaginations (10). Valerie Traub calls this growing predilection for maps “mapmindedness,” suggesting that this form of knowledge delineated “not only the boundaries of one’s nation and town” but also “the myriad forms that inhabit the earth.” To map and thus “know” a place

was “to identify its inhabitants, its flora and fauna, and its characteristic customs and ‘habits’” (265). Concerned with both global space and the life forms of foreign natures, cartography was in this way inextricable from empire.<sup>1</sup>

Early modern cartography also makes visible how, even as it proclaimed itself as objective and rational, science was a deeply representational or aesthetic enterprise—and not disinterestedly so. Traub reminds us that “[g]lobes, atlases, and maps all depend on strategic manipulations of perspective” that might be invisible to their viewers, but nevertheless condition their perception of global space. “Because maps reduce three-dimensional space to two dimensions, their production involves technical as well as representational challenges, including choices regarding relative size, scope, and scale” (268). These choices matter. Early modern maps, for instance, often “adopt a synoptic, ‘god-like’ perspective, which positions the viewer out in space and extends sight lines far beyond what is physically achievable,” thus responding to and satisfying “a desire to master, reify, and totalize space” (269). One of Mercator’s famous world maps, the *Orbis imago*, is a case in point. The first map “to divide the New World into North and South America,” it was thus “the first widely distributed map to use the word ‘America’”—to popularize a name that references, of course, a European explorer (Amerigo Vespucci) and thus categorize global space according to a celebrated history of European colonial expansion. In a map made in 1569, Mercator “widened the latitudes of the north and emphasized the northern latitudes of the Atlantic, which Europeans were in the process of exploring and conquering...thereby underscore[ing] the significance of these regions” (Long 252). His maps in this way demonstrate how cartography—and, more broadly, science—were by no means objective endeavors, but instead produced highly aestheticized and rhetorical representations of the world. What made them so powerful is that they offered knowledge which appeared to the European observer as though it were objective, factual, or authorized by nature itself.

There were, however, ways in which maps disclosed their highly wrought character. “By the early seventeenth century,” Traub observes, “the world map, whether produced in England or the Low Countries, typically was adorned with nongeographical motifs” (270), including “personifications of the continents,” “tableau” which highlighted “the continent’s notable flora and fauna,” and “representatives” of the continent’s indigenous populations whose “costume” conveyed information about tribal and national affiliation, “religion,” “ethnicity” and “skin color,” and “custom” (272). Perhaps not surprisingly, European peoples tend to be represented on these maps as “opulen[t]” and “well-to-do,” while non-Europeans are highly stylized, possessing exaggerated physiological features and appearing in various states of undress (272). As Traub argues, “[t]he resulting of reasoning would give significant support to racism, colonialism, and imperialism.” It is easy to imagine how Caliban in all of his stereotypical physical deformity and behavioral savagery would blend right in with these racist representations of indigenous peoples. At the same time, however, the “universalizing logic” of the world map—its juxtaposition of the “exotic” and “familiar”—positioned “the Englishman as well as the Icelander” or African as a “rationalized object[t] of knowledge” (273). However favorably they depicted

---

<sup>1</sup> For an example, see the Dutch cartographer Joan Blaeu’s maps of Europe and Africa (links to the maps are provided in the “Handouts” section). These maps make visible the different (and troubling) techniques of representation used to distinguish between European and non-European spaces and peoples. See also “A History of the World in Twelve Maps” (link also provided in the “Handouts” section), which will help students develop a sense of how cartography and worldview are deeply intertwined.

Europeans, in other words, these maps also demonstrated how they too were not immune from and susceptible to objectification and control.

Natural history, too, is an important context for understanding *The Tempest*. Referring to the collective “study of plants and animals, minerals, and fossils,” natural history had by the early seventeenth century “become a well-developed discipline carried out by individuals who saw themselves as naturalistic and who possessed a specialized body of knowledge and specific techniques of investigation” (Long 252). Natural history aspired to objectivity, but the expanded sense of the globe created unique problems for its practitioners. Unable to undertake “personal observations” of every report of a new species, for instance, scientific accounts of “mythical creatures such as griffins...remained part of natural historical accounts as possible creatures that had not yet been seen and thus verified.” Nevertheless, natural history offered new and compelling ways to catalogue the planet’s myriad life forms—to “describ[e]” and thus systematize “plants and animals in new and more specific ways. Striving to describe nature in its entirety, naturalists would “often accompan[y] voyages” and they helped to import “hundreds of heretofore unheard of plants and animals” into Europe for further study (253). It wasn’t long before not only scientists, but also monarchs and people across Europe were engaged in the trade of “exotic species such as parrots and turkeys, the jaguar, the tapir, the armadillo” (Höfele 283). As Andreas Höfele tells us, “[s]trange beasts were highly sought after, a prestigious currency in the diplomatic exchanges of gifts between rulers. Alive, they adorned the royal menageries; dead, they became cherished items in *Wunderkammern*, or curiosity cabinets.” Taxidermy emerged as a “new art” for “turn[ing] dead animals, their plumes and furs intact, into durable objects of wonder” (284). Careful readers know that the traffic in specimens lies at the heart of *The Tempest*, for “[u]pon encountering Caliban” Stephano immediately begins to devise a plan for capturing and transporting him back to the European mainland, where he might be gifted to a monarch or sold “to the highest bidder” (284).

Natural history also produced a new logic of “physiognomy” wherein “animal likenesses—the noble leonine forehead and aquiline nose, the bovine equine, ursine, or vulpine—were thought to provide a lexicon of human character traits inscribed as facial feature.” It suggested, in other words, that a person’s character—his humanity—might be determined by reading the “animality” of his facial structure. The more animal the face, the more “evil, sinful, or disruptive” the individual. Animals were in this way “used both to specify what clearly belong to humanity and to exclude what supposedly did not.” Demarcating the boundary between the human and the animal was an especially pressing concern in the early modern period, for Shakespeare and his contemporaries did not understand them as sealed off from one another. The human body, for instance, was thought to be populated by “[a]nimal spirits” that could “determin[e] his motions and emotions.” When “passionate impulses overruled reason,” then, humans were understood to “literally, not just metaphorically, *become* animals” (285). Once again, Caliban resonates with this context. Prospero maps Caliban’s deformed and inhuman physiology onto his character, using the former to deny the humanity of the latter—to explain the supposed animality of his passions and rebellious behavior.

Last but not least is the science of climate, another context with which *The Tempest* is deeply concerned. From the beginning, the play invokes and instrumentalizes the imaginative possibilities embodied by inclement weather. This seems appropriate, given that we now know that “Shakespeare lived his fifty-two years from 1564 to 1616 in an English climate colder than today’s.” His lifetime coincided with a novel period in the earth’s climatological history called the Little Ice Age. This is not to

say Shakespeare lived his life surrounded by snow and ice: “average temperatures across northwest Europe may have been up to a degree Celsius colder than in the late twentieth century, perhaps still colder in winter” (Hulme 31). If this fluctuation in temperature was relatively indiscernible, what was remarkable were the period’s storms. Shakespeare “lived through the late summer and early autumn storms of 1588 that so famously disrupted the great Spanish Armada,” for instance (Hulme 32). It is little surprise that such storms are a frequent feature of in the plays, appearing not only in *The Tempest* but also in great works such as *King Lear*. Beyond the chaos of tempestuous weather, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scientists believed that “regions of extreme climate” gave rise to “monstrous races”—to “a monstrous humanity” (Fuller 25). This, too, is a belief that may be at issue in *The Tempest*, regardless of whether the play ultimately endorses it. Whether we read Caliban as Irish, Native American, Afro-Caribbean or African, what is clear is that both he and his mother are monstrous in the eyes of the Europeans he meets. That monstrosity echoed and perhaps heightened by the island he occupies—by the tempestuous climate in which he came of age.

Climate, of course, is also an abstract concept—something imagined, nebulous, mobile. Whitfield argues that if “there was one way in which exploration and discovery entered profoundly into the plays in a metaphorical sense,” they did so through “the sea” and through climate. The “destructive storm” for Shakespeare “becomes a symbol of transformation, sometimes involving death and sometimes the opening of a new life.” Climatological events often mark “turning points in the plot” or function as “catalysts in a process of discovery that is not geographical but psychological or spiritual” (7). Mike Hulme agrees, suggesting that “climate was an imaginative idea that served many purposes” in the plays. It could signify order or regimes of normalcy—it “offer[s] a sense of the prevailing, or expected, conditions,” for instance—and yet at the same time the extremities of climate—“the abnormality of untimely or extreme weather”—unsettle these logics of order, revealing how tenuous they were in the first place (30). *The Tempest* begins with precisely this kind of disorder. The storm acts as a kind of leveling agent, destroying the usual boundaries between characters of different socioeconomic statuses. Thus, the Boatswain holds the power in the opening scene, commanding his aristocratic passengers to do his bidding and provoking them to acknowledge how their fates are tied up with and dependent upon his. In this scene we can observe, too, how climate is a “vehicle for revealing fate and conveying judgment to individuals” (31). Storms are often “a sign of God’s providence,” whether for a character or a “threatened nation” (32). A tempest, especially in Shakespeare’s plays, is never just a tempest.

### CLOSE READING

To explore the relationship between *The Tempest* and cosmology, natural history and climatology, students might consider the following: the play’s title; the language of humanness and animality in descriptions of not only Caliban (especially those offered by Trinculo and Stephano in Act 2, Scene 2), but also other characters, including Prospero, Ariel, the Boatswain, Ferdinand, Stephano and Trinculo; Stephano’s dream of capturing and selling Caliban for political favor or money in Act 2, Scene 2; and the opening sequence of the play in Act 1, Scene 1, wherein the storm rages and the ship sinks. Students should close read these passages with the following questions in mind:

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Ask students to look up “tempest” in an etymological dictionary (such as the *Oxford English Dictionary*). To what does the word refer other than storm and climate? What are its connotations? Are the word’s different meanings in agreement or contradictory, and how?

Which apply to the Shakespeare's play? How might we understand "tempest" or "climate"—which were, in the early modern period, abstract concepts, as well as symbols for the relationship between order and flux—as it describes the play? Does the title of the play refer only to the storm with which it opens, or are there other tempests in its action?

- The representation of Caliban in many ways resonates with racialized depictions of indigenous peoples as subhuman or animal in nature. In what ways is Caliban represented as animal-like? Is he ever portrayed as human? How do we make sense of these contradictions in perception? Are there other characters that are described as something other than human? Prospero or Ariel, for instance? (Consider, too, how the Boatswain is likened to a fish in Act 1, Scene 1, as well as the moment when Ariel imagines Ferdinand as having turned to coral and pearl in Act 1, Scene 2.) How do these moments contradict or complicate Caliban's standing as a lesser or inferior character? How do they complicate our understanding of humanness?
- What do we learn about the relationship between science, political power, economics and / or empire when Stephano imagines transporting Caliban to Europe where he might sell him for profit? How is science here intertwined with the imperial networks of trade, for instance, or the acquisition of political favor? How does Caliban resist Stephano's attempts to objectify him—to convert him into a specimen or curiosity for amusement and profit? And what do we make of the similarities between Stephano's vision of a Caliban in circulation and the slave trade, which also mobilized science to enable the conversion of human persons into property? What does *The Tempest* tell us about the relationship between scientific ways of engaging with the world and the concept (and limitations) of humanness or personhood?
- What is the function of climate or weather in the play's opening scene? In what ways does the storm disrupt or destroy otherwise stable hierarchies of relation or of power? (To answer this question, pay careful attention to the interactions and relationships between characters. Watch for how they shift as the storm unfolds and consider what these changes signify.) Even as the storm is a destabilizing force, does it ever coincide with some overarching sense of order? What, for instance, do we make of the language of fate or destiny in this scene? The sense that the storm, although chaotic, also makes legible a set of predetermined outcomes or future that are immutable and beyond the control of the play's characters? What do we make of this contradiction? Is the storm a symbol of instability, stability or something else, and how does this frame the remainder of the play?

## MAGIC

It might seem odd to include a discussion of magic in a unit on science, but in Shakespeare's time magic was largely understood as a scientific enterprise. This did change over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Nevertheless, what we would now describe as pseudoscience or the occult—astrology, natural magic, alchemy—were in the early modern period scientific practices employed by the most serious of scientists. Thus, Francis Bacon, the father of empiricism, defended magic as "ancient and honourable": "among the Persians it stood for a sublimer wisdom, or a knowledge of the relations of universal nature, as may be observed in the title of those kings who came from the East to adore Christ" (qtd. in Coursen 20-1). "Powerful evidence of how seriously magic was taken" in Shakespeare's day, as Brian Copenhaver argues, "was the vehemence of religious opposition to it" (529). That readers of *The Tempest* take Prospero so seriously—that he is not a quack, but a man of learning, rationality and power—likewise demonstrates the extent to which magic was a rigorous intellectual endeavor in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England. This sense of rigor stemmed in part from the belief

that the terrestrial and celestial spheres, as well as human and animal natures, were not as disconnected as they might seem. Common belief held that “celestial influences” affected events on earth—that the motions and zodiacal position of “celestial bodies in the sky” could determine “human character” as well as “individual fate” (Long 249). Astrologers analyzed these “influences” by creating charts or “maps of the relationship between heavenly and earthly events,” which were then used “to locate mankind within the universe” (Whitfield 3). Renowned scientists such as Johannes Kepler produced such maps and “[d]r[ew] up horoscopes” as “a common source of employment” and “an important source of income” (Long 249). In doing so, they proceeded according to a “doctrine of ‘correspondences’,” which suggested “that all the different divisions of the natural world are linked to each other in their inner natures: animals, plants, minerals, elements, stars, and planets could potentially interact with mankind in his spiritual and physical aspects” (Whitfield 3).

What scholars now called natural magic was founded upon these correspondences, which its practitioners—called magi—understood to be vehicles through which to control the natural world and unleash its “latent powers” (Whitfield 3). As Long notes, “[n]atural magic assumed that the physical world and a divine world were connected, the former being a microcosm of the latter.” Magi used these connections to “manipulate the divine world in order to influence the terrestrial” (256). How they did so was not only through magical objects and instruments, but also through a power believed to be unique to humankind: language. Copenhaver observes that “[w]ords, images, and experience, especially vicarious experience storied in books, confirmed the magical powers of physical objects—natural objects such as magnets, peonies, and dragons, and artificial objects such as rings, amulets, and automata” (526). The circulation of printed images and text was thus an important medium through which magical knowledge was disseminated. More importantly, there was a sense that language itself was a source of magic—that “the pronouncing of magical words” offered one way to intervene in and transform the world (Whitfield 3). Scholars have long made connections between Prospero who is, of course, a magus and Shakespeare, who employs language to cast spells of a certain sort—to conjure worlds.

Beyond the broad category of natural magic, other, more specific occult sciences—such as alchemy—are at the heart of *The Tempest*. Alchemy, too, proceeded according to a certain logic of correspondence. Understanding the earth as composed of “four terrestrial elements—earth, air, fire, and water—each include two separate qualities: earth is cold and dry, fire hot and dry, water cold and wet, and air hot and wet” (Long 254). Alchemists believed that “by exchanging one quality for another” they might transform “one element into another” (Long 254). These practices amounted, in some sense, to an early form of chemistry. They concerned mineralogical substances, and understood those substances as “active, live things” that “slowly perfected themselves in the ground,” such that coal might “very slowly grow into a more perfect element such as gold” (Long 254). Thus, alchemists believed that if they could properly manipulate these substances and their qualities, they could “expedit[e] this process” and manufacture precious elements at will (Long 254). This might sound ludicrous to us now, but if we keep in mind that in early modern England “most people assumed that the transmutation of elements occurred, as could be seen every time boiling water changed to steam,” it then would have seemed highly probable that magi might manipulate elements and their qualities to produce such “transmutations” in a controlled, purposeful way (Long 254). Alchemy is invoked both in the content and the form of *The Tempest*. Ariel, for instance, is “an airy spirit” while Caliban functions as an embodiment of earth (Vaughan 28). Alden T. Vaughan and others have argued, too, that *The Tempest*, both in title and in form, “can be compared to...the alchemical process” (63). The play, he argues, takes shape

through a series of transformations that move toward a higher purpose. These include Prospero's efforts to reform "fallen human nature" as embodied by Caliban (63). And as Vaughan observes, Prospero uses the language of alchemy to describe his project throughout the play: he "'boil[s]' his enemies' brains" in order to transmutate or "transform their characters" into something more refined (64).

Scholars have also suggested that Prospero is himself a reference to two of Europe's most famous magi: Cornelius Agrippa of Germany and John Dee of England. Whitfield notes, for instance, that "Prospero's power consists in a mastery over nature, whose personified spirits and energies he has learned to control, which is exactly what Agrippa had described in his works" (4). Indeed, the play's many references to Prospero's library invites readers to imagine which books might have populated it. It is easy to imagine Agrippa's among them. But Prospero resembles most closely his contemporary, John Dee, "who concerned himself with magic, among many other interests" (Long 256). Dee was a well-connected Londoner. He was famous for his library—"the largest in England in his day"—as well as his "laboratories" (Long 256). He understood his work as striving to "reveal the mystery of divine creation" (Long 256). Though to us he might sound like an eccentric, Dee was respected by London's elites. Long notes, for instance, that "Queen Elizabeth I and many others also consulted him on medical, political, and philosophical matters" (256). Like Dee's magic, Prospero's "has the air not only of the occult but also of the scholarly"—it involves "magical equipment and charms," to be sure, but also a kind of scientific rationality or line of logic and an understanding of language as deeply transformative in its power (Eggert 315). *The Tempest* contains other references to Dee, too, including the name of the beloved spirit, Ariel, which calls to mind "'Uriel,' the name of an angel in the Jewish cabala" and Dee's "spirit-communicant" with whom he was in contact during séances and other occult practices (Vaughan 27).

What is perhaps most significant about *The Tempest*'s invocation of magic, however, is not necessarily the connections it makes to particular historical figures or developments in the field of natural magic, but rather the questions it raises about perception, illusion and art. Chen-Morris notes how empirical sciences—astronomy, in particular—raised a host of questions about the limits of human perception. As astronomers built new visual technologies with which to view the heavens, they discovered that sometimes what appears before the eye—what seems verifiable and true—is in fact only an "appearance" or illusion. Thus, early modern astronomers demonstrated how seeing is not believing—how what appears before one's own eyes might in fact not be true to the world as it actually is. Dee found these "shortcomings of optical devices" and perceptions especially frustrating, for they produced "ever-growing obstacles" for the beliefs at issue in his project and his aims (Chen-Morris 261). This unit mentioned above that Prospero, the great magus, is often identified with Shakespeare, the great playwright. This parallel is significant because though magic is imagined as an intellectual and meaningful pursuit in the play—a search for knowledge and truth—it is at the same time a source of illusion and trickery. Vaughan points out, for instance, that Shakespeare may have had in mind not only Agrippa or Dee when he created Prospero, but also "the street wizard"—"[s]treet magicians, jugglers and conjurers"—who is not a practitioner of science or a symbol of intellectual rigor, but rather a "carnival illusionist" (64). These performers were just that: performers. They, like Prospero often does, deal in "lies and stage tricks" (Eggert 314). If Prospero is analogous to Shakespeare, then, or at the very least the playwright and the artist, then *The Tempest* asks us to consider what art actually produces for the world. Is it a mere exercise in misdirection—in falsity—or does it reveal meaningful truths? The play



emphasizes over and over again that magic “is largely a question of illusion, that its victims do not realize what is happening to them, and that they are playthings in the hands of a superior power”—of an illusionist who tricks them into false belief (Mincoff 98). At their worst, these illusions cover over the real world and distract those who are subject to them from their “responsibilities, whether in the political world...or in the private world” (Vaughan 155).

We cannot overlook the fact that it is because of his fascination with illusion that Prospero is unable to see the plots forming against him—plots which ultimately produce his exile. *The Tempest* in this way considers how magic and art are akin in their illusory productions. Further, it explores the unsettling possibility that art—that the theatre and the play itself—amounts, ultimately, to “trumpery” (Eggert 314). In this play Shakespeare seems at his most unsettled about his own art and its role in the world. Does it produce meaningful truth? Or is it a deceptive illusion—a cheap trick? Prospero’s speeches in Act 4 and in the epilogue do not provide any clear answers. Some scholars have interpreted Prospero’s renunciation of his magic and his books as a “tacit admission of guilt and fraud” (Eggert 314) that might by extension implicate art and the playwright. Yet, others argue the opposite. Marco Mincoff, for instance, argues that what *The Tempest* shows us is that reality and illusion are not so different. “What is asserted by Prospero”—and illustrated by the characters’ experience both while subject to and free from the power of his magic—is that “life itself is like a dream and subject to the same illusions” (98). The theatre, then, would constitute an ideal place to explore this curious confluence of the fictive and the real—of whether and how humans spend their lives (as astronomers had begun to discover) mistaking superficial appearances for objective reality; of whether we mistake things as they seem for things as they are.

#### CLOSE READING

To explore the function of magic in *The Tempest*, students might consider the following: Act 1, Scene 2, which contains many descriptions of magic from multiple points of view. See in particular Caliban’s description of Prospero and his books, Prospero’s exchange with Miranda, Ariel’s exchange with Prospero wherein he reveals how he conjured the illusion of a storm, and Gonzalo attempts to make sense of how his clothing is impossibly dry despite his having survived a shipwreck. To consider the relationship between magic, illusion and art or theater, students should turn to Prospero’s “revels” speech in Act 4 and the epilogue. Students should close read these passages with the following questions in mind:

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Prospero and Caliban reiterate the power of books throughout the play. What is the relationship between Prospero’s power as a magician and his books—or, more broadly, language? What does this relationship tell us about language and its capacity to shape the world? Is this capacity always good or can it be manipulated for dangerous purposes? Keeping in mind the play’s sense of language as a medium of magic and power, consider how this might resonate with our contemporary understanding of Shakespeare as one of the greatest wordsmiths and writers to ever live. In what ways is Shakespeare, like Prospero, a sorcerer? How does his sorcery depend upon language and the magic of the printed book?
- We are told by numerous characters that Prospero is a great magician, unparalleled in his power. What specific acts of magic or sorcery does Prospero perform? Beyond the act of magic that is recounted from memory—the moment when Prospero freed Ariel from imprisonment—

does he cast other spells? Compare Prospero to Ariel, who also possesses magical powers and is responsible for conjuring the tempest. What kinds of magical acts does Ariel perform on Prospero's behalf? Do his powers ever rival Prospero's? Does Prospero really possess as much power as other characters assume, or is it somewhat of an illusion? In what way is Prospero's power (whether magical or otherwise) dependent on characters such as Ariel, Caliban or Miranda?

- *The Tempest* is preoccupied with the relationship between magic, illusion and art. These preoccupations are especially visible in Prospero's monologue in Act 4 (where he directly references the theatre) and the play's epilogue. In what ways is magic a scientific, substantial empirical enterprise in *The Tempest*—one concerned with real, actual truths? In what ways is it the opposite? How do these contradictions inform the play's imagining of its own purpose as a work of art? And of theatre more generally? Is art, according to the play, only an illusion? Is *The Tempest* itself a mere work of trickery? Or does it offer something more meaningful? Is it possible, according to the play, for truth to emerge from fiction, or meaning from illusion? Are the fictive and the real really so different?

### ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECT IDEAS

- Shakespeare's language, like Prospero's books, is magical and even incantatory. It is intended to be read aloud. Have students choose a speech from the play to be performed in front of their peers. Students should memorize the speech and should try reciting it in a number of ways, which will help them decide how best to present the language—how best to showcase its magical effects. After their performances, students might discuss how they approached the task—the choices they made to best showcase their chosen speech's aural effects, for instance.
- Ask students to write an essay that studies a word which is central to the play and has scientific and / or supernatural connotations. These words might include "tempest," "magic," "book," "fate," or "monster." Students might use an etymological dictionary to conduct a brief survey of the word as its meanings have changed over time. They might then consider when and where the word appears in the play, and to what effect(s). For instance, students might write an essay about the words "monster" and "monstrous" and their relationship to Caliban's function in the play as a scientific curiosity.
- Have students write reflective papers that explore the relationship between magic and theatre in *The Tempest*. They might consider more fully the questions listed above. Other questions to which they might respond include: why in this play—the last of which he was the sole author—does Shakespeare seem most uncertain about the value or purpose of the theatrical, the aesthetic and / or the fictive? Does the play resolve this uncertainty? What do we make, for instance, of Prospero's choice to relinquish his books and thus his magic? Is Shakespeare doing the same at the end of *The Tempest*? How does the epilogue, in particular, inform and complicate these questions?

## UNIT 4 • THEATRE, MUSIC, MASQUE

**OBJECTIVE:** To explore the performance contexts and histories of *The Tempest*; the concept of theatre and embodied performance; and the significance of music and masque as they are staged in the play.

**HANDOUTS** Aernout van Buchel's sketch of the Swan playhouse (Wikipedia)  
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ec/The\\_Swan\\_cropped.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ec/The_Swan_cropped.png)  
King James's patent of the King's Men (Shakespeare Documented)  
<http://www.shakespearedocumented.org/exhibition/document/king-james-establishes-kings-men-warrant-under-privy-seal>

### PREPARATORY & RECOMMENDED READING

- Kristiaan P. Aercke. "'An Odd Angle of the Isle': Teaching the Courtly Art of *The Tempest*." *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's The Tempest and Other Late Romances*. Ed. Maurice Hunt. MLA, 1992. 146-52.
- John H. Astington. "Audience and Playgoing." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare's World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). Ed. Bruce R. Smith. Cambridge University Press, 2016. 95-101.
- Martin Butler. *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Gabriel Egan. "Playhouses." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare's World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). 89-95.
- Reginald Foakes. "Romances." *Shakespeare: An Oxford Guide*. Ed. Stanley Wells and Lena Cowen Orlin. Oxford University Press, 2003. 249-60.
- Andrew Gurr. "Theatre." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare's World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). 67-77.
- David Lindley. "Blackfriars, Music and Masque: The Theatrical Contexts of the Last Plays." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Last Plays*. Ed. Catherine M. S. Alexander. Cambridge University Press, 2009. 29-46.
- . "Music." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare's World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). 135-41.
- Jean Macintyre. "Court Masques." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare's World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). 155-60.
- Michael E. Mooney. "Defining the Dramaturgy of the Late Romances." *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's The Tempest and Other Late Romances*. Ed. Maurice Hunt. MLA, 1992. 49-56.
- Emma Smith. "The Critical Reception of Shakespeare." *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Ed. Margreta De Grazia. Cambridge University Press, 2011. 253-68.
- Keith Sturges. "'A quaint device': *The Tempest* at the Blackfriars." *Critical Essays on The Tempest*. Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. G. K. Hall, 1998. 107-29.
- Alden T. Vaughan. "Introduction." *The Tempest*. Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Arden Shakespeare, 1999. 1-160.

### UNIT ORGANIZATION

This unit is divided into three sub-sections: "Early Modern Playgoing"; "A Designer's Play"; and "Music & Masque." Together, these sub-sections develop points for use in lecture, which are followed by

suggested passages for class discussion and questions for further inquiry. The unit concludes with ideas for in-class activities and student projects.

### EARLY MODERN PLAYGOING

William Shakespeare came of age at a moment in which theatre exploded. As London's population boomed, more and more people flocked to see plays. Playwrights scrambled to meet the demand. As Andrew Gurr tells us, from the beginning of the seventeenth century "at least four or five companies performed regularly in London, most of them offering a play every afternoon for six days of the week" (69). But the theatre landscape looked much different then than it does now. For instance, "[t]he modern practice of running plays for a week or longer did not develop until the last few years up to 1642, when there were enough companies competing with each other to allow any especially popular play to have an extended run" (69). Each acting company had to have a wide range of plays in the repertoire at any given time in order to compete for an audience. "[N]o play was performed twice in succession," Gurr observes, "and even the most popular plays only recurred once every two or three weeks" (69). Playwrights had to provide "constant novelty"—by no means an easy or low-pressure undertaking in the cosmopolitan space and competitive market of London (Gurr 69). This one reason for which acting became a truly professional activity requiring extensive training and talent. Many actors started their careers as young "apprentices" who were carefully "train[ed]" to perform "various duties, including all the women's parts"—for, of course, women were not allowed on the stage in Shakespeare's time (71). Together, the actors were also responsible for overseeing all aspects of the play and its staging: the job of "director" did not yet exist. "[E]xperienced compan[ies] could take a new play from a first reading to performance on the stage within three weeks" (Gurr 71).

To accomplish this feat the actors organized themselves into highly coordinated acting companies wherein they "work[ed] as teams, each member playing their own part in the shared production" (Gurr 67). Shakespeare began his career as an actor in the Lord Chamberlain's Men—the title of their royal patron, Henry Carey, the first Baron Hunsdon and, later, George Carey, who served as the Elizabeth's Lord Chamberlain soon after his father's death. Under the patronage of King James I, the company's name would change to the King's Men—their company "became the greatest of its time or," as some scholars such as Gurr argue, "any other" (67). Within the companies, senior players—called actor-sharers—"took an equal share in the costs and profits of the company" (Gurr 67). Scholars have noted that acting companies are of particular interest for their egalitarian structure and politics. For the purposes of profit sharing, they were, of course, organized in a hierarchical manner, but it was possible for members to rise through the ranks—this is precisely what Shakespeare did, moving from player to sharer. "In a heavily authoritarian society, ruled by a monarch and the lords of the many manors throughout the country," acting companies "were almost uniquely democratic, organized as equal 'sharers'" who worked collaboratively and made decisions about company business together (Gurr 67).

The plays these acting companies staged usually ran about two hours in length. Shakespeare's works are littered with references to this time period, calling it the "two hours' traffic of our stage" in the prologue to *Romeo and Juliet*. Prospero's plot in *The Tempest* requires precisely this amount of time to unfold, as he specifies when he says to Ariel that they will need "At least two glasses. The time 'twixt six and now / Must by us both be spent most preciouslly" (1.2.85-6)—"two glasses" here referring, quite literally, to two hourglasses. When plays were longer in length, acting companies usually opted to cut them down, making editorial decisions about which parts should remain intact and which might go. The beginning of

a play was “heralded by a flag waving from the top of the playhouse and trumpet call to announce its commencement” (Gurr 70). Students who have seen a Shakespeare production at the American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wisconsin may recall hearing a recorded trumpet call prior to its start—a practice that meant to capture one facet of the experience of seeing a play in Shakespeare’s time. Inside the theater, the audience took their places either in seats in the galleries or in the open space in front of the stage, called the yard, where they stood for the duration of the play. Whereas now audience members pay more money for a seat the closer it is to the stage, in the early modern period the cheapest place from which to watch a play was the yard. Hamlet famously and “contemptuously” refers to those in the yard as “‘groundlings’, the word for small fish with great mouths who sucked lichen off the stones in the river bed” (Gurr 70). Whatever Hamlet’s contempt might imply, playwrights had to write with the groundlings in mind. They had to provide their audiences with “vigorous action and rapid speech” which, beyond providing general entertainment, might encourage those members of the audience who were “on their feet” to return for another performance (Gurr 70).

Anyone who has enjoyed a concert or attended an event that requires one to stand for its duration will also understand what Gurr means when he says that a “main feature of such playgoing, largely lost now, was an essential awareness of where you chose to stand or sit”—“of the crowd crammed in with you shoulder to shoulder” (70). Playgoing was a distinctly collective experience shared by people of all types and ranks. Scholars suspect audience size ranged in the “thousands rather than hundreds,” with “Perhaps as many as three thousand” in attendance “when the Globe was full” (Astington 96). As many as “[t]en thousand people might have been accommodated at playhouses on the busiest days of the year” for the London theatre business—a number that is somewhat astounding when we consider that “the estimated population of London in 1600” was only “two hundred thousand” (Astington 96). It was impossible to “forget that you were part of a crowd, giving ear and eye to a wholly fake imitation of reality” (Gurr 70). The experience of playgoing, in other words, is not necessarily as immersive as we might think—it certainly opened up new worlds, but the fictionality of those worlds was always visible in part because of audience members’ proximity to one another and to the stage. At the same time, this proximity permitted and invited a certain amount of audience participation. Characters in Shakespeare’s plays often make asides to the audience, making them insiders to the action itself. Likewise, plays often incorporated “metatheatrical in-jokes,” wherein actors would step outside of the characters to address a knowing audience. As Gurr notes: “Such in-jokes occur for instance when Polonius in *Hamlet* claims to have played Julius Caesar and was killed by Brutus. As the first audiences knew, the actor playing Hamlet himself had played Brutus opposite the other actor’s Julius in the previous year’s great play at the same playhouse...It was easy to make such jokes when the players and their audiences were so closely acquainted” (70)—when playwrights were writing for an audience whose attendance was relatively regular, and who thus possessed a relatively intimate knowledge of the actors in a given company and the plays they had produced.

This is an element of theatre that is somewhat lost to us now, though we might find some semblance of it in film. What does remain is the sense of collectivity that theatre creates as it provokes the audience to join together in “spontaneous reaction to the surprises and delights the performers are producing on stage” (Astington 98). Plays were well attended in part because they were affordable. “[W]hen the Globe was built in 1599,” according to Astington, “it remained possible to attend the older playhouses for a penny, the price of basic admission to a place standing in the yard” (96). For everyone “but the very poorest,” this was an amount they could spare (Astington 96). The relatively low cost of attendance

meant that audiences were relatively diverse. People of all kinds—rich and ordinary, women and men, young and old—went to the theatre, sometimes alone and sometimes in groups. These large and diverse audiences constitute one facet of “the theater’s democratic nature,” which offered an alternative “within a society that officially insisted on hierarchy” (Astington 96).

Beyond the plays, the acting companies who staged them and the audiences who saw them, playhouses are of course a crucial part of the theatre landscape from which *The Tempest* emerged. In Shakespeare’s time, the London theatres took the form of open-air amphitheatres. There were two major playhouses in late sixteenth-century London: the Theatre and the Curtain. As Gabriel Egan describes it, “[t]he standard layout was a timber-framed polygon of fourteen to twenty sides forming a roofed seating area on three levels, ranged around an open yard into which a rectangular or trapezoidal stage projected. The whole structure was between seventy and one hundred feet in diameter and could hold around two thousand to three thousand people, divided roughly between those standing in the yard and those sitting in the galleries” (90). Perhaps even more important than the architecture of playhouses was the structure of their stages. The main stage had a cover positioned atop two posts, which protected the actors’ costumes in the event of rain. In the Globe, this cover was painted with celestial imagery to invoke the heavens above. The cover was also usually outfitted with a door, which “allowed characters to be winched down to the stage by rope, a primitive form of theatrical flying” (Egan 90). As it was originally built, the Globe did not feature such an opening, but one was added “for flying characters in 1609” (Egan 91). It seems no coincidence that while his earlier plays had never necessitated such a structure, Shakespeare’s next two plays “made spectacular use of one: Jupiter descends on an eagle in *Cymbeline* (1610) and Juno and Ariel-as-Harpy descend in *The Tempest* (1611)” (Egan 91). And as there was heavens above, so was there an underworld below: “A trapdoor in the floor of the stage could represent a grave for scenes of burial...or the way down to hell, up from which devils could emerge” (Egan 90). The trapdoor was used, for instance, to depict a grave in productions of *Hamlet* and scholars argue that *The Tempest* was purposefully “designed to make use of this configuration with the stage as earth, heaven above, and hell below” (Gurr 71). What stood behind the stage was also important, for this apparatus dictated where and how characters exited and entered a given play’s action. In the rear wall of the stage there were “two opposing doors” for “the opposing sides in each play” (Gurr 71). For instance, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Capulets and Montagues would use different doors, signaling their familial alliance to the audience not only in speech, but also in their use of stage space. There was also a larger, “more substantial opening in the center” of the rear wall, likely “for the entry of authority figures and for harmonious exits hand in hand at the play’s close” (Gurr 71). The stage also featured a balcony for “scenes involving characters addressing those on the main stage as if from out of a window or atop city walls” (Egan 90)—the most iconic example being, of course, when Juliet calls out to Romeo from her bedroom in the upper floors of her home.<sup>1</sup>

Shakespeare’s acting company, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, were housed in the famous Globe theatre. But they did not start out there—or, at least, not exactly. In actuality, the group began its career in 1594 at the Theatre, which was built by James Burbage, the father of Richard Burbage, who was the company’s principal actor. But they soon ran into a problem: while they had built and owned the structure of the theatre itself, “their lease on the land on which the playhouse stood was due to expire

---

<sup>1</sup> For an early modern visualization of a playhouse like the Globe, see Aernout van Buchell’s illustration of another open-air amphitheater, the Swan (link can be found under “Handouts”).

in early 1597" (Egan 91). While negotiating with the property owner, however, they continued to pay rent. Failing to come to an agreement, the company moved temporarily to the Curtain and Burbage set to strategizing. Because they had continued to pay their rent even after the lease had expired—and because the property owner had continued to accept payment—the contract was “still in force” insofar as it gave James Burbage “the right to remove any buildings he had put up” so that he might “re-erect [them] somewhere else” (Egan 92). And so, the company devised a plan which might seem unthinkable to us today: he “employed a master carpenter, Peter Street, to stealthily dismantle the Theatre over a few days, beginning on December 28, 1598” (Egan 92). They transported the Theatre in pieces across the river Thames and put it back together under a new name: the Globe. The company maintained a happy residence in the theatre until 1613, when a fire burned it to the ground. Resilient as always, they “rebuilt on the same foundations, an operation that again would preserve the size and shape of the building” (Egan 92). When scholars refer to the first and the second Globe, these are the events to which they refer. Really, the playhouse was actually three playhouses in one: the Theatre, the Globe I and the Globe II, the latter of which remained intact until it “was closed with the other playhouses as the Civil War loomed in 1642” (Egan 92).

While *The Tempest* was most certainly performed at the Globe and perhaps imagined with its newly outfitted cover in mind, there is another space that is equally if not more important to its history: the Blackfriars theatre. The Lord Chamberlain’s Men were so successful they were able to maintain not one, but two venues for their productions. In 1596—two years after taking up residence at the Theatre—the company acquired an indoor space in a wealthy area of London called “the Blackfriars complex” that had previously been “used for boy-company performances from 1576 to 1584” (Egan 91). Burbage immediately started work on outfitting it for company use. The work stopped almost as soon as it had begun, for “residents of this elite area successfully petitioned the Privy Council to ban this new theater’s use by the Lord Chamberlain’s Men” (Egan 91). Burbage had no choice but to lease it out to another boy-company in the hopes of recouping some of his money. But in 1608 the company of boy actors made a disastrous choice: they performed a play “which offended King James, and the company was disbanded” (Egan 94). At this point, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men boasted the king as a patron—a point to which we will discuss in greater detail in the next paragraph—and had consequently renamed themselves the King’s Men. This is all to say that whatever objections there had been to their presence at Blackfriars in the 1590s, there were no longer any obstacles that would prevent them from using the space. Thus, “from 1609 they began to use the indoor Blackfriars in the winter and the open-air Globe in the summer” (Egan 94). These performance spaces were very different from one another. While the Globe was primary source of illumination was daylight, the Blackfriars’s was candles. The Blackfriars theatre was also much smaller, offering a more intimate space that worked especially well with Shakespeare’s “domestic” and emotive tragedies, but was not especially suited to “large battle scenes” or “even two-handed duels” (Egan 94). A more constrained space meant a smaller audience who sat “in boxes, galleries, and indeed on stools at the edges of the stage itself” (Egan 98). It also meant more money (per ticket at least): “entrance fees charged at indoor hall playhouses typically started at six times the usual penny charged to stand in an open-air amphitheater, and for this a spectator would not get close to the stage” (Egan 94). The audience at Blackfriars performances was for this reason comprised primarily of the well-to do and the aristocratic elite. Monarchs did not attend performances at the Globe, for instance, but records show that they did so at the Blackfriars. Here we can begin to see, as Egan argues, a transition toward the “modern practice of charging more for seats near the stage” (94). Spaces like Blackfriars were ideal for productions that involved music, and it is for this reason that

some scholars believe that *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's most musical play, was written with the Blackfriars in mind. We will explore this argument in more detail later in this unit.

As mentioned briefly above, Shakespeare's acting company changed its name—the Lord Chamberlain's Men—in 1603 to reflect its new patronage, becoming the King's Men. Whereas in the early sixteenth century theatre had been a relatively new and unregulated enterprise, in the early seventeenth century it had assumed a prominent place in the cultural scene of London. As Gurr puts it: "By the time of King James, playgoing was so dominant a feature of London's activities that the writers of royal patents, essential to validate the workings of each of the royally patronized companies, conceded openly that all the companies had a secondary duty...to serve the public in London" (68). Theatre, at least in the eyes of the king, had become a public service—a force of public good. Thus, in a letter announcing the formation of the King's Men under the sponsorship of the king, James I wrote:

Wee of our speciall grace...have licenced and authorized...theise our Servauntes Lawrence Fletcher William Shakespeare Richard Burbage Augustyne Philipps John Heninges Henrie Condell William Sly Robert Armin Richard Cowly and the rest of theise Associates freely to use and exercise the Arte and faculty of playing Comedies Tragedies histories Enterludes moralls pastoralls Stageplaies, and Suche others like as theie have already studied or hereafter shall use or studie as well for the recreation of our lovinge Subjectes as for our Solace and pleasure when wee shall thincke good to see them duringe our pleasure. (qtd. in Gurr 68-9)<sup>2</sup>

It is no exaggeration to say that the King's Men, and by extension the theatre, were by the early seventeenth century—however temporarily—a royal institution. This development was not, however, entirely James's doing. "Royal protection of professional playing," as Gurr observes, "was begun by Queen Elizabeth in 1583 with the first Queen's Men" (75). But when James ascended to the throne, this "protection"—and endorsement—intensified. The Blackfriars theatre—for which some suspect *The Tempest* was written—was one space wherein this intensification took place. The Blackfriars, as already noted, offered a more intimate and exclusive space in which to view plays. It was more expensive than the Globe and its clientele were more sophisticated. "Under King James" it "became the prime social venue for the aristocracy in London": "its auditorium became a haunt for royalty and its dependents" (Gurr 95). Thus, by the 1630s, royalty like Queen Henrietta Maria—who was married to Charles I, the second son of James and the next king of England—were attending plays at the Blackfriars, albeit as anonymously as possible. This reversed the longstanding tradition wherein "plays had always been taken to court, where royalty watched them" (Gurr 75). As it turns out, the fortunes of London's acting companies would not only rise but also fall as a consequence of their increasing intimacy with the English monarchy: "One indirect but drastic consequence of this royal and social devotion to playing was that, once Charles had fled from London in early 1642 and set up his base at Oxford against the Parliamentary forces, London became Parliament's own fief, free from and hostile to the king" (Gurr 75). One of Parliament's first orders of business was to issue an "ordinance about public plays" that shut down the London playhouses for the next eighteen years—until "the restored King Charles II admitted two new companies to play in London" (Gurr 75).

---

<sup>2</sup> See the "Handouts" section for a link to an image of the original patent issued by the king.



The royal patronage of Shakespeare's acting company reminds us that while playhouses such as the Globe and the Blackfriars are crucial fixtures in the performance history of plays such as *The Tempest*, the royal court was an equally important venue. As Astington puts it: "Only in Victorian romance, and in *Shakespeare in Love*"—or, in the case of Queen Henrietta Maria, careful disguise and anonymity—did royalty "go to the playhouse" (97). Elizabeth certainly never went, but "rather saw plays in her own chambers in the various royal palaces, accompanied by her attendant ladies and courtiers" (Astington 97). In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, acting companies went on a sort of royal tour. They would "pac[k] their costumes and properties in good time for unimportant and well-rewarded performance, given in the evening, indoors, under candlelight, on a temporary stage before a grand, richly dressed audience assembled on raised ranks of seating, the queen positioned in the symbolic center of the auditorium, directly facing the stage" (Astington 97). During Elizabeth's reign, this was the chief way in which the aristocracy saw plays. This tradition continued under James. "They gave annual performances at court" and were prepared "to go off whenever they could be paid to do so, drawn to perform at the houses of the great, in London and around the country" (Gurr 74). James made frequent use of the King's Men on ceremonial and other special occasions, such as Christmas or the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth in 1613, the latter of which was celebrated with a performance of *The Tempest*. All in all, "[t]hrough his first Christmas, he attended twenty performances, including all eight by the company to which he gave his name" (Gurr 74). That the King's Men rose in stature during James's reign is made clear by the fact that they "provided more than half of everything staged at court through the 1630s" (Gurr 74).

The monarchy was not, however, strictly an enabler of theatre—it was also its chief regulator. As more playhouses sprung up and plays multiplied, the English Crown faced some unique challenges. There was, for instance, deep concern about the content of the plays performed. Earlier in this unit, we mentioned that the King's Men were finally authorized to perform at Blackfriars because another acting group put on a play to which the king took offense. This was not unusual: "[a]s thousands of people flocked to see and hear plays, the authorities found it vital to regulate what was done at the various playgoing venues" (Gurr 67). Under Queen Elizabeth a new office for the censorship of plays was established. The man tasked with "reading all plays before they could be staged" was called the Master of the Queen's Revels and "[f]rom 1578, he applied his signature of approval to the end of every play manuscript to 'allow' it for public staging" (Gurr 67). These manuscripts include, of course, those Shakespeare had written. Also of concern were crowds: "controlling the crowds plays attracted was seen as a major problem, since London then had no regular police force" (Gurr 68). Moreover, unruly behavior was not the only concern. Standing shoulder to shoulder, audience members were at risk of spreading disease. Thus, Astington calls contagion "[t]he most dangerous part of being among a crowd at the theater"—a problem of which "London authorities were well aware" (99). The playhouses would in fact close no less than three times and for "months on end" in 1603, 1625 and 1636, the years in which the plague was "particularly bad" in London (Astington 99). And the playhouses themselves were also subject to regulation. Through 1594, acting companies had performed not in playhouses but in "large coaching inns" which featured "open courtyards" for summer use and "great upper rooms" for winter performances (Gurr 72). But the Lord Mayor of London wanted such performances banned and, in 1594, he was permitted to do precisely this, leaving only "two designated theatres in the suburbs" available to London's acting companies. To get around the ban, acting companies such as the Lord Chamberlain's Men built "roofed playhouses in precincts inside the city that were, by historical accident, free from the Lord Mayor's control" (Gurr 72). Eventually, Shakespeare's company was one of only two who were

“licensed” by authorities to play at “the two London venues” available: the Rose and the Theatre or, as it was later called, the Globe. It might come as a surprise that, in the end, this regulatory battle proved quite profitable for the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, for “[t]he licensing of just two companies gave the pair sole access to the lucrative London market” (Egan 91). Shakespeare’s company in this way “grew rich in a time of relative economic hardship” (Egan 91).

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

To help students think through this historical context and, later, how it relates specifically to *The Tempest*, ask students to consider the following questions. They offer ways to explore the concept of theatre, the act of translation that occurs when a dramatic work is converted into text for individual consumption, the question of embodiment not only as it relates to the performers but also to the audience and reader, and the very different performance spaces that were available when *The Tempest* was written. This discussion will serve as a good framework for the discussion questions offered in the remaining sub-sections of this chapter, which will ask students to close read *The Tempest* in the context of theatre and performance history.

- What is theatre? (And why call it theatre and not theater?) What is performance? What are the differences between reading a text and performing it? Between reading a play like *The Tempest* and acting it out? Or watching as it unfolds through the voices, gestures and actions of a group of actors? In other words, how is this more embodied experience of or engagement with a dramatic work differ from reading it on the page? What is lost? Is anything gained? To help students think through these questions, ask them to perform scenes aloud in small groups and to then individually brainstorm some initial thoughts on how this more embodied experience compares to the one of reading silently to oneself. These activities can serve as a framework for discussion.
- Much about the theatre has changed since the time in which Shakespeare lived. These changes have to do not only with the space and technology of the playhouse itself, but also with audience experience. What is it like to see a play today? What do modern stages usually look like and with what kinds of things are they—and theatres—outfitted? (Consider, for instance, curtains and lighting.) In what ways would seeing a play in the early modern period have been different? How does the experience of seeing a play change when the audience is outside and the production dependent on daylight as its only source of illumination, for instance? How does the experience change when one is not seated, but jostling for a position in an open space in front of the stage, or standing shoulder-to-shoulder with other audience members who you may or may not know? What about Shakespearean theatre history have we been able to preserve in modern productions of the plays? What have we lost?
  - Teachers might also ask who has seen a Shakespeare play on the stage. Those who have might then describe their experience. Where did they see the production: in a space that attempts to preserve or replicate Shakespearean drama as it was originally experience (such as the reconstructed Globe theatre), or that is somewhere in between (such as the American Players Theater) or in a space that is X? Ask students to describe what was “authentic” about their experience and what was not. And what does authenticity mean when we talk about Shakespeare? Does it mean seeing his plays under conditions that replicate as closely as possible how they would have been performed by an acting company and experienced by an audience? Or does it mean seeing his plays in a space that, though not true historical context, offers the best

opportunity to experience the language for Shakespeare is known? Or seeing his plays on stages technologically equipped to supply effects that, though unavailable in Shakespeare's time, somehow reveal or enhance the meaning of a given play? Or—as a final possibility—does this pursuit of authenticity tell us more about who Shakespeare is to us now—about how we want to remember and experience his work? When we see “authentic” Shakespeare, are we actually experiencing authenticity? In what ways is authenticity impossible? Or informed however unconsciously by assumptions and desires that we project onto Shakespeare's texts?

- Compare and contrast the space of the Globe with that of the Blackfriars theatre. How are they different? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these spaces? Can we imagine how a play like *The Tempest* might have transformed according to each theater's unique characteristics? What does this tell us about the space of performance more generally? How does space mold or alter a play, or subject it to a kind of translation? Might we understand theatrical space as a character who, like Prospero or Caliban, directs the way the action of a play unfolds? How is a play in this way so much more than its text—than what is visualized on the printed page? How can we account for this sense of space—and of embodiment, more generally—which is so easily forgotten or lost when we read the text of a play silently to ourselves?

## A DESIGNER'S PLAY

But what about the performance history of *The Tempest*, in particular? How was the play staged by the King's Men? What possibilities does it afford and what particular challenges does it present? These questions are taken up in the following paragraphs. Keith Sturges observes that “[e]ither *The Tempest* was first played at the Blackfriars in the winter of 1610/11 but not acted at the globe in the following summer, or, more likely, the play was premiered at the Blackfriars season of autumn 1611 and was still quite new when it was played at court” to celebrate Elizabeth's marriage (107-8). Scholars have picked up additional clues from adaptations of *The Tempest*, such as John Dryden's operatic rendition of 1670, which states that *The Tempest* “had formerly been acted with success in the Blackfriars” (qtd. in Sturges 108). That Dryden's collaborator was William Davenant—who revived the London theatre following the restoration of King Charles II and claimed to be Shakespeare's bastard son—reinforces scholarly suspicions that Dryden was right: *The Tempest* was likely imagined “as a ‘private theatre’ play” for performance at Blackfriars and at court (Sturges 108). But why do we care whether the play was designed for Blackfriars or whether it was simply performed interchangeably at both of the King's Men's playhouses? Because the Blackfriars context lends weight to the claim that “[d]esign, not narrative, is *The Tempest*'s major impulse”—that “its structure is architectural, not dynamic” (Sturges 107). As Sturges puts it: “*The Tempest* is a designer's play. Short of conflict and rounded characterization, it has always been staged in a spectacularly visual way” (111). Here, we can see how the play's many ambiguities—for instance, its island setting which so steadfastly resists location and representation—might afford, rather than limit, the possibilities of spectacle. *The Tempest* in many ways is less concerned with plot and more concerned with visuality. Encountering a narrative that does not offer the same intricate twists and turns as, say, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, readers are instead invited to linger with and visualize *The Tempest*'s enigmatic—and for that reason enticing—world. The Blackfriars would have offered the ideal space in which to provoke such imaginings. “The stage was a platform for the actors, not a locale realistically presented through flats, borders and curtains”—the stage, in other words, did not present itself as a window into the play's world, but rather heightened its scenic

ambiguity (Sturges 112). This scenic imprecision allowed Shakespeare to “experimen[t] with graphic kinds of stage imagery,” such as “[a] special poetry” that offers “a series of stage pictures which, like visions in a dream, have a sharp-edged clarity and a sense of careful composition” (Sturges 112), but also steadfastly resist apprehension. Like a dream, they are “both emblematic and not readily accessible to simple interpretation” (Sturges 112). One set of “stage pictures” emerges as the characters offer variant interpretations of the island, which is, as Sturges puts it, “a symbolic landscape”: Gonzalo envisions that landscape as a utopia while for Ferdinand it is “a new Garden of Eden where Adam re-meets Eve; for Antonio and Sebastian, a desert place; for Caliban, an empire and possession; for Ariel, a prison; for Prospero, a ‘poor isle’ where he refinds his dukedom and loses his daughter” (113). Thus, Blackfriars offered a “‘magic’ space”—a locale as “unlocalized” as *The Tempest*’s island setting—wherein to “enact [Shakespeare’s] present fancies” (Sturges 113).

*The Tempest* is also “a designer’s play” in the sense that it is deeply self-conscious of its own theatricality or staging—and of the theatre as an institution that blurs the boundaries between illusion and truth, reality and spectacle. This self-consciousness takes most immediate shape in Prospero, who is simultaneously “presenter and participant”—he “draw[s] attention to the overt theatricality of events, reminding us that we are watching a play in which the actors assume different ‘shapes’” (Mooney 55). Thus, just after the masque in Act 4, Scene, 1, Prospero declares that “Our revels now are ended,” revealing the “actors” he has directed and the pageantry he has staged to secure his daughter’s marriage and, by extension, his restoration to power. The masque is put on by “‘shapes’ like Ariel, who have ‘perform’d’ ‘bravely’ in the insubstantial pageant contained in the larger illusion that is *The Tempest*” (Mooney 55). In the epilogue, Prospero, too, describes how he “has been an actor in this insubstantial pageant. His magical and musical ‘charms...all o’erthrown’, he is left with only his personal magic” (Mooney 56). He is a foil for the playwright, “draw[ing] attention to artifice and the techniques of art and illusion” (Aercke 147). As Prospero’s assistant, Ariel is thus “not only the ideal courtier but also a stagehand who responds promptly on cue and whose changes in costume indicate his different functions” (Aercke 147). Having given up his books and thus his magic, Prospero is deprived of his power to use “Spirits to enforce, art to enchant” (Epilogue 14). In transferring his power to the audience—in making an “appeal for applause” that will break the spell that is *The Tempest*—Prospero demonstrates how the audience are equal participants in the spectacle that unfolds onstage. They, too, are “actors” of a sort. They, like Prospero and Shakespeare, are collaborators in the performance. *The Tempest* in this way shows how plays are designed not only by playwrights and actors, but also those who attend individual performances and react to them in spontaneous ways that are never exactly the same.

*The Tempest* is self-conscious of its own theatricality not only as it pertains to actors and pageantry, but also to the space of the stage itself. The epilogue imagines “the island as an explicit metaphor for such a stage” (Aercke 147). As already noted, the “island-stage is vaguely located but perfectly circumscribed, inaccessible from profane reality except by some magic act” (Aercke 147). Significantly, the island-stage is temporalized repeatedly over the course of the play. Prospero emphasizes over and over again that the length of the action in the play is the same as the standard runtime of performances in the early modern period. *The Tempest*’s stage directions heighten this sense of self-conscious spectacle. They are, as Kristiaan P. Aercke notes, “unusually detailed” (147) and “expansive” (Smith 166). As such, they “emphasize representational artifice and ‘acting’” (Aercke 147). They highlight, in other words, that *The Tempest* is a highly-wrought work of “artifice” or illusion and is self-consciously so. Take for instance the stage directions which preface the wedding masque: “Solemn and strange Musick: and Prospero on

the top (inuisible:) Enter seuerall shapes, bringing in a Banket; and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations, and inuiting the King, &c. to eate, they depart” (qtd. in Smith 166). This kind of stage direction—which “contain[s] adjectives or adverbs” and conveys a richer sense of the scene—are according to Emma Smith “rare” in Shakespeare’s oeuvre. Compare them, for instance, to directions such as the following: “‘Enter Timon in a rage,’ Enter Mariners wet,’ ‘Enter King sick’” (qtd. in Smith 166). Such directions “are minimal, sometimes apparently inconsistent or incomplete records” of the setting, action and tone of a performance, and as such “offer little narrative padding” and “plac[e] more emphasis on the reader’s active work to construct from the lines a range of possible accompanying actions” (Smith 166). *The Tempest*, on the other hand, is bursting with stage directions that suggest the play is deeply aware of its own “quaint device[s],” as they are called in Act 3, Scene 3. The play in this way “balances a simultaneous awareness of the technical resources of theatrical magic and the inexplicability of their effects” (Smith 165).

### CLOSE READING

To explore the self-conscious theatricality of *The Tempest*, students might consider the following: stage directions throughout; Act 3, Scene 3, wherein Prospero stages a banquet and Ariel puts on the role of harpy; the wedding masque of Act 4, Scene 1, especially Prospero’s “Our revels now are ended” speech; and the epilogue of Act 5, Scene 1. Students should close read these passages with the following questions in mind:

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to call *The Tempest* a designer’s play? Which elements of theatrical production does the phrase “designer’s play” emphasize? Which does it downplay or ignore? Does the play’s relative lack of narrative complexity, for instance, set the stage for its more overtly visual, architectural or theatrical aspects? What does this tell us about *The Tempest*? What, according to this logic, are its most important, experimental and meaningful components? Why is the play so self-conscious of itself as a work of theatrical production and to what end? Students might turn to stage directions for help answering these questions.
- In what ways does *The Tempest* identify itself as a work of theatre? Consider, for example, when Prospero refers to Ariel and the play’s other characters as actors. What do we make of this? If you were to assign roles to the characters—to imagine them as an acting company in miniature—what would they be and why? How does the play’s sense of space and temporality position it as a work of artifice? What is the effect of describing the length of the play’s plot as equivalent to the runtime of the performance? To put it another way, what is the effect of viewing a play that ostensibly unfolds in real time? And what role does the audience play in theatrical production, according to *The Tempest*? How do we interpret Prospero’s appeal to the audience at the play’s end?
- How might *The Tempest*’s self-conscious theatricality suggest new possibilities for our understanding of the play’s characters and the power differentials between them? For instance, if Ariel is the essential stagehand through which the production unfolds, how does this inform or complicate our reading of his relationship with Prospero? Is Prospero the playwright, as scholars have argued? Does he hold sway over the pageantry that takes place in the play, or are there other creative powers afoot? How might Prospero’s appeal to the audience change our understanding of his apparent power? What does it mean that, at the play’s end, an autonomous and supreme figure of power acknowledges and is dependent on the capacities of

a more collective and democratic body, such as the audience? What might this tell us about Prospero's relationship to the collective of "actors" within the play itself?

## MUSIC & MASQUE

As critics have noted time and again, *The Tempest* is the most musical of Shakespeare's plays. It was written at a time when the theatrical space, personnel and technology available to the King's Men was in a state of change. The play reflects these developments, which were reflective of broader trends in early modern theatre and performance. That *The Tempest* is so musical is perhaps unsurprising given its deep engagement with scientific discourse. As outlined in Unit 3, cosmology, natural history and natural magic were sites of investigation into a rapidly expanding universe that invited new questions about material life—including whether it was governed by correspondences or harmonies that might be manipulated for human gain. David Lindley emphasizes that, "as a science and an art," music was equally concerned with "abstract principles of harmony," though this concern was predominantly mathematical ("Music" 135). It, like other branches of science, "speculat[ed] about the harmonious proportions of the universe and their reflection in the visible world and the human soul" (Lindley, "Music," 135)—ideas that were beginning to fade away but nevertheless at issue in Shakespeare's time. Thus, Sturges understands music in *The Tempest* as invoking "the group of ideas concerned with the harmony of spheres and astral influences," while the play's many disharmonious sounds call to mind "chaos, pain and punishment" (115-6). Poets invoked in meter and other formal devices musical logics of relationships and harmony to imagine "the order of an ideal commonwealth, or the well-tempered body of the individual" (Lindley, "Music," 135). While *The Tempest* is the most musical of Shakespeare's plays in the sense that it incorporates music so emphatically into its content, students should also keep in mind that verse—that Shakespeare's iambic pentameter—possesses a musical quality of its own, and that this form of music cuts across the plays.

As discussed elsewhere, scholars speculate that *The Tempest* was written for the Blackfriars theatre. The most compelling evidence for this claim is the presence and role of music in the play. Having hosted prior to 1608 a boys' acting company whose performances possessed choral and instrumental components, it afforded the King's Men an opportunity to acquire "some of their instrumentalists" ("Music," 137), which Lindley describes as a "famed consort of musicians" ("Blackfriars" 35). These included players of percussion and "brass trumpets"—whose "piercing sounds" were used to mark "ceremonial entrances and exits"—as well as "hunting horns" and "woodwinds" (Gurr 75). Whereas the music at the Globe prior to the acquisition of the Blackfriars in 1608 "was provided by members of the acting company themselves and their apprentices," the King's Men now had access to new "resources, both in personnel and equipment," that opened up new possibilities for their repertoire (Lindley, "Blackfriars" 35). This is not to say, however, that there emerged a deep divide between the performances offered at the Globe versus the Blackfriars. Scholars warn it is not safe to assume, for instance, that *The Tempest* was performed exclusively at the Blackfriars while other, less musical plays remained at the Globe—and in fact we have evidence that contradicts such assumptions. What remains true is that the acquisition of the Blackfriars opened up the range of possibilities available for performances at the Globe. Armed with new resources—instruments and musicians, among others—the King's Men constructed "[a] music room above the stage" at the Globe in order "to match the practice of Blackfriars" (Lindley, "Music," 137). At the very least, we know "that musical resources grew during the seventeenth century and that playwrights not infrequently responded by providing more

opportunities for instrumental and vocal music in their plays” (Lindley, “Music,” 137). Shakespeare was one of these playwrights and *The Tempest* one of these plays.

*The Tempest* takes full advantage of these new opportunities, employing a range of musical elements—ceremonial blasts and soft interludes, songs for singing and sound effects—for various purposes. According to Lindley, “it is the work above all other which explores the dramatic and thematic potential of music to its fullest” (“Blackfriars” 37). Whereas music was put to earlier use for purposes inconsequential to a given play’s action—to provide background noise, for instance—in *The Tempest* it is the “cause and engine” of narrative (Lindley, “Blackfriars” 37). Music is that which “brings Ferdinand on stage in 1.2, it charms the lords to sleep in 2.1 and clears their addled brains in 5.1” (Lindley, “Blackfriars,” 137). It is, in other words, consequential: it creates and complicates meaning as it triggers events and acts as commentary. While the original music crafted for use in *The Tempest* no longer exists, it is still possible to close read its function using clues which remain preserved in the text of the play itself. As Sturges states, “the suggestive descriptions of the stage directions” very often help us to recover “a rich score” of “song and instrumental pieces” to which we no longer have direct access (116). The play distinguishes, for instance, between loud and soft music, the latter of which possesses a magical quality and heightens the play’s ambiguities. “[I]t is always assumed,” as Lindley observes, “that the music the audience hears is also heard by the characters onstage” (“Music” 138). When Antonio and Sebastian do not hear the soft, strange music that is audible to others—including the audience—Shakespeare offers us “a sign of their moral imperfection” (Lindley, “Music,” 138).

Here, we can also see at play an early modern fascination with how “music works very differently on different people in different circumstances” (Lindley, “Music,” 135). As such, it was a source of not only transformation but also rebellion—it could reveal and even manipulate potentially dangerous material possibilities or defects that required careful management or “control” (Lindley, “Music,” 135). This is one example of how music makes meaning—rather than simply reflecting what the text tells us, or what we already know—in *The Tempest*. There are times when it does, of course, “simply endorse or underline the action it accompanies,” but we must remember that “it is always capable of interrogating that action or creating a complicity with the audience” (Lindley, “Music,” 138). We can see how music creates “complicity” or a sense of collectivity in *The Tempest* in Act 3, Scene 2, when Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo devise their plot against Prospero. Lindley reads these lines—particularly the chant of “Flout ‘em and scout ‘em”—as emphatically musical. The passage “emphasize[s] the solidarity of the conspiratorial group” and, by extension, invites the audience to imagine how they, too, “could join in the musical ensemble” (Lindley, “Music,” 139). Songs, too, drive the action of the play, disclosing secrets about the characters who sing them and functioning as mechanisms for casting Prospero’s spells. “[T]he songs of Ariel,” for instance, are “a crucial medium in Prospero’s exercise of magic power” (Lindley, “Music,” 139). They are in this way the play’s engines of narrative action and “influence our response to the situation as a whole” (Lindley, “Music,” 140).

Lindley’s gesture to the audience, here, is important, for it emphasizes how music works upon not only the characters and action within the play, but also without. The play’s “first effect,” as Sturges notes, is not visual—it’s aural (114). In Shakespeare’s time, personnel positioned in “the upper level of the Blackfriars façade or a resin box provided the lightning and the thunder was mimicked by drums in the tiring-house or music room or by cannonballs rolled in a thunder run” (Sturges 114). Other sound effects included “a sea machine” comprised of “small pebbles revolved in a drum” as well as “a wind

machine,” devised using “a loose length of canvas turned on a wheel” (Sturges 114). Together, these devices worked to create “a brief masterpiece” that rendered audible the question “of human constancy in an inconstant world” (Sturges 114). In the play’s final act, Prospero pleads the audience to self-consciously join in a soundscape that they had already helped compose by contributing spontaneous sounds—such as laughter—to the score. *The Tempest* can only come to an end, Shakespeare reminds us, with another, crucial sound: applause. That the play culminates in this way highlights how music not only operates on the level of content, but also on the level of form. It is, in other words, a feature which gives structure or shape to the play itself. Michael E. Mooney argues, for instance, that *The Tempest*’s subplots—the “Ferdinand-Miranda, courtly, and comic subplots”—all “turn on a musical and ‘spectacular’ climax” (55). “Noise and music frame each episode,” according to Mooney, “enclosing the action and introducing an illusionistic plane that surround the events” (55). Music also marks the breaks between acts—a topic to which we will return in the next unit—during which “stagehands trimmed the candles that amplified the little daylight that windows on the walls admitted” at the Blackfriars theatre (Gurr 75). Outdoor venues such as the Globe required no such intervals, but they “were necessary and expected, and could therefore be designed for,” in indoor performance spaces (Lindley, “Blackfriars,” 30). This explains, perhaps, why *The Tempest* as published in the First Folio includes in its text the breaks between acts, which were not formally marked but only “implicit” in performances at open-air playhouses, where “plays were probably performed straight through with no interval” (Lindley, “Blackfriars,” 30). Music in this way makes visible not only developments in the action of *The Tempest*, but also developments in the performance history and editorial practice of early modern theatre.

*The Tempest*’s music is intertwined with another, overtly musical tradition: the court masque. Readers of the play know already that it contains within it a wedding masque, wherein Miranda and Ferdinand are brought together by Prospero in preparation for their marriage. This is a relatively common feature of Shakespeare’s late work. As Reginald Foakes observes: “Shakespeare’s romances are...consciously theatrical, and each them contains a masque or masque-like elements” (253). Consisting of spectacular artifice and highly stylized language, the masque is another part of *The Tempest* that “invites audiences to experience new ways of understanding the human predicament through the theatrical self-awareness of his romances” and of theatre (Foakes 253). No aspect of *The Tempest* showcases this “self-awareness” most forcefully than the masque, which serves as a prelude to Prospero’s declaration that the “revels”—within the play and without—are coming to an end. But what is a masque, exactly? “In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the elaborate aristocratic entertainments known as ‘masking’ formed part of court festivity all over Europe,” which Jean Macintyre tells us was “associated with jousts, seasonal feasts, and other celebrations” (155). These festivities could be seasonal, but were also staged to mark special occasions. By the early seventeenth century—when *The Tempest* was written—“court masque” referred to “what masking became during the reigns of James I and Charles I, performances elaborated from Tudor masked dances into quasi-dramatic entertainments” (Macintyre 155). These performances always involved “some form of disguise, and dancing,” and “frequently deployed mythological figures in their fictions” (Lindley, “Blackfriars,” 40). Played by “costumed aristocrats,” these figures or characters ranged from representatives of far-flung and colonial locales—such as America, Africa or Ireland—to personifications of “the clouds or the moon” (Macintyre 155). The “players,” as we might call them, “first danced choreographed dances, then ‘took out’ audience members for ‘the revels’, court social dances that continued as long as the king pleased” (Macintyre 155). It is perhaps no surprise that masques were strongly associated with “heated, even illicit desire,” and thus afford a fitting backdrop for Shakespeare’s love and marriage plots (Lindley, “Blackfriars,” 39).



It might seem as though masques were mere entertainments or games, but they were in fact invested with symbolic meaning and political significance. Martin Butler notes that they “were performed before comparatively small audiences and were usually seen only once” (2). The audience consisted of those of wealth and political power—“social elites,” as well as “officials and magistrates”—and, thus, masques constituted “an important point of contact between the crown and its political class, cementing their bonds of loyalty and outlook” (Butler 2). In addition to functioning as a mechanism for bringing together the members of England’s ruling class, the court masque always contained within it an “explicit political function”—an overtly political argument—that “usually took [its] point of departure from some aspect of royal policy or current events” (Butler 3). Sometimes the king would participate in these performances, while at other times they were put on for him. In either case, “[t]hey sought to underwrite his authority, foster confidence in his rule, affirm his ties with his nation, and invest him with political and personal legitimacy” (Butler 3). The arguments that masques offered on behalf of the king were not always focused on domestic or national politics, and they were often intended for a non-English audience. They were, for instance, “an opportunity for honoring the representatives of foreign powers” and for displaying the power of the English Crown to those representatives in a symbolic, highly aestheticized form (Butler 2). Extremely lavish and thus costly to produce, “[m]asques proclaimed the Stuarts’ ability to command attention on the world stage and decked them in the symbolic forms of European kingship” (Butler 2). It was by way of the court masque that Whitehall—the royal venue in which masques were usually performed—“came to look like a center of power equivalent in prestige to Paris, Vienna, and Madrid” (Butler 2). Thus, in early modern England, power was inextricable from what might otherwise seem like entertainments: masque, in this case, as well as art, music, literature and, of course, theatrical production. Just as masques “did not passively reflect a stable or pre-existing reality but were themselves part of an unfolding political narrative,” so too were plays such as *The Tempest*. While court masques most certainly represented a favorable view of the king and his policies—whether domestic or foreign—theatre and, by extension, literature became a medium for articulating controversial perspectives on nation and politics that were otherwise disallowed in “a society with no freedom of speech” (*Norton Anthology* 486)—an idea to which we will return at the end of this unit.

What is the significance of the masque as staged in *The Tempest*? Act 4, Scene 1 has been a source of heated debates for scholars, and of frustration for students. In fact, students are not alone in their irritation. As Alden T. Vaughan notes: “Critics have sometimes dispraised the verse Shakespeare created for his masque, or even derided the entire episode as an interpolation by someone else” (70). The masque, in other words, seems so out of place—both narratively and stylistically—that it has provoked some to speculate Shakespeare is not even its true author. Whether he authored it is not the point, though it is worth noting the wedding masque plays upon those questions of theatricality and illusion that lie at the center of *The Tempest* and so actually belongs. Rather, what students should recognize is that the scene feels different—jarring, strange, out of place—because it introduces new language and aesthetic conventions—“highly stylized and artificial” techniques of representation—that were in keeping with the court masque tradition (Vaughan 70). “Gods and goddesses,” after all, “do not speak conversational blank verse”—whose so-called natural rhythm replicates the patterns of English speech—but instead “are elevated high above the audience and speak an elite language” that is highly symbolic and self-consciously wrought (Vaughan 70). This “elite language” makes visible the allegorical character of court masque and, by extension, the symbolic character of Shakespeare’s scene. This overt symbolism is bound up in the masque’s cast of mythological figures, who embody various aspects of

Miranda and Ferdinand's love, as well as their future marriage. Juno, for instance, personifies "a fertile future with the presence of Ceres, the goddess of the harvest" (Lindley, "Blackfriars," 43). Together, "Ceres, Iris and Juno present a double image of the cosmic union of earth and air, fire and water, with a vision of the union of Ferdinand and Miranda as the return of universal harmony" (Vaughan 70). The absence of Venus, goddess of love, is notable and the play draws attention to it when Ceres asks after her. That Venus and Cupid—"goddess of sensual love" and "purveyor of passion"—are not present is crucial, for it diminishes the threat of uncontrolled desire, blessing Miranda and Ferdinand's future marriage with the promise of a "chaste love...that eschews extremes of passion" (Vaughan 70 and 71). This is especially important to Prospero, for his fate and legacy are bound up in the success of his daughter's union: he "hopes to see his dynasty continue in peace and prosperity, with his grandchildren as heirs to both Milan and Naples" (Vaughan 71).

*The Tempest* employs the conventions of a court masque, but with a twist. Typically, masques included and began with a "grotesqu[e]" anti-masque that served as a comic prelude to the masque itself (Vaughan 68). The effect of the two parts, together, was one of "ideal closure"—of "harmony, unity, and consolidation" or resolution (Butler 6). The order of the two parts was crucial to this sense of resolution, for the masque "sublimate[d] conflict into aesthetic accord" (Butler 6). If the performance unsuccessfully dismissed its "contradictory, unresolved, or embarrassed" elements—whether displayed in the anti-masque overtly or in the masque as defects—these failures "expose[d] the political gap which each was in the business of bridging" (Butler 6). They made visible, in other words, "how far kingly symbolism struggled to accommodate structural strains in the body politic" (Butler 6). *The Tempest* is interested in exploring such exposures or failures. The structure of the wedding masque emphasizes this point: "Prospero's masque inverts this order"—that of anti-masque and masque—"ending abruptly with his recollection of Caliban's conspiracy" (Vaughan 73). Shakespeare in this way does not simply reflect or employ unrevised the court masque, but manipulates them to further test "the limits of art, and of magic" (Lindley, "Blackfriars," 42). The "interrupted masque," according to Lindley, "images both the appeal and the limitations of theatrical spectacle" ("Blackfriars" 42). He goes on to point out that while masque deals in "allegory"—that "aim[s] at pinning down and confining the interpretation of attributes and qualities in the figures it depicts"—Shakespeare's plays (including *The Tempest*) "operat[e] at the other end of the spectrum" insofar as they are concerned with "moral complexity and ambivalences" disallowed by the court masque (Lindley, "Blackfriars," 43). Lindley argues that the genre of the court masque was one "to be challenged even as it was exploited" in *The Tempest* (Lindley, "Blackfriars," 43). It turns out, then, that the masque is in many ways intentionally or self-consciously unsuccessful in its refusal to blend in seamlessly with what precedes and follows it, as well as its strange and sometimes opaque symbolism, and its resistance to closure. The wedding masque—especially its failures—tells us much about the questions discussed already in previous units, including those about theatre and illusion, meaning and ambiguity, resolution and irresolution.

### CLOSE READING

To explore the roles of music and masque in *The Tempest*, students might consider the following: stage directions throughout, which often include information about the musical soundscape of the play; Ariel's songs in Act 1, Scene 2, and Ferdinand's exchange with Caliban about the island's soundscape in the same scene; and the wedding masque of Act 4, Scene 1. Students should close read these passages with the following questions in mind:

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the role of music in a theatrical production like *The Tempest*? How does it compare to, say, the way music is employed in a film? In what ways are they similar or different? Under what conditions might music not simply reflect or intensify something we already know, but convey its own meaning? When does music in *The Tempest* achieve that purpose? Can you think of a moment (or moments) when references to music and sound—whether in stage directions or elsewhere in the text—helped you discover something new, or contradicted your interpretation of a given plot point or character?
- What kinds of sound are invoked in *The Tempest*? Is it all music? What about sound effects used to set a scene? Or Caliban’s description of the island as “full of noises”? How does this varied landscape of sound inform or complicate our imagining of the space imagined in the play—of the island and the action that unfolds on it? What does it mean that our first sensory impression of that action is not visual, but aural? In what ways does the play de-privilege sight, whether in the action or its engagement with the audience? Why might this be significant?
- Systematically analyze the wedding masque. Who are the mythological and symbolic figures that appear, and what might they represent? Which figures might you expect to see in a masque that serves as a prelude to a wedding, and what do we make of their absence? How would you describe the language of the wedding masque? How is it different from that used in the rest of the play? What does it signal about masque, whether within *The Tempest* or without? What is Prospero’s purpose in putting on the masque? What does it accomplish or secure for him? For Miranda and Ferdinand?
- Now systematically analyze the wedding masque’s failures or “exposures.” Does the wedding masque fit seamlessly into the action that bookends it? Or does it seem out of place? If so, why? What do we make of Shakespeare’s reversal of the masque structure, wherein the anti-masque follows (instead of precedes) the masque? How does this reversal heighten or complicate our sense that the masque does not belong? Why are these failures significant? What do they tell us about courtly love, for instance, or theatricality and illusion? Why would *The Tempest* expose and manipulate the moments in which the pageantry of masque collapses?

### ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECT IDEAS

- Have students work in small groups to prepare individual scenes from *The Tempest* for performance. After each group has presented their work, hold a discussion that takes up the following questions: have students compare the experience of reading the play, viewing it and performing it. How are these experiences the same and how are they different? What does the textual version of a dramatic work fail to preserve? Is there anything to be gained from reading—rather than viewing or performing—*The Tempest*? Students might also discuss the choices they made about how to represent certain characters or plot points. What about *The Tempest* did they choose to emphasize or downplay in their performances? How is performance an interpretation of the written text? What do the differences between the groups’ performances tell us about performance as an act of interpretation?
  - Students might also take up these questions in a formal essay assignment. Another approach would be to ask them to focus their essays on one character, and to then spend the essay showing the different ways you might “read” or interpret that character’s actions and motivations, and the range of moral or political implications they might convey.

- Students interested in music might reconstruct the soundscape of *The Tempest* using clues from the play's stage directions and text. To do so, they might ask themselves: what would *The Tempest* look like if it could not be seen, but only heard? (Don't forget that we would still be able to hear the actors speak.) What kinds of music would you use and why? Would you create certain effects using modern technology, or would that seem out of place? How would you reconstruct in sound the experience of being in a storm, for instance? How might sound work to create or complicate the play's meaning(s), and what kinds of music or aural effects would you incorporate to do so? Do silences play an important role and, if so, where do they belong and why?
- Ask students to reimagine the function of the court masque for modern times, and to produce one of their own. If the President of the United States used masque as mechanism for displaying his political power, what would that look like? Who would participate in the masque? Which symbolic or mythological figures would appear in its action? What kind of story would they tell? Where would the masque be staged and using what kinds of materials? Who would be in the audience? What political message would it deliver?

## UNIT 5 • GENRE, FORM, LANGUAGE

**OBJECTIVE:** To explore *The Tempest's* generic hybridity and the difficulties it presents; the function of and relationship between narrative and poetic structures; and Shakespeare's linguistic devices.

### HANDOUTS

Glossary of Literary Terms (Purdue OWL)

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/575/1/>

### PREPARATORY & RECOMMENDED READING

- David Crystal. "Language." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare's World, 1500-1660* (Volume 1). Ed. Bruce R. Smith. Cambridge University Press, 2016. 161-71.
- Jonathan Culler. "Toward a Theory of Non-Genre Literature." *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*. Ed. Michael McKeon. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. 51-6.
- Reginald Foakes. "Romances." *Shakespeare: An Oxford Guide*. Ed. Stanley Wells and Lena Cowen Orlin. Oxford University Press, 2003. 249-60.
- Scott Maisano. "New Directions: Shakespeare's Revolution—*The Tempest* as Scientific Romance." *The Tempest: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan. Bloomsbury, 2014. 165-94.
- Russ McDonald. "Reading *The Tempest*." *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's The Tempest*. Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. G. K. Hall, 1998. 214-33.
- Marco Mincoff. *Things Supernatural and Causeless: Shakespearean Romance*. University of Delaware Press, 1992.
- Michael E. Mooney. "Defining the Dramaturgy of the Late Romances." *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's The Tempest and Other Late Romances*. Ed. Maurice Hunt. MLA, 1992. 49-56.
- "romance, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Oxford University Press.
- Meredith Anne Skura. "Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in *The Tempest*." *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's The Tempest*. 60-90.
- Alden T. Vaughan. "Introduction." *The Tempest*. Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Arden. Shakespeare, 1999. 1-160.

### UNIT ORGANIZATION

This unit is divided into three sub-sections: "Genre"; "Narrative"; and "Language." Together, these sub-sections develop points for use in lecture, which are followed by suggested passages for class discussion and questions for further inquiry. The unit concludes with ideas for in-class activities and student projects.

### GENRE

To introduce your students to the concept of genre, you might begin by asking them to imagine walking into a bookstore. What do they see? Do they like to visit a particular section of the store? What other sections are they familiar with? As students brainstorm the extensive list of possibilities—fiction, poetry, drama, young adult, graphic novel and manga, mystery, sci-fi and fantasy, romance, biography, history—they will soon realize what they already knew all along: that they are familiar with a host of literary genres and that these genres constitute a system through which to organize, distinguish between, and compare different kinds of texts. When we search for a book, we use generic guidelines to help us make

a selection. Do you prefer thrillers? Your best bet is to look in the “Mystery” section of the store. Or do you frown upon detective fiction, sci-fi and fantasy? You’re most likely to find something you like in the shelves holding works of “Fiction.” Thus, “genre, one might say, is a set of expectations, a set of instructions about the type of coherence one is to look for and the ways in which sequences are to be read” (Culler 51). Some view genres as comprising “taxonomic categories in which we place works that share certain features” (Culler 52). A genre, in this sense, is a system of rules, guidelines or norms according to which a literary work generally behaves. But this notion of the genre as taxonomy ignores how texts might exhibit characteristics from a range of genres and, thus, might not be so easily classified. Many works of literature might “fal[l] outside of established genres,” in other words, thus putting the integrity of those genres into question (Culler 52). Genre fiction—mystery, science fiction, fantasy and romance—is a familiar category that exemplifies this resistance: each manipulates the novel’s characteristics, including narrative form, so as to create a new, hybrid category of literature.

Even though Shakespeare’s plays are all unmistakably works of drama, they nevertheless complicate the borderlines between genres. *The Tempest* emphatically resists generic categorization and its generic hybridity has been the source of much scholarly debate. The editors of the First Folio (1623) published it as the lead-off play of the section containing comedies. To call *The Tempest* a comedy is not exactly incorrect. As Alden T. Vaughan notes, it contains a “main plot” which is “paralleled in [a] comic subplot”: “Ferdinand’s courtship of Miranda,” for instance, “is juxtaposed with scenes of clowning by the drunken servants Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban” (9). At the same time, however, the play is shot through with elements that are decidedly not comedic. “The comic clowning” is not strictly humorous, for it marks the unfolding of a plot that “threatens the very life of the play’s protagonist” (Vaughan 9). In this way, *The Tempest* exhibits the “darker themes of Shakespeare’s tragedies—regicide, usurpation and vengeance” (Vaughan 9). Such potential misfortunes are always seething just beneath its use of humor. Michael E. Mooney notes, too, that the play “opens with all the sights and sounds of a tragedy” (49). Consider, for instance, how the tempest with which *The Tempest* begins recalls the turbulent storm wherein King Lear rages against his mortality and the indifference of the natural world. Such parallels illustrate how “in his final plays Shakespeare puts to new purposes previous themes and conventions, enlisting them in the service of a vision that moves beyond tragedy and loss to renewal and reconciliation” (Mooney 49). So what do we call *The Tempest*, then? Some scholars categorize the play as a tragicomedy—a hybrid genre that “mingle[s] episodes of misery or grief with incidents of joy and triumph” (Foakes 250). This genre took root in the “changing theatrical climate” of early modern England, according to Vaughan (10). “By 1610-11,” he observes, “Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher”—two of Shakespeare’s fellow playwrights—“had begun a productive literary collaboration, specializing in mixed-mode plays that were often labeled ‘tragicomedies’” (Vaughan 10). Describing the new genre of the “tragi-comedie,” Fletcher argues that what distinguishes it from tragedy is that “it wants deaths, which is inough to make it no tragedie”—and what distinguishes it from comedy is that it “brings some” characters so “neere” “inough” to death that it could never be a “comedie” (qtd. in Vaughan 10). Foakes speculates that “[t]ragicomedie seems to have appealed to a well-bred audience”—such as the one at Blackfriars—“by allowing them to stay relaxed, and by not demanding a strong emotional engagement while offering a pleasant variety of entertaining incident” (251). Ultimately, tragicomedy strives for “reconciliations” that produce “some kind of final harmony” (Foakes 251). We can see such reconciliations and harmonies at play throughout *The Tempest* and especially in the final act, when Ferdinand and Miranda are joined together, Prospero gives up his books and seems to reconcile himself with Caliban, and the disjunctions between illusion and truth dissolve as the audience assumes Prospero’s power and applauds.

But *The Tempest* is also a romance. Romance does not in this context connote the erotic pulp novel with which we as modern readers are familiar. Rather, romance refers to “a fictitious narrative in prose of which the scene and incidents are very remote from those of ordinary life, *esp.* one of the class prevalent in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, in which the story is often overlaid with long disquisitions and digressions” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Foakes offers a more extensive definition—as well as a brief terminological history—which is especially useful for thinking through *The Tempest*’s relationship to romance:

[I]t [‘romance’] usefully suggests the idea of fictions that are unrealistic, works that create a world dominated by chance rather than character or cause and effect, and plays in which we are attuned to delight in and wonder at the unexpected...The English word ‘romance’ was derived from French, and at first associated with long French poems...In Shakespeare’s age the word was chiefly identified with old chivalric verse narratives and folk tales, and there were many...who regarded these with a certain disdain, if only to differentiate them from more sophisticated kinds of romance that were widely read by educated readers, such works as Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1590-9), and Sir Philip Sidney’s prose *Arcadia* (1590)...The word ‘romance’ is only as old as French, but fictions containing romance motifs are, of course, much older, perhaps as old as literature itself, a notable example being Homer’s tales of the wanderings of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. (249)

Foakes elaborates further that romances often “take place in far-off or invented places or times” and thus “opened up imaginative vistas for Shakespeare’s age when most people, like the playwright himself as far as we know, had no opportunity for travel overseas” (250). They also tend to be relatively directionless, “spinning one fiction out of another” (Foakes 250). While this statement applies more so to lengthier prose and poetic works and not plays, it’s worth considering how *The Tempest*’s relatively simplistic narrative structure invites readers to “take pleasure in the telling of the tale”—or, rather, shoves into the foreground the play’s more ambiguous, transformative and open-ended qualities, such as its attention to magic and illusion (Foakes 250). This is one of many ways in which *The Tempest* announces itself as romance. The island setting is perhaps the most overtly romantic of the play’s elements, its unlocalized position in space and time inviting the audience to exercise their imaginations freely and to engage in virtual travel. The historical contexts and antecedents of *The Tempest*, too, are “colored by romance” (Skura 61). As noted briefly in Unit 3, the play invokes “voyaging discourse” and “the romance and exoticism of discoveries in the Old as well as the New World” in order to develop a “stylized allegory” which exploits “the romance core of all voyagers’ experience” (Skura 61).

There is one other, perhaps surprising, genre in which *The Tempest* participates, though it did not have a name in Shakespeare’s time: science fiction. Scott Maisano ventures the claim that the play “is among the earliest works of *scientific* romance,” or “what we call works of science fiction produced before the term ‘science fiction’ became standard in the 1920s” (166). Students who have considered the play’s scientific contexts as they are described in Unit 3 will likely find this generic categorization appropriate. Though neither the discipline of science nor the word “scientist” existed in early modern England, *The Tempest* is nevertheless concerned with the possibilities and limits of scientific inquiry—think of the play’s simultaneous engagement with natural history and natural magic—as well as the empirical method of viewing the world that Francis Bacon, one of Shakespeare’s contemporaries, developed. Was Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* one of the first works of science fiction? Students might debate this question in class or take it up in a formal essay assignment.

### CLOSE READING

Ask students to brainstorm a list of *The Tempest*'s potential generic categories. They should provide evidence from the text that justifies each proposed genre. After composing their lists, students might consider the following questions:

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is genre? How do we categorize literary works according to genre? Which characteristics are most valuable, telling or important for helping us “read” the genre of a given work of literature? What do we do when a text will not fit neatly in one generic category? Do we categorize it under both, or develop a logic according to which we choose one over another? Is it possible for a work of literature to have no genre—to resist any and all attempts at categorization? Can you think of an example? Is *The Tempest* such a work?
- How would you categorize *The Tempest* with respect to genre? What is its relationship to the genres we normally associate with Shakespeare's plays: comedy, tragedy, tragicomedy and history? To romance? To science fiction? What should we call it, if it is all of these things? Does it present us with a new genre entirely?
- *The Tempest* belongs not only to the genres discussed in detail above, but also to the overarching genre of drama. Compare *The Tempest* to a canonical American or British dramatic work that you might read in one of your literature classes (for example: Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* or *Death of a Salesman*, or Thomas Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*). What characteristics do these dramatic works share? What do these convergences (and any divergences you might identify) suggest about genre? Is it a stable system of categorization? Or does it transform across literary works and over time? How do we know that a work of drama is, in fact, a work of drama if its characteristics are subject to change—and if, like *The Tempest*, it cuts across a range of other genres?

### NARRATIVE

*The Tempest* transverses a range of not only genres, but also literary forms. This sub-section provides a broad overview of one of these forms: narrative. Scholars have frequently noted that *The Tempest* is somewhat of an anomaly in Shakespeare's oeuvre as a result of its narrative structure. Whereas the comedies feature intricate plots whose twists and turns hinge upon chance meetings between characters and fortuitous circumstances beyond human control—and whereas the tragedies involve carefully laid plans of murder and revenge that come to gut-wrenching, engrossing and sometimes unexpected fruition—*The Tempest*'s narrative is comparatively simple and uneventful. As Vaughan puts it: “Despite the play's unique panoply of visual wonders, very little happens on Prospero's enchanted island” (4). World-shattering events like the play's opening storm, while seemingly tragic, amount to nothing more than illusion, and so do not make for an extended and compelling narrative trajectory. From the very beginning, for instance, we know that Ferdinand is not dead and, thus, that his father's woe is only temporary. We spend the play following “clusters” of characters who—with the exception of Ariel—wander aimlessly “around the island” (4). The play's main character, Prospero, remains largely stationary, conjuring those events which actually do occur from afar. Even the ending is relatively anti-climactic. “The last scene brings everyone to Prospero's cell for a final revelation” but, as Vaughan observes, “they were always nearby” (4). The conclusion is one the play has already foretold and from which it has declined to deviate. *The Tempest* in this way deviates from generic expectations: it offers



“nothing of the ups and downs and sudden reversals of romance” (Mincoff 94). The ending is less fortuitous than expected. There are few if any surprises. As a character, Prospero arguably heightens the play’s anticlimactic qualities. Mincoff argues that “by placing in the center of this play a powerful and benevolent magician, Shakespeare prevented the possibility of any real tension” (97). The problem with Prospero, in other words, is similar to the one with Superman: there would seem to be no adversary equipped to match him in a fight. That Prospero will get his way appears inevitable—and, as the conclusion of the play illustrates, that appearance proves true.

*The Tempest* is also, with the exception of *The Comedy of Errors*, the shortest of Shakespeare’s plays. Its plot is similarly abbreviated, transpiring over the course of only a few hours. Scholars have speculated that it “may indeed be Shakespeare’s most tightly structured play” (Vaughan 14). It unfolds through a “tight pattern” of events and roles that are often doubled or exist in parallel. “Prospero’s overthrow in Milan twelve years earlier,” for instance, “is nearly repeated” (Vaughan 15). Of all Shakespeare’s plays, *The Tempest* is the only one to adhere to what is called the unity of time: a classical dramatic principle that mandates the action take place within the course of a day. To provide necessary background and context, the play relies heavily on memory. “[C]haracters merely *remember* the events of the twelve years preceding” (Vaughan 15). This can make for a frustrating reading experience—“[t]he compression of events to one afternoon...leaves many loose ends”—but it also produces productive points of ambiguity (Vaughan 16). “Caliban’s recollections,” for instance, sometimes “challenge his master’s” (Vaughan 15). The function of memory within the play also highlights the limitations and problems of human individuality and perception. We are not sure, for instance, if we should take Prospero’s experience as truthful or as biased. When he recounts how Caliban attempted to rape Miranda, we are not sure if we should believe him. When he compels Ariel to rehearse his imprisonment at the hands of Sycorax and his subsequent liberation, we are not sure if Prospero is feeding Ariel lines, so to speak—if he is forcing Ariel to narrate events as he would have them play out. The narrative structure of *The Tempest* in this way plays upon and complicates the ideas and questions taken up in the play’s content. The two are inseparable from one another. Together, they work to create meaning—to, for instance, offer interpretive possibilities upon which we might draw in our analysis of Prospero, our understanding of the relationship between illusion and truth, et cetera.

Beyond its uneventful quality and its constraint, *The Tempest*’s narrative structure deploys repetition in ways that coincide with the play’s musical and poetic qualities—and which might inform or complicate our interpretation of its meaning. As Russ McDonald observes, the parallels between plot and sub-plot—as well as the temporal “symmetries” between past and present—are frequently “the subject of comment” in the play (223). “The play is famous for the density and congruity of its mirrored actions” (McDonald 223). While not a lot happens, what does happen unfolds according to a temporal simultaneity that posits time as thick and history as repeatable—or, at the very least, as always at work in the present. Prospero’s overthrow, for instance, ripples into the present and threatens the future as Caliban plots his fall. McDonald argues that the play produces a “reticulum of stories”—a layered narrative that reconfigures the relationship between past, present and future—which “seems both familiar and wonderful” (223). Thus, even as the play’s events are anticipated and its plot structure contained, its narrative structure is on some level magical. The play’s narrative structure highlights, too, how “Shakespeare is repeating himself”—how he is making a similar “reticulum” of his own work as *The Tempest* “unashamedly gaz[es] back over” and reimagines “his entire *oeuvre* and summon[s] up scenes, persons, themes, metaphors, bits of vocabulary, and other minor theatrical strategies” that appear in

earlier plays (McDonald 223). The repetitious elements of the play's narrative in this way are not necessarily sources of boredom. Rather, they are rewarding, especially for avid readers of Shakespeare, who know his work and can identify the "meaningful pattern of familiar and yet rearranged material" that *The Tempest* deploys (McDonald 223). Repetition in this way is an important narrative feature of *The Tempest* that, while it might undercut the excitement of plot, is highly suggestive.

### CLOSE READING

To explore the structure and function of narrative—and, by extension, temporality and memory—in *The Tempest*, students might consider the following: the play's beginning in Act 1, Scene 1; the play's end in Act 5; passages wherein Prospero obsesses over time (such as Act 1, Scene 2); passages wherein characters resort to memory in order to offer a history of the play's characters and events (such as Caliban's recollections of life on the island prior to and just following Caliban's arrival in Act 1, Scene 2 or Miranda's near inability to remember her mother and caretakers in the same scene); and moments when characters tell stories whose structure—or telling—is repetitive (such as when Prospero narrates to Miranda their family history in Act 1, Scene 2 or when he compels Ariel to recount his prior life on the island in the same scene). Students should close read these passages with the following questions in mind:

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is narrative? What is its relationship to plot, or to the familiar sequence of beginning, middle and end? How are narrative and plot the same? How are they different? What is temporality? If you are unsure, try to describe the sense of time—or temporality—conveyed by the sequence of beginning, middle and end. Is narrative always linear? Does it always take shape through sequential series of events?
- Characters in *The Tempest* frequently use their memories in order to describe a point in time prior to the events staged in the play. At the play's conclusion, some characters' fates are decided, while those of others (such as Caliban) remain shrouded in mystery. In what ways does *The Tempest*'s invocation of memory and inconclusive ending complicate the conventional notion of narrative as containing a beginning, a middle and an end? How does it complicate or resist the conventional notion of time as a linear, sequential, orderly series of events? How does the play imagine time? What shape does it take and how might it suggest a different sense of temporality than the linear one with which we are most familiar?
- Prospero is obsessed with time. Why? How would you describe his sense of temporality and why is he so concerned with timeliness? Consider how the moments in which Prospero tells stories—such as when he narrates his family history to Miranda—are structured by repetition (he constantly asks Miranda to "mark" him and questions whether she is paying attention). What is the effect of these repetitive interruptions? How do they interact with or complicate the structure of the story Prospero tells? How do parallels between past and present, as well as plot and sub-plot, undercut a linear model of time, and why might this matter? What do we do with the fact that the play unfolds through two senses of time: one that is repetitive or cyclical and another that is linear or sequential? How do they interact with or complicate one another, and how do we make sense of them together? Are they ever reconciled?

## LANGUAGE

There is a third way in which *The Tempest* cuts across genres: the play's amalgamation of prose and verse. While some characters' speech unfolds through unembellished prose, others speak in the iambic pentameter for which Shakespeare is known. These differences are significant. As David Crystal notes, "the social situation or the nature of the interaction" between characters is often transmitted through Shakespeare's use of prose and verse (163-4). Poetry in the early modern period was "characteristic of a 'high style' of language used by high-status people" while prose was indicative of a "low style" (Crystal 164). We can see these divisions at work in *The Tempest*, wherein characters like the Boatswain, Stephano and Trinculo speak in prose while others—Prospero, Miranda and, notably, Caliban—do so in verse. And while both prose and verse demand close reading, the latter is more intricate on the level of the word and, thus, requires especially careful attention. "[M]ost words in a language have more than one meaning—they are *polysemic*" and this, as Crystal reminds us, "allows authors an opportunity to say several things at once" (166). This is especially true in the case of verse, which is more constrained than prose and so, perhaps paradoxically, offers a multitude of interpretative possibilities. This is in part because poetry employs and manipulates a range of linguistic devices to draw out and complicate the multiplicity of meanings at issue in a single line and even a single word. These include repetitions that unfold by way of meter and rhyme. In *The Tempest* Shakespeare employs blank verse—unrhymed lines of five metrical feet, each of which contains a short syllable followed by a long one—which, though unrhymed, employs a repetitious alternation of unstressed and stressed syllables which give the impression of recursive movement and "elliptical" ambiguity. The form of the verse—especially as it differs from prose—calls attention to itself. Thus, even though blank verse is the poetic form said to come closest to natural patterns of human speech (in English, that is), its metrical quality and appearance on the page denaturalizes language; it emphasizes how language is always a mechanism of creation and representation—one that sometimes operates of its own accord, out of the control of the person who utters it.

In *The Tempest*, verse performs important representational work. Poetic devices are used to convey and intensify "the island's dreamlike effect, contributing to the audience's sense of suspension from time and space" (Vaughan 21).<sup>1</sup> These include apostrophes, which Shakespeare employs "to omit syllables from words, not simply to suit the iambic pentameter line but in all likelihood to compress the language and reveal the emotions boiling beneath" (Vaughan 21). The use of contractions in verse highlights how poetry, like narrative, is a site of compression in *The Tempest*, and this impulse toward constraint is what makes possible the play's many enigmatic but also productive and provocative ambiguities. In fact, words are not only abbreviated, but sometimes left out altogether, "leaving the observer to make the line coherent by supplying an all-important noun, pronoun, verb or adverb" (Vaughan 21). At other times, words that are key to the meaning of a given passage "are delayed" by way of enjambments and line breaks, which "interrupt[s]" the play's syntax. Both techniques invite the reader to fill in linguistic and by extension conceptual gaps—to read closely and to work hard; to assess the range of significances a lexical omission or deferral might make available for interpretation. The play contains a "high proportion of irregular lines" as well (Vaughan 22). These irregularities may seem unintentional or erroneous, but they very often signal something important. If we think of the blank verse form as a guiding norm in the play, in other words, irregularities—deviations from that norm—might

---

<sup>1</sup> See the suggested close reading and discussion activities below for a sample passage that employs many of these devices.

communicate and complicate the meaning of the lines or speeches in which they occur. These irregularities include the breaking up of individual lines so that they are split across the speech of different speakers—something that happens over and over again during the play—and the use of feminine or unstressed syllables at the end of a given line (lines of iambic pentameter should always end on a stressed syllable), as well as other, non-iambic metrical forms (including trochaic meter, which unfolds through alternated stressed and unstressed syllables, and is thus the opposite of iambic). These irregularities emphasize “the plot’s underlying tension between harmony and disruption, between utopian longings and the chaos caused by human nature” (Vaughan 22). Their presence is often unsettling.

Verse also makes visible some of the lexical innovations and wordplay that run throughout the whole of the play, including its prose. Vaughan emphasizes that “[e]ditors of *The Tempest* frequently note its unusual reliance on compound words,” which establish unexpected relationships between words, things or ideas we might never have thought to put together (22). These compounds are poetic in their effect, destabilizing meaning at the level of the word and thus amplifying the linguistic ambiguities that verse already manipulates and exploits to proliferate imaginative possibilities. Like poetic compounds, Shakespeare’s figures of speech are emphatically poetic—they offer evocative descriptions of seemingly mundane or familiar objects, and those which have lost their meaning over time heighten, however inadvertently, the play’s fascination with ambiguity, illusion and magic. As Crystal observes: “We still talk about something being *hard as steel*, *soft as silk*, and *black as ink*,” yet “we have for the most part lost the immediacy of recognition that is required by such images as *soft as wax*, *swift as quicksilver*, and *black as jet*” (166). Shakespeare may not have anticipated that some of his figures of speech would be illegible to future audiences, but they nonetheless continue to possess some resonance in the sense that—detached from the archaic or esoteric meanings they held in another historical moment—they become incantatory, even magical encapsulations of the questions and themes the play as a whole explores. The overall effect of Shakespeare’s verse and his poetic figures of speech is to create “verbal and ideational patterns” which “entice the audience by promising and withholding illumination, demonstrating the impossibility of signification certainty and creating an atmosphere of hermeneutic instability” (McDonald 216). The verse of *The Tempest* is incantatory and magical, conveying a sense of how language is at its most powerful—its most transformative and its most dangerous—when it operates out of and beyond the control of its creator; when its forms and connotations work together to make visible unexpected and seemingly impossible interrelationships between and among things, persons and entire worlds.

### CLOSE READING

To explore poetic form and devices, students should work closely with and annotate a passage. To teach them scansion—or how to read meter—have them speak the words aloud to one another, searching for which syllables are stressed and which are not. Reading the stresses of a line incorrectly will feel unnatural or “off” and thus will help students map metrical forms. Once they have marked these structures, they can begin to track the other devices—such as repetition, alliteration and assonance—that give shape to Shakespeare’s verse, and can then begin to assess how they interact with and complicate the meaning of the words themselves. Below is an example of a passage whose first lines have been scanned (the meter in this passage is quite irregular, so it will be a challenge for students) and whose most prominent poetic features have been marked using bold font. After working through it—

and the supplementary discussion questions—with your students, assign a new passage—or set of passages—for them to close read either individually, or in small or large groups.<sup>2</sup>

*Caliban*

/        /        /  
I must eat **my** dinner.

/        /        /        /  
This island's **mine** **by** Sycorax, **my** mother,

**Which** **thou** tak'st from **me**. **When** **thou** cam'st first,

**Thou** strok'st **me** and **made** much of **me**, wouldst give **me**

**Water** with berries in 't, and teach **me** how

To name the bigger light and how the less,

**That** burn **by** day and night. And **then** I loved **thee**,

And showed **thee** all the qualities o' **th'** isle,

**The** fresh springs, **brine** pits, **barren** place and **fertile**.

Cursed be **that** I did so! All **the** charms

Of Sycorax, toads, **beetles**, **bats**, light on **you**,

For I am all **the** subjects **that** **you** have,

**Which** first **was** mine own king; and here **you** sty **me**

In this hard rock, whiles **you** do keep from **me**

**The** rest o' **th'** island. (Act 1, Scene 2)

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Note the passage begins and ends with a split line. Observe how the first two lines—the second of which mentions Sycorax, Caliban's mother—conclude with feminine endings. The meter, as mentioned above, is a challenge—students will likely become frustrated as they attempt to parse it. That is okay! Knowing that the passage diverges markedly from the conventions of blank verse is enough to answer the following questions: what do we make of this passage's metrical irregularities? Why would Caliban's speech—which traces a history of colonial

---

<sup>2</sup> Students may also wish to consult a list of literary terms and devices as they close read the intricacies of Shakespeare's language (see the link to an online glossary under "Handouts").

dispossession—begin and end in fragmentary lines? Why would it diverge so markedly from blank verse, the poetic form most emblematic of the normative patterns of English speech? (Don't forget that Caliban's native language is not English—that English is presented in *The Tempest* as a mechanism of colonization!) What is the significance of the feminine ending in the second line? Does it simply reflect the femaleness of Caliban's mother, or does this doubling of the feminine—of metrical softness—convey something more meaningful?

- Pay attention to the use of pronouns and possessives in the passage. What do we make of the constant juxtaposition of the pronouns “I” and “thou”? Of the doubling and tripling of possessives in single lines (such as the second)? How, on the level of the word, does the passage capture the play's engagement with the problems of colonial power and dis/possession? How do we interpret Caliban's use of “thou” to refer to Prospero in the first half of the passage as compared with his use of “you” in the second half? What is the difference between “thou” and “you”? Is one more intimate than the other? Is one more possessive, distanced or accusing?
- Consider the use of alliteration, assonance and repetition. Note how assonance aligns “tak'st” with “cam'st” in the third line of the passage. What does Caliban here suggest about the relationship between these two actions—coming or arriving and taking—and how does this intersect with the broader themes of the play? What is the overall effect of these aural repetitions—of lines wherein words possess either similar beginnings or endings? What about the repeated use of the word “and,” which draws out the syntax of the passage, delays the conclusion of its narrative and gives us a sense of accumulation—of language piling up upon itself?

#### ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECT IDEAS

- Students might write position papers or formal essays on the generic categorization of *The Tempest*. To which genre(s) does it belong and why? Does it establish a new genre or belong to no genre at all? How do these questions and their answers inform or affect how we interpret the play as a whole? These papers might be used as the starting point for a debate about genre as it is at issue in *The Tempest*.
- Have students choose a passage from *The Tempest* to “translate” into a different genre. For instance, they might convert a prose paragraph into blank verse or vice versa. Then, have them write a reflective assignment on the effect of their translations. How does the transition from prose to verse (or from verse to prose) alter a given passage's meaning? What does this tell us about the differences between verse and prose, both in and beyond *The Tempest*?
- Ask students to write prose or blank verse imitations of Shakespeare's language. These should be spoken by a character of their choice. They might offer a window into a character's interiority—into, say, Ariel's perception of Prospero—or reimagine some aspect of the play (or something else). As they reimagine some aspect of the play, they will also function as interpretations of the play, as well as the questions or ideas it explores. These imitations should carefully manipulate formal devices—such as plot and temporality, or meter and alliteration—so that they the further the interpretation of the play the imitation offers on the level of content. Students might write a short reflective essay to accompany their imitations. These essays should offer a reading of the imitation the student has created—they should outline the interpretation or argument the imitation makes about *The Tempest*—and an explanation for the choices the student made on the level of form.

## UNIT 6 • MAKING SHAKESPEARE

**OBJECTIVE:** To explore *The Tempest*'s relationship to the First Folio; the impact of early modern editorial and publishing practices on the play; and Shakespeare's identity as an individual and collective author.

**HANDOUTS** Prefatory matter from the First Folio (Folger Shakespeare Library)  
<http://www.folger.edu/the-shakespeare-first-folio-folger-copy-no-68#page/To+the+Reader/mode/2up>

### PREPARATORY & RECOMMENDED READING

Anston Bosman. "Shakespeare and Globalization." *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Ed. Margreta De Grazia. Cambridge University Press, 2011. 285-302.  
Gabriel Egan. "The Provenance of the Folio Texts." *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's First Folio*. Ed. Emma Smith. Cambridge University Press, 2016. 68-85.  
B. D. R. Higgins. "Printing the First Folio." *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's First Folio*. 30-47.  
Chris Laoutaris. "The Prefatorial Material." *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's First Folio*. 48-67.  
Eric Rasmussen. "Publishing the First Folio." *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's First Folio*. 18-29.

### UNIT ORGANIZATION

This unit is divided into three sub-sections: "The First Folio"; "Publishing & Printing"; and "Making Shakespeare." Together, these sub-sections develop points for use in lecture, which are followed by suggested passages for class discussion and questions for further inquiry. The unit concludes with ideas for in-class activities and student projects.

### THE FIRST FOLIO

That the First Folio—published posthumously in 1623—has been mentioned numerous times over the course of this guide is not simply because it gave us the first version of *The Tempest* in print. It is also because it was a carefully crafted framing device for Shakespeare's dramatic works that aimed to canonize the author, a genre and, by extension, English literature. Having died in 1616 Shakespeare did not have a say in how his plays were presented in the First Folio, except insofar as his manuscripts served as the basis for the volume's text. But what is the First Folio, exactly? There are many answers to this question. The most basic is that the First Folio is, essentially, an anthology—a collection of works that, in this case, are the creation of a single author. But we must remember that Shakespeare was not only an author of plays, but also of poetry. Focusing on his dramatic works, the First Folio is thus organized not only around one author but also one overarching genre (drama). As such, it capitalizes on and makes an argument for the burgeoning reputations of both Shakespeare and theatre. This is an argument which we will explore in more detail later in this unit. But first, we should take a quick tour of the book itself, for while plays like *The Tempest* make up the bulk of its content, the volume's prefatory matter functions as a rhetorical framing device which dictates how readers read the works—and the author—published therein. Chris Laoutaris's essay on the prefatory material of the First Folio is an essential resource, and would offer students a useful introduction to the publication history of *The Tempest*. Laoutaris offers, first, a brief outline of the volume's prefatory material: it "begins with a short poem 'To the Reader' by 'B.I.', believed to be Ben Jonson," a famed playwright and critic of early modern England. The opening poem offers a commentary on what comes next—"the facing title-

page”—which features one of the few portraits we have of Shakespeare by Martin Droeshout, a skilled engraver. “This is followed by a dedicatory epistle to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and his brother Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery,” which “is signed by ‘John Heminge’ and ‘Henry Condell’”—two actors in Shakespeare’s acting company, the King’s Men. They are also “signatories” of a second dedicatory piece addressed “To the great Variety of Readers.” What follows varies in order depending on which copy of the Folio you read, but generally includes memorial poems by Ben Jonson, Hugh Holland, Leonard Digges and “I.M.,” generally thought to be James Mabbe.” These poems are followed by the “Catalogue” or table of contents and a list of actors who performed in the plays collected in the volume (Laoutaris 48-9). What students should take away from a quick glance through the prefatory matter of the First Folio—whether or not they recognize the various men to which it refers—is that these materials make visible a network of associates with whom Shakespeare is intertwined. The folio collects and celebrates the work of a single author, but it also takes pains to mark that work as a collective endeavor—a point to which we will return later.

Close reading the prefatory matter of the First Folio will prove just as fruitful as close reading *The Tempest*. Laoutaris, for instance, extrapolates much from the volume’s title page alone. First, he draws our attention to the subtitle: “Published according to the True Originall Copies.” The title page thus makes “the promise that the reader will gain therein access to the ‘Originall’ words not simply of a playwright and man of singular talent but of an individual of some social status, designated by the honorific title ‘M[aste]r’” (50). The First Folio, in other words, promises exclusive and unmediated access to the plays as Shakespeare had written them and, by extension, to the “master” playwright himself. This claim is reiterated on the list of actors that appears some pages later, at the top of which is section title claiming that the Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies” that follow are “Truely set forth, according to their first ORIGINALL.” That the playwright is man of “social status” and esteem is reinforced by Droeshout’s portrait, “which depicts Shakespeare in a doublet embellished with ‘metal braid decoration’ and ‘flat band’ collar. This was attire belonging to a gentleman, though more fashionable in 1616 than 1623” (Laoutaris 50). The portrait is signed by its “Graver”: “Martin Droeshout, Sculpsit London.” Underneath we find information about the volume’s publishers: “LONDON / Printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Ed. Blount, 1623.” Thus, on its own the title page reminds us that Shakespeare “is in fact the product of a collaborative network operating at a specific time, and from a location identified” multiple times over the course of the prefatory matter (Laoutaris 54). Stratford-upon-Avon is mentioned nowhere, and the First Folio offers nothing in the way of biographical details. This may be in part because the volume is crafting a careful portrait of its celebrated author—both in image and in text—that does not mesh with a narrative of humble beginnings and reduced stature. It may also be because the First Folio attempts to make visible the collaborative “foundation upon which the immortal ‘Shakespeare’ is raised” (Laoutaris 54). As Laoutaris puts it, the First Folio is “a book book-ended with personalities” (54).

Students familiar with Shakespeare’s acting company, the King’s Men, and its royal patron might find the dedicatory epistle especially surprising, for it is not addressed to the person we might expect: the king. Laoutaris offers a compelling explanation for this notable omission: while the King’s Men gained in influence and wealth under king’s patronage, the publishers of the First Folio “benefitted from projecting a longer-standing relationship between two prolific and powerful patrons and the acting company” (58). These patrons were the Herbert brothers, Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery. The epistle names the Earls “Guardians” of the Shakespeare’s plays, which are in turn called “Orphanes.”



Laoutaris speculates that Pembroke, who was close to the king from the time he took the throne, “was instrumental in the [King’s Men’s] rapid promotion” (59). And as Lord Chamberlain, Pembroke himself possessed great power over English acting companies and their proximity (or lack thereof) to the Crown: it was he who “had control of the program of performances at court” and, as such, he acted as “an important mediator between the players and the King” (Laoutaris 59). But where does Montgomery come into the picture? At the time of the First Folio’s production, Pembroke had been promoted to the office of Lord Treasurer, but he “had repeatedly refused to vacate the Lord Chamberlain’s office unless his brother was installed in his place” (Laoutaris 59). The takeaway, here, is that the First Folio’s publishers realized that they could count “on at least one of the brothers remaining in th[e] influential position” of Lord Chamberlain, which also had “jurisdiction over the Master of the Revels” who, as discussed in previous units, was a censor—he controlled which plays were allowed to be performed and which were not. The dedicatory epistle is in this way strategic. At the same time, it also communicates to the First Folio’s readers that the Shakespeare, the King’s Men and the volumes publishers were intimately interconnected with those in the highest seats of power. They had, in other words, developed “a powerhouse of close-knit relationships which encompassed the offices which controlled playing and censorship” (Laoutaris 60). These relationships are invoked both to reinforce and invite royal favor, and to make a subtle rhetorical argument on behalf of Shakespeare and his plays. That the dedicatory epistle is followed by an appeal to the volume’s readers illustrates this point. Having identified their royal patrons and traced their powerful connections, the actors Heminge and Condell address the reader directly, positioning the First Folio as a “chance to buy into the structures of literary ‘priviledges’” (Laoutaris 61). Emphasizing on the title page that the volume offers “originall” or unmediated access to Shakespeare and his—and by extension the powerful network of which he and his contemporaries are players—the First Folio “dangle[s] before the reader” the idea that, in purchasing the book, she assumes “the role of patron” (Laoutaris 62). In buying and reading the book, she gains entry to the “glamour” and advantages of another, more wealthy, more powerful way of life.

But we have yet to address the most important of the two words in the volume’s title: “folio.” What is a folio? Why call the First Folio a folio at all? Because “folio” describes the format in which the volume appeared. Previously, Shakespeare’s works had appeared in “quarto.” As Eric Rasmussen observes: “In the three decades between 1593 and 1623, ninety-five quarto editions of Shakespeare’s works had been published” (23). The difference between quarto and folio editions was most immediately one of size. Whereas quartos measured approximately 9.5x12 inches, folios came in at a whopping 12x19 inches. They were, as these numbers suggest, considerably larger than their quarto counterparts. Why does this matter, though? Why do we care that the First Folio was not a First Quarto? Because larger volumes were much more expensive to produce and to purchase. “Scholars estimate that the cost of producing each copy of the First Folio was 6s. 8d,” according to Rasmussen (18). “If the print run was £750 copies,” as scholars suspect, “then the total cost of the project was £250, an astronomical amount in an age in which a shoemaker could expect to earn £4 in a year and a goldsmith up to £5” (Rasmussen 18). Should the First Folio have failed, the risks were enormous for those who had invested in its production. Rasmussen tells us that “the retail price in London for an unbound copy”—it was common practice for books to be sold unbound and for their buyers to then commission a binding to fit their budgets—“was 15 shillings.” This means the volume’s “publishers would have to have sold 333 copies of this enormously expensive book before they could break even—and that’s assuming that they sold the copies on the retail market. With a wholesale price of 10 shillings, they would need to have sold 500 copies to cover their initial investment” (27). Scholars have long debated what the First Folio’s

publishers were thinking: “Why th[e] publishers were willing to risk such a vast sum on an unprecedented venture—an expensive folio devoted exclusively to plays—and whether their investment ultimately left them wealthy or bankrupt are currently two of the most hotly debated issues in Shakespearean studies” (Rasmussen 18). Laoutaris argues that the folio format was associated with well-respected genres of writing, including “theological tracts, legal treatises, tomes recording national history [and] works by classical authors” (51). As such, the format of the volume—along with its organizational emphasis on the “classical categories” of comedy and tragedy—elevated Shakespeare and his plays to a similarly well-respected and timeless status. The format might have thus encouraged otherwise skeptical buyers to make a purchase. But whether the First Folio was ultimately a commercial success is unknown to us. While “[s]ome scholars have argued that [it] was a runaway success, given that demand was apparently so great that a second edition...was required within less than a decade,” others have noted that the fortunes of at least one of the volume’s publishers “declined rather sharply” in the years following its publication (Rasmussen 28). We can only guess at whether the First Folio “le[ft] its risk-taking publishers appropriately rewarded or ironically impoverished” (Rasmussen 28). Whatever the case, the volume helped to ensure Shakespeare would reward readers for centuries to come.

### CLOSE READING

Have students read and annotate the prefatory material from the First Folio, either in selections or as a whole. As they do so, have them consider the following questions:

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is an anthology? What does it mean to publish a collection of an author’s works? Of an author’s works as they pertain to a specific genre? How is the experience of reading Shakespeare change when you read an individual play on its own versus when you read that play as part of a larger body of work? For instance, how does reading a play printed in an anthology re-contextualize its content and meaning? Of what does an anthology remind its readers?
- *The Tempest* is the first play printed in the First Folio. It is categorized as a comedy. How does the First Folio’s prefatory matter and logic of generic categorization reframe the play? Does set up certain expectations for the play or guide how it should be read? What do we make of the fact that *The Tempest*, the last of the plays Shakespeare authored on his own, is positioned first in a posthumous collection of his dramatic works? How does the structure of the volume—and *The Tempest*’s position within that structure—inform our reading of the play and our understanding of Shakespeare?
- What would it have meant to buy the First Folio as an early modern reader? Who and / or what are readers buying into? Why spend so much money on a book? What power and promise did a book such as the First Folio hold for its readers? Does the prefatory material offer any clues to help you answer these questions?
- What is print format? How does it influence the kinds of books you choose or decline to buy? Think, for instance, of hardbacks, trade paperbacks and mass market paperbacks. Which are of higher quality? What kinds of books do you associate with each? In what format, for instance, is “serious literature” most often published? In what format is genre fiction—such as romance or thrillers—published? What does print format communicate to a reader, whether about a book’s content or its price? With this in mind, what were the potential benefits and pitfalls of publishing Shakespeare’s works in folio—rather than quarto—format? To whom was the book

most commercially accessible? Were there incentives for buying the book if it was a little (or very) out of a buyer's price range? How does the prefatory material of the First Folio explain or justify its lavish choice of format? In what ways was the folio format a practical choice? For instance, does a larger format make better sense when publishing a book containing so many works? How does format in this way not only tell us something about a book's audience, but also about the pragmatisms or realities of publishing?

## PUBLISHING & PRINTING

How *The Tempest* and the other plays in the First Folio were prepared for publication raises important questions about editorial practice and print production, both of which have a tremendous impact on the final presentation of a text—and which can remain largely invisible to its readers. The story of how the First Folio was published and printed also makes legible some important differences between the publishing industry as it existed in the early modern period as opposed to today. Whereas modern readers use the word “publisher” to refer to the person or company that prepares books and other written works for publication, “no one in Shakespeare’s London would have known what a ‘publisher’ was” (Rasmussen 18). At the time, these persons—and anyone else “involved in any aspect of the bookselling trade”—were called “stationers” (Rasmussen 18). These persons might include “printers, publishers, booksellers and bookbinders,” all of whom were subject to regulation by “guild” known as the Stationers’ Company (Rasmussen 18). In the early modern period, publishers were responsible for “acquir[ing] the manuscript” to be published and then “register[ing] his right to it in the Stationers’ Register,” a comprehensive list that detailed who held the copyright to which texts (Rasmussen 18). Copyright thus operated somewhat differently than it does now, and it was a recurring source of trouble during the preparation and production of the First Folio manuscript—a topic to which we will soon return. Publishers were also responsible for hiring a printer and, together, they would “decide on the format, type size and design, paper quality and number of copies” (Rasmussen 18). Publishers not only provide printers with the manuscript to be printed, but also with the paper necessary to complete the job. Information about an early modern book’s publisher(s) and printer(s) is usually located on the title page, as well as about “the bookshop (usually the publisher’s own) where copies of the book could be purchased” (Rasmussen 18). The First Folio’s title page lists Isaac Jaggard and Ed. Blount as printers. We now know that Edward Blount was in fact the publisher of the First Folio and that “the printing of the Folio was done entirely in the workshop of William Jaggard and his son, Isaac” (Rasmussen 19).

Blount was an important player, so to speak, in the early modern print landscape, publishing major works including John Florio’s translation of Montaigne’s *Essays* (1603, 1613), Thomas Shelton’s translation of Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* (1612, 1620) and a poetry anthology that included one poem by Shakespeare (Rasmussen 24). He also held the copyrights to *Pericles* and *Antony and Cleopatra* though, “oddly...he did not publish either title” (Rasmussen 21). They, like *The Tempest*, would be published for the first time in the Folio. The Jaggards, on the other hand, “had long-standing connections with London theatre professionals” (Rasmussen 23). The Folio’s epistle to the readers claims that Heminge and Condell—“Shakespeare’s friends and fellow actors in the King’s Men”—initiated the publishing endeavor that would become the First Folio, but some scholars believe it was the elder Jaggard “who approached the King’s Men to obtain access to Shakespeare’s texts” (Rasmussen 23). The King’s Men’s consent was legally required per royal decree, as the Jaggards knew only too well: they had attempted in 1619 to “publish a collected edition of Shakespeare’s play in quarto,” but failed to obtain the consent of Shakespeare’s acting company, which was required by order of the Lord

Chamberlain (Rasmussen 20). As it turned out, the actors would prove instrumental to any publishing project—whether small- or large-scale—involving Shakespeare’s works. Their involvement (or lack thereof) would decide any given project’s fate. Ultimately, whether it was the acting company or the Jaggards who proposed the project is incidental. What is clear is that “at some point”—with the consent of the King’s Men—“a syndicate of publishers was formed,” with Blount “likely join[ing] the project later, as his name is missing from a 1622 advertisement” (Rasmussen 23).

It has been said that “[n]o two copies of the Folio are known to be exactly identical” (Higgins 39). The differences between copies are in part the result of problems that emerged during the publishing syndicate’s attempt to secure copyright for each of the plays printed (or reprinted) in the Folio, as well as editorial practice and printer’s errors. “Of the thirty-six plays in the Folio,” Gabriel Egan notes, “twenty had not previously been published” (69) and for sixteen of these plays (including *The Tempest*) “the Folio is our only early edition...and any modern edition must be based on it and supplemented only by the editor’s ability to spot and correct errors in the script” (70). In the case of some of the plays that had been published previously, Blount and the Jaggards had to secure copyright from another publisher. They came to agreements with John Smethwick and William Aspley, “who owned copyrights of five plays published in quarto”—and who joined the project as shareholders (Rasmussen 24). Other publishers were not so willing to negotiate. The Jaggards and Blount struggled to secure rights to *Richard II* and *1 Henry IV* from Matthew Law, forcing the printers “to skip over these plays” and disrupt the chronological order of the portion of the Folio containing Shakespeare’s historical works (Rasmussen 24). According to Rasmussen, “the prospects for securing rights to *Troilus and Cressida* from Henry Walley were apparently so uncertain that the play was removed from its position following *Romeo and Juliet* and left off the table of contents”—and “some copies of the First Folio were sold without it” (24-5). After securing the copyright late in the process, the printers were able to “insert[t]” it “at the last minute...between the ‘Histories’ and the ‘Tragedies’” (Rasmussen 25). Difficulties securing copyright in this way affected the organizational logic of the first Folio in detrimental ways.

The manuscripts upon which the First Folio was based were also sites of trouble. Scribes were hired to compile a master manuscript that the printers would set to type. However much the publishers may have aimed for consistency, these scribes each had their own editorial preferences and quirks—and these made their way into the text of the First Folio. Ralph Crane, who transcribed a handful of plays—*The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter’s Tale*, *Cymbeline* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—used a style so identifiable that scholars “can tell from the spellings, punctuation and layout of these six plays that the Folio printers’ copy was a Crane transcript” (Egan 70 and 71). They exhibit a set of “highly distinctive habits of writing,” including: massed entrances of characters, regular act and scene divisions, extensive and literary stage directions, the expansion of abbreviations (even when it disrupts the metrical integrity of a line of iambic pentameter), distinctive spellings, the frequent use of certain punctuation marks, and the writing of prose that does not fill the line and so looks to be verse (Egan 71). “The rewriting of stage directions,” according to Egan, “is particularly intrusive” (71). While it is somewhat reassuring to know that scholars possess a thorough enough understanding of Crane’s style that they can sometimes differentiate between “Crane’s involvement” and Shakespeare’s, there still lurks the unsettling possibility that we cannot always know what was of the author’s creation—what reflects his intentions—and what was not. Students familiar with the information surveyed in Unit 5, for instance, will know that many of Crane’s stylistic preferences appear frequently in *The Tempest*. For instance, the play is known for its amplified and

descriptive stage directions, as well as its use of abbreviated words and irregular meter. How much these stylistic traits are Shakespeare's doing is not entirely clear.

Oddities and errors were also produced during the printing process, which consisted of the following steps: "First, the team assembled the 'copy-texts,' which were the source documents from which the Folio was printed"—these included, of course, Crane's transcripts of *The Tempest* (Higgins 31). After the transcripts were given one last round of editing, the printers began the process of "casting-off," wherein they "marked on the copy-text where a printed Folio page would begin and end...and when a new section of paper was needed" (Higgins 32). Casting-off produced a rough estimate of what the book would like and how much paper would be required. It was an inevitably inexact process and it could interfere with the intended format or layout of a given text. As Higgins observes, "The workmen who cast-off the Folio texts frequently made bad estimates of how many pages a play would require, leading to one of the major ways the Folio texts were altered during printing: bad estimates forced compositors to expand or compress the text to match the estimate" (32). Next, the printers converted the copy-text "into metal type to be inked and printed" (Higgins 33). Typesetting was intricate and also tedious work, requiring the printers to set individual pieces of type for each letter and space on a page: "To set a page of text," as B. D. R. Higgins tells us, "a compositor placed the copy-text in front of him" and then "manually picked out, letter by letter and space by space, the corresponding individual pieces of metatype (known as 'sorts') from large wooden cases in front of him" (36). Typesetters were also responsible for providing "signatures" that were printed on each page. These signatures—which consist of some combination of letters followed by numbers—helped the bookbinder put the printed sheets in order. They tend to be "more reliable than the page numbers" of the Folio which are, as it turns out "wrong in several places" (34). Typesetters also committed other, unknowing errors. Sometimes they inadvertently "eye-skipped" over words or entire lines of the text—much as we sometimes do when reading a book or revising a piece of writing—or "repeated words or lines" (Higgins 37). They occasionally "transposed sections of text to the wrong place, mistranscribed and contaminated their source material," or by accident took letters "from the wrong compartment" which, upon being inserted into the text, produced "a form of early typo" (Higgins 37). This overview of the publishing and printing process demonstrates what Higgins argues: "the industrial context of publishing, formatting and finding an audience has dramatic consequences for the material that is produced" (36). Differences in scribal styles and errors committed during the printing process "changed the original text in ways that create important modern questions of interpretation" (Higgins 37). The First Folio's promises of exclusive and unmediated access to Shakespeare's plays in their "originall" form—and to the playwright himself—were doomed to fail.

These questions surrounding editorial practice and printer error are important because they continue to influence how we experience and interpret Shakespeare's plays today. We are no more equipped to discern what Shakespeare intended than were his early modern contemporaries. As Anston Bosman points out in his account of Shakespeare in translation, "editing is a kind of translation"—one to which the plays have always been subject, whether printed in English or in another language (292). We assume that if translation inevitably necessitates a loss, reading a work in its original language does not—that it offers direct access to text at hand. But as the publication history of the First Folio demonstrates, this is most certainly not the case. Editorial intervention possesses just as much impact on the integrity of a text as do the choices a translator is forced to make when converting a work of literature into a new language. The medium in which a text is rendered is also consequential. This is especially relevant to *The*

*Tempest* which, alongside the emergence and rise of digital media, has transformed as acting companies incorporate into their performances technologies that did not exist in Shakespeare's time. The Royal Shakespeare Company will soon put on a production of *The Tempest* that deploys what the play's directors call "twenty-first-century magic." Partnering with Intel, they are using digital media and motion capture technology to bring the world of the island to life. Whether or not this insertion of new media into the play is true to its spirit—or instead amounts to another stylistic interference—is something students might debate in class.

#### CLOSE READING

Have students compare *The Tempest* as printed in the First Folio to a modern edition of the play. Alternatively, they might compare a modern anthology of Shakespeare's dramatic works to the First Folio, focusing on a specific part of the text, such as the title page or a particular play. As they do so, they should consider the following questions:

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is an editor? What is a publisher? A printer? In what ways do their roles overlap? How are they different? In what ways does each shape a text as it appears in its final printed form? What kinds of choices are they required to make in the process of preparing a text for publication and then seeing its publication through? How might these choices be helpful to readers? And how might they, on the other hand, interfere with the integrity of a text?
- How is the job of an editor similar to that of a translator? In what way is editing an act of translation? Do we see these similarities—or translations—at work when we compare the First Folio to a modern edition of Shakespeare's plays? In what ways? What remains the same and what is different? What do we make of these differences? To consider these questions in depth, students might focus on a specific passage of *The Tempest* as printed in the First Folio versus a newer edition.

#### MAKING SHAKESPEARE

The First Folio both builds on and makes a case for the reputation of an author whose canonicity is now unquestioned. The Jaggards had, in fact, begun to do so decades earlier. "In 1599, in what may have been the earliest attempt to capitalize on Shakespeare's then growing reputation, [William] Jaggard brought out an anthology of poems entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim*" (Rasmussen 19). Only a handful of poems in the collection were authored by Shakespeare and yet the volume's contents were advertised as the work of "W. Shakespeare" (Rasmussen 19). A second edition followed and it, too, credited poems written by other poets to the bard. Rasmussen describes *The Passionate Pilgrim* as an "opportunistic appropriation of Shakespeare's name" for commercial gain—one that indicates he might already have had a mass following as early as the late sixteenth century (19). Though the prefatory material of the First Folio most certainly takes great pains to "construc[t] the playwright whose works it preserves," we should also recognize how it might have exploited a knowledge of and reverence for Shakespeare that already existed among England's playgoers and readers.

At the same time, the First Folio's publication history and contexts complicate our understanding of and assumptions about the canonical Shakespeare we know today. This history—and Shakespeare's involvement in the King's Men, for that matter—remind us that while one man may have authored the plays, a team of people shaped and readied them for performance and for publication. Even as the First

Folio canonizes Shakespeare, it also brings to the fore the multitude of “personalities...who colluded in, collaborated towards and co-funded the creation of ‘Shakespeare’ as successive generations would come to know him” (Laoutaris 49). Laoutaris calls this collective author “Shakespeare, Inc.” (49). He argues that “[t]he emphasis” in the First Folio “is on the team who helped bring Shakespeare’s plays to life”—on how the genius that is “Shakespeare” is as much collaborative as it is singular (57). Shakespeare, in other words, is not only a man and an author, but also an institution—one who was a long time in the making and emerged only through careful, painstaking but also sometimes fortuitous execution. Throughout this guide, we have considered whether Shakespeare is an English or global author; whether he belongs to a particular nation of readers or a world of them; whether he is historically situated or timeless; whether he is an instrument of colonial power or one of anticolonial rebellion. The print history of the First Folio throws another wrench into the mix. Who is Shakespeare if he is not an individual, but a collective? This is in many ways the same question that *The Tempest*’s Prospero forces us to ask. Is Prospero an autonomous, powerful and exceptional individual? Or a collective comprised of characters as different as Miranda, Ariel and Caliban? How does our reading of Prospero change when we understand him not as an individual but as a multitude? And what does Prospero in this way tell us about Shakespeare? About our impulse to celebrate his mythic individuality at the expense of those many human actors who worked across space and time to produce that myth of individuality in the first place? About our inclination to claim him for our own—to dispossess the many others (and Others) who participated in his creation or inherited him? These are difficult and unsettling questions that *The Tempest* might help students to answer.

## ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECT IDEAS

- For a creative and at the same time analytical assignment, ask students to translate *The Tempest* (or even just one scene from the play) into a different medium (such as that of the graphic novel or film). Students might then present their translations to their peers—or write an accompanying reflective essay—that considers how this act of translation enhanced, modified or impoverished the play. What parts of the play remained intact? Were any enhanced or amplified? Was there anything lost in translation?
- Using the text of the First Folio, students should edit a scene from *The Tempest* for publication. Prior to beginning work on their “editions,” they should consider the following questions: who is their intended reading audience and how might this inform their editorial practice? For instance, are they editing an edition for kindergartners or high school students, and how do these audiences differ in their needs? What information would an edition need to include for it to be useful to the intended audience? How will students handle stylistic aspects of the text that might be difficult for modern readers to understand? Will they modernize spelling, for instance, or standardize punctuation? Will they “translate” seemingly archaic compound words and figures of speech into modern English for the ease of the reader? And what about format? Will the text preserve the distinction between meter and prose? And how will it be laid out and printed on the page, and why? Students might write reflective essays that outline their choices and consider the impact of their editorial practice. To do so, they might compare their finished “editions” to the text of the First Folio and close read a particular passage as printed in each.
- Ask students to write a biography of Shakespeare that puts aside the life story of the man and focuses instead on the team—“Shakespeare, Inc.”—that helped create the author we now celebrate. As they research and write their biographies, students might consider the following questions: Who should be included and why? From which places and times? Does the biography

of Shakespeare-as-collective stop with the First Folio? Does it extend through subsequent editions of the Folio and beyond Europe? Should it include those who have adapted Shakespeare's works? Should it include the literary critics who have interpreted and re-interpreted his plays over the course of centuries? How do these biographies recast Shakespeare? What do they tell us about the English canon, or about literary history? About the very notion of an author or a literary text?



## UNIT 7 • THE ANNUAL STUDENT CONFERENCE

**OBJECTIVE:** To prepare students to make the most of the Annual Student Conference through active engagement; and to provide strategies for building student confidence, addressing concerns, and setting expectations for conference participation.

### ABOUT THE CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKER: MARGARET ATWOOD

This year, the Great World Texts program will welcome Margaret Atwood to the Annual Student Conference. Students from across the state will have the rare opportunity to engage her in a conversation about *Hag-Seed*, her recent novelistic adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. This interaction is the core component of the Annual Student Conference.

Margaret Atwood is a Canadian and award-winning author who grew up in northern Ontario and Quebec, and in Toronto. She received her undergraduate degree from Victoria College at the University of Toronto and her master's degree from Radcliffe College. She is the author of more than forty books of fiction, poetry, and critical essays. Her MaddAddam trilogy—the Giller and Booker prize-nominated *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013)—is currently being adapted for HBO. Her novels include *The Blind Assassin*, winner of the Booker Prize; *Alias Grace*, which won the Giller Prize in Canada and the Premio Mondello in Italy; and *The Handmaid's Tale*—coming soon as a TV series with MGM and Hulu.

When Atwood is asked to name her favorite author, she answers: Shakespeare. Her reasons are both humorous and telling: “First,” she writes, “so much of what we know about plots, characters, the stage, fairies and inventive swearwords comes from Shakespeare. Second, if you name a living author the other living authors will be made at you because it isn’t them, but Shakespeare is conveniently dead.” But it is her third rationale that is the most interesting: “Shakespeare refuses to be boxed in.” She continues:

Not only do we know very little about what he really thought, felt and believed, but the plays themselves are elusive. Just when you think you’ve got a meaning nailed down, your interpretation melts like jelly and you’re left scratching your head. Maybe he’s deep, very deep. Or maybe he didn’t have a continuity editor. And Shakespeare will never turn up on a talkshow and be asked to explain himself, the lucky devil.

“Shakespeare,” Atwood concludes, “is infinitely interpretable.” After reading *The Tempest*, students will know exactly what Atwood means. If it is Shakespeare’s most magical play, it may also be his most elusive. Atwood tell us we should embrace this elusivity. It was this quality that motivated her to write a chapter about *The Tempest* in her nonfiction book, *On Writers and Writing*, and to write an adaptation of *The Tempest*—called *Hag-Seed*—for Shakespeare’s 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary. “It was,” as she writes, “my first choice, by miles. It contains a great many unanswered questions as well as several very complex characters, and the challenge of trying to answer the questions and tease out the complexities was part of the attraction.” *The Tempest* is a challenge—one Atwood argues we should embrace in all of its slippery mess.

*Hag-Seed*’s main character, Felix, is a modern rendering of Prospero. Having been unceremoniously

ousted from his role as Artistic Director of the Makeshiweg Festival, he lands a job teaching theatre in a prison and begins to devise a plan for revenge. The prison setting might seem odd at first, but Atwood explains that upon re-reading the text struck her in a new way—it took her by surprise. She began “counting up the prisons and imprisonments in the book” and realized “[t]here are a lot of them” — they’re everywhere, once you start looking. Each character, as it turns out, “is constrained at some point in the play.” Readers have focused on the play’s magical character—indeed, this teaching guide does extensively—but Atwood was intrigued by the overarching question of constraint, which runs throughout the text and has been largely overlooked. “So,” she writes, “I decided to set my novel in a prison” (“A perfect storm”). Atwood’s keynote address will offer students an opportunity to think through the many questions raised in *The Tempest*—the majority of which possess no easy answers. Her experience writing *Hag-Seed*, too, will help students to think through questions ranging from the possibilities and challenges of adaptation, and why we continue to read Shakespeare at present.

### ON MEETING AN AUTHOR

Meeting an author is a thrilling experience, but it might also prove a nerve-wracking one for students. To prepare students for this event, consider the following in advance of the conference: What are the expectations for students’ behavior? What kinds of questions should they ask and how will they present their work to the keynote speaker? How can they best prepare for this meeting? What should teachers do if students are nervous, disruptive or unprepared? The preparatory materials listed below will help you and your students to develop a deeper sense of Atwood’s work, as well as what to expect at the Annual Student Conference and how to prepare for it.

### PREPARATORY MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

Author Website

<http://margaretatwood.ca>

Margaret Atwood, “A perfect storm: Margaret Atwood on rewriting Shakespeare’s *Tempest*”

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/sep/24/margaret-atwood-rewriting-shakespeare-tempest-hagseed>

Alexandra Alter, “Novelists Reimagine and Update Shakespeare’s Plays”

[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/06/books/novelists-reimagine-and-update-shakespeares-plays.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/06/books/novelists-reimagine-and-update-shakespeares-plays.html?_r=0)

Amy Carlton, “Celebrated author looks to the past and future for inspiration”

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2016/05/31/newsmaker-margaret-atwood/>

Lynn Neary, “Now is not the time for realistic fiction, says Margaret Atwood”

<http://www.npr.org/2015/09/30/444775853/now-is-not-the-time-for-realistic-fiction-says-margaret-atwood>

### ADDITIONAL READINGS & RESOURCES

Cooperative Children’s Book Center (UW-Madison), “Tips on Hosting an Author/Illustrator Visit”

<http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/authors/tips.asp>

Dane Gutman, “The Perfect Author Visit” – tips for preparing students to meet the keynote speaker

<http://dangutman.com/school-visitskypes/the-perfect-author-visit/>

Suzanne Roberts, “How to Talk to a Writer”

<http://the-how-to.tumblr.com/post/32877145596/how-to-talk-to-a-writer>

Jo Walton, “How to Talk to Writers”

**POINTS FOR LECTURE:**

- *Prepare your students for meeting Margaret Atwood.* Emphasize that, like all people, our keynote speaker could be nervous, excited, happy, sad, shy, in a good or bad mood, etc. Show clips of her doing interviews, and show the class her photograph so they can think of her as an individual from the start.
- *Emphasize being courteous and respectful.* Those students designated to ask questions during the keynote should always greet and thank Atwood, introduce him- or herself by name and school affiliation, and *then* ask a question. Encourage students to make eye contact, and to be polite and confident!
- *Help students avoid feelings of anxiety.* Focus on the experience, not the “performance” or act of talking to Atwood. Emphasize that she is coming to the conference precisely because she is interested in and excited about the ideas students have developed as they’ve read *The Tempest*. She came all the way to Wisconsin just to talk to us—know that she thinks students have something to say that is worth hearing. Emphasize that this is a dialogue, meaning that student voices matter. Atwood wants to hear from students as much as they want to hear from her.
- *Encourage them to be specific.* Don’t just say: “I love this book!” Students should be prepared to articulate what they loved most about it. In preparation, ask students to consider what was most inspiring, thought-provoking or challenging about the text. They should also consider what they hope to learn about *The Tempest* and its life in adaptation from Atwood.
  - *Tips for asking questions.* Avoid yes or no questions. Instead, ask questions that allow room for thought and interpretation. Consider, too, the “lead in” to the question. Students should give a little context to let the author know where they’re coming from. For example: “Why did Shakespeare choose [X]?” would be a much more interesting question if the student first explained what about [X] is interesting or confusing to him or her. For instance: “I loved this character, but was confused by some of his choices, such as [EXAMPLE]. Why do you think Shakespeare chose to have him do [this or that]? How did you reinterpret or negotiate this aspect of the text in *Hag-Seed*?”
- *Be prepared.* Ask students to think about how Atwood might react to a given question. Once you’ve chosen which questions to ask the keynote speaker, role-play possible answers as a class. Prepare a list of follow-up questions, too.
- *On decorum.* This conference is a serious academic affair and a lot of planning has gone into this event by teachers, students, UW faculty and staff, etc. The people in attendance have traveled far and spent months preparing for this event. Disruptive, discourteous or disrespectful behavior is unacceptable. Teachers whose students do not follow the decorum guidelines are expected to remove students immediately from the room.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- How would you like to be treated (or not) if you were the keynote speaker? If you were a student from another school?
- What questions do you most want answered? What do you want to know about *The Tempest* and its many adaptations, including *Hag-Seed*?

### ASSIGNMENTS, ACTIVITIES & PROJECT IDEAS:

- Hold a conference dress rehearsal. If your group of participating students is small, this might consist of each student giving a brief but formal presentation of her project, followed by a question and answer session. If your group of participating students is large, split them into two groups. Have one group present their projects first and the other second. Students will alternate between presenting and viewing, just as they will on the day of the official conference.
- Read *Hag-Seed* and / or research Atwood's work on *The Tempest*. Students can also get excited about her visit by studying her background and oeuvre.
- Role-play meeting Atwood. Have students prepared with questions, and practice asking and answering them. What questions got the best (or worst) answers? Why?
- Brainstorm productive questions. In small groups, students should write down as many questions as they can think of to ask Atwood. Then switch questions with other groups and select those which seem best and those which seem least effective. Use this as the basis for a discussion about how we decide if a questions is "good" or "bad"? (Hint: the least effective questions are those that are too easy to answer, produce obvious answers, or could easily be answered by anyone reading the book.) You might have students revise with this discussion in mind, practicing how to construct a clear, direct and interesting question.

## THE TEMPEST: A PRELIMINARY LIST OF ADAPTATIONS

### FILM & TELEVISION

- “Yellow Sky” (1948). Directed by William A. Wellman (USA). English. Western.
- “Forbidden Planet” (1956). Directed by Fred M. Wilcox (USA). English. Science Fiction.
- “Resan till Melonia” / “The Journey to Melonia” (1989). Directed by Per Åhlin (Sweden). Swedish.
- “Prospero’s Books” (1991). Directed by Peter Greenway (UK). English.
- “The Tempest” (2010). Directed by Julie Taymor (USA). English.

### FINE ART

- William Hogarth. “Scene from Shakespeare’s The Tempest” (ca. 1735):  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:William\\_Hogarth\\_017.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:William_Hogarth_017.jpg)  
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/nov/14/arts.education>
- J.W. Waterhouse. “Miranda – The Tempest” (1916):  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Miranda\\_-\\_The\\_Tempest\\_JWW.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Miranda_-_The_Tempest_JWW.jpg)

### LITERATURE

- W.H. Auden. “The Sea and the Mirror” (1944).
- August Boal. *A Tempestade / The Tempest* (1979).
- Robert Browning. “Caliban upon Setebos” (1864).
- Aimé Césaire. *Une Tempête* (1969).
- Roberto Fernández Retamar. “Caliban: Notes Toward a Discussion of Culture in Our America” (1971).
- George Lamming. *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960).
- John McDonald. *The Tempest: The Graphic Novel* (2009).
- Nkem Nwankwo. “Caliban to Miranda” (1969).
- Ernest Renan. *Caliban: A Philosophical Drama Continuing the Tempest of William Shakespeare* (1877).
- Adrienne Rich. “After Dark” (1966).
- José Enrique Rodó. “Ariel” (1900).
- Percy Bysshe Shelley. “With a Guitar – To Jane” (1822).
- Kyō Shirodaira. *Blast of Tempest* (2009-2013).
- Ngugi wa Thiong’o. “Towards a National Culture” (1972).

### MUSIC

- Marianne Faithfull. “Full Fathom Five” (1965):  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Xne9T\\_qPzU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Xne9T_qPzU)
- Pete Seeger. “Full Fathom Five” (1966):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grhjUGzA9jA>

- Jean Sibelius. "The Tempest (*Stormen*), Op. 19" (1925-6):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPrDP0e3edU>  
[http://www.sibelius.fi/english/musiikki/nayttamo\\_myrsky.htm](http://www.sibelius.fi/english/musiikki/nayttamo_myrsky.htm)
- Arthur Sullivan. "The Tempest incidental music, Op. 1" (1861):  
<http://www.gilbertandsullivanarchive.org/sullivan/tempest/>  
<http://www.gilbertandsullivanarchive.org/sullivan/tempest/times1862.html>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtDymTHeJ9Q>
- Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. "The Tempest, Symphonic Fantasia after Shakespeare, Op. 18" (1873):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyID7dxY4qo> [http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/The\\_Tempest](http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/The_Tempest)

## THEATRE

- "The Tempest." Directed by Declan Donnellan (Moscow: 2011-14).  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/8442454/The-Tempest-Barbican-review.html>
- "The Tempest." Directed by Lear de Bessonet (New York: 2013).  
<http://www.nytimes.com/video/nyregion/100000002414641/tempest-in-the-city.html>
- "The Tempest." Directed by Geoff Elliott & Julia Rodriguez-Elliott (Pasadena, CA: 2014).  
<http://www.latimes.com/tn-gnp-20141021-story.html>
- "The Tempest." Adapted and directed by Tae-Suk Oh. (Seoul, 2014).  
<http://lamama.org/the-tempest/>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2011/aug/15/the-tempest-review>  
<http://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/tempest-oh-tae-suk-2011/>
- "The Tempest." Directed by John Bell (Sydney, 2015).  
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/stage/john-bells-the-tempest-proves-a-magical-journey/news-story/d111af29b82a98e092b074c752af0a1d>
- "The Tempest." Directed by The Red Door Theater Company (Pasadena, TX: 2016).  
<http://www.houstonpress.com/event/the-tempest-8561113>
- "The Tempest." Directed by Gregory Doran. (Stratford-Upon-Avon, 2016-7).  
<https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/about-the-play>  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/such-stuff-as-dreams-are-made-on-ariel-to-appear-as-3d-digital-a/>

## WHAT IS A CLOSE READING?

Close reading is a specific method of literary analysis that uses the interpretation of a small piece of text as a way to think about the whole. This kind of analysis invites readers to pay close attention to the effects of the specific words on the page. We ask ourselves *why* each word was chosen, *how*, it contributes to the broader themes and ideas of the text, and *how* it interacts with other words / images in the text. While there is no “right” way to analyze a text, there are more or less compelling ways of interpreting different passages. The steps below are intended to help you persuasively close read a passage in a literary text (though the skills you develop are applicable to the close reading and analysis of any text anywhere):

1. *Summary*. Read the passage once without making any annotations. Start by asking yourself: What is going on here? Who is speaking? What is the speaker / character / narrator saying? In what context? If you are unable to write a 1-2 sentence summary of the passage, read through it again until you have a clearer idea. Don’t panic if you’re unsure. Many texts are deliberately ambiguous or confusing—it is not always possible to articulate in definite terms what is happening.
2. *Mood & Tone*. The second time you read through the passage, consider the overall mood created by the writing. Is it comic, tragic, sinister, serious? How would you describe its tone and its attitude? Formal, playful, ironic? Does the writer use understatement or exaggeration?
3. *Literary Devices*. Circle / underline the specific words, images and literary devices which contribute to the mood and tone you have identified. These might include any of the following:
  - a. Unusual vocabulary or diction (archaic words, neologisms, foreign imports, slang, colloquialisms). Use a dictionary if you need to look up words you don’t recognize. (Try [www.askoxford.com](http://www.askoxford.com))
  - b. Symbols: does the writer use images which would seem to represent something else?
  - c. Metaphors and similes
  - d. Striking comparisons or contrasts
  - e. Personification
  - f. Alliteration and / or onomatopoeia
  - g. Repetition
4. *Bigger picture*. Having considered these details, you can start to develop an overall interpretation of the passage. Consider the ways that your passage fits into the text as a whole. What do you think is the text’s main message? How does it contribute to the broader themes of the work? How do the particular literary devices you have identified help to emphasize, intensify or trouble the questions and issues with which the text is concerned?





