

ARTICLE

“Command these elements to silence”: Ecocriticism and *The Tempest*

David Gray 

Dalarna University, Sweden

Correspondence

David Gray, Dalarna University, Sweden.

Email: dgy@du.se

Abstract

As part of the response in the humanities to rising concerns of the human influence on the Earth system, ecocriticism – an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature focused on ecological and environmental concerns – became a major trend in literary and cultural studies by the first decade of the twenty-first century. This period also witnessed an increase in ecocritical studies of Shakespeare's works, which have continued to proliferate. It is timely therefore to consider those individual works that have interested ecocritics and featured in ecocritical studies. This article will provide just such a consideration of Shakespeare's final play, *The Tempest* (1611), providing a critical review of the play's ecocritical studies thus far, and drawing attention to central ideas and common themes in the process. Finally, the article offers its own ecocritical analysis of the play, based on historical accounts of a catastrophic tidal event that took place in south-west England, in 1607.

Leo Marx (1964) proposed that William Shakespeare's tragicomedy *The Tempest* (1611) be considered an allegory for the New World, in the midst of the social and cultural upheaval of the 1960s.¹ Subsequent critical readings of Shakespeare's final play readily adopted this interpretation and became increasingly influenced by the prevalent political radicalisms of the era – feminist, anti-racist and environmentalist – through their literary theoretical *noms de plume*: feminism, post-colonialism and ecocriticism. Feminist and postcolonial studies of the play flourished during the latter half of the twentieth century. Ecocritical studies of *The Tempest* are, however, a more recent development,

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2020 The Author. *Literature Compass* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

which as this article will show have repeatedly drawn on postcolonial and new historicist criticism; historical and recent developments in the natural sciences; as well as key studies from the vast corpus of Shakespeare scholarship to offer insightful and imaginative interdisciplinary readings of the play.

In broad terms, the first decade of the twenty-first century witnessed a proliferation of ecocritical studies of Shakespeare's works (primarily his plays), the effect of which was to more or less establish the field by the end of the "noughties."² The opening lines of Simon Estok's *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare* posit that "ecocriticism has become established as a credible area of study with increasing insights on Shakespeare" (2011, p. 1). Estok's accompanying note to these lines delineates an ecocriticism and Shakespeare corpus in support of his claim (2011, p. 127). Karen Raber's 2007 essay "recent ecocritical studies of english Renaissance literature" does however go beyond the inception – 1998 – suggested by Estok and adopts a much broader historiography.³ This new way of reading Shakespeare shares in a long history of critical attention to natural phenomena and the complex relationships between culture and nature in his writing, but is, at the same time, distinguishable from this tradition by way of its increasing awareness of the Anthropocene, or humanity's role as a geological agent affecting the Earth's climate and environment.

As part of this theory-based approach, *The Tempest* emerged as a play that tends to attract ecocritics and ecocritical inquiry. Ecocritical studies, the major examples of which are featured in this article, have highlighted and engaged with certain areas of the play. The storm of the play's opening scene, for example, has been analysed for its linguistic markers, stagecraft, as an analogy for political and psychological change, and as a faithful representation of extreme weather. Further, the play's setting hinges on a chief hallmark of the pastoral genre, whereby a contrast is made (often a moral one) between the country (simple, pure) and the city (byzantine, corrupt), in this case the island and Prospero's former city-home, in Milan.⁴ As a result, ecocritics have often found this application of the genre relevant to issues of ethics and environment. The play is also seen to be an important bearer of early-modern ideas on culture and science, especially in relation to understanding climate and the natural world. Similarly, others have analysed the play's capacity to anticipate later developments in the natural sciences, notably Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. Ultimately, the play is considered an important source for critical re-readings in light of a growing inclination towards interdisciplinary, environmentally informed literary studies, from the late twentieth century.

Accordingly, this essay will analyse five ecocritical studies of *The Tempest* by Jonathan Bate, Gabriel Egan, Glen A. Love, Downing Cless and Todd A. Borlik, presenting their main arguments in thematic sections, organised chronologically. The essay will then explore historical documents and a risk modelling report relating to an extreme weather event in England in 1607 due to its relevance to the ongoing debate on ecocritical analysis of the play.

1 | ONE VOICE FOR ARIEL?

Jonathan Bate's "a voice for Ariel" in a chapter from *The Song of the Earth* (2000) represents the first apparent, sustained ecocritical study of *The Tempest*. In Bate's analysis, it is possible to see how an ecocritical approach develops, from his earlier engagements with mid-to-late twentieth century new historicist and postcolonial readings of the play, typified by the work of critics and writers like Stephen Greenblatt, Stephen Orgel, Edward Kamau Brathwaite and Aimé Césaire (Bate, 1997, pp. 217–50). According to Bate's central argument, the emergence of an ecocritical reading of *The Tempest* can be represented in the transfer of reading Otherness from Caliban to Ariel:

The ecocritical project always involves speaking for its subject rather than speaking as its subject: a critic may speak as a woman or as a person of colour, but cannot speak as a tree. [...] But it is not easy for any of us to project ourselves into a character who is specifically non-human and is only gendered in a shadowy way. Perhaps that is why postmodern criticism has been almost silent about Ariel. (2000, p. 72).

According to Bate, the desire in literary theory to speak for, or on behalf of, the other, finds in the ecocritical project an other (the natural world) that is still unspoken for. Bate justifies the need to speak on behalf of nature, because of the threat to the biosphere from modern concepts of progress, founded, as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer argue, on the “dialectic” of enlightenment, which reveals that “technology is the instrument which enslaves nature and exploits the masses” (2000, p. 77; Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979).

Further, Bate offers an ecocritical reading of *The Tempest* based in the language of *négritude* (2000, p. 79). Bate quotes from Lawrence Buell's *The environmental imagination* (1996) to define *négritude* as “a traditional, holistic, non-metropolitan, nature-attuned myth of Africinity [and a] reaction to and critique of a more urbanized, ‘artificial’ European order.”⁵ In this “nature-attuned” mode, Bate challenges postcolonial readings of *The Tempest* that focus almost entirely on the relationship between Prospero and Caliban as part of a culture against culture debate: such is the reading of the play put forward by (Leo) Marx. For this reason, he contends that there is a need to draw attention to Caliban's closeness to nature, thus endorsing a key feature of *négritude* and promoting a culture against nature debate (2000, pp. 79–89).

The Ariel and nature conflation is facilitated further through a comparative analysis with the *Tempest*-inspired poem “With a Guitar. To Jane” by Percy Bysshe Shelley.⁶ Bate posits that art – in this case the guitar and Shelley's poem – are comparable to the harnessing of the power of Ariel, which similarly relies on the subjugation of nature, in each case the felling of a tree: “The price of art is the destruction of a living tree” (2000, p. 92). Wood for making a guitar, paper for printing a poem and Prospero's splitting of “The pine” are all complicit, according to Bate's reading, of art's subtly disguised abuse of nature (Shakespeare, 1.2.291–93).

Bate's ecocritical reading of *The Tempest* presents several tentative analyses that in context shifted critical attention towards a more environmentally minded interpretation of the play. As a result, Bate's chapter clearly set a precedent that has since opened the way for further ecocritical study.

2 | METAMORPHOSIS, TRANSMUTATION, COSTUME CHANGE

In Gabriel Egan's chapter “Supernature and the weather: *King Lear* and *The Tempest*” (2006) there are several noteworthy connections to Bate's essay, along with a number of new paths of enquiry. Bate's analysis of the relationship between science and nature in *The Tempest* identifies Francis Bacon's *Magnalia naturæ*, and the principle that knowledge is power and technology the essence of that knowledge, as key to understanding this relationship. Comparatively, Egan discusses scientific and technological progress in *The Tempest* in light of Isaac Newton's *Philosophiæ naturalis principia mathematica* and Newton's acknowledgment that progress derives from previous generations, epitomised in the often-quoted adage “standing on the shoulders of giants” (2006, p. 148). Bate and Egan, while using different sources, concur that this pervasive concept of progress has since the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment led to widespread, long-term adverse effects on the environment, and is the chief ideology against which the environmental movement of the 1960s emerged.

Another point of comparison with Bate's analysis is the chapter's engagement with colonisation. Egan cites numerous examples in the play where deforestation is inferred, notably in relation to Caliban's subjugated role in sourcing firewood for Prospero and Miranda. Using William Strachey's shipwreck account of the Virginia-bound *Sea Venture* off Bermuda, a frequently cited textual source for the play, Egan argues that an early audience would have understood the evident deforestation taking place on the island in terms of colonization, since the characters rarely mention the need to build a ship to leave the island, a feat which the marooned *Sea Venture* crew achieved.⁷ Egan points to several postcolonial studies that draw parallels between *The Tempest* and the Tudor conquest of (the island of) Ireland to show that in the play, as in Ireland, the prominence of deforestation can be interpreted as integral to the process of colonisation (2006, pp. 156–57).

These points of comparison with Bate's chapter highlight a number of early, common areas of ecocritical interest in the play, and yet Egan draws attention to other ecologically minded interpretations, such as the changes within

the life sciences available to Shakespeare. In this vein, Egan argues that *The Tempest* is “clearly concerned with the possibilities of transmutation, especially regarding human flesh,” though “most commonly understood [by literary commentators] as the influence of Ovid” (2006, p. 149). Egan cites B. J. Sokol's study of the “pearls that were his eyes” (1.2. 395–402) metaphor from Ariel's song, to show how Shakespeare understood recent discoveries in the life sciences – as in this case the accurate account of how pearls are formed (2006, pp. 149–50). According to Egan, this historical-biological idea of transmutation can also be applied to descriptions of Caliban, particularly Trinculo's initial (mis)perception of whether he (Caliban) is “a man or fish?” (2.2.24). This in turn fits well with an early-audience understanding that Caliban's and Ariel's costumes had been re-used in a sea-pageant staged in 1610 “on the Thames celebrating the investiture of Prince Henry as Prince of Wales”: a self-referential theatrical device that provides a visual motif for the process of transmutation (2006, p. 152).⁸

Egan contends, moreover, that Shakespeare's chief concern is with “the power to give the appearance of a transformation, belief in which then performs a real [psychological/emotional] transformation” on one or more characters (2006, p. 150). This theatrical trickery is skilfully illustrated by way of Ariel's account of the appearance of a storm to Prospero. In comparison to the Dover Cliff scene in *King Lear*, the audience is initially shocked and deceived to learn that the storm was unreal, since they “have no reason to suppose that the tumult of the first scene is an illusion created by Ariel” (2006, p. 151). Ultimately, it is the ambiguity of the knowledge behind Prospero's control (his “art”) over the physical world that Egan finds appealing for its “ecological significance” and consequently motivating in terms of an ecocritical study (2006, p. 153).

3 | “THE SCHOLARSHIP AND SCIENCE OF INTERVENING YEARS”⁹: THE TEMPEST AND CHARLES DARWIN'S THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Another ecocritical study of *The Tempest* that deals with later discoveries in the life sciences is Glen A. Love's journal article “Shakespeare's Origin of Species and Darwin's Tempest” (2010).¹⁰ Love begins by stating that *The Tempest* “is rich in its anticipation of Darwinian evolutionary theory ideas” (2010, p. 121). The two main theories applied in Love's article demonstrate the capacity for *The Tempest* to mediate between the humanities and the life sciences through the contemporary idioms of bioculture and applied cognitive science.¹¹

To clarify the distant historical connection of Shakespeare and Darwin, Love asserts: “What the comparison offers, I believe, is a surprisingly relevant science/humanities dialogue, not appreciably dimmed by the intervening gap of 250 years, on the most abiding and profound of subjects: nature, and especially human nature” (2010, p. 121). Love claims that in *The Tempest*, there is a long-lasting sense of “abeyance,” which continues to be resolved, in part, through discoveries in the life sciences (2010, p. 123). Quoting Kenneth Burke on drama and Mark Johnson on cognitive philosophy respectively, Love shows that the satisfying of an expectation or the satisfaction that comes with the completion of patterns depends upon a dialectic of the dénouement and a continued sense of abeyance in *The Tempest*. One key example of this, according to Love, can be shown by tracing Darwin's theories on evolutionary thinking and the question of human origins back to ideas in *The Tempest*, in particular through the character of Caliban.

Beginning with “the evolutionary-biological implications of its pastoral structure,” Love proposes that Marx's consideration of *The Tempest* as Shakespeare's American Fable and an implicitly pastoral play is foundational to an ecocritical thinking of the play – in this case, as an evolutionary fable (2010, p. 129).¹² Further, he maintains that literary pastoralism has a shared history with evolutionary history and adaptation. Whether from Arcadian, Persian, Roman or biblical narratives, Love suggests that Caliban fulfils a generic role, represented in one story of origin with the ancient Arcadians, who “were linked with animals, herding, and hunting, and led by the god Pan, who was half-man and half-animal and who copulated with both” (2010, p. 130). The ambiguity surrounding Caliban's identity as human or non-human, his attempts to rape Miranda and his core primal nature, support this evolutionary-pastoral nexus according to Love.

In addition, Love proposes that island ecology is a crucial facet of *The Tempest* that enhances Shakespeare's pastoral range. The separateness or experimentalism of an island setting for human interrelations is a decisive factor in *The Tempest* according to his island-ecology analysis.¹³ Love demonstrates the value of reading *The Tempest* through an island model put forward by ecologist Robert MacArthur and biologist E. O. Wilson – “dispersal, invasion, competition, adaptation, and extinction” – which works remarkably well to “describe the successive narrative action of *The Tempest*” (2010, p. 132).¹⁴ The chief interpretative claim being made here is that *The Tempest*, when read in this way, provides a host of features relatable to ideas in biogeography and, by extension, evolutionary biology. As Egan demonstrated, when confronted with Prospero's relentless gathering of wood, an early audience would have understood this deforestation in the context of colonisation (2006, pp. 156–57). Love suggests that it is therefore productive to consider issues of colonisation in a biological sense using terms such as “invasion” and “competition.”

Furthermore, both Bate and Egan in their ecocritical studies of *The Tempest* have discussed transformations and metamorphoses in relation to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Yet Love develops on the analysis of Daniel Wilson's Darwinian study of *The Tempest* from 1873 (2010, pp. 124–25).¹⁵ Love argues for the consideration of long-term evolutionary interpretations of the lines by Ariel beginning “Full fathom five thy father lies” (1.2.395–402). Sokol and Egan both use early seventeenth century scientific discourse to discuss Ariel's lines, in part as a metaphor on the formation of pearls. Love shifts attention from the biological change suggested in Ariel's line “pearls that were his eyes” (1.2.397), to another example of natural transformation: “Of his bones are coral made” (1.2.396). The ability for coral to integrate or recycle bone into coral, shells or bones for sea-vertebrates is suggestive, according to Love, of the human origins first proposed by Darwin. Moreover, Trinculo's identification of Caliban upon first sight (spread flat on the ground and covered with his cloak) is of a half-fish, half-man: “What have we here? A man or a fish?” (2.2.24). According to Love, in this scene “Shakespeare seems to anticipate the Darwinian discovery that the evolutionary history of humans is to be found in the fossilized bodies of other animals, including sea animals” (2010, p. 134).¹⁶

Finally, the transition in literary-critical interpretation of Caliban that took place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is generally given as being from beast to noble savage and then to colonial oppressed Other. Yet the interest for Love lies in the connection made by Prospero to Caliban: “this thing of darkness I/Acknowledge mine” (5.1.289–90). For Love this can be interpreted as strong evidence for Shakespeare's anticipation of the Darwinian preposition of the animal origins of humans. While the proleptic linking of developments in the life sciences to *The Tempest* may seem to invest the play with an almost prophetic capacity, it should be noted that Love and several of the critics studied in this article embrace, at least in part, the New Historicist position that Shakespeare is studied for its modern significance as well as in its historical context. And for many ecocritics, this is a modern context where ecological and environmental lines of enquiry are highly relevant.

4 | ECO-PERFORMANCE AND THE TEMPEST

One of the opening claims in Downing Cless's essay “Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*” (2010) confronts the speculation surrounding the lack of primary or central sources for these plays, which “has perplexed critics” (2010, p. 91). Cless highlights a wealth of critical analysis that testifies to the vast range of images about nature and Shakespeare's knowledge of the environment (his early education) within his plays. Accordingly, Cless contends that Shakespeare's “two most nature-laden plays” give a strong indication that “nature was Shakespeare's main source” (2010, p. 91).

As a result, Cless finds Shakespeare's childhood and early life in the Stratford area highly relative to the images of nature, environmental language and ecological knowledge found in *The Tempest*. According to Cless, reading Ovid, Virgil and possibly Lucretius at grammar school in Stratford would have provided Shakespeare with many of the ideas about nature that are reflected in *The Tempest*. Recent criticism of Shakespeare's eclectic reading habits and his experiences of rural life whilst living in Stratford appears to shed new light on Shakespeare's understanding and awareness of the natural world.¹⁷ Focusing on two recent biographies of Shakespeare by Greenblatt and Park

Honan, Cless argues that consensus can be found to consolidate A. L. Rowse's claim that Shakespeare was "an out-of-doors, country man; not an urban intellectual like [Christopher] Marlowe or [Ben] Jonson" (2010, pp. 93–4).¹⁸

Subsequently, Cless confirms: "Greenblatt and Honan convincingly argue that each play is original and heavily dependent on Shakespeare's memories, in the case of *Tempest* obviously overlaid on the Mediterranean island which he derives from several sources" (2010, p. 95). Aside from references to a pageant that included a dolphin-riding mermaid, which Shakespeare saw when he was 11 years old, Cless agrees with Honan that there is little evidence of any visit to the seashore and little chance for him to have seen a real dolphin. Essentially, Cless proposes that the main textual sources on islands and marine life for *The Tempest* included "recent travel accounts of newly explored islands alongside classical descriptions of ones off of Greece and Italy" and the accounts of the *Sea Venture* shipwreck off the Bermuda coast.

5 | CALIBAN, LINCOLNSHIRE FEN SPIRITS AND LOCAL WEATHER

In response to chiefly postcolonial readings of *The Tempest*, dominated by issues of New World colonialism, Todd A. Borlik's "Caliban and the fen demons of Lincolnshire" (2013) relocates critical attention from the Americas or parts of the Mediterranean to the fens of Lincolnshire in England:

During *The Tempest's* travels throughout the past century of criticism, England itself has been left off the itinerary. Historicist studies have been so fixated on the horizon that they have neglected to attend to relevant developments in Shakespeare's own milieu. (2013, p. 22).

Borlik contends that agrarian land-enclosure efforts to reclaim "the desolate fens of eastern England" and representation of "the region's eerie folklore" in key medieval texts offer convincing indigenous sources for *The Tempest* as a counterpoise to reports from the Mediterranean or the New World, which have become commonplace in historicist studies (2013, p. 22). For instance, a cursory glance through the section on "sources and contexts" in the Norton Critical Edition (2019) of *The Tempest* includes extracts from Strachey's "True Reportory" as well as other travel-account and fictional depictions of sea voyages and storms, all of which are set in the Mediterranean or the Americas.¹⁹

Borlik's call to reconsider Shakespeare's milieu has several companionable studies in this regard. Cless's argument for *Dream* considers the crop failures as a result of disastrous local weather conditions, towards the end of the sixteenth century: effects of the so-called "little ice age." Cless notes that Shakespeare had witnessed flooding on the Avon "that obstructed farming and ruined crops" (2010, p. 99). Moreover, though not relating specifically to *The Tempest*, Melissa Croteau mentions the "devastating flooding in 1607" in her discussion of apocalyptic narratives and Shakespeare (2009, p. 16). Considering the appeal of abnormal climactic-conditions to an ecocritical study, it is surprising that the tempestuous weather, and subsequent flooding, of the west coast of England in 1607 has been little discussed with regard to *The Tempest*.

A recent retrospective risk-management report asserts that the 1607 flooding "caused the largest loss of life from any sudden onset natural catastrophe in the United Kingdom during the past 500 years" and remains "the most catastrophic flood in western Britain" ("1607 Bristol," 2007, p. 1). This report argues that despite suggestions that the floods were the result of a tsunami, the evidence supports "the theory that the event was a wind driven storm surge superimposed on an extreme spring tide" (2007, p. 7). Pamphlets describing this event were sold by printers "who also published Shakespeare, operating out of the churchyard of St Paul's in London" (2007, p. 2). Some examples from these pamphlets provide accounts of an extreme weather event that can be interpreted as viable figurative sources for *The Tempest*:

In a short tyme did whole villages stand like Islands (compassed rounde with waters) and in a more short time were those Islands vndiscoverable, and no where to be found. The tops of trees and houses onely appeared (especially there where the Countrey lay lowe,) as if at the beginning of the world townes had been builte in the bottome of the Sea, and that people had plaide the husbandmen vnder the Waters. (A true report, 1607, para. 6).

The islands in this case are neither Mediterranean nor Caribbean, but an area of rural countryside in Somersetshire; flooding affected counties on either side of the Severn Estuary including Shakespeare's neighbouring county Gloucestershire.

Another pamphlet account of the event, which includes a striking woodcut of a galleon in stormy waters, titled *Gods warning to his people of England* includes this description:

Sometimes it so dazled the eyes of many of the Spectators, that they immagined it had bin some fogge or miste, comming with great swiftnes towards them: and with such a smoke, as if Moun|taynes were all on fire: and to the view of some, it seemed as it: [millions] of thousandes of Arrowes had bin shot foorth all at one time, which came in such swift|nes, as it was verifly thought, that the Fowles of the ayre could scarce fly so fast, such was the threatning furies thereof...(p. 5).

The description of the event bears similarities to the account of the tempest provided by Ariel to Prospero:

ARIEL. I flamed amazement. Sometimes I'd divide.
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards, and bowsprit would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the precursors.
O' th' dreadful thunderclaps, more momentary.
And sight-outrunning were not. The fire and cracks.
Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune.
Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,
Yea, his dread trident shake (1.2.198–206).

The style and content of the flood account embodies imaginative visions of flaming mountains or clouds, which contained the "threatning furies thereof". Ariel has been referred to as "Fury-like" and in the same way his supernatural effects of a storm appear analogous to the "real" account from *Gods warning to his people of England*.²⁰

Furthermore, the account from *Gods warning to his people of England* also includes a story regarding a maid stranded by the flood waters on a temporary island. Several rescue attempts are related until "At last some of her friends, deuised a deuise, and tyed two broad Troughes the one to the other, (such as in those countreys they vse to salt Bacon in) and put therin two lustie strong men [...] (as if they had bin boates)" ("Gods warning," p. 10). The writer of the pamphlet then expresses in great surprise the scene that confronted the two rescuers:

The Hill or Banke where the maide abode all that space was all so couered ouer, with wilde beastes and vermin, that came thither to séeke for succour that she had much adoe to saue her selfe, from taking of hurt by them: and much a-doe she had to kéepe them from créel|ping vpon and about her, she was not so much in daunger of the Water on the one side: as she was troubled with these Uermin on the other side (*Gods warning*, p. 10).

This passage includes several parallels with the plot of *The Tempest*: a young woman trapped on an island overrun with wild, threatening beasts, as well as men enduring rough waters to arrive at the island.

Further, the writer remarks that the girl is saved by an unseen act of divine intervention: "But the Almighty God, who is the Creator of all good things, when he thought meete, sent his holy Angell to commaund the Waters to cease their fury" ("Gods warning," p. 9). The passage compares favourably to the Boatswain's charge to Gonzalo during the storm at sea in the opening scene: "You are a councillor: if you can command these elements to silence and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a rope more." (1.1.18–20). Prospero's supernatural control over the elements becomes of course the chief irony, for the reader/audience, behind the Boatswain's rhetorical statement. Comparatively, it is also Prospero's apparent act of controlling the waters in scene one that serves to save/rescue Miranda from a life trapped on the island.

In other words, the island setting, the arrival of a boat of men and a guiding force able to cease the power of the waves are all features of *The Tempest*, suggesting that the pamphlets describing the human-environmental turmoil surrounding the 1607 flooding are worth considering as alternative textual sources. Ultimately if, as argued by Borlik, Caliban can be considered to some extent a composite figure of folkloric spirits and mythical beasts from the Lincoln fens, so too can reports of disastrous flooding on the River Severn, a stranded maid, strange new beast-infested island homes and supernatural forces be considered part of the purview of *The Tempest*.

ORCID

David Gray  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0454-8255>

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See the chapter "Shakespeare's American Fable" in Leo Marx, *The machine in the garden* (1964/2000) 26–47. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *A Norton critical edition* (second ed.), Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman (eds.) (New York, W. W. Norton: 2019). All further citations to the play and to relevant commentary by its editors are from this edition.
- ² Since 2000, Gabriel Egan's *Green Shakespeare: From ecopolitics to ecocriticism* (2006), Robert Watson's *Back to nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (2006), and Daniel Brayton's *Shakespeare's Ocean: An ecocritical Exploration* (2012), are three books entirely devoted to ecocritical studies of Shakespeare. Essay collections and books on ecocritical studies of early modern english literature that feature readings of Shakespeare, include Palgrave Macmillan's collection titled *Early modern ecostudies: From the florentine codex to Shakespeare* (Thomas Hallock, Ivo Kamps and Karen L. Raber eds. 2008); from Routledge, Downing Cless's *Ecology and environment in European drama* (2010) and Todd A. Borlik's *Ecocriticism and Early modern english literature* (2011). Ashgate have also published a collection of essays on various ecocritical studies of Shakespeare, *Ecocritical Shakespeare* (Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton eds. 2011).
- ³ See Karen Raber, "Recent ecocritical studies of english Renaissance literature," (2007). Sharon O'Dair's essay "The State of the Green" continues the task of reviewing extant ecocritical approaches to Shakespeare, and also problematizes the often nebulous definitions and methodologies that inform such approaches. O'Dair, "The state of the green: A review essay on Shakespearean ecocriticism" (2008).
- ⁴ Terry Gifford explains that "pastoral" was chiefly understood up to around 1610 as the representation of shepherds and a simpler, purer country form of living as opposed to the elaborate culture and moral corruption of city life. See the definitions of pastoral in Gifford's *Pastoral* (1999), pp. 1–12.
- ⁵ Lawrence Buell, *The environmental imagination: Thoreau, nature writing, and the formation of american culture* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard UP: 1995) p. 64.
- ⁶ It should be noted here that Bate's ecocritical project has its origins in the study of Romantic poetry, where he applied the notion of "romantic ecology," part of an environmental tradition in literature, in order to reassess the poetry of William Wordsworth. See Bate, *Romantic ecology: Wordsworth and the environmental tradition* (Abingdon, Routledge: 1991).
- ⁷ Egan perpetuates the popular critical view that William Strachey's *true reportory* (1625; a version of this account is supposed to have circulated in letter form prior to the first performance of *The Tempest*) was one, if not *the*, influential text behind *The Tempest*. Yet this contention has been challenged by a number of critics, notably in Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky's article "Shakespeare and The VOYAGERS revisited" (2007).

- ⁸ Rose McKenna adapts the notion of reuse (as a contemporary eco-friendly phenomenon), to analyse the concept of salvage in the play, in the article "Surviving *The Tempest*: Ecologies of salvage on the early modern stage" (2017). The essay, while not covered in this article, is very clearly part of the growing body of ecocritical work on *The Tempest*.
- ⁹ (Love, 2010, p. 128).
- ¹⁰ Published in *Configurations* - the society for literature, science, and the arts journal - this article testifies to the interdisciplinary development of ecocritical studies of *The Tempest* in the first decade of the 21st century.
- ¹¹ For further insight into the emerging field of "bioculture" see Lennard J. Davis and David B. Morris, "Biocultures manifesto," (2007).
- ¹² Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* is a recurrent source for most of the ecocritical studies of *The Tempest* examined here, and is cited in Bate, "A Voice for Ariel" 77; Love, "Shakespeare's Origin of species and Darwin's *Tempest*" 129; Downing Cless, "Shakespeare's *A midsummer night's dream* and *The Tempest*," *ecology and environment in European drama* 111, 112. See also Gifford, *Pastoral* 10; pp. 90-92.
- ¹³ As Love notes, Darwin was thinking in a similar way about islands as biological laboratories over 200 years later.
- ¹⁴ For the MacArthur and Wilson quote see "Footnote 35," taken from Robert H. MacArthur and Edward O. Wilson, *The theory of Island biogeography* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton UP: 1967) p. 4.
- ¹⁵ See Daniel Wilson, *Caliban, The missing link: A critique of Shakespeare's The Tempest and A midsummer night's dream* (1873).
- ¹⁶ Leah Marcus suggests that the anticipatory features of *The Tempest* to Darwin's *Descent of man* can be traced back to "the Gilbert Shakespeare (1858-60), edited by Howard Staunton"; a decade and a half before publication of Wilson's book. Moreover, one of Sir John Gilbert's illustrations supports this evolutionary link by representing Caliban as a simian shown together with a monkey. See Leah Marcus, "Introduction: the blue-eyed witch" in *Unediting The Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton*, (1996), p. 8.
- ¹⁷ Cless notes the following books as contributing to new understandings of Shakespeare's early life experiences and his electric reading: John Erskine Hankins, *Backgrounds of Shakespeare's Thought* (Hamden, Connecticut, Archon: 1978); Virgil K. Whitaker, *Shakespeare's Use of learning: An inquiry into the growth of his mind & art* (San Marino, California, The Huntington Library: 1964); A. L. Rowse, *What Shakespeare Read-and thought* (New York, Coward, McCann & Geoghegan: 1981); Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare's Reading* (Oxford, Oxford UP: 2000).
- ¹⁸ Rowse, *What Shakespeare Read*, 12. See also Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the world: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (New York, W. W. Norton: 2004); Park Honan, *Shakespeare: A Life* (Oxford, Oxford UP: 1998).
- ¹⁹ See "Geography and Travel," in the Norton critical edition (2019) of *The Tempest*.
- ²⁰ See for example Arthur R. McGee, "Macbeth and the furies" (1966), p. 56.

REFERENCES

- 1607 Bristol Channel Floods. 400-year retrospective (2007) [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://static.rms.com/email/documents/fl_1607_bristol_channel_floods.pdf.
- A true report of certaine wonderfull ouerflowings of Waters, now lately in Summerset-shire, Norfolke, and other places of England: Destroying many thousands of men, women, and children, ouerthrowing and bearing downe whole townes and villages, and d [...]owning infinite numbers of sheepe and other Cattle (Original work published). Retrieved from http://downloads.it.ox.ac.uk/ota-public/tcp/Texts-HTML/free/A12/A12596.html#index.xml-front.1_div.2. (1607).
- Adorno, T., & Horkheimer, M. (1979). *Dialectic of enlightenment*. trans.J. Cumming. London: Verso Books.
- Bate, J. (1991). *Romantic ecology: Wordsworth and the environmental tradition*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Bate, J. (1997). *The genius of Shakespeare*. London: Picador.
- Bate, J. (2000). *The song of the earth*. London: Picador.
- Borlik, T. A. (2013). Caliban and the fen demons of Lincolnshire: The Englishness of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. *Shakespeare*, 9, 21-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2012.705882>
- Brayton, D. (2012). *Shakespeare's ocean: An Ecocritical exploration*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Bruckner, L., & Brayton, D. (Eds.). (2011). *Ecocritical Shakespeare*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.
- Buell, L. (1995). *The environmental imagination: Thoreau, nature writing, and the formation of American culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
- Cless, D. (2010). *Ecology and environment in European Drama*. New York: Routledge.
- Croteau, M. (2009). Introduction: Beginnings at the ends. In M. Croteau & C. Jess-Cooke (Eds.), *Apocalyptic Shakespeare: Essays on visions of chaos and revelation in recent film adaptations* (pp. 1-27). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company.

- Davis, L. J., & Morris, D. B. (2007). Biocultures Manifesto. *New Literary History*, 38, 411–418. <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2007.0046>
- Egan, G. (2006). Supernature and the weather: *King Lear* and *The Tempest*. In *Green Shakespeare: From ecopolitics to ecocriticism* (pp. 132–171). Oxon: Routledge.
- Estok, S. C. (2011). *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gifford, T. (1999). *Pastoral*. London: Routledge.
- Gods warning to his people of England By the great ouer-flowing of the vvaters or floudes lately hapned in South-wales and many other places. Wherein is described the great losses, and wonderfull damages, that hapned thereby: by the drowning of many townes and villages, to the vtter vndoing of many thousandes of people (Original work published). Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A00015.0001.001/1:2?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>. (1607).
- Greenblatt, S. (2004). *Will in the world: How Shakespeare became Shakespeare*. New York: W. W Norton.
- Hallock, T., Kamps, I., & Raber, K. (Eds.). (2008). *Early modern ecostudies: From the Florentine codex to Shakespeare*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Honan, P. (1998). *Shakespeare: A life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Love, G. A. (2010). Shakespeare's *origin of species* and Darwin's *Tempest*. *Configurations*, 18, 121–141. <https://doi.org/10.1353/con.2010.0000>
- MacArthur, R. H., & Wilson, E. O. (1967). *The theory of Island biogeography*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Marcus, L. (1996). Introduction: The blue-eyed witch. In *Unediting the renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (pp. 1–37). London: Routledge.
- Marx, L. (2000). *The machine in the garden*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (Original work published 1964).
- McGee, A. R. (1966). *Macbeth* and the furies. In K. Muir (Ed.), *Shakespeare survey volume 19: Macbeth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McKenna, R. (2017). Surviving *The Tempest*: Ecologies of salvage on the early modern stage. *Shakespeare*, 13(3), 271–281. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2017.1317283>
- O'Dair, S. (2008). The state of the green: A review essay on Shakespearean ecocriticism. *Shakespeare*, 4(4), 459–477. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450910802501246>
- Raber, K. (2007). Recent ecocritical studies of English renaissance literature. *English Literary Renaissance*, 37, 151–171. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.2007.00097>
- Rowse, A. L. (1981). *What Shakespeare read-and thought*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.
- Shakespeare, W. (2019). In P. Hulme & W. H. Sherman (Eds.), *The Tempest* (2nd ed.). New York: W. W. Norton (Original work published 1607).
- Sokol, B. J. (2003). *A brave new world of knowledge: Shakespeare's The Tempest and early modern epistemology*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Stritmatter, R., & Kositsky, L. (2007). Shakespeare and the voyagers revisited. *The Review of English Studies*, 58(236), 447–472. <https://doi.org/10.1093/res/hgl152>
- Watson, R. (2006). *Back to nature: The green and the real in the late renaissance*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Wilson, D. (1873). *Caliban, the missing link: A critique of Shakespeare's The Tempest and a midsummer night's dream*. London: Macmillan.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

David Gray is a senior lecturer in English at the Department of Foreign Languages in Dalarna University, Sweden. He has published on 18th- and 19th century British and Irish literature, as well as representations of the Nordic countries in 20th century life/travel writing. Currently, he is working on a monograph of Ulster-Scots poetry c. 1790–1850. He is also co-editor of the e-journal *Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language*.

How to cite this article: Gray D. “Command these elements to silence”: Ecocriticism and *The Tempest*. *Literature Compass*. 2020;e12566. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12566>