

Critically analyse Act 2 Scene 1 of William Shakespeare's, *The Tempest*. Consider the following areas in which to discuss:

- The language and/ or literary techniques used by the author
- Contextual information about the author and the author's intent
- The significance of the assigned extract in relation to the rest of *The Tempest*
- The significance of the assigned extract in relation to other comparable examples of literature from/ about the historical era/ theme depicted in it
- Relevant academic scholarship and theories for interpreting examples of historical literature

Introduction

William Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*, is a complex work that delves into themes of power, control, and colonisation. In Act 2 Scene 1, Shakespeare provides an insight into the turbulent history surrounding colonisation, shedding light on the impact of European expansion. This essay will focus on the characterisation used to explore the contrasting voices that challenges discussions of geographical expansion, socio- political structures, and colonisation. Furthermore, in conjunction with characterisation, recognising noteworthy historical events that may have influenced the narrative and themes of *The Tempest* will also be explored.

Characterisation, Power, and Colonialism

Since Prospero embodies power and directly influences and controls the narrative of other characters in *The Tempest*, it is difficult to discuss colonisation without briefly reflecting on the First Act, as it is the premise of and reason for why we see such themes as racism, challenges to authority, and power being played out in Act 2. Therefore, before focusing on Act 2 Scene 1, it would be prudent to have a wider discussion of the themes, history, and critiques surrounding *The Tempest* as a whole.

Through the use of magic, the relationship between Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel explores themes of power as well as challenge to authority. Peter Krause explains that the play is a story of 'powermongering, subjugation, and the uncontested rule of one magically endowed sovereign'.¹ In particular, this power stems from 'an imbalance of power epitomized by the magical governing the non- magical'.² Krause recognises that Mason and Brown have a similar opinion, explaining that they consider Prospero's magic 'integral to his authoritarian

¹ Peter Krause, "Subject to a tyrant, sorcerer": A Hyper- Intuitive Reading of *The Tempest*, *Medieval & Renaissance drama in England*, 35, (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 2022), p. 150

² Ibid., p. 149

governance of the island'.³ More specifically, Prospero uses his magic to wield control over the other islanders to do his bidding. Even the storm itself was conjured 'art'⁴ to create the 'wild waters' as part of Prospero's grand plan to engineer that the 'king's son'⁵ marries Miranda. Prospero's magic, therefore, not just a craft learnt through 'volumes'⁶ that he prized above his 'dukedom',⁷ but also a 'dictorial tool'⁸ due to 'his ability to cast spells'. This can be witnessed in Prospero's interactions with Ariel and Caliban, over 'both of whom the sorcerer wields enormous power'.⁹

For example, we learn that the storm has been created by Ariel under the instruction of Prospero: 'Hast though spirit, perform'd to point the tempest that I bade thee?'¹⁰ Ariel obliges out of magical enslavement to Prospero rather than through altruism, forcing Ariel into a position of obliged labour, drawing parallels with Renaissance colonisation. Therefore, as Krause explains, the use of magic not only demonstrates power imbalance, but also explores themes of exploitation, mistrust, and enslavement.¹¹ Similarly, according to Ayao Nubukpo,¹² Prospero's flattering attitude towards Ariel in comparison to Caliban may represent a bias towards his aesthetic. Nubukpo explains, 'the people of darker skin complexions like the Native Americans and Africans were treated like subhuman beings'.¹³ However, in the case of slaves of 'lighter complexion, there were attempts at negotiating a friendly relationship', which echoes Prospero's treatment of Ariel, who 'treated Ariel almost like a friend'. Andrew Bruff¹⁴ recognises that, when Prospero needs Ariel's help, Prospero becomes superficially appears flattering, calling Ariel 'my brave spirit'.¹⁵ However, though the adjective of 'brave'¹⁶ is complimentary, the use of the possessive adjective 'my'¹⁷ undercuts the flattery and reminds Ariel that he is still owned and enslaved by Prospero. Therefore, as both Nubukpo and Bruff recognise, Prospero's language changes when he

³ Phillip Mason, "*Prospero, King Lear, and the Colonial Father*" in *Prospero's Magic: Some Thoughts on Class and Race*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp.75–97 and Paul Brown, *This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine*, pp. 48–70, cited by Peter Krause, *Hyper-Intuitive Reading of The Tempest*, p. 148

⁴ William Shakespeare, Act 1 Scene 2, *The Tempest*, ed. By Roma Gill, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 4-25, p.4

⁵ Ibid., p. 14

⁶ Ibid., p.11

⁷ Ibid., p.11

⁸ Peter Krause, *Hyper-Intuitive reading of The Tempest*, p. 150

⁹ Ibid., p.149

¹⁰ *The Tempest*, p.13

¹¹ Ibid., pp.151-154

¹² Ayao Nubukpo, *The Fairer the Skin, the More Humane: A Comparative Analysis of Ariel and Caliban in the Tempest by William Shakespeare*, (New York University at Binghamton, Department of Philosophy, Interpretation, and Culture), p. 2-9

<<http://huichawaii.org/assets/nubukpo,-ayao---the-fairer-the-skin,-the-more-humane.pdf>>

¹³ Ibid., p.7

¹⁴ Andrew Bruff, *Mr Bruff's Guide to 'The Tempest'*, (GB: Amazon Printing, 2017), p. 54-55

¹⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p.13

¹⁶ Ibid., p.13

¹⁷ Ibid., p.13

wishes to exploit Ariel, whilst simultaneously giving Ariel subtle reminders of the power ranking in this relationship. Perhaps this is due to Ariel's appearance because Prospero's language towards Caliban is consistently dehumanizing and openly controlling.

For example, Prospero directly calls Caliban 'my slave'¹⁸ and regularly resorts to dehumanizing insults such as 'a thing most brutish'¹⁹ and a 'poisonous slave got by the devil himself',²⁰ implying that Caliban is both lazy and inherently evil. Prospero fails to recognise the contradiction of his words since he relies heavily on Caliban to perform physically laborious tasks that require practical skill. Therefore, the dynamic between Caliban, Ariel, and Prospero reinforces Nobukpo's notion of a difference in treatment of his slaves due to their aesthetic, which Nobukpo²¹ recognises as having similar undertones to the historical contexts of slavery that surround *The Tempest*. Thus, Prospero is possibly an embodiment of the power colonisers had and wielded over their slaves, represented here by Ariel and Caliban. Further examples of attitudes towards global expansion can be seen in Act 2.

Characterisation and Global Expansion

Through characterisation, we see magic and power provide the play with an 'unseen ether in which all of the characters enact their subplots',²² of whom provide a window into various socio- political polarising opinions held during Shakespeare's time regarding geographical expansion and challenges to authority. Contrasting views, contemporary to Shakespeare's time regarding geographical expansion, appear to be personified in *The Tempest* through a distinct division among Alonso's courtiers. Since *The Tempest* was written around 1610, in the time of colonising New England and Virginia, Shakespeare appears to use historical accounts unfolding around him to form the premise of *The Tempest*.

Andrew Bruff²³ explains that Shakespeare was directly associated with the Virginia Company of London, the very same company whose ship sailing from Plymouth to Virginia, was caught in a storm in Bermuda, causing a fleet of ships to separate and one to sink. However, all the crew of the Sea Venture survived, swimming to a nearby island where they lived for several months until rescued by a passing ship. Immediately, this historical event has multiple echoes of the events that occur in *The Tempest*, reinforcing Shakespeare's attention to current affairs that he was drawing upon to form his play. Therefore, it is not surprising that other examples of contemporary historical accounts and events can be seen in Act 2.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.18

¹⁹ Ibid, p.20

²⁰ Ibid., p.18

²¹ Ayao Nubukpo, *The Fairer the Skin*, pp.2-9

²² Peter Krausse, *Hyper- Intuitive reading of The Tempest.*, p.148

²³ Andrew Bruff, *The Tempest*, p. 4

In Act 2 Scene 1, Gonzalo is presented as an optimist. Even when Alonso is grieving over the perceived death of Ferdinand, Gonzalo remarks that they should be 'merry'²⁴ for surviving the tempest. However, from the beginning of this scene, Gonzalo's optimistic attempts to comfort are regularly undermined through humorous, mocking and sarcastic remarks from Sebastian and Antonio. Perhaps discrediting Gonzalo's ideology from the beginning was a deliberate tactic on Shakespeare's behalf in order to avoid accusation of duplicity or insurrection for sharing an opposing perspective on contemporary views of colonisation. Thus, when Gonzalo does begin to put forward his views on authority, environment, and colonisation, his message is weakened, and therefore not as impactful on Shakespeare's audience. A similar juxtaposition of views among Alonso's courtiers transpires when the marriage of his daughter is discussed.

There is a clear language contrast used among the courtiers when addressing Claribel's new husband, the King of Tunis. For instance, Gonzalo references Claribel's new husband by his title of 'king',²⁵ demonstrating his view of seeing Claribel's husband as equal ranking to Alonso. Gonzalo also calls him the 'King of Tunis', highlighting Gonzalo's respect for the King's specific geographical ruling. Through Sebastian, Shakespeare seems to be exploring a hostile attitude that may have been commonly held at this time. For instance, when Sebastian is blaming Alonso for the shipwreck for sailing to Claribel's wedding, he says:

'Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,

That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,

But rather lose her to an African'²⁶

Sebastian's direct accusation and criticisms humiliate and undermine Alonso's authority whilst simultaneously undermining the authority of the King of Tunis by referring to him by his race as opposed to his hierarchical title of king. This is reinforced when Sebastian pairs the adjective 'blessed' when describing Europe and 'lose' when referring to Africa, highlighting his opposing stance towards each continent. Furthermore, Sebastian uses the possessive adjective of 'our', indicating his elevated perception of Europe as a nation worthy of being personally associated with. Even phonetically, the sound of 'our Europe' is soft and gentle, symbolising care and compassion for his affiliated nation. In stark contrast, Sebastian refers to the King of Tunis as 'an African'. Sebastian's generalisation of the King of Tunis as a king of his entire continent reinforces Sebastian's lack of respect or knowledge for the King's specific heritage and culture, and thus demonstrating dismissiveness and inconsideration for the King's true identity. Additionally, the impersonal adjective generates a dehumanizing quality; and, with the phonetically jarring sound that the words 'an African' create together, a clear message of dislike towards Africa and its people is being signalled by Sebastian:

²⁴ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p.27

²⁵ Ibid., p.30

²⁶ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, pg.32

deeming the continent of Africa as inferior to his own continent of Europe. In these examples, Sebastian's language presents an undertone of racism and prejudice towards Africa, an attitude that may have been common at the time. Christopher Leslie²⁷ recognises that during this period of geographical expansion, Shakespeare and his audience would be familiar with people from around the globe being paraded around England in various shows and exhibitions. He explains that around the time Shakespeare was born in 1564, 'a textual traffic in images of purported monsters was augmented by the display of live individuals of unusual provenance'.²⁸ Furthermore, he explains that part of exploration and voyages, even as far back as Christopher Columbus, 'bringing native people back to Europe as prisoners for the purpose of display'²⁹ was commonplace. Therefore, during Shakespeare's time, he would have been familiar with captured immigrants being brought to various parts of Europe and treated as sub-human by being presented as macabre, lurid, and obscene spectacles. In turn, this practice of dehumanization of non- Europeans may, naturally, desensitise Shakespearean England to the cruelty of such acts whilst also conditioning society to view non- Europeans as inferior beings unworthy of equal rights and opportunities. Thus, Shakespeare, through Sebastian and Antonio, could be exploring an attitude that may echo and represent many of his audience's own feelings regarding the idea of the King of Milan's daughter marrying 'an African':³⁰ somebody that, they too, would have been conditioned to deem as inferior and unworthy of such status and privilege through marriage. In contrast, Gonzalo represents an alternative perspective, one that challenges an elitist mindset of global expansion and colonisation, even among Shakespeare's own audience.

Sebastian and Gonzalo represent contrasting attitudes towards the island's natural resources, which again may echo various voices of contemporary Shakespearean society. We see this when Gonzalo has an immediate appreciation for the island's beauty and natural resources. For instance, Gonzalo refers to the grass as 'lush and lusty'³¹ with the island providing 'everything advantageous to life'. Gonzalo's optimistic observations almost personify the island by presenting it as a living, breathing organism that can provide; perceiving the island as their saviour, which offers protection and sanctuary for their survival. However, as discussed above, there is a clear division of opinions about the island among Alonso's courtiers that challenges Gonzalo's optimism.

Antonio calls the land 'tawny' and the air 'perfumed by a fen', presenting the island as dull, unpleasant, and unusable. Therefore, Gonzalo and Antonio may be representing contemporary conflicting opinions regarding how colonisers perceived new worlds and new

²⁷ Christopher Leslie, *Half Fish, Half Monster: Shakespeare's Caliban and the Performance of Natural History*, *Forum: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts*, 16, (Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp.3-4

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.3

³⁰ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, pg. 32

³¹ *Ibid.*, pg.29

lands, suggesting that some believed that living harmoniously with an environment would optimise its use, whereas others saw the land as an opportunity to exploit its resources. Therefore, in contrast to Gonzalo, perhaps Sebastian embodies a more conservative, traditional mindset shared and regular among Europeans; a voice that some Renaissance explorers may have had difficulty penetrating. Therefore, Gonzalo could embody the voice of various Renaissance explorers who showed admiration for the indigenous people's use of land. Evidence for this comes from the possibility that Shakespeare may be drawing upon contemporary sources to formulate these two conflicting viewpoints. In particular, Amerigo Vespucci's Letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici accounting his voyage between 1501 and 1502 challenged the assumption that a new world would be uninhabitable and instead, recognised 'the fertility of the land'³² and the 'healthfulness to the air' and how the 'gentle people'³³ lived in harmony with their environment. Here, reminiscent of Gonzalo's viewpoints, Vespucci appears to be sympathetic towards the natives of South America, admiring their use, respect, and appreciation for the land that supports them. However, though Vespucci's opinions here may seem to echo those of Gonzalo, and perhaps these elements did indeed influence Shakespeare's characterisation, it is worth noting that Margaret Hodgen and Anthony Pagden recognise that Vespucci's views are not as clear-cut as Gonzalo's.

Rather, according to Pagden, because the 'divide'³⁴ between culture and religion among Europeans and the natives was 'too wide', Vespucci drew upon his own understanding of the Garden of Eden and other Christian beliefs to understand them. Consequently, Hodgen³⁵ explains, Vespucci saw the continent and its inhabitants as an 'unfallen world';³⁶ though gentle and pure, the people were 'less civilised'. Furthermore, Hodgen identifies that because Vespucci's viewpoint is influenced by Christian standards, he therefore deems the indigenous people as 'inhuman'³⁷ due to their lack of [perceived] laws and life 'without governance'.³⁸ Therefore, Vespucci has a rather complex viewpoint of this native land and its people, appearing to admire them in some ways whilst also considering the people primitive and inferior to Europeans. However, there are certainly echoes of Gonzalo's mindset and ideology in relation to his desire to be in harmony with nature in order to utilise its resources. Therefore, in relation to Gonzalo, these complicated mixed opinions held by Vespucci are perhaps divided among Alonso's courtiers, providing Gonzalo to reflect the more optimistic angle held by Vespucci in relation to the land, and leaving the more

³² Amerigo Vespucci, *New World*, Letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici (1502/1503), in *Renaissance Humanism: An Anthology of Sources*, pg.300

³³ Ibid., p.302

³⁴ Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1993), p.24

³⁵ Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), pg. 196

³⁶ Vespucci, *New World*, p.302

³⁷ Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*, p. 196

³⁸ Vespucci, *New World*, p.303

cynical sentiments relating to its people to Sebastian and Alonso. Since Vespucci influenced many other explorers of the time who also challenged Europe's attitudes towards the indigenous, perhaps Shakespeare is creating a general collection of challenging ideologies to formulate the premise of Gonzalo's character rather than exclusively drawing upon just Vespucci's views.

Michel de Montaigne's, *On the Cannibals* essay,³⁹ accounting his observations whilst travelling, has been widely recognised as influencing Shakespeare when forming the character of Gonzalo. For instance, Montaigne's account of the Brazilian natives appears to observe and make summaries of their world through a respectful, optimistic lens untainted by European standards and expectations. M.A. Screech recognises Montaigne's 'respect for barbarous peoples'⁴⁰ and even has 'admiration' for their way of living 'once their motives are understood'. Montaigne demonstrates admiration for how the natives appreciated and respected the land as well as how it supported their health through physical activity and nutrition: 'it is rare to find anyone ill there; I have been assured that they never saw a single man bent with age, toothless, blear-eyed or tottering'.⁴¹ Again, this has echoes of Gonzalo's admiration and gratitude for the island's 'lush and lusty'⁴² land, which has 'everything advantageous to life'.⁴³

Characterisation and Socio- Political Structures

Gonzalo's utopian speech maps out his ideology, which has been linked directly to ideas seen in Montaigne's essay. Not only does Gonzalo challenge perceptions of indigenous people and their land, but also European's socio- political structure. However, doing so during this time of civil unrest came with potential personal risk and therefore, required careful navigation.

In his rhetoric, Gonzalo states there would be 'use of service, none'⁴⁴ with no division 'bound of land', and no cultivation nor use of 'metal, corn, or wine, or oil'. Instead, laborious work would be replaced by 'all men idle, all, and women too' in order to remain 'innocent and pure'. Gonzalo's character is personified by his steady rhythmic delivery of his speech through blank verse. This choice of measured tempo conveys a sense of quiet confidence, whilst removing any sense of threat of social provocation from the ideology Gonzalo is presenting. The repetition of 'no' and 'not' bring further attention to the various changes Gonzalo would like to make to society. He addresses themes of hierarchy with 'no name of

³⁹ Michel de Montaigne, *On the Cannibals*, in *The Complete Essays*, trans. And ed. With an Introduction and Notes by M.A. Screech (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 228-241

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.228

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 233

⁴² William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p. 29

⁴³ Ibid., p.29

⁴⁴ Ibid., pg. 33

magistrate'; themes of slavery with the removal of 'service'; and would create a world that does not exploit the land of 'metal, corn, or wine, or oil'; whose men and women are 'idle' in a world with 'no sovereignty'. These themes of criticism have echoes of Montaigne, who believed the indigenous people's 'simple ways have much to teach us'⁴⁵; not only about the natives, but as an opportunity for Europeans to reflect on their own flaws in regard to 'the cruelty, the corruption and the culture of Europe', who condemns non- Europeans as 'barbarous merely because their manners and their dress are different'.⁴⁶ Montaigne referred to the harmonious natives as the 'noble savage'. The juxtaposed choice of words indicates that Montaigne recognised that their cruelty and flaws were no different to those of European societies. Perhaps, because of their peaceful way of living, Montaigne perceived the indigenous people as more sophisticated than his European colonisers.

K.R. Andrews⁴⁷ reflects on Gonzalo's choice of 'no metal',⁴⁸ suggesting Shakespeare could be drawing on the knowledge of Elizabethan and Jacobean privateers and pirates who regularly stole precious metals from the New World ships. This gives weight to Montaigne's statement of European's behaviour being 'no different'⁴⁹ to behaviours seen among indigenous people, who Europeans would look down upon and see as worse 'because their manners and their dress are different'.⁵⁰ Gonzalo, therefore, appears to be wanting to change those aspects of European society that Montaigne also saw as problematic and in need of reconsidering. Simona Laghi⁵¹ recognises the direct connection between Montaigne's essay and Gonzalo's characterisation, noting Gonzalo 'imagines being the sovereign of a peaceful commonwealth ruled only by natural law with the exclusion of positive law', whilst Andrew Bruff⁵² suggests that Gonzalo's speech is paraphrasing the essence of Montaigne's essay. However, Simona Laghi argues that Montaigne's essay is not the only influence and instead, suggests "' noble Neapolitan" not only draws from Montaigne's essay *Of Cannibals*, but also from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and in particular the myth of *Astraea*'.⁵³

Laghi's reasoning for this comes from Gonzalo's uttering of: 'I would with such perfection govern, sir, t'excel the golden age',⁵⁴ arguing that 'Gonzalo's speech, far from being a homage to Montaigne's essay, actually parodies the primitivist view of the state of

⁴⁵ Michel de Montaigne, *On the Cannibals*, p. 228

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 228

⁴⁷ K.R. Andrews, Penetration of the Carribean region by contrabandists, pirates, and privateers of France, England, and the Netherlands, *The English in the Carribean, 1560-1629, The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in the Ireland, The Atlantic, and the America 1480-1650*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978), pp.123-124

⁴⁸ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p. 33

⁴⁹ Michael de Montaigne, *On the Cannibals*, p. 228

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 228

⁵¹ Simona Laghi, *Utopias in The Tempest, Polemos (Roma)*, 11:1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 177-93

⁵² Andrew Bruff, *The Tempest*, p.p. 2-4

⁵³ Simona Laghi, *Utopias in The Tempest*, p. 187

⁵⁴ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p. 33

nature'.⁵⁵ Richard Halpern also recognises Gonzalo's connection with golden age themes, stating: 'Gonzalo's citizens are not the purposefully, even obsessively productive citizens of a fully rationalised polity but rather the idle denizens of golden age'.⁵⁶ Similarly, James Hankins⁵⁷ argues that Montaigne's *On the Cannibals* essay has ancient Greek and Roman influence. Hankins argues, Montaigne's essay, like ancient Greece and Rome, has 'intimate knowledge of another culture suggesting that 'both sides of a question led in the end to an incipient form of cultural relativism'.⁵⁸ If Gonzalo's speech is influenced by Montaigne's cultural relativism, which in turn is influenced by Greek and Roman ideologies, perhaps Shakespeare did indeed draw upon Greek and Roman humanism to form Gonzalo's character, both directly and indirectly. Therefore, it might be possible that Gonzalo embodies a mixture of cultural and socio-political influences to form the premise of his optimistic, utopic character. Once again however, Gonzalo's optimism is continually undermined through mocking remarks from Sebastian and Antonio.

Leading up to this scene, Gonzalo makes a blunder when comparing the marriage of Claribel and the King of Tunis to that of Dido, accidentally calling her 'widow Dido'.⁵⁹ Immediately, when Gonzalo tries to rectify his mistake, Antonio sneers, 'Widow! A pox o'that! How came that 'widow' in? Widow Dido!' Perhaps this is another tactical move by Shakespeare to undermine Gonzalo's ideologies. But, this example feels especially important to do so, as this is the climax to Gonzalo's speech; therefore by presenting Gonzalo as confused and misspoken, potentially places further doubt in Shakespeare's audience's mind that Gonzalo's ideas are not to be trusted. Similarly, even during Gonzalo's speech, just as it gains momentum, he is interrupted by Sebastian saying, 'yet he would be king on't',⁶⁰ Since Gonzalo's rhetoric displays a multitude of ideologies that challenge the status quo of Shakespeare's time, perhaps this humorous interruption is yet another example of Shakespeare deliberately dampening the message behind Gonzalo's words. Since there was much socio- political turmoil at the time, the reason for the continuous undermining might be because Shakespeare wished to avoid any charges of sedition or undermining England's monarchic hierarchy.

To start with, as Andrew Bruff explains, 'King James I gave Shakespeare's company of actors the title The King's Men, which was a huge honour'.⁶¹ Therefore, since the King of England had personal investment and respect for Shakespeare and his work, it would be prudent of Shakespeare, personally and for his company, to avoid accusations of sedition or activism

⁵⁵ Simona Laghi, *Utopias in The Tempest*, p.188

⁵⁶ Richard Halpern, *The Picture of Nobody: White Cannibalism in The Tempest* 1994, *The Production of English Renaissance Culture*, (Ithica, New York/I Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 276

⁵⁷ James Hankins, *Humanism and the Origins of Modern Political Thought*, *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. by Jill Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.118- 141

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 128

⁵⁹ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p.30

⁶⁰ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p. 33

⁶¹ Andrew Bruff, *The Tempest*, p. 4

from the King. Especially at this time, as James I was experiencing various acts of socio-political unrest among religious groups, who were indeed challenging his authority. Oliver Arnold suggests that Shakespeare's plays to 'consistently demonstrate a hostility to the procedures of the House of Commons',⁶² whilst Chris Fitter further agrees that Shakespeare was a 'radical at heart who always sided with the people against the aristocracy'.⁶³ However, as Andrew Hadfield recognises, Shakespeare's plays 'changed when James VI came to the throne in 1603'.⁶⁴ Soon after the Gunpowder plot in 1605, when Shakespeare's play *Coriolanus* was on stage, Hadfield describes this time as being 'a time of acute paranoia'⁶⁵ when people were unsure 'who they could really trust, or what they should actually do about what might be happening'.⁶⁶ Hadfield further explains that the post-Gunpowder Plot period resulted in an 'Oath of Allegiance' designed to give 'subjects a stark choice' of acknowledgement that the pope 'had no power to depose the King'⁶⁷ or to 'discharge any of his subjects of their allegiance and obedience to his Majesty'.⁶⁸ Thus, as Hadfield summarises, this created a 'confrontational formula' within the King's circle, which highlighted the severity of mistrust and alertness around this time for any disloyalty or treasonous behaviour. Furthermore, James I was in favour of global expansion and colonisation, having initially created a council within the Virginia Company of England to represent and carry out the King's ideas in relation to global expansion.⁶⁹ Since Shakespeare was also affiliated with the Virginia Company, showing any signs of anti-colonisation may have been risky and dangerous at this time. Therefore, with this turbulent history in mind, the prospect of Shakespeare using characterisation to avoid personal repercussions for exploring favourable opinions of the abolition of slavery and hierarchy, seems even more likely.

⁶² Oliver Arnold, *The Third Citizen: Shakespeare's Theater and the Early Modern House of Commons* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), cited by Andrew Hadfield in *Shakespeare and Politics in the Time of the Gunpowder Plot*, *The Review of Politics*, 78.4 (2016)

⁶³ Chris Fitter, *Radical Shakespeare: Politics and Stagecraft in the Early Career*, (Abington: Routledge, 2012), cited by Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Politics in the Time of the Gunpowder Plot*, *The Review of Politics*, 78.4 (2016)

⁶⁴ Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Politics in the Time of the Gunpowder Plot*, *The Review of Politics*, 78.4 (New York, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 571

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 582

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.582

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.583

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 583, citing J. Ryan Clarence, *The Jacobean Oath of Allegiance and English Lay Catholics*, *Catholi. Historical Review*, 28, (1942), p. 162

⁶⁹ edited by Susan Myra Kingsbury, Carola Woerishoffer, *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, *Library of Congress*, 4, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906- 1930) p.11

Conclusion

For a modern audience, William Shakespeare's choice of characterisation offers an insight into the themes and history of colonisation, global expansion, and socio- political tensions that surrounded and influenced *The Tempest*. By challenging the Renaissance narratives of conquest, power, and exploration, Gonzalo's characterisation in Act 2 Scene 1 invites Shakespeare's audience to reflect on the morality and impact that these have on indigenous people. However, due to the social tensions of the time, undermining the power of Gonzalo's message through Sebastian and Antonio was perhaps a clever strategy of dampening any personal accusation of sedition.

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