The English Department Advent Calendar 2016: Beginnings

“You know that the beginning is the most important part of any work.” (Plato: Republic)

If you like literature – or if you like to read out loud – and especially if you like beginnings, then …

… be part of the English Department Advent Calendar.

From Dec 1, we will have the beginning of a famous text (prose, drama, and longer poetic texts) every day to listen to online – read by students as well as members of staff of the English department.

For more information, please contact:
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® A list of texts will be provided – or suggest your own!
Introduction to Literary Studies
WiSe 2016/2017
Lecture 3:
Early Modern Drama/Theatre
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (1611)
Session Plan

1. William Shakespeare’s Last Play
   (Context: Author, Oeuvre, Moment)

2. Character Constellation, Communication and Action
   (Basic Coordinates: Central Topics and Concerns)

3. The Shakespearean Stage
   (Aesthetics: Dramatic Strategies)

4. Reception History of *The Tempest*
   (Reception and Theoretical Perspectives)
1. William Shakespeare’s Last Play

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)
born and died in Stratford-upon-Avon
actor and playwright

The Globe Theatre (London)
1. William Shakespeare’s Last Play

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

- history plays
- comedies
- tragedies

The Sonnets (1609)

after *The Tempest*:
collaborative plays (e.g. *Henry VIII: All Is True* – with John Fletcher in 1613)
The Tempest (1611)

Shakespeare’s last single-authored play

Performed at Court Nov 1, 1611

first published in First Folio (1623)

listed under “Comedies”

often called “romance”

contains a masque in Act IV
Plot Summary
(from http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zrbj6sg/revision/1)

*The Tempest* is a play about magic, betrayal, love and forgiveness. It is set on an island somewhere near Italy where Prospero, the one-time Duke of Milan, and his beautiful daughter, Miranda, live with a sprite called Ariel and a strange wildman called Caliban. Prospero is a powerful magician who creates a storm, or tempest, that sets the scene for the play. In the events that follow we see a plot to murder the King of Naples, a drunken scheme to kill Prospero and a romance between Miranda and the King’s son, Ferdinand. In the end everyone is forgiven and they all set sail for home.
2. Character Constellation, Communication and Action

Characters in the Play / Dramatis Personae

Island:
Prospero – the right Duke of Milan
Miranda – daughter to Prospero
Ariel – an airy spirit
Caliban – a savage and deformed slave

Spirits: Iris, Ceres, Juno, Nymphs

Courtiers:
Alonso – King of Naples
Sebastian – his brother
Antonio – brother to Prospero, the usurping Duke of Milan
Ferdinand – son to the King of Naples
Gonzalo – an honest old councillor
Trinculo – a jester
Stephano – a drunken butler
Master – of a ship
Boatswain
Mariners
Opening Scene: a Storm (Tempest)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zrbj6sg/revision/2
Opening Scene: a Storm (Tempest)

This play starts dramatically with a ship being tossed around by waves in a violent storm. The stage directions tell us that ‘thunder and lightning’ are heard. On board the ship is King Alonso of Naples who is heading home from his daughter’s wedding in Tunis. He is accompanied by his son Ferdinand, and his friends Sebastian, Antonio and Gonzalo. As the storm worsens, the boatswain asks the noblemen to stay in their cabins out of harm’s way so the crew can keep the boat safe. Antonio and Sebastian curse the boatswain, who suggests they do some work or be quiet. The opening scene ends with cries of panic and prayer as the boat begins to sink.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zrbj6sg/revision/2
Dramatic Genres

“Tragedies and Comedies, saith Donatus, had their beginning à rebus diuinis, from diuine sacrifices, they differ thus: In Comedies, turbulenta prima, tranquilla ultima, In Tragedyes, tranquilla prima, turbulenta ultima, Comedies begin in trouble, and end in peace; tragedies begin in calmes, and end in tempest. [...] Cicero saith, a Comedy is the imitation of life, the glasse of custome, and the image of truth [...].”

Opening Scene: a Storm

The shipwreck in 1.1, in a 1797 engraving by Benjamin Smith after a painting by George Romney
Act 1, Scene 2: Enter Prospero and Miranda

Miranda.
If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch
But that the sea, mounting to th’ welkin’s cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer – a brave vessel
(Who had no doubt some noble creature in her)
Dashed all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
Against m very heart! Poor souls, they perished.
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere
It should the good ship so have swallowed and
The fraughting souls within her.
Prospero.

Be collected. (1.2.1-13)
Island Inhabitants

- Miranda
- Prospero
- Ariel
- Caliban

2. Character Constellation, Communication and Action
Courtiers

Split up in groups:

Ferdinand – meets Prospero and Miranda; he and Miranda fall in love (1.2)
Courtiers

Split up in groups:

Ferdinand – meets Prospero and Miranda; he and Miranda fall in love (1.2)

Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Adrian, Francisco and others (2.1)

Stephano and Trinculo meet Caliban (2.2)
Courtiers

2.1 Alonso (King of Naples), Sebastian (his brother), Antonio (Prospero’s brother) and Gonzalo (a kind nobleman) are stranded on another part of the island. Alonso is upset because he believes his son is dead.
2.2 Trinculo meets Caliban; found by Stephano

3.1 Ferdinand and Miranda in love
3.1 Ferdinand and Miranda in love

Ferdinand.

I am, in my condition,
A prince, Miranda; I do think a king
(I would not so!) and would no more endure
This wooden slavery than to suffer
The flesh-fly blow my mouth! Here my soul speak:
The very instant that I saw you did
My heart fly to your service, there resides
To make me slave to it, and for your sake
I am this patient log-man.
Miranda.

Do you love me?

Ferdinand.
O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound,
And crown what I profess with kind event
If I speak true […].
3.1 Ferdinand and Miranda in love

Ferdinand.

[...] I,
Beyond al limit of what else I’th’ world,
Do love, prize, honour you.

Miranda.

I am a fool
To weep at what I am glad of.
Prospero [aside].

Fair encounter
Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace
On that which breed between ’em.

Ferdinand.

Wherefore weep you?

Miranda.
An mine unworthiness that dare not offer
What I desire to give [...] (3.1.59-78)
Dramatic Communication

Levels of Communication

Character Speech

Epic Elements of Communication
2. Character Constellation, Communication and Action

Levels of Communication & Character Speech

Internal level of communication: communication within the play, between the actors on the stage

MONOLOGUE: spoken by one character
SOLILOQUY: spoken by one character who is alone on stage
DIALOGUE: spoken by at least two characters who communicate with each other

External level of communication: between author and audience → e.g. dramatic irony/discrepant awareness)

in *The Tempest*:
the audience know that Ferdinand is alive but his father and his company don’t)
Epic Elements of Communication

Prologue
- at the beginning of a play
- most often spoken as a monologue

Epilogue (see later)

Report
- e.g. teichoscopy (*Mauerschau*)

Aside
- monological: character voices a thought, only audience understands;
- dialogical: characters converse in whispers, unnoticed by other characters;
- aside ad spectatores: comment directly addressed to audience
2.2 Trinculo meets Caliban; found by Stephano

3.1 Ferdinand and Miranda in love

“I am your wife, if you will marry me;” (3.1.84)
3.2 Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban drunk: plan to kill Prospero; overheard by Ariel

3.3 Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo and other courtiers continue to look for Ferdinand but believe him dead; Ariel appears as harpy and calls Antonio, Sebastian and Alonso “three men of sin”

4.1 Prospero consents to marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand; wants to give them a proper wedding: Nymphs appear and perform masque; Prospero remembers conspiracy and ends revels; Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo appear to kill Prospero; Ariel distracts them first and then sends spirits in shape of dogs and hounds upon them
5.1 Prospero meets his brother and other courtiers: their surprise to meet him alive; his forgiveness; also forgives Caliban and sets Ariel free; gives up his magic

Epilogue
Epilogue. Spoken by PROSPERO.

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint. Now 'tis true,
I must be here confin'd by you,
Or sent to Naples. Let me not, 05
Since I have my dukedom got,
And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
In this bare island by your spell,
But release me from my bands
With the help of your good hands. 10
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please. Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
And my ending is despair, 15
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardoned be,
Let your indulgence set me free. Exit.
Epilogue

• an “afterspeech”
• mostly spoken by one character (very rarely: several characters)
• addressed to the audience
• concludes the play and may contain an apology, a final remark, a summary, the request for applause, thanks to the audience for coming, thanks to those who supported the audience, a prayer for the queen (in Elizabethan drama), …

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtuoNCfbnYM
3. The Shakespearean Stage

Communication in drama

Three unities

Stage Action and Staging

1.1 A tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard; enter a Shipmaster and a Boatswain. [Stage direction]
3. The Shakespearean Stage

Outdoor Theatre (e.g. The Globe) vs. Picture-Frame Stage
Act 4, Scene 1: The Masque

Def. Masque:
Festive courtly entertainment
Music and dancing, singing and acting

Elaborate designs

Inigo Jones (1573-1652)
Architect and designer of masques

Costume designs by Inigo Jones
Act 4, Scene 1: The Masque

Context: wedding of Miranda and Ferdinand

Prospero.
Now come, my Ariel; bring a corollary
Rather than want a spirit. Appear, and pertly. Soft music.
No tongue, all eyes. Be silent!

Enter Iris.
[…]
Juno descends.
[…]
Enter Ceres.
Act 4, Scene 1: The Masque

They sing.
Juno.
Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,
Long continuance and increasing,
Hourly joys be still upon you;
Juno sings her blessings on you.
Ceres.
Earth’s increase, foison plenty,
Barns and garners never empty.
Vines with clustering bunches growing,
Plants with goodly burden bowing;
Spring come to you at the farthest,
In the very end of harvest.
Scarcity and want shall shun you,
Ceres’ blessing so is on you.
Act 4, Scene 1: The Masque

Ferdinand.
This is a most majestic vision, and Harmonious charmingly. May I be bold To think these spirits? Prospero.

Spirits, which by mine art I have from their confines called to enact My present fancies. [...] (4.1.106-22)

[...]
Enter certain Nymphs.
Act 4, Scene 1: The Masque

Prospero.

[...] Our revels now are ended. These our actors, As I foretold you, were all spirits, and Are melted into air, into thin air: And, like the baseless fabric of this vision, The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, The solemn temples, the great globe itself, Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve, And, like this insubstantial pageant faded, Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff As dreams are made on; and our little life Is rounded with a sleep. (4.1.148-58)
https://www.theguardian.com/stage/video/2014/jul/30/roger-allam-the-tempest-shakespeares-globe-video
4. Reception History of *The Tempest*

Music:
at least 46 operas
orchestral works (e.g. Tchaikovsky, Arthur Sullivan, …)
individual songs

Literature:
Percy Bysshe Shelley, “With a Guitar, to Jane”
W. H. Auden, *The Sea and the Mirror*
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1931)
Margaret Atwood. *Hag-Seed* (2016)
4. Reception History of *The Tempest*

4.1 *The Tempest* in the Visual Arts

4.2 Screen Adaptations

4.3 Literary Criticism

4.4 Theatre Productions

Joshua Reynolds, *The Hon’ble Mrs Tollemache as Miranda* (1773)
Johann Heinrich Füssli, *The Tempest* ()
William Edward Frost (1810 –1877), *The Meeting of Ferdinand and Miranda with Prospero, from William Shakespeare’s The Tempest* (n.d.)
4.2 Screen Adaptations

Gorrie, John (dir.). *The Tempest*. 1979. [BBC Television Shakespeare]
Taymore, Julie. *The Tempest*. 2010. [changed Prospero to Prospera; with Helen Mirren]
Wellman, William A. *Yellow Sky*. 1948. [Western based on *The Tempest*]
Wilcox, Fred M. *Forbidden Planet*. 1958. [Science fiction]
4.3 Literary Criticism

Two Examples:

1. Postcolonial Readings
Shakespeare’s lifetime: a period of colonization
merchant stories from the Americas: myths about the Cannibals of the Caribbean, faraway paradisiacal places and distant tropical Utopias

- Caliban (near-anagram of Cannibal)
  Caliban read as reference to colonialism: enslaved by Prospero
  Shakespeare’s own reference to Montaigne’s Essay “De Canibales”
  reinterpreted as the “noble savage”

- Aimé Césaire, *Une Tempête*: set in Haiti, Ariel as mulatto: negotiates his freedom with colonizers, whereas Caliban chooses rebellion
4.3 Literary Criticism

Two Examples:

2. Feminist Criticism

only one female character: Miranda
other women only mentioned (Alonso’s daughter, the witch Sycorax, Caliban’s mother)
- Miranda typically viewed as completely deprived of freedom by her father
  ➢ Thompson: “Miranda, in a manner typical of women in a colonial atmosphere, has completely internalised the patriarchal order of things, thinking of herself as subordinate to her father”

? Why would she then propose marriage to Ferdinand?
4.4 Theatre Productions

Prospero (Roger Allam) and Ariel (Colin Morgan) in 2013 Globe production

Patrick Stewart in 2006 RSC production as Prospero

Theatre Adaptations:
https://www.theatrefolk.com/products/the-tempest
http://synetictheater.org/event_pages/the-tempest/
2016 RSC Production of *The Tempest*
2016 RSC Production of *The Tempest*

In a unique partnership with Intel, we will be using today’s most advanced technology in a bold reimagining of Shakespeare’s magical play, creating an unforgettable theatrical experience.

https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/about-the-play

https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/video-creating-the-tempest
Bibliography


https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/about-the-play/stage-history