



The Ecomaterialist Appropriation of the Shakespearean Stage: Tracing the Entangled Worlds in Rupert Goold's *The Tempest* (2006)

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary environmental concerns and ecological issues stimulate updated adaptation and appropriation of dramaturgy, allowing the playwrights, directors, stage designers, and performers to reconsider conventional strategies of theatre. Pushing intellectual and creative boundaries, the material-based practice of ecological theatre has recently found expression in theatre and performance studies. Drawing mainly upon recent ecomaterialist notions, this paper traces the entanglement of the material worlds in Rupert Goold's *The Tempest* (2006). Therefore, this paper aims at investigating how Goold reappropriates the stage by employing William Shakespeare's canonical text under the specific conditions of the Anthropocene, directly depicted on stage through arctic scenery, shipwreck, storm, and human despair against nonhuman climatic forces. By analyzing the 2006 production of *The Tempest* from an ecomaterialist point of view, this paper indicates that Goold pays particular attention to the entanglement of humans and more-than-human worlds, fostering the idea that a human being is an integral component of the material environment that contains and sustains, rather than being a distinct entity. Thus, by assigning distributive agency to the matter on stage, Goold uncovers nonhuman performance and suggests that each performing actor uniquely participates in the process of meaning and affect.

Keywords: *The Tempest*, Rupert Goold, the Anthropocene, Ecomaterialist Theatre, Material Entanglement

Introduction

Art has always been at the forefront of cultural change and interaction, reflecting the fluctuations in social values and tendencies. As an art form, theatre offers an instinctive way to reimagine the contemporary issues that pervade the global agenda. Thus, it has the capacity to reshape perceptions of humanity's attitudes toward the realities of the twenty-first century. In his book, *Politics of Performance*, Baz Kershaw interrogates the extent to which theatre can "change not just the future action of their audiences, but also the structure



of the audience's community and the nature of the audience's culture" (1992, p. 1). According to Kershaw, the concept of "performance efficacy" can be illustrated as "the potential that theatre may have to make the immediate effects of performance influence, however minutely, the general historical evolution of wider social and political realities" (1992, p. 1). As Kershaw emphasizes, theatre evidently aims to "alter, or confirm" the spectators' perceptions of real-world realities (1992, p. 2). Hence, theatre emerges as a cultural production that addresses social and political milieu, extending beyond its textual meaning.

In a similar vein, in *Reading the Material Theatre*, Richard Knowles provides "a more fully contextualized and politicized understanding of how meaning is produced in the theatre" (2004, p. 9). Knowles states that an analysis of the performance in relation to its production and reception allows for a variety of possibilities. To put it more clearly, Knowles insists that performance texts can either reconfigure "versions of society, history, nationality, ethnicity, class, race, gender, sexuality, ability or other social identities," and particularly in "the degrees to which the transgressive or transformative potential of a particular script or production functions on a continuum from radical intervention and social transformation to radical containment" (2004, p. 10). Taking Kershaw and Knowles's text-to-performance studies into consideration, it is possible to argue that theatre has been considered a catalyst for cultural transformation and engagement, mirroring the shifts in social values and trends. Theatre as an art form provides an intuitive means to radically reimagine contemporary world challenges and foster transformation of humans' attitudes toward those challenges.

The appropriation of the canonical hypotexts is an alternative to offer a radical reimagination of the contemporary problems that pervade the global agenda in the twenty-first century. Thus, this paper aims to analyze Rupert Goold's appropriation of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, by artistically re-visioning the stage elements under the specific conditions of the Anthropocene, including climate change crisis, global warming, and environmental deterioration. In so doing, the paper will interrogate the extent to which theatre scholars, directors, stage designers, and performers can transform the stage to propose solutions to our current ecological condition. Building upon recent scholarly works by new materialists, including Jane Bennett, Karen Barad, and Stacy Alaimo, the paper revolves around the appropriation of the Shakespearean early modern space according to the ecological conditions of the Anthropocene. Tracing the intersections between recent new materialist interpretations and stage appropriations, the paper will delve into Goold's 2006 production of *The Tempest* that radically points to the material entanglement of the humans and nonhuman actors.

The Anthropocene, “human-dominated geological epoch” (Bonneuil & Fressoz, 2016, p. 16), is characterized by the gradual deterioration of the earth’s ecosystems and biodiversity due to human influence. The Anthropocene has become widely recognized since 2000 when Eugene F. Stoermer and Paul Crutzen “emphasize the central role of mankind in geology and ecology” (2000, p. 17). While humans obsess with themselves, like Narcissus by the lake, the more-than-human worlds that surround them seem to have become more unpredictable and aggressive. The sea levels have gradually increased and become irreversibly polluted. The deterioration of fish life, plankton, and coral reefs may be related to climate change effects and the contamination caused by human waste. Countless species have faced the threat of endangerment or extinction. Rampant mining activities, excessive fertilizing, and intensive agriculture practices are causing the destruction of ecosystems, leading to a catastrophic decline in biodiversity. Climate change has been caused by the widespread combustion of fossil fuels and the subsequent rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels (Bonneuil & Fressoz, 2016, pp. 11-23). The global south is experiencing waves of migration due to deforestation, drought, desertification, poverty, and famine. The occurrence of oil spills and the release of radiation from nuclear power plants, along with the persistent risk of nuclear warfare and the significant growth of the global population to 7 billion, all prompt concerns regarding the long-term viability of both human and nonhuman life (Ellis, 2018).

The Anthropocene underscores an array of theories that present alternative philosophies to anthropocentrism by signifying the existence of more-than-human worlds. In addressing the devastating consequences of the Anthropocene, for instance, recent ecocritical studies clearly point out the fact that “Existence is entangled, symbiotic, hybrid. There is no clearly defined borders which allow fixed notions of being” (Ferrando, 2014, p. 170). This point of view deconstructs the assumed ontological hierarchy between humans and nonhumans, subject and object. Thus, the horizontal re-visioning of the more-than-human world calls for an awareness of the distributed agency of each existential performance in spacetime. In this vein, new materialism, object-oriented ontologies, and social assemblage theories also provide insights into understanding the Anthropocene.¹

1 Cultural theorists’ interest in the Anthropocene and the related philosophies has steadily increased in the 21st century. Donna Haraway’s *Natureculture*, Bruno Latour’s *Active Network Theory*, Rosi Braidotti’s *nomadic subject*, Karen Barad’s *agential realism* and *intra-action*, Jane Bennett’s *thing theory*, Jason W. Moore’s *the Capitalocene*, and Timothy Morton’s *the ecological thought* have developed new philosophical grounds from which theatre and performance studies derive fresh insights.

In the Anthropocene, theatre and performance studies enthusiastically *adopt* the aforementioned insights and endeavor to *adapt* or *appropriate* stage under the specific conditions of the Anthropocene. To put it more clearly, theatre can be considered a mesh in which human and nonhuman materiality is inevitably entangled. Shifting away from the representationalist trap of conventional theatre, such an endeavor enables theatre and performance scholars, directors, stage designers, and playwrights to reconsider how nonhuman performance can uncover the ecologies of human theatre. Then, the idea of entanglement will be encouraged, fostering the realization of the differences by moving away from the central anthropocentric focus. Therefore, all the elements that come together within the theatrical space, from the dramatic text to the dramatic personae, from the stage to the sound, from the light to the audience, are unique within this mesh, and there is no hierarchical relationship between them. In light of those considerations, the following discussion will first deal with new eco-aesthetic paradigms in theatre and performance scholarship, interrelating them with recent ecomaterialist assumptions, and then trace those intersections in Rupert Goold's *The Tempest*, first presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in 2006.

Ecomaterialism in Theatre and Performance: A Theoretical Background²

The more-than-human worlds that surround humanity have become more uncertain; thus, the certainties previously claimed by scientists and scholars are gradually disappearing. This is evident in various aspects, such as the melting glaciers, the core function of technology in sustaining human life, and the increasing resistance of viruses to chemical treatments, among others. Human dominance as the master of the universe has never before been challenged and degraded to such a significant degree. According to Karen Barad this is the consequence of "particular practices that [humans] have a role in shaping and through which we are shaped" (2007, p. 390). Then, what remains to be explored and analyzed within theatre and performance studies? The answers are

2 Serpil Oppermann writes, "ecomaterialism is currently conceived as a project of theorizing the earth's human and other-than-human dwellers in terms of multiple becomings with a detailed consideration of what, in fact, is the major concern of this approach: the global dynamic of crisis ecologies as a result of human-driven alterations of the planetary ecosystems, otherwise known as the compulsive powers of the Anthropocene [...] Accordingly, ecomaterialism is the epigenesis of the new materialist theories, developing in gradual differentiation through their platform and amplifying their ecological frameworks [...] Ecomaterialism, in other words, compels us to reckon a living world with the protean conditions of being mineral, vegetal, animal and human; a material world in which earthly beings, things and forces are environed with the same ecological, geological and also biopolitical plight" (2018, p. 120-121).

varied; however, the main concern focuses on the “distribution of agency over human [and] nonhuman” actors on stage, positing humans “are not the only active beings” (Barad, 2007, p. 218, 391).

Considering that the theatre stage “functions as a field of exchange where myths take flight, moving between the permeable spheres of self and community and then out into the terrain of our lives” (May, 2007, p. 95), it is significant to note that everything that exists on stage actively participates in the process of meaning and affect. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the theatre stage is a space of interaction where human and nonhuman bodies, substances, temporalities, cognitive processes, and discourses are entangled with each other, signifying ecology. In other words, the theatre stage is an intersectional space where actors meet the audience, the dramatic text integrates with the body, and the audience is involved in the process of meaning construction. This intersectionality refers to ecological existence, as “Ecology includes all the ways we imagine how we live together. Ecology is profoundly about co-existence” (Morton, 2010, p. 7). Ecology refers not only to the biological existence of organisms but also to how humans relate to each other and the more-than-human worlds. Thus, incorporating the term ecology into the theatre and performance arts requires a different conceptual and theoretical framework beyond its reception in the biological sciences.

This emphasis on co-existence fosters fresh insights into contemporary theatre and performance arts that point to the entanglement of human and nonhuman on stage, blurring the distinctions between these entities. In this regard, towards the end of the twentieth century, the theatre scholar Una Chaudhuri reinforced the role of “the arts and humanities – including the theater” in dealing with the ecological problems in the Anthropocene by coining the term “ecological theatre” (1994, p. 25). Chaudhuri argues that in the context of the humanist paradigm that marked the Age of Enlightenment, theatre solely focuses on the social aspect of human life. Thus, the widespread conviction in the anthropocentric characteristics of contemporary theater results in a position that is “programmatically anti-ecological” (1994, p. 24). To foster ecological theatre, Chaudhuri addresses the necessity “for a turn towards the literal, a programmatic resistance to the use of nature as metaphor” (1994, p. 29), pointing out theatre’s capacity to convey a new spatial dimension. According to Chaudhuri, the widely held assumption that modern theatre revolves around anthropocentric themes leads to a deliberately anti-ecological position. Chaudhuri describes the initial phases of a process called “a remapping of humanism” (1994, p. 30), which involves the development of a new

theatre practice that focuses on materialism and ecology, rejecting the tendency to generalize and use nature as metaphor. By enabling the theoretical reconceptualization of theatre studies with an ecological trajectory, this new materialist approach also offers entry points from which human and more-than-human world entanglements can be conveyed to the audience.

This shift toward a new materialist-based theater and performance practice allows for the realization of “our material embeddedness and enmeshment in and with the more-than-human environment” (Arons & May, 2012, pp. 2-3). This entanglement is provided by theatre’s materiality, as theatre is “both a living art form and a site wherein bodies, communities, politics, commerce, and imaginative possibilities intersect in a material way” (May, 2007, pp. 97). The dynamism of the material world provides multiple paradigms for theatre and performance arts by “displacing the human subject from the center of the ‘world’ and locating it instead in an agential landscape of flows, systems, and networks” (Lavery, 2016, pp. 230-231). Such a reconsideration both allows for a new spatial dimension in the Anthropocene, where geological debates are intertwined with philosophical ones, and stimulates new arguments in theatre and performance studies. To put it more clearly, the material world is composed of a complex web of connections, forming networks that generate significant signifying influences (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014, p. 1-2). Thus, the new materialist-based theatre derives from “a dynamic process of material expressions seen in bodies, things, and phenomena coemerging from these networks of intra-acting forces and entities” (2014, p. 7). Paying particular attention to the material configurations of human material-discursive constructs and nonhuman entities, this viewpoint allows for the process of adapting and appropriating the theatre space through new spatial dimensions. As the nonhuman entities are intricately linked to human lives, the recognition of the continuity between human and more-than-human worlds provides fertile ground for the appropriation of the canonical hypotexts in the Anthropocene.

The emphasis on the entanglement of human and more-than-human worlds challenges dualism of subject and object in the material world and incorporates the idea of agency to promote new theatrical strategies. As Chaudhuri highlights, “a programmatic resistance to the use of nature as metaphor” (1994, p. 29) entails the appreciation of the intrinsic value of every unique element on stage. Such a materialist-based theatre perspective problematizes anthropocentric conventional theatre codes. Moreover, this offers a performative space in which the evolving relationships between

humans and nonhumans in our contemporary lives are being explored on stage. As the relationships between these entities reinforce the agency of nonhuman matter while defying the priority of human power, the contemporary appropriations pay particular attention to the limits of humans' sense of control dispersed by the huge effects of the anthropogenic climate crisis. In this vein, ecomaterialism that has recently emerged in the field of ecocriticism involves dissolving the traditional separation between subject and object in the material world and incorporating ideas of agency to promote awareness of ecological issues. It is, therefore, no coincidence that ecomaterialism challenges reductionist and dualistic forms of thought that create antagonism and hierarchies between humans and nonhumans. As Oppermann writes,

Placing a concerted emphasis on multiple modalities of becoming that involve messy interactions of human and non-human agencies, flows of elements and geobiochemical forces in the highly problematized zones of naturecultures, ecomaterialism also liberates us from our speculative exceptionalism. (2018, p. 122)

Ecomaterialism centers on the concept of our inherent interconnectedness with the natural world, acknowledging the expansion of our understanding of human identity in the face of environmental vulnerability. From an ecomaterialist standpoint, the relationship between humans and nonhumans is intricately entangled and those entities share common ecological predicaments. These connections exist throughout several domains, including the economic, political, cultural, scientific, and tangible realms. Therefore, ecomaterialism begins by expanding one's sense of self and erasing simplistic divisions in order to embrace ecological approaches to interact with the environment. Therefore, the paper considers Goold's production of *The Tempest* (2006) as an ecomaterialist theatre appropriation.

The human interaction with the nonhuman environment is a central point to the contemporary literary theories that call for a radical reorientation. As political theorist Jane Bennett questions, "Why advocate the vitality of matter? Because the image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter feeds human hubris and our earth destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption" (2010, p. ix). Displacing the human subject from the center of the universe and positioning the human being within agentic flows propose a horizontal relationship between "humans, biota, and abiota" (2010, pp. 111-112). Thus, the emphasis on the interconnectedness of all things challenges

the traditional view that separates matter, agency, humans, nonhumans, nature, and culture. Bennet's approach posits the vitality of matter pushing humans to acknowledge that matter in the environment does not exist just for humans' benefit. That is, Bennett favors a more sustainable interaction with the vibrant matter to defy human arrogance.

In a similar vein, Karen Barad's examination of the matter, rooted in her expertise in quantum physics, brings a more performative perspective. Barad's approach has been taken by theatre and performance studies to examine how performance and actions produce effects beyond mere meaning creation. According to Barad, "matter is not a thing but a doing" generating continuously evolving patterns (2007, p. 183). Barad's concept of "intra-action" elucidates the materializing of all human/nonhuman and social/natural bodies. The intra-acting bodies, which are inseparable from each other, actively participate in the formation of identities and subjectivities, asserting that human agency must be considered fundamentally dependent on its responsiveness to the nonhuman agency. Barad's notion of intra-action goes beyond mere interaction and highlights a deep and mutual entanglement between human and nonhuman agencies; thus, the emphasis on "doing" redirects the focus to the performative interpretation of the phenomena. Building on both Bennet and Barad, Stacy Alaimo elaborates on the notion of "trans-corporeality" to describe the bodily natures of human and nonhuman environments. In Alaimo's terms, transcorporeality refers to the study of intangible material forces, such as the movement of substances and forces between individuals, locations, and socio-economic and eco-political systems. Thus, it explains how the material world affects human bodies, knowledge, and actions. Alaimo highlights that a fresh recognition of material might uncover extensive and sometimes unexpected outcomes of a certain activity on many populations, species, and ecosystems (2012, p. 22).

Recent theatre and performance scholarship applies ecomaterialism to stage appropriations, paying particular attention to the emphasis on the recognition of the entanglement between humans, beings, and places. Such an emphasis fosters the idea that humans are integral components of the ecology rather than distinct entities. Materiality in theatre and performance studies refers to the incorporation of ecological concepts throughout the whole process of theatrical production. Thus, this tendency ultimately stimulates innovative forms of creative expression and involvement. In other words, ecomaterialist concern in theatre appropriations emphasizes agency and materiality, re-visioning the stage in which neither human nor nonhuman or the matter is given priority. In this sense, ecomaterialism enables the comprehensive flourishing

of a variety of materials, emphasizing the human body's dynamic presence amid other material entities. Such attention allows for new considerations for stage adaptations and appropriations, stimulating attention to the idea of entanglement. Thus, incorporating ecomaterialism into the appropriation of dramaturgy involves collaborating with both humans and nonhumans to co-design. The directors take into account various levels of interdependence in order to broaden their perspective on the materials in the performance. In so doing, they provide 'voice' to nonhuman entities, recognizing their vitality and capacity for action. This can enable stage adaptations/appropriations to envision thought-provoking ways in which humans and the more-than-human worlds depend on each other and inspire alternatives to prevailing canonical narratives. More importantly, this tendency in adaptations/appropriations clearly emphasizes that the theatre production and presentation should be based on actively integrating with the natural environment in a manner that is artistically stimulating.

Tracing the Entangled Worlds in Rupert Goold's *The Tempest* (2006)

In the dramatic text of *The Tempest* (1611), the material space holds significant and diverse importance, reflecting both the influence of the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean region, as well as the emerging spread of Atlantic trade and colonialism. The play originally performs Renaissance London; however, the spaces are in mutual exchange, affecting and being affected by each other. For instance, an unidentified island in North Africa, Tunis, Naples, and Milan are in continuous entanglement. The period is the age of discovery, and the play reflects English desire for the New World's riches. Additionally, there are mentions of the Americas in other parts of the text, including references to "Bermoothes," "Setebos," and "Indians." The play also highlights significant regions that were part of the Ottoman Empire, namely Algiers and Tunis, which served as crucial harbors in the North African coastal area referred to as "Barbary." These regions were closely linked to the activities of the "Barbary pirates." The Ottoman corsairs, also referred to as privateers, were primarily Muslim individuals who operated from the African coast. They were sponsored by influential and affluent individuals and their main activity involved intercepting merchant vessels in the Mediterranean and beyond (Scott, 2020, p. 23). The so-called "uninhabited island," despite being inhabited by Caliban, Ariel, and various spirits before Prospero's arrival, is significant in relation to the doctrine of discovery. This doctrine, which paved the way for the concept of terra nullius, was used to justify European conquest of the Americas by claiming that

the indigenous populations did not have ownership rights over the land due to their non-Christian beliefs or lack of legal possession rights. The drama frequently references Montaigne, who raised doubts about the harsh methods employed in the colonization of the New World (Cless, 2010, p. 109).

Simultaneously, the material space is adequately adaptable to accommodate significantly different conceptualized locations. The island is depicted as having contrasting characteristics of fertility and productivity, as well as being a desolate and unproductive wilderness. It can be argued upon Gonzalo's comments: "Here is every thing advantageous to life," to which Antonio sarcastically responds, "True, save means to live" (II.i.50–1). Caliban, possessing superior expertise of the terrain, presents the beauty of the physical setting that combines contrasting elements such as fresh springs, fruitful terrain, and desolate places as follows: "all the qualities o'th' isle,/The fresh springs, bine-pits, barren place and fertile" (I.ii.337). Then, it is possible to assert that the variety of spaces in the original text allows for creative stage appropriations. During the early 2000s, several prominent performances and literary adaptations occurred in or referenced areas such as the Arctic North, Sub-Saharan Africa, New Zealand, Palestine, and Trinidad (Scott, 2020, p. 24).

Within this complex and ever-changing setting, the play highlights the tension between humans and nonhuman powers in driving the main plot. In the story, a storm and shipwreck are elaborated to highlight the entangled relationship between those forces. The storm performs as an agential force that affects the fate of the humans and brings the humans' entanglement with nonhuman forces to the light. Especially the materials are presented as fundamental for sustaining life on the island, and this aspect is immediately underscored. Caliban is the inhabitant of the island and claims ownership when he utters, "This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother" (I.i.333). Thus, he plays a significant role in providing materials that will sustain life on the island for the shipwreckers. Prospero, who considers himself the owner of the island, is aware of this fact and mentions Caliban as follows: "We cannot miss him. He does make our fire,/ Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices/ That profit us" (I.ii.311–3). As the quotation highlights, Caliban is the provider of the life-giving materials that humans need to survive. In the play, the representation of the entanglement between humans and nonhumans can be taken as a challenge to defy human sovereignty. This tendency is also clear in Gonzalo's 'Commonwealth' speech, calling for a more egalitarian life. Gonzalo remarks as follows:

I' th' commonwealth I would, by contraries,
 Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
 Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
 Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
 And use of service, none; contract, succession,
 Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
 No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
 No occupation, all men idle, all;
 And women too, but innocent and pure; No sovereignty— (II.i.148–57)

According to Thomas Bulger, Gonzalo's speech delivers the principles and qualities inherent in *The Tempest's* utopian vision, which is intended to provide superior substitutes to current conditions. As the first scene delivers a macrocosmic chaotic realm, humans are geographically displaced and the existing order is suspended. In other words, *The Tempest* signifies a realm in which time is disordered and the conventional social hierarchies are disrupted by the perilous conditions of the storm. The humans are in conflict with the material world, where the established orders are declared ineffective. Thus, humans must reestablish the balance on individual, societal, and cosmic levels (1994, p. 38).

The Tempest evolves into a process of both creation and performance, as humans are physically entangled with the materials around them, allowing them to become "active participant[s] in the world's becoming" (Barad, 2003, p. 803). In this performative space of entanglement, *The Tempest* enables the flow of "agentic assemblages" (Bennett, 2010, p. 111) where each material asserts vitality and agency. As the above quotations reveal, the humans are geographically displaced due to the storm and they need materials such as fire, wood, and food to survive on the island. These materials perform a vital role, asserting vitality and agency in the formation of life on the island. Here, the attention to matter visualizes how humans are entangled with their environment that sustains them. In this regard, rather than being a play that deals with particular references to humans, *The Tempest* provides a much more comprehensive reading for contemporary theatre, performance, and Shakespearean studies. Especially the summer of 2006 witnessed "a dozen Shakespeare productions" (Dessen, 2006, p. 13), one of which is Rupert Goold's *The Tempest* with its expansive stage, serving as the foundation for the action. Additionally, stage elements such as light, temperature, and audio are used appropriately (Hartwig, 2007, p. 26). It is significant to note that Goold's stage evolves

into a totally different setting from the original one that met the spectators with a Mediterranean scene. Such a Gooldian appropriation addresses the recent global ecological issues that pervade theatre and performance endeavor in the Anthropocene.

The primary motivation for this metamorphosis is the initial ecocritical focus in the field. The ecocritical stance in the appropriations of dramaturgy interrogates the extent to which Shakespearean texts effectively confront and potentially highlight the dangers posed to both human and nonhuman existence in the Anthropocene. Lynne Brucker and Dan Brayton question, "Can reading, writing about and teaching Shakespeare contribute to the health of the planet" (2011, p. 2). Although theatre and performance scholars acknowledge that the connection between the ecocritical lens and theatre/performance scholarship has been gradually and steadily developing over the past twenty years (Arons & May, 2012, p. 3), there is currently limited evidence of the integration of these two fields with Shakespearean ecocriticism. In his *Shakespeare and Ecology*, Randall Martin emphasizes the need for more exploration in this field by stating that "Shakespeare's greatest possibilities for becoming our eco-contemporary, however, arguably lie not in academic discourse but in performance [that] comes from Shakespeare's extraordinary global reach and seemingly inexhaustible capacity for reinvention" (2015, p. 167). As mentioned above, the variety of material space and the richness of the entangled worlds in Shakespearean dramatic works are productive and fruitful to be reproduced in the contemporary period. Thus, *The Tempest* enabled the directors and stage designers to reappropriate the original Mediterranean space according to the specific conditions of the Anthropocene, when the entanglement of the human and more than human worlds posits much more significance. In this way, the performing nonhuman actors on stage explicitly point out the current ecological implications and how they affect humans. Martin also suggests that Shakespeare's plays demonstrate an understanding in the early modern era that the interactions between human and more-than-human worlds and their surrounding ecosystems were undergoing transformation (2015, p. 168). Their explicit or situational portrayal of emerging challenges such as climate change, population expansion, deforestation, environmentally harmful farming methods, and the militarization of gunpowder highlighted the existence of tangible, although occasionally remote and intricate disruptions to survival existence. Shakespeare's keen observations of both small and large interconnected systems of living organisms also encourage audiences to draw parallels between human and nonhuman materialism, allowing for an ecomaterialist reading of Goold's *The Tempest*.

It is essential to delineate certain fundamental elements of ecomaterialism in stage appropriations, while acknowledging that these may vary and develop over time, being determined by the specific productions and performances. For instance, the appropriation of theatrical space into a distinct location is important. It is not necessary to have a realistic portrayal, but the appropriation of a suitable environment for the performance is important. This assessment is determined by the material environment of the stage, such as the set, light, design, actors' bodies, the audio elements, and their influence on the performance, particularly on the audience. All those dramaturgical aspects contribute to the creation of meaning and the circulation of affect. Whether a matter such as storm performing as an actor, or an ephemeral one such as sound or light that construct the dramatic environment, the matter meets with the audience through sensual interactions. Brian Massumi elaborates this process as a bodily interaction, "where the body is only body, having nothing of the putative profundity of the self nor the superficiality of external encounter" (2002, p. 59). To paraphrase Massumi, the meaning and affect are constituted by a material interaction, independently from any social and cultural influence. Then, it is possible to argue that dramatic meaning is "mutually constitutive" (Knowles, 2004, pp. 17-18). The dramatic production's material ecosystem in relation to the contemporary world offers new statements for the audience. In the case of Goold's appropriation, it both deliberately makes its setting pertinent to the contemporary audience's concerns and stimulates thought-provoking insights into our current ecological crisis.

Rupert Goold's *The Tempest*, designed by Giles Cadle and starring Patrick Stewart, significantly deviates from the original text. Challenging traditional performances, Goold artistically situates the play on an arctic island. As Linda Hutcheon states, "the desire to transfer a story from one medium or one genre to another is neither new nor rare in Western culture" (2003, p. 39). In this sense, Goold creatively re-visions the stage and makes "the adapted material [his] own" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 20). In the original text, Shakespeare specifies that the play takes place on a Mediterranean island situated equidistantly between North Africa and Naples. The play's New World elements, which draw from Montaigne's "Of Cannibals" and a modern Caribbean shipwreck story, have often been the main subject of analysis and discussion among critics and performers so far. Goold's unconventional decision to appropriate the stage to an arctic desert, despite its long-standing tradition of being staged elsewhere, strongly challenges the typical interpretations of *The Tempest* (Hartwig, 2007, p. 27). In so doing, Goold's *The Tempest* "move[s] away from simple proximation and towards something more culturally loaded"

(Sanders, 2006, p. 21). It effectively achieves the transformation of space into a specific location, which may be considered to be the primary characteristic of an ecomaterialist theatre. Goold's deliberate selection of the setting, as Miranda refers to it as a "brave new world" (V.i.183), challenges the audience's expectations, redirecting their focus towards both the conventional reality of the play and the unconventional environmental setting. Thus, it certainly "create[s] new text in which the old stories are reimagined and reinterpreted from formerly excluded perspectives" (Burnett, 2002, p. 7).

The stage is featured with stratified snow-white panels, resembling a block of ice that has covered the arctic desert and protruded towards the center. The interior scenes which take place in Prospero's hut are characterized by a wooden background placed in front of the stage. Although the wooden cabin is only heated by a converted oil drum furnace, it nonetheless offers some insulation from the freezing external temperatures. Goold himself defines the stage design as a "shifting, evaporating, oft-claimed but never owned environment" (qtd. in Bate and Wright, 2008, p. 141). The hut is one of just two artificial structures in the surrounding area, along with Caliban's "cave," which is formed by repurposing the remains of an old boat. Here, the emphasis is on human characters' adaptation to the environment. As mentioned above, Goold's production deviates significantly from the original Mediterranean tropical setting yet its strong ecomaterialist tendency is in perfect harmony with Shakespeare's ecological perspectives. Goold effectively includes a harsh arctic and/or post-catastrophic landscape as a dynamic character in his adaptation of the dramatic story about adapting to survive in challenging environmental conditions. Here, Goold assigns 'voice' to material entities beyond humans, recognizing their vitality and capacity for action. In so doing, the appropriation, engaging with the liveliness of the nonhuman world can help challenge preconceived notions of the relations between human and more-than-human worlds. Connecting with the vibrant matter and the agency of nonhuman entities enables the appropriation of dramaturgy to provide thought-provoking and artistically stimulating insights for the presentation of the entangled worlds on stage. According to Bennett, the idea of vibrant matter envisions interactions between human and nonhuman entities, by shifting the emphasis from human subject to a complex "assemblage" of diverse aspects and dynamic materials. Bennett's notion of assemblage, derived from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, recognizes the distribution of matter among a diverse array of actants, including "trash, bacteria, stem cells, food, metal, technologies, [and] weather" (2010, p. 23). Taking Bennett's elaboration into consideration, Goold's presentation of the harsh arctic as a vibrant character that is consistently contingent upon collaboration can be illustrated as the

manifestation of new aesthetic paradigms and theatrical strategies in the Anthropocene. In this sense, the Anthropocene “provide[s] the contemporary conditions for [...] an updated ecotheatre, dedicated to putting the vast resources of live, embodied performance at the service of radical reimagination called for by the perilous predicament we find our species – and others – in today” (Chaudhuri, 2014, p. 2). This updated form of theatre diverges from conventional anthropocentric theatre by juxtaposing humans with immense and unpredictable phenomena, such as the climate crisis and global warming. Reconfiguring theatre in response to the ecological predicaments of the Anthropocene allows for exploring alternative methods of effectively addressing contemporary discussions regarding pressing global environmental issues and their consequences for both humans and nonhumans.

Goold’s arctic scenery rather than a tropical one can be illustrated by special reference to Jane Bennett’s theory of “thing power.” Bennett illustrates the notion as “the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce affects dramatic and subtle” (2010, pp. 5-6). The harsh environment in the production brings into focus “the shared materiality of all things” (2010, p. 13), blurring the distinction between subjects and objects. In the original text, Caliban shows the highest level of adaptation to the natural environment and he is depicted as an indispensable character for sustaining life on the island. While the original text depicts Caliban as an indigenous inhabitant, Goold subverts his reception by casting him as a white actor, John Light, although he is still an “animalistic human” (Hartwig, 2007, p. 28). Hartwig suggests that “Caliban can be seen as an emblem of colonial oppression and as the natural, the connection between humanity and the more-than-human world” (2007, p. 28). Here, Caliban’s representation as a blurred image – both human and nonhuman – through theatre can be considered a manifestation of ecological co-existence, highlighting the entanglement. Thus, Goold’s attempt at staging each entity as a vibrant matter, including harsh arctic landscapes and human characters, allows it to become “an active participant in the world’s becoming” (Barad, 2010, p. 803). Thus, each entity brings its own agential power to take action in the dramatic space, offering new directions in stage appropriations. The appropriation of the stage allows for exploring the infinite possibilities of either changing or affirming the audience’s attitudes towards ecological problems that pervade the global agenda. In this way, *The Tempest*, “refreshingly new-minted” (Benedict, 2007) effectively addresses ecological issues.

The opening scene reveals a violent sea storm by displaying the picture of a marine transmitter from the 1960s onto a semi-transparent stage screen. Goold intends to

convey the fear a passenger feels when a storm hits. As the voice transmits a sequence of fishing and weather updates, the radar display indicates the movement of an impending storm. Then, the black-and-white video casts the mariners' futile attempts against turbulent waves and fierce winds (Martin, 2015, p. 168). Paying particular attention to Bennett's concept that things are active and dynamic entities, which experience a constant state of change and self-transformation, it can be argued that life on earth cannot be restricted to our anthropocentric actions and viewpoints. Human activities occur inside an intricate network of materials, where each element has an impact on the others. The storm scene in the play explores the idea of a tangible connection between humans and more-than-human worlds, contributing to a broader understanding of ecology that emphasizes ecological existence. Within this regard, Goold's appropriation of the stage creates a theatrical space for the audience to go deeper into discursive and theoretical structures and reconceptualize them in a nonhierarchical ontology by emphasizing an ecomaterialist understanding of theatre. Ecomaterialist theater, which performs all human and nonhuman materials on the stage by associating them with all the processes of the earth, offers new intellectual grounds for the audience to reconceptualize these phenomena and offer new artistic understandings. In this way, ecomaterialist theater points to the horizontal performativity of all human and nonhuman bodies through the visual, auditory, and spatio-temporal unity offered by theater and performance arts in making sense of the challenges of the Anthropocene, as Goold's production presents.

When the stage screen ascends gradually and a snow-covered stage design begins to appear. Prospero's shabby shelter made of wood and discarded metal attracts attention while gloomy light and feeble heat are transforming the stage environment. Prospero also undergoes a transformation with the appearance of "a crossover monster of Inuit or post-human fantasy" (Martin, 2015, p. 168). Prospero's shipwreck calamity is staged through an inhospitable landscape and stage elements, including light, heat, and sound. Bennett's emphasis on the essential physicality inherent in matter and its involvement in an assemblage is well shown in Goold's production. Each material involved in the eco-global conflict has a crucial energy, always pulsating with vitality, and asserts its active involvement in the continual interactions that engulf the biosphere. However, being alive does not consistently elicit a positive impact on other beings. In other words, ecology also encompasses the presence of devastating entities that may awaken a menacing energy or aggressive liveliness that engenders human and nonhuman survival. The production's dynamic materiality consists of human characters

and unpredictable nonhuman powers who actively participate in ecological terror. In this vein, the harsh arctic environment “has efficacy, can do things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events” (Bennett, 2010, p. viii). Hence, it is inherently dynamic beyond human endeavor, shifting attention to “the creativity of agency, to a capacity to make something new appear or occur” (Bennett, 2010, p. 31). It certainly has a thing-power and has the ability to affect and be affected beyond human-centered actions. The production’s distributive agency among the human and nonhuman powers prompts us to contemplate the agency of an ecological assemblage.

The storm as a performing actor in this ecological assemblage serves as a cautionary message about our own disregard for the environment. The burned oil container and arctic desert indicate potential environmental outcomes, including the destruction caused by a global conflict, possibly involving nuclear weapons, over depleting fossil fuel resources. The original text’s reference to the human abuse of the natural world in Act III provides a declaration for Goold’s production:

A clap of thunder sounds and lightning flashes.

ARIEL enters in the form of a harpy. ARIEL flaps his wings on the table, and by means of some kind of device on stage, the food disappears from the table.

[To ALONSO, ANTONIO, and SEBASTIAN]

You are three men of sin, whom destiny,
That hath to instrument this lower world
And what is in’t, the never-surfeited sea
Hath caused to belch up you, and on this island
Where man doth not inhabit—you ‘mongst men
Being most unfit to live—I have made you mad;
[...] The elements
Of whom your swords are tempered may as well
Wound the loud winds or with bemoaned-at stabs
Kill the still-closing waters as diminish
One dowl that’s in my plume. (III.iii.53-68)

Ariel’s speech clearly outlines Shakespeare’s original imagery of human mistreatment of the natural world. This imagery evidently influenced Goold’s ecomaterialist interpretation. Ariel, the native resident of the island, serves as the genuine embodiment

of nature. Ariel is cast by Julian Bleach, who accurately reflects the character's origins and surroundings. He is "dressed in black, with hair standing on end as if inverted icicles, pale as the snow, and barefoot," reciting the play's melodies in a raspy and resonant voice (Hartwig, 2007, p. 28). Ariel is depicted as the inhabitant of the polar wilderness and his entanglement with the arctic realm is reinforced by his capacity to be visible from any location on stage. Goold, attracted by the analogies between *Dr. Faustus* and *The Tempest*, defines him as "something truly terrifying and threatening" (qtd. in Bate & Wright, 2008, p. 131). In Act III, following the stage instruction, "Enter several strange shapes, bringing in a banquet" (III.iii.18), which seem to be Eskimos, characterized by their attire of huge winter coats with fur-lined hoods. They present raw-meat to the aristocrats during the banquet. Pressing himself out of the dead animal's body, Ariel's imagery serves as a representation of "the material interrelatedness of all beings, including the human (Alaimo, 2010, p. 151). The idea of material entanglement enables humans to map subtle interactions and influences among various entities across time and space. This mapping is essential for conceptualizing material exchanges between entities within an extensive global network, where world ecology and world politics are interdependent and need scientific negotiation (Alaimo, 2010, p. 16). In this sense, Goold's dark images reveal the production's tendency to move away from anthropocentrism, creating spaces in which the dynamic performativity of nonhuman actors, forces, processes, politics, and economics can be staged.

Goold's attention to Prospero's primitive living conditions refers not only to human reliance on primordial life for survival but also to the global climate change crisis. The audience witnesses ice melt through the collapse of Prospero's house as the performance proceeds. This stage effect symbolizes the fragmentation of the earth, which is a clear allusion to the consequences of the global climate crisis (Hartwig, 2007, p. 30). By such a stage effect, Goold aims to portray the effects of the anthropogenic climate crisis on humans' survival. However, this new spatial paradigm provides a number of avenues for interventions to mitigate the catastrophic consequences of environmental violence for all living beings. As May highlights, "skills like radical empathy, deep listening, collective embodied practice, and a sense of self-as-community—all central to theatre as a way of knowing—are essential to" create global climate change awareness (2016, n.p.). Thus, Goold's arctic stage design, Ariel's representation as an arctic creature, and the ecological calamities Prospero experiences during the performance provide a unique and extensive performance for the audience. The attention to matter as the central element of the production demonstrates an increased sensitivity to nonhuman

entities that interact with humans. This tendency in dramaturgical appropriations engenders a uniquely ecomaterialist comprehension of theatre, indicating that an embodied materiality is perpetually engaged in interaction and co-creation with its environment. In this sense, the key aspect of an ecomaterialist approach to the performance lies in its establishment of a specific setting on the stage, where the reconsiderations of the actions and the characters are most meaningful. The arctic setting of *The Tempest* will undoubtedly impact future performances of the play.

Conclusion

This paper adopts an ecomaterialist approach to analyze Rupert Goold's production of *The Tempest* (2006). Thus, it indicates that Goold's appropriation of the stage allows for tracing the intersections between ecological materialism, theatre and performance studies. The production creatively involves human and nonhuman agency, both in terms of its material aspects and its theatrical elements. Re-visioning the stage under the specific conditions required by the Anthropocene, Goold offers fresh insights into the performance appropriations. *The Tempest* provides fertile ground to investigate ecomaterialist theatre to emphasize a dynamic flow of the materials in theatrical space. Indeed, directly depicted on stage through arctic scenery, shipwreck, storm, and human despair against nonhuman climatic forces with a sense of vibrancy respond to the intricate challenges of the global ecological crisis. It is, therefore, no coincidence that *The Tempest* provokes ecological thinking and a dynamic ecomaterialist understanding of democracy.

Goold's production allows to examine the function and aspects of performance in the Anthropocene, in which humans and more-than-human worlds are constantly entangled in a material way. To put it more clearly, Goold employs a canonical text but re-revisions the stage to portray current ecological challenges such as climate change, global warming, and environmental deterioration. More importantly, the characters are thrown into harsh arctic conditions and they have to fight against the climatic forces for survival. Prospero's cell and Caliban's cave which offer insufficient protection from the freezing external temperatures portray human despair. The emphasis points out that humans are in constant entanglement with nonhuman forces. In the production, the Anthropocene, characterized by the gradual deterioration of the earth's ecosystems and biodiversity due to human influence, is brought forth to address the requirement for a horizontal re-vision of the relationship among animals, plant-life, ecological system

and energy flows. By assigning distributive agency to the materials on stage, Goold uncovers nonhuman performance and suggests that everything that exists on stage actively participates in the process of meaning and affect. In this vein, Goold's production regards stage as a space of interaction, where human and nonhuman bodies, substances, temporalities, cognitive processes, and discourses are entangled with each other, signifying ecology. To conclude, Goold's representation emphasizes human and more-than-human entanglement and challenges the dualism of subject and object in the material world. By doing so, the production employs the notion of agency to promote new theatrical adaptations. Promoting a connection with more intricate, egalitarian, and ecological ways of existence, *The Tempest* (2006) will undoubtedly impact future performances of the play.

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