

Montaigne's *Essais*, Shakespeare's *Trials*, and other Experiments of Moment

Colin Burrow has said, rather teasingly, in a recent essay on Shakespeare and the *Essays*: 'It may or may not be the case that there was a "Montaignian moment" in England around 1600, in which a shared body of rhetorical principles and texts, a growing interest in the difficulty of connecting individual experiences with general precepts, and a desire among many readers to read texts which appeared to enact thought and display personal experience all issued in a deep change in the collective mentality.'¹ I call Burrow's statement a tease, because he is careful to *suspend* the question as to whether or not such a moment took place in England around 1600, saying that 'it may or may not be the case'. He does so because he is above all concerned to explore what might be called (if we grant that it *was* the case) Shakespeare's idiosyncratic response to this broader cultural moment. That response, Burrow argues, is to be found in Shakespeare's creation, in plays written after 1599, of episodic 'moments' on the margins of the main action.

I want in what follows to suggest that when the moment is viewed in this way, as a conversational encounter rounded with a pause, then it may provide one useful way of thinking more flexibly than has sometimes been the case about questions of influence as these recur in the reception history of Montaigne in England. What I want to argue, first, is that the connection between Montaigne and his English readers – and specifically, here, Shakespeare – is not necessarily always best seen in terms of the specific influence of one author on another, but as an intertextual connection, a moment of virtual conversation between them about the manner as well as the matter of their shared preoccupations. So – of the canonical example of Gonzalo's description of an ideal commonwealth in *The Tempest* – I will be proposing that the virtual conversation between Shakespeare and Montaigne in that moment concerns as much the rhetorical manner of Gonzalo's description, and the reactions it provokes, as its verbal and conceptual matter. Close analysis of an example such as this starts

the work of dissolving the putative monolithic Montaignian moment into a whole congeries of mini-moments, all ready to be reassembled in the form of a broader moment, but each requiring further specification in the first place. I plan to do some of this closer work of specification, in the second part of this chapter, by exploring some examples – taken from *The Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Caesar* before I turn to *The Tempest* – when I will suggest that a Shakespearean moment is best understood as an encounter with, and a response to, Montaigne. What sorts of Montaignian moments are these? And what do they reveal about the connections that Montaigne’s text affords its readers? My focus – which is methodological in character – will be on how best to ‘finesse the question of direct influence’ (in Lars Engle’s 2006 phrase) if we wish to understand connections between Montaigne and Shakespeare where thinking, as well as or rather than direct verbal borrowing, is involved.² Montaigne and Shakespeare belonged to an age that tested the limits of what could be thought. Montaigne responds to this experimental intellectual culture by writing *essais* that implicate the reader in the freedom and the challenge of thinking in the moment. Shakespeare found in Montaigne’s essays a precursor, an inspiration, and a text to think with.

Ways of finessing the question of direct influence

First, let us return to the question of that broader ‘Montaignian moment’ in England around 1600, observing briefly in its favour that work on manuscript responses by William Hamlin (in copies of Florio’s English Montaigne) supports and extends the claim, already made by some in respect of the printed responses (including Shakespeare’s), that the early seventeenth-century English tend to approach Montaigne with the same freedom of thought that which Montaigne adopts in respect of the authors he most prizes.³ That is to say that they read Montaigne and borrow from him in order to think with him about the question in hand, and indeed to think against him, if need be. Hamlin argues that the manuscript response exhibits the qualities of eclecticism and wide-ranging autonomy that he finds in printed

responses, and that it thus adopts the Montaignian style of transformative readerly reaction, indeed entrenches that style.

These arguments have succeeded in making the seventeenth-century English Montaigne moment at once seem socially broader, emotionally more varied, and culturally more diffuse in its consequences than many might previously have allowed. I say diffuse, because Montaigne's text offered the English not only matter to borrow – in the guise of words, concepts, and themes – but also a manner: the style of transformative, appropriative, readerly reaction. This is an argument with profound implications for the study of Montaigne's influence in England. It suggests that, when we are considering direct borrowings of Montaigne by English authors, we ought to expect to understand these better if we are prepared to explore whether or not the direct borrowing is accompanied by an imitation of Montaigne's signature style. It also suggests that, if we wish to capture the Montaignian moment in its totality, we will need in general to look beyond verbal or conceptual borrowings to other forms of encounter.

The study of Shakespeare's relationship with Montaigne has arguably been limited in its ambitions by the single piece of incontrovertible evidence yet found of a direct intertextual connection between the two authors. Even that direct connection is long known to have been mediated by a third party, since after Edward Capell in 1780 first observed Gonzalo's description of an ideal commonwealth in *The Tempest* (2.1) to be based upon Montaigne's chapter 'Des Cannibales' (I.31), it was later established that Shakespeare's source for the passage was Montaigne in John Florio's 1603 translation of the *Essays*.⁴ I will turn to that example later. I would like, first, to review two examples of more remote connection between the authors. My argument will be that the best way to approach Shakespeare's response to Montaigne is to see it as composed of moments that reward a flexible comparative exploration able to deal with a wide spectrum of intertextual connection ranging from direct influence, via triangulated encounter, to cases of apparent 'action at a distance'.

That spectrum of intertextual connection requires a broader understanding of what constitutes a ‘source’. Burrow points out that this restrictive understanding has been the combined result of two tendencies. The first has been to impose on any putative source the test of the ‘exact verbal parallel’, and this has left Shakespeare criticism ill equipped ‘with a vocabulary or method for writing about relationships between two authors where thinking, rather than direct verbal borrowing, is involved’. The second tendency has been to privilege those of Shakespeare’s sources, as first Charlotte Lennox and then Geoffrey Bullough did, which offered the playwright material for the composition of his plots – fictional texts such as plays, poems, and *novelle* – and to neglect discursive texts that lie behind passages of argumentation in Shakespeare. That neglect is in part explained by the first tendency I mentioned – to impose on putative sources the ‘exact verbal parallel’ test – since Shakespeare, like many other readers of discursive texts of his day, does not tend to respond to such texts by reproducing them verbatim but by thinking with them.⁵ If we are looking to establish a relationship between Shakespeare and Montaigne in which a manner of thinking as much as its subject-matter might be involved, then, we will have to approach the notion of the source altogether more flexibly. While the empirical search for the exact verbal parallel can and must remain, it must not be allowed to operate as a litmus test, but instead be reconceived as one part of a broader enquiry. Part of the breadth of that enquiry comes, as it were, from the outside: the external context in which Shakespeare encountered Montaigne and put Montaigne to use is now better understood, thanks to – to cite just three important studies – Hamlin’s study of manuscript response to Montaigne in the age of Shakespeare, Peter Mack’s cultural-historical work on the rhetorical and intellectual training that Montaigne and Shakespeare had in common,⁶ and Warren Boutcher’s social-historical work on the importance of Montaigne’s work to the formation of the élite in Jacobean England. ‘[Montaigne] was used by scholars and advisers to furnish the real aristocracy and by playwrights to furnish the staged aristocracy with matter for topical philosophical discussion – as Gonzalo does Alonso’, says Boutcher, effortlessly connecting the external context of

aristocratic Jacobean England to the internal context, in this case, of the displaced Neapolitan court in *The Tempest*.⁷

How, though, to deepen that connection so as to understand how, at particular moments in the plays, the connection with Montaigne is put to dramatic use? The approach I would like to recommend involves comparing and contrasting the matter that connects our authors – words, concepts, themes, other texts, literary forms – but also the manner – transformative, appropriative, readerly reaction – in asking, in essence, what happens to a Montaignian essay when it finds its way on to the Shakespearean stage.

Work done in this vein by Terence Cave and Colin Burrow has taken us into contrasting kinds of Shakespearean moment. Returning from a different perspective to the topic explored by Robert Ellrodt in 1975, the marked self-consciousness of Montaigne and Shakespeare,⁸ Cave argues in a 2007 essay that this serves both authors as an instrument of experimental thought. He groups moments of theatrical self-dramatization in Shakespeare together with quasi-theatrical situations. These examples, Cave says, are not to be understood as the dramatist's self-congratulatory asides, but as his experiments, second-level strategies by means of which the characters are induced to reflect on their situations and capacities and we to think with them. In this, they resemble key passages in the work of Montaigne, who consistently foregrounds the unfolding process of reflection over the matter ostensibly in hand. The term that Montaigne uses for this process is *essai*, meaning literally a 'trial', and referring here not to a genre of writing – this is a later development – but to an intellectual and literary experiment. This etymology allows Cave to encapsulate his literary parallel thus: 'Shakespeare's trials, and the other procedures that operate in the same way, are his *essais*.'⁹ Note that the comparative approach here is no longer designed to establish 'influence' or even necessarily historical connection: some of the plays Cave mentions, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c. 1595), precede the earliest conjectured date upon which Shakespeare is thought to have read Florio's Montaigne. The encounter between the two writers is not located in history so much as in a quasi-allegorical critical fiction. The comparison is

designed to do other work: it sets out, as A. D. Nuttall did in his work on Shakespeare and the ancient Greek playwrights, to account for a case of apparent literary ‘action at a distance’; it chronicles in Montaigne and Shakespeare, as Laurie Maguire has put it, ‘not the specific influence of one author over another, but the air that both breathed’, thus recasting ‘source-study as literal inspiration, from the Latin *inspirare*, to breathe in’.¹⁰ Cave sees trials and false trials as moments of active Montaignian experimentation at the level of the plot. By contrast, Burrow focuses on moments of inaction at the level of plot, where experimental thinking aloud comes centre stage because there is at once no possibility of action and ‘a huge weight of affect’. The encounter between the two writers is here relocated in history, since Burrow looks only at plays that postdate Shakespeare’s reading of Florio’s Montaigne, but the encounter is then subject less to ‘an exercise in empirical discovery’ than to ‘an act of critical exploration’.¹¹

Moments of inspiration in The Merchant of Venice and Julius Caesar

I have so far pointed studies focussing on either end of the wide spectrum of intertextual connection that, I have argued, relates Shakespearean moments to Montaigne, ranging from direct influence, via triangulated encounter, to apparent ‘action at a distance’. What I want to do in the rest of this paper is to focus on three Shakespearean moments, reflecting the same range, that have particularly interested me. Two of these, on which I have previously published essays, are otherwise not much discussed. The third, while endlessly discussed, looks perhaps a little different in the light of the two previous moments.

The first of my moments is a case of apparent ‘action at distance’ operating, at the level of the plot, in the trial scene of *The Merchant of Venice*.¹² Shakespeare there seems for all the world to borrow directly from Florio’s Montaigne’s account of occult sympathies and antipathies in nature when Shylock uses the language of occult antipathy to explain why he prefers to claim his pound of flesh from Antonio rather than receive the three thousand ducats

owed to him. The passages differ above all in their contexts. They are similar, however, not just in their conceptual content but even in their phrasing.

Here is Montaigne, in ‘Of the Institution and Education of Children’, describing phobias he has seen develop in people who, as children, were not taught to control them:

I have seene some to startle at the smell of an apple, more than at the shot of a peece; [...] and others to be scared with seeing a fetherbed shaken: as *Germanicus*, who could not abide to see a cocke, or heare his crowing.¹³

Here he is in ‘An Apologie for Raymond Sebond’ listing tricks that the senses play upon the judgement:

I have seene some, who without infringing their patience, could not well heare a bone gnawne under their table: [...] others will be offended, if they but heare one chew his meat somewhat aloud; nay, some will be angrie with, or hate a man, that either speaks in the nose, or rattles in the throat.¹⁴

Here is Shakespeare, or rather Shylock in the trial scene of *The Merchant of Venice*, on being pressed to explain why he prefers to claim his pound of flesh from Antonio than to receive the three thousand ducats owed to him:

I'll not answer that --
But say it is my humour: is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned? What, are you answered yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;

Some that are mad if they behold a cat;
 And others when the bagpipe sings i'the nose
 Cannot contain their urine: for affection
 Masters oft passion, sways it to the mood
 Of what it likes or loathes. Now for your answer:
 As there is no firm reason to be rendered
 Why he cannot abide a gaping pig,
 Why he a harmless necessary cat,
 Why he a wollen bagpipe, but of force
 Must yield to such inevitable shame
 As to offend, himself being offended:
 So can I give no reason, nor will I not,
 More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
 I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
 A losing suit against him. Are you answered?¹⁵

The most striking parallels between these passages – their listing of powerful antipathies towards harmless animals, their anaphoric sequences starting ‘some [...]’ and finishing ‘and others [...]’, and their use of phrases such as ‘in the nose’ and ‘cannot abide’ – led George Coffin Taylor, an enthusiastic pioneer in the 1920s in the search for ‘exact verbal parallels’ between our two authors, to conclude that, ‘except for the early date of *The Merchant of Venice*, one would naturally conclude the Shakespeare passage had been influenced by the Montaigne passage’.¹⁶ Since Taylor considers influence in this case to be impossible, the passages appear as a dead-end in his study, a wrong turning narrowly avoided. Despite more recent conjectures about the earlier circulation of Florio’s manuscript,¹⁷ direct influence still seems highly unlikely here, but the discussion of sympathies and antipathies is repeated in enough late sixteenth-century European texts, learned and popular, to suggest that

there may be a network of sources common to both Montaigne and Shakespeare.¹⁸ What is striking is how differently the authors use the concept of occult sympathies and antipathies, Montaigne to claim (in his chapter ‘Of Friendship’) that occult sympathy was the indispensable and yet philosophically elusive ‘certain something’ that drew him into perfect friendship with La Boétie, Shakespeare to name the secret bond that links the Jewish usurer Shylock to his arch-enemy, the Christian merchant, Antonio. Action at a distance produces a reversal of perspective whereby the occult quality at work in Montaigne’s friendship reappears in Shakespeare, maddened, at the inexplicable root of an intimate hatred.

The second of my moments, another trial scene of a sort, is probably a case of triangulated encounter. I have in mind Caesar’s funeral in *Julius Caesar*.¹⁹ Both Montaigne and Shakespeare look back to ancient writers on Rome – Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch – and explore Roman history and sensibility in dialogue with them. An ardent admirer of Plutarch, Montaigne was fascinated by Rome’s philosophical traditions, not least the anti-authoritarian free-thinking sensibility that he found allied with republican political thought. Montaigne highlights that sensibility in contrasting pronouncements on Roman Stoicism by Cicero and Seneca. What matters to Montaigne is that, despite their differences of perspective, Cicero and Seneca agree that Roman thinking is and must always be free-thinking. Montaigne gives free-thinking a new lease of life in the anti-authoritarian and experimental form of the *Essais*.

What Shakespeare does in parallel with Montaigne, but to quite different effect, is to depict in *Julius Caesar* the death of Roman free-thinking as Rome lurches from its republican past towards an imperial future under the authoritarian rule of the Caesars. Shakespeare knew his Plutarch, studied Cicero at school, and may well have encountered Seneca directly or indirectly. Brutus, as Shakespeare dramatizes his story in *Julius Caesar*, is the Roman free-thinker who walked into a faction. Shakespeare takes from Plutarch (in the 1579 English translation by Thomas North) the main events of his drama – Brutus’s speeches justifying the assassination and Antony’s oration at Caesar’s funeral – but these events, which days separate in Plutarch, Shakespeare compresses to form a single scene in which Brutus and Antony

address, in turn, the same crowd of people. This scene resembles nothing more closely than a trial, containing speeches for the defence and prosecution, with the people acting as judge and jury. Brutus speaks first, and from a position of power, as the head of the faction that has just assassinated Caesar. He urges the crowd to exercise its judgement with the old Roman freedom: ‘Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, so that you may the better judge’.²⁰ He explains that he slew his friend Julius Caesar to save Rome from Caesar’s ambition. He puts his case with compelling force. The people, who had first demanded satisfaction, now acclaim Brutus as Rome’s saviour. In a chilling moment, and, as many have observed, the play’s single most politically telling line, a member of the crowd shouts, of Brutus, ‘Let him be Caesar!’ That shout from the crowd suggests that Brutus has misjudged a political mood that is turning away from republican and intellectual freedoms towards voluntary servitude to authoritarian rule. Then Mark Antony steps forward and seizes the initiative. Closely associated with the dead ‘tyrant’, as people are now calling Caesar, and permitted to speak only on the whim of the new darling of the crowd, Brutus, Antony starts from a dangerously weak position. He does not take long triumphantly to transform it. The words he utters over Caesar’s corpse amount to, in A. D. Nuttall’s words, ‘the greatest oration in the English language’.²¹ That oration turns the tables on Brutus and his associates with breath-taking speed. Only some one hundred and thirty lines into this most powerful and ruthless of political speeches, Antony has the entire crowd screaming to his tune, as one: ‘Revenge! – About! – Seek! – Burn! – Fire! – Kill! – Slay! – Let not a traitor live’.²² He has transformed a funeral into a trial scene has issued in a death sentence for the embodied ideal of Roman free-thinking.

Both of the examples discussed so far have presented cases of remote intertextual connection, and perhaps for that very reason have encouraged a critical exploration that ranges beyond questions of direct influence, comparing and contrasting instead not only the matter that connects our authors but also the shared manner – transformative, appropriative, experimental – that accounts for their divergences. My third and final example – Gonzalo’s

description of an ideal commonwealth in *The Tempest* (2.1) – will tend to suggest that such an approach will also enlarge our understanding of moments of encounter between the two writers to include an influence of manner that is, as it were, hiding in plain sight.

A moment of encounter in The Tempest

This much-studied episode – to return to the perspectives that I have tried to open up in this essay – may be said to expand Cave’s suggestion, that Shakespeare translates the essaying of Montaigne into drama in the form of trials and quasi-trials, by connecting it with Burrow’s suggestion that Montaigne offers Shakespeare material for interpersonal drama during lulls in the plot. For Gonzalo does both: he turns to Montaigne when trialling a kind of argument, about the perfect commonwealth he imagines for the island, and he does so in an episode of interpersonal drama.

Gonzalo’s depiction of an ideal commonwealth is offered to his master, Alonso, as Alonso and his shipwrecked companions feel their way around the desert island on which a storm at sea has cast them on their journey home from the African wedding of Alonso’s daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis.²³ Gonzalo is explicitly the experimental thinker, here, starting his monologue as he does in the following terms: ‘Had I plantation of this isle, my lord, [...] | And were the King on’t, what would I do?’ What Burrow suggests, with reference to this episode, is that experimental thinking, while initially plotless, swiftly generates action in the form of ‘interpersonal drama’ as one character responds to another’s thinking aloud in the light of their preoccupations. There is for Burrow, in particular, ‘a direct comment on Montaigne’s utopianism in the way that Sebastian and Antonio immediately after hearing about the golden world of Gonzalo’s commonwealth set about attempting to kill their king’. At such moments, a non-narrative source ‘feeds back in complex ways into the action of the play’ and reflects back on its own composition as an essay, with component elements of the source assigned to different voices in the dialogue. Burrow comments: ‘That makes

Shakespeare a particularly valuable reader of Montaigne, since there are times when his drama can appear to pick apart the contexture of commonplaces, abstract principles, and personal experiences from which so many of the essays are so delicately woven. It is almost as though Shakespeare can sometimes allow one to see behind the *Essays*, and, as it were, allow his audience to glimpse their genesis.’²⁴

I would like to return to this observation from a different angle by identifying the *form* that Gonzalo’s speech adopts and then suggesting that this form may be an inheritance from Montaigne as much as the words Gonzalo uses. This will cause me to challenge an assumption found in many readings of this episode, including those (already cited) of Burrow and Warren Boutcher, that the Montaignian material that Shakespeare puts to use in this scene is philosophical in character. My contention, in essence, is that what Montaigne provides Shakespeare here is not philosophical but rhetorical in character. Burrow and Hamlin hint at this when they point out, quite rightly, that, in launching on his speech, Gonzalo is (to quote Hamlin) ‘attempting to relieve Alonso’s misery’ and that Gonzalo does so by, in Burrow’s terms, playing the (courtly) ‘fool’.²⁵ Only Frank Lestringant, to my knowledge, has connected the rhetorical choice that Gonzalo makes – as well as the material he uses – with Montaigne.²⁶

Gonzalo launches into a set-piece speech in praise of a perfect commonwealth on the island because his master views the island not only as uncharted territory, but as his son’s watery grave writ large, and – like a good courtier – Gonzalo is trying to distract his master from his woes. The rhetorical choice he makes is to attempt a declamation. I have in mind the exercise in oratory in which a speaker exercises or displays his or her talent by arguing with ingenuity a cause at one remove from the pressing causes that would receive orations in the tribunal and the assembly: the setting for a declamation is, then, not so much a trial as a mock-trial; the aim ranges from admiration, through consolation, to sheer pleasure.²⁷ A definition of the *declamatio* is to be found in Quintilian. Erasmus explores its possibilities in several texts. These include a *Declamatio de morte*, containing arguments in praise of death offered by way of consolation for the death of a loved one, an aim that Gonzalo shares (since

Alonso is in despair at the loss of his son). Erasmus went on to write a famous Renaissance declamation, the *Praise of Folly*, in which he pushes the declamation to a virtuoso limit by making Folly speak in praise of herself. Thomas More replied, in *Utopia*, with a similarly ironic praise of the better political life to be found in the New World, on Nowhere Island, where all things are held in common.

Montaigne provides the link insofar as he practises the mode of declamation at times in his essay on the Cannibals. This essay is no more direct a contribution than *Utopia* is to the debate in political philosophy about the best state. It is a text in which Montaigne sets out to unsettle his European reader's unthinking superiority complex by praising – at least initially – the so-called barbarians of the New World: by offering, in other words, a declamation in paradoxical praise of communistic, polygamous, man-eating folly. This is the part of the essay that Shakespeare recycles in *The Tempest*. Montaigne goes on to judge the Tupinambá practice of cannibalism to be indeed cruel, but less so than the atrocities of the Europeans who condemn them, blind to their own faults. The argument is not relativistic, then, but comparative and contrarian: it suggests that the very people we unthinkingly despise may actually be living much better than we are. While Montaigne seeks to unsettle his implied reader, Gonzalo imitates Montaigne in an unsuccessful attempt to distract his master, but the genre of the declamation accommodates both of these aims and provides them with a rhetorical structure. That rhetorical structure is made available to Shakespeare by Montaigne's essay along with the description of a better New World political life.

Montaigne's text may in fact form part of a longer sequence of declamations connecting Shakespeare back to Erasmus. José de Pina Martins and Frank Lestringant have suggested, as a possible source for Montaigne's 'Des cannibales', the anonymous short Italian declamatory text on folly, *La Pazzia* (Venice, c. 1541), which appeared in a French translation by Jean du Thier in Paris in 1566. They point out how much *La Pazzia* owes to Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*.²⁸ Extending this intertextual chain to Shakespeare via Montaigne,

as Lestringant does, gives us a sequence of declamations in which the New World emerges as praiseworthy folly in contrast with the morally bankrupt wisdom of Europe.

The passage from *The Tempest* subjects the foregoing sequence to a further sea-change. No longer the American reality that Montaigne depicts it to be, that better society has become the momentary projection of an Italian courtier on an island that is part-Mediterranean, part-American in its geography. There is a similar scattered transformation of other elements. It does indeed seem, on the one hand, that, in being turned into interpersonal drama in the way Burrow describes, the fabric of Montaigne's text has been unpicked: two strands, for example, that are interwoven in Montaigne – his praise of a better society in which all things are held in common and the self-ironizing extravagance with which he offers that praise – are separated out and allocated, the one to the declamatory Gonzalo and the other to the carping Sebastian and Antonio, to animate the drama.

Many critics have treated Gonzalo's praise of a better society as the Montaignian borrowing in this scene, because it is the most easily identified in verbal terms, and they have seen that praise as having the character of a philosophical proposition in Montaigne's work. This has led some to conclude that Shakespeare is rather aggressively making a fool of Montaigne's proposition.²⁹ My suggestion has been all along that it is neither an act of aggression nor indeed of homage, but an appropriative borrowing of a kind that is quintessentially Montaignian, and therefore the borrowing of a manner – in this case, the rhetoric of declamation – along with the matter of Golden Age utopianism. His appropriation of declamatory rhetoric enables Shakespeare to do different theatrical work with it: to show what a trial in the rhetorical art of declamatory consolation looks like when it fails to achieve its aim of distraction, for example, even as that trial's praise of holding all things in common then throws into high relief the privatarian colonizing impulses of character after character in the play; and to reveal the level of mental unreadiness among the Neapolitans for the political culture of the island they are about to encounter. Meanwhile, the connection between Montaigne and Shakespeare on the level of the rhetoric of declamation in this scene casts a

certain light back on the Montaignian source, revealing its genesis to be its own kind of experiment with the praise of utopian folly.

¹ Colin Burrow, 'Montaignian Moments', 242.

² Engle, 'Sovereign Cruelty in Montaigne and *King Lear*', 119.

³ Hamlin, *Montaigne's English Journey*, 91-92.

⁴ See Boutcher, 'Marginal Commentaries', 15.

⁵ Burrow, 'Montaignian Moments', 240.

⁶ Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric in Montaigne and Shakespeare*; see also, by the same author, 'Montaigne and Shakespeare: Source, Parallel or Comparison?'.

⁷ Boutcher, 'Marginal Commentaries', 25.

⁸ Ellrodt, 'Self-Consciousness in Montaigne and Shakespeare'.

⁹ Cave, 'When Shakespeare Met Montaigne', 117.

¹⁰ Nuttall, ‘Action at a Distance’; Laurie Maguire, ‘Part I: Editor’s Introduction’, in *How to Do Things with Shakespeare: New Approaches, New Essays*, ed. Laurie Maguire (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 7-10 (p. 8).

¹¹ Burrow, 'Montaignian Moments', p. 242, p. 249.

¹² I recapitulate here the reading of *The Merchant of Venice* in my essay, ‘French Connections: The *Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi* in Montaigne and Shakespeare’, in *How to Do Things with Shakespeare*, pp. 13-33.

¹³ *Montaigne's Essays*, trans. John Florio, 3 vols (London and New York, NY: Dent and Dutton, 1965), I.25, p. 176; Michel de Montaigne, *Les Essais*, 3 vols (paginated as one), ed. Pierre Villey and V.-L. Saulnier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992), I.26, p. 166 (the chapter numberings in this part of book I differ in these two editions).

¹⁴ *Montaigne's Essays*, II.12, p. 316; Montaigne, *Essais*, II.12, p. 595.

¹⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. M. M. Mahood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4.1.42-62.

¹⁶ Taylor, *Shakspeare's Debt to Montaigne*, 7.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Desan, “‘Translata proficit’”.

¹⁸ In my 2008 article ‘French Connections’, pp. 31-32 (n. 2), I cited the following potential instances of that network of sources: Girolamo Cardano, *De subtilitate* (On Subtlety) (1550), bk 18; Giovanni Battista Della Porta, *Magia naturalis* (On Natural Magic) (1558); Reginald Scot, *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), bk 13; and Zachary Jones, in his English translation of Pierre Le Loyer’s 1586 French study of ghosts, *A Treatise of Spectres* (1605). I now add that Sextus Empiricus argues, in his second mode of doubt, that ‘there are many differences in our choice and avoidance of external things’ (*Outlines of Scepticism*, 22), a passage on which Montaigne draws in ‘Of the Institution and Education of Children’, and which reappears in a partial English translation of Sextus’s *Outlines* dating from around 1590 (Hamlin, ‘A Lost Translation Found? An Edition of *The Sceptick* (c. 1590) Based on Extant Manuscripts’, 48.) I am grateful to Will Hamlin for suggesting to me this addition to the network.

¹⁹ I return here to arguments presented in my essay, ‘Trial by Theatre, or Free-Thinking in *Julius Caesar*’.

²⁰ William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, ed. T. S. Dorsch (London and New York, NY: Routledge, The Arden Shakespeare, Second Series, 1994), III.2.16-18.

²¹ A. D. Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker*, 186.

²² *Julius Caesar*, III.2.206-07.

²³ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford: The Oxford Shakespeare, 1987), 2.1.139-70.

²⁴ Burrow, ‘Montaignian Moments’, 243, 245.

²⁵ Hamlin, *Montaigne's English Journey*, 86; Burrow, ‘Montaignian Moments’, 243.

²⁶ Lestringant, ‘Gonzalo’s Books’.

²⁷ See Chomarat, *Grammaire et rhétorique chez Érasme*, vol. 1, pp. 931-1001.

²⁸ Pina Martins, ‘Modèles portugais et italiens de Montaigne’; Lestringant, ‘Gonzalo’s Books’, 180-85.

²⁹ A recent example is Stephen Greenblatt’s reading of this episode in his introduction to Greenblatt and Platt, eds., *Shakespeare’s Montaigne*.