

Interactive comment on “Using geosciences and mythology to locate Prospero’s Island” by Tiziana Lanza

R. John Leigh (Referee)

rjl4@case.edu

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Review of: Using geosciences and mythology to locate Prospero’s Island
GENERAL COMMENTS: Tiziana Lanza has written an informative and interesting review of the sources – both scientific and literary – that William Shakespeare (WS) may have used in writing *The Tempest*. Her account is balanced, appropriately weighing the evidence for each suggestion, and well constructed. Her writing style will make this article accessible and appealing to a wide readership. My criticisms are relatively minor, concerning a few points of evidence, and making suggestions for improvements in English style (although the writing is generally very good). One minor criticism is that the paper is sometimes a bit repetitive (for example, the emergence of the Ferdinanda Island is referred to several times). The author could easily address this. SPECIFIC

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COMMENTS AND TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS: (please treat style issues as suggestions): Abstract, line 8: "...in the context of naturally occurring hazards." (hazards – plural) Abstract, line 12: "...proposed several hypotheses..." Abstract, lines 14-15. "We don't intend to identify the island, we believe the island is a polyhedral place both from a philosophical-political and from a geographical point of view." This sentence might throw some readers. Although "polyhedral" (many sided) is correct, some readers might think that this refers to the island itself having many sides. Perhaps something along the lines: "Our goal is not to identify the island but rather to examine the various geographical and philosophical-political factors that may have influenced Shakespeare's literary creation." Abstract, line 19: "phenomena originating in the volcanism..." Abstract, line 20: I do not understand what "sources precious" means. In the text, Strabo is referred to. Perhaps "historical sources" is meant? Line 22: delete "In recent years" – rather, "A new trend towards..." Line 31: "for calculating, for instance, the return period of an earthquake" – suggest "for predicting future earthquakes." (If this is technically correct). Line 36: "Details about the new updated front-end..." This is jargon. Please state simply what is meant. Are these details of predicted events? Line 40: "...since many years..." Better as "...for many years..." Line 54: "While in..." better as "During..." Line 63: "only a couple of centuries later" better as "over two centuries later" (if correct). Line 69: "wordily renown" better as "worldly renowned". Line 71: "In doing so, we intend to do a work..." better as "In doing so, we intend to conduct a work..." Line 97: Comment: "some of the neo-scientists" who were tolerant of alchemy included Newton. Lines 102-103: "Nevertheless we assist to a slow decline..." The meaning is unclear. Was this the intended meaning – "Nevertheless, we can observe a slow decline in the importance of the Renaissance Magus."? Line 109: Comment - Perhaps add mention of Galileo, who showed the importance of experiments (and who used mathematics more than Bacon). Lines 111-112: The meaning of the following sentence is not entirely clear: "Nevertheless, Bacon himself reinterpreted one of the main features of the magical-chemical tradition: the philosophy of domain, a knowledge aiming at transforming nature (Rossi, 1968)" Not everyone

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will want to read Rossi's book to clarify the sentence. Please make this clearer. Do you mean that Bacon was saying that alchemists had a different set of values? For example, in his Aphorisms, Bacon wrote: "It is true that alchemists have some achievements from their labors, but these came by chance, incidentally, or by some variation of experiments, such as mechanics are accustomed to make, and not from any art or theory; for the theory they have formed brings more confusion than help to their experiments." Line 115: better as "Nevertheless in this respect. . ." (Also, an alternative explanation to the one mentioned here is that WS knew Bacon and discussed scientific matters with him.) Line 135: reads better – "Prospero uses the adjective "rough" when referring to his magic. Also, commentators remark. . ." Lines 154-163: Comment: Although I agree that more attention should be given to John Florio as a candidate for the authorship of Shakespeare's works, perhaps this section should be put in a more neutral voice (your enthusiasm may turn off readers who are not ready to entertain this possibility, such as Stratfordians, who are the majority of readers). Line 194-5: ". . .usurped his title of the Duke. . ." Line 203: Perhaps: "Alonso, and his son Ferdinando, are searching for each other." Line 210: Perhaps: ". . .final celebration clouded by Prospero's unexpected melancholia." Line 218: Having stated that the sources of the play are debated, the sentence starting "He used sources. . ." should better start: "He appears to have used sources to build the philosophical and political assets of the play such as, for instance. . ." (or similar to imply that these are hypotheses). Lines 253 and following. The general consensus would seem to be that Strachey's description is most consistent with a hurricane – which frequently affect that area of the Atlantic. Perhaps state that. Line 285: ". . .eruption we assist." is unclear. Assist does not seem to be the right word. Perhaps "observe"? Line 314: Is "multifaceted" better here than "polyhedral"? Line 325: Better to say "It is generally agreed that WS read the famous. . ." Line 345: WS might also have seen the Strachey letter if he was in contact with a member of the Second Virginia company. Line 353: ". . .Hakluyt's belongings." (reads better) Line 373: "natural hazards." (plural better) Line 408: ". . .learn that the island has different. . ." Line 424: ". . .for sure assert that. . ." Line 430: This sentence could be improved. Perhaps "As

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we will see in the last section, which is dedicated to natural hazards in *The Tempest*, there are other reasons besides the island's intrinsic features to place it in the Mediterranean. But for the..." Lines 439-443: Consider breaking this quoted conversation out into separate lines for each speaker – so it can be better appreciated. Line 449: Should "trait" be "tract"? Is trait the correct technical term here? Line 453: "...to the part of the Tyrrhenian lying to the north of Sicily." Line 456: specify "...and Virgil's Epic." Line 468: "...testify to a difficult..." Line 469: Should "geodynamic" be plural (here and elsewhere in the paper)? Line 484: km² (superscript "2") Line 485: Is "perimetral" a technical term? Do you mean outside of the perimeter of the major islands? Line 501: "...WS supplanted..." Line 503: "Following Roe's directions..." Perhaps, "Consistent with Roe's suggestion..." Line 504: "Roe maintains..." Line 538: "To Roe, these are clearly..." Line 545: "...with at great imagination." Line 619: "...collected evidence..." Line 622: "...WS respects..." Also, I do not really understand what this sentence about WS respecting the time, place, and action units of classic drama means; please clarify. Line 624: Do you mean that the tempest that WS uses as a source must have occurred before the performance date of the play in 1611? If so, please clarify. Line 640: "...Fire is described..." Line 714: "...and thought-executing..." (thought) Line 728: "Eventually, WS was interested..." Line 729: "...rather than embarking upon..." Line 736: Suggest: "What has the Sea of Sicily to envy in the Bermuda triangle?" Line 758: "...Channel has been an object of..." Line 767: I am not clear what this sentence starting "Eventually volcanic eruptions at sea..." means. Do you mean that it was probably known at the time of WS that sea eruptions occurred? Line 771: Make sure to superscript the degree symbol, such as 36° Line 850: Can you cite a source for this legend about Elizabeth I being thrown inside Aetna? Line 875: "...Harpy interrupts the..." Line 882: "...collected evidence that..." Line 902: "...both fans of..." REFERENCES: Please make sure that the references are in alphabetic order (if this is the required format). At present, Strachey is followed by Jensen. Also, in the opening parts of the paper, state that you will be using the Arden 1986 edition as the source for your quotes from *The Tempest*. FIGURES: Figure 2: Who generated this figure using

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Google Map – the author? If not provide the citation. Is using the face of WS the best symbol? Perhaps use colored dots or crosses to avoid overlap? Figure 3 is charming, but is it necessary in this paper? Figure 4 is referred in the text in line 488. Should this be a reference to Figure 5?

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