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Growing Pains

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Growing Pains

SHARON O'DAIR

My local scene has changed. I now live in Berkeley, California, after having lived in Tuscaloosa, Alabama for almost 30 years. I thought that engaging the Anthropocene in a new scene might pose difficulty, since most if not all of my ecocritical essays allude to my life in the South, its weather, coast, poverty, striking biodiversity, or environmental degradation. But it did not. I am now an urbanite: Traffic roils in front of my house almost continuously, even on Sunday mornings, and, in the back, a few streets away, trains roll by intermittently, horns blaring. When I run or walk to the McLaughlin Eastshore State Park and the Berkeley Marina, lovely places affording vistas of San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, and Marin County, I cross Interstate 80 on a well-designed pedestrian bridge, bookended by striking sculptures, one celebrating the University of California's intellectual tradition and Berkeley's radical tradition, and the other celebrating Berkeley's natural beauty and the recreational opportunities the Eastshore State Park offers—birdwatching, kite-flying, biking. Yet as I cross that bridge, traffic below me slows to 20 mph at 11 am, even on weekends. Twice in the year I've lived here, this stretch of Interstate 80 has been closed from accidents involving big rigs, backing up traffic for miles and hours, spilling frustrated drivers onto the adjacent surface streets, my streets.

The Eastshore State Park is reclaimed landfill, and the McLaughlin for whom it is named was a woman who began her activism in the 1960s, aiming to prevent Berkeley from creating more land for development though yet more landfill. She succeeded, but in 1966, the population of California was 18 million¹; in 2016, a half-century later, it is about 39 million.² Housing prices have risen accordingly or, perhaps, more than accordingly. In this city and in many others in the San Francisco bay area, and in Los Angeles to the south, thousands upon thousands of people live in battered, bruised RVs or cars, and the homeless, lots of them, congregate under freeway overpasses and in downtowns and city parks. Many in Berkeley live adjacent to that well-designed pedestrian bridge, on both sides of—or under—Interstate 80; they live in tents, under lean-tos, beneath tarps, in dirty sleeping bags, surrounded by their belongings, and the garbage they generate. Some wander up University Avenue, dragging stuff along, begging at intersections and bus stops; others rail incomprehensibly about everything—or nothing. A Shakespearean might be forgiven for seeing *King Lear's* Poor Tom in the most ill-equipped, the most deranged, the poorest. Poor Tom, whose discourse, writes Simon Palfrey, “is not socialized as conversation”; Poor Tom, whose life is “profoundly removed from objects, human or nonhuman; from the pursuit of them or definition through them. And this includes oneself, considered

Shakespeare in the Anthropocene

as any socially recognizable object.”³ This scene, my Anthropocene, is recognizably and creepily dystopic, despite the visually stunning topography of water, hills, mountains, and San Francisco itself.

In a review of the field of ecocriticism, published in 2011, Lawrence Buell observes that “nothing generated within ecocriticism thus far comes close to matching intellectual historian Dipesh Chakrabarty’s brilliant short polemic, ‘The Climate of History: Four Theses.’” This essay, writes Buell, “reflects on the irony of the complex interactions between the rise of post-Enlightenment democratic institutions and the advent of what today is increasingly being claimed as the Anthropocene Age.”⁴ What Chakrabarty means, and what Buell thinks ironic, is that democracy, individual freedom, and the like—not just capitalism or imperialism—require the burning of fossil fuels. Since then, fellow Indian intellectuals have offered similarly provocative work, including Srinivas Aravamudan, Amitav Ghosh, and Chakrabarty, too. In “Climate and Capital,” his follow-up to “The Climate of History,” Chakrabarty bravely asserts that

Population is often the elephant in the room in discussions of climate change. The “problem” of population—while due surely in part to modern medicine, public health measures, eradication of epidemics, the use of artificial fertilizers, and so on—cannot be attributed in any straightforward way to a logic of a predatory and capitalist West, for neither China nor India pursued unbridled capitalism while their populations exploded.⁵

Even more audaciously than Chakrabarty, Ghosh confronts the elephant in the room in *The Great Derangement*, suggesting that Asia is no mere victim of climate change: “The reality is that the continent has also played a pivotal role in setting in motion the chain of consequences that is driving the present cycle of climate change.”⁶ Without dismissing the West’s contribution, which occurred “through the continuous expansion of the carbon footprint of what was about 30 percent of the world’s population at the beginning of the twentieth century,” Ghosh maintains that today’s climate crisis has been precipitated by Asia’s contribution through “a period of sustained economic expansion [launched] in the late 1980s.”⁷ This was “a sudden but very small expansion in the footprint of a much larger group of people, perhaps as much as half of a greatly expanded global population, late in the twentieth century” (91).⁸ Ghosh is then moved to ask, “Could it be that imperialism actually delayed the onset of the climate crisis by retarding the expansion of Asian and African economies? Is it possible that if the major twentieth-century empires had been dismantled earlier, then the landmark figure of 350 parts per million would have been crossed long before it actually was?”⁹ The answer, he thinks, “is almost certainly yes,” and while Ghosh does not think acknowledging this truth “diminish[es] the force of the argument for global justice regarding greenhouse gas emissions,” this answer is difficult for Western liberal intellectual elites to embrace; it causes, I think, too much cognitive dissonance.¹⁰ But in any case, “[t]he heart of the matter,” writes Ghosh, is “numbers”: the climate crisis results from “the totality of human actions over time,” not those of

Growing Pains

any one group of people.¹¹ These contemporary Indian intellectuals are not the first to understand this; Mahatma Gandhi wrote in 1928, “God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the West . . . it would strip the earth bare like locusts.”¹² Fossil-fueled growth in Asia at the rate of the past thirty years is not sustainable.

In 2012, *PMLA* published a cluster of essays on “Sustainability,” including one by Steve Mentz, who writes one of the responses to this cluster of essays. About sustainability, Mentz is the most grumpy of the contributors, asserting from the get-go that “the era of sustainability is over.”¹³ Others are less certain: Stacy Alaimo thinks the concept might be reworked, as do Stephanie LeMenager and Stephanie Foote.¹⁴ Mentz does not think this possible, because, in his view, sustainability, like pastoral, means stasis and what we need are “models for thinking about nonstable systems.”¹⁵ But, with respect to Mentz, whose work I admire very much, I would suggest that sustainability does not mean stasis, because in most cases, perhaps almost all, we don’t say “sustainability,” we say “sustainable development” or “sustainable growth.” Certainly, I think, we *mean* “sustainable development” or “sustainable growth.” Development or growth, not stasis; adjective, not noun. What I emphasize here is not the sustainable but the development or, more precisely the growth. Which is not sustainable.¹⁶

This cluster of essays began as a seminar for the Shakespeare Association of America, and in our first offerings to each other, Todd Borlik, an eco-historicist, posed this question: “how do we trace the origins of the Anthropocene without sending a tacit message that our current predicament is simply another episode in a millennia-long saga and therefore nothing too worrisome?”¹⁷ Recently, I discovered in *Lapham’s Quarterly* a feature called “Déjà Vu: Bringing a historical perspective to today’s news,” which implicitly asks the same question: it pairs today’s climate change deniers Scott Pruitt and Luther Strange with Aristotle, who denied climate change in his *Meteorology*.¹⁸ To answer his question, I am sure Borlik has an answer, as many of us do. One answer might be (and for the sake of argument, I will offer it as my own) that it is unnecessary to trace the origins of the Anthropocene, since what we need to do is address “our current predicament,” as Borlik puts it, and since we know very well how to address it—reduce our carbon footprints immediately and significantly by imposing a carbon tax. Or to put it another way, by changing the way we live. Instead of trying to discover the origins of the Anthropocene in the early modern or elsewhere, I suggest that we Shakespeareans look to the early modern, to Shakespeare, in order to help us discover—or rediscover—different ways of living, of understanding, of defining words and concepts, all of which might help us do what we need to do to address our current predicament. And so, in what follows, I will consider what Shakespeare means by “growth” (and, as a coda, what Shakespeare might mean by “need”). An online concordance reveals seventeen uses of “growth” in Shakespeare’s oeuvre,¹⁹ but not one of them is the specialized use of the word in economics, growth in an economy, which use, as the *OED* notes, does not occur until the middle of the 20th century. Needless to say, Shakespeare does not mean growth in population, either, given high birth rates and high death rates during the early modern period. There was, as we know, effectively no growth either in Gross

Shakespeare in the Anthropocene

Domestic Product or population until the industrial revolution. Principally, then, Shakespeare's uses of the word follow the *OED*'s first definition: "The action, process or manner of growing; both in material and immaterial senses; vegetative development; increase."

Shakespearean growth is physical, inherent, or natural, as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* suggests when she describes the children who will help the wives mock Falstaff—her own son and daughter and "three or four more of their growth."²⁰ Similarly, in *As You Like It*, Celia wonders whether Rosalind knows "how thy name should be hanged and carved upon these trees?"²¹ Her cousin professes not to know and the two engage in a piece of comic questioning, in which Rosalind becomes ever more anxious and desperate to know and Celia becomes ever more astonished that she does not, given the heavy clues she offers, one of which concerns the youth of this man, who "hath but a little beard," a beard whose "growth" she can wait for, Rosalind exclaims, if only Celia will reveal the name of this mystery man!²² Earlier in the play and similarly, Le Beau formally commends the young men who wrestled Charles; they were "three proper young men of excellent growth and presence." Now broken, however, they are "with little hope of life."²³ Their growth, like all growth, can be thwarted or diverted, as these lines by Agamemnon in *Troilus and Cressida* suggest:

Princes,
What grief hath set the jaundice on your cheeks?
The ample proposition that hope makes
In all designs begun on earth below
Fails in the promised largeness: cheques and disasters
Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd,
As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,
Infect the sound pine and divert his grain
Tortive and errant from his course of growth.²⁴

And growth can be stopped, as Othello's meditation on murdering Desdemona sadly reveals:

Put out the light, and then put out the light!
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore
Should I repent me. But once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume: When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It needs must wither.²⁵

But in well-known lines opening *As You Like It*, Orlando may suggest that growth is not only physical, inherent, or natural, not only fragile, but also

Growing Pains

emotional and ethical. The younger brother begins the play by complaining about Oliver's treatment of him:

For my part, he keeps me rustically at home, or, to speak more properly, stays me here at home unkept; for call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth that differs not from the stalling of an ox? His horses are bred better; for, besides that they are fair with their feeding, they are taught their manage, and to that end riders dearly hir'd; but I, his brother, gain nothing under him but growth; for the which his animals on his dunghills are as much bound to him as I.²⁶

"Nothing . . . but growth" is what Orlando gains from his brother's overseeing—one cannot call it care—of him. In contrasting physical, inherent, and natural growth with breeding, training, education, and an awareness of social norms, Orlando insists that growth alone is insufficient for "a gentleman of [his] birth." Physical growth requires to be supplemented. In beginning her wooing of Adonis, Venus, too, invokes a growth that implies an understanding of and consent to social norms. Adonis is duty-bound to reproduce:

Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,
Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,
Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear:
Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse:
Seeds spring from seeds and beauty breedeth beauty;
Thou wast begot; to get it is thy duty.²⁷

The Winter's Tale also implies that growth must be supplemented with breeding, training, education, and an understanding of social norms, since, as Time says, the wide gap of sixteen years contains much more than physical, inherent, or natural growth:

I, that please some, try all, both joy and terror
Of good and bad, that makes and unfolds error,
Now take upon me, in the name of Time,
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime
To me or my swift passage, that I slide
O'er sixteen years and leave the growth untried
Of that wide gap, since it is in my power
To o'erthrow law and in one self-born hour
To plant and o'erwhelm custom.²⁸

If, in contrast to growth in GDP or growth in populations or even sustainable growth, Shakespearean growth means that which is physical, inherent, or natural, and in addition does imply an ethics, an ethics of duty, responsibility, relationality, and care, then Shakespearean growth coheres very well with the aims

Shakespeare in the Anthropocene

of the Indian intellectuals I have discussed above and with the mostly European 21st-century environmental and economic movement of degrowth, which is the English translation of the French *décroissance* (and of the Italian *decrecita* and the Spanish *decrecimiento*). While I can do no more than allude to the movement here—its antecedents include Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Veblen, Mauss, Polanyi, and Illich, among many others, including many from sundry religious traditions—I will point out that in its contemporary form, Degrowth dates to 1972's influential report, *Limits to Growth*, published by the Club of Rome, a global think tank established in 1968 that focuses on problems in economics and the environment. Founding texts in the movement since then include Fred Hirsch's *Social Limits to Growth* (1976) and Herman Daley's *Steady State Economics* (1977). French economist Serge Latouche and English economist Tim Jackson, among others, have continued the work in the last decades of the twentieth century and into this one. Jackson published *Prosperity Without Growth* in 2010 to unexpected acclaim and the second edition appeared in 2017, gathering gushing blurbs from Naomi Klein, Yanis Varoufakis, Noam Chomsky, among many others, including politicians and religious leaders.

Jackson and his fellow economists know the difficulties they face, since for mainstream, neo-classical economists the idea of prosperity without growth, of living well without growth, is “complete anathema.”²⁹ Indeed, Jackson acknowledges that for most economists as well as certainly most people, “abandoning, or being abandoned by, growth is still a frightening prospect.”³⁰ And that indeed frightening prospect, I would suggest, explains much about the rise of President Donald J. Trump of the United States, who promised to unshackle the American economy and deliver 4% growth per annum. Growth, thinks Trump and most of America, is what will make America better, if not great again. Still, degrowth economists, political scientists, and ecologists continue to challenge this fear and this mainstream consensus; they ask us to think critically about our culture's assumption, so ingrained as to be automatic, that more is always better. Degrowth asks societies to imagine and construct different societies, societies that recognize social and ecological limits to economic and population growth and that encourage human happiness outside of continual material accumulation, in and through, for example, care, craft, practice, leisure, recognition, and relationality.

But degrowth doesn't demand only that we make do with less—less throughput, less energy, less waste, less stuff. Because even with less, the world will enjoy excess; the question for all of us is what to do with surplus, with excess, with *dépense*. Shakespeare addressed the question, too, in *King Lear*, in one of my favorite speeches. The speech is Lear's, addressed to his daughters:

O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life's as cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need,--

Growing Pains

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!³¹

In *Posthuman Lear*, and fittingly, given his focus on the play's deep and compelling use of proverbs to manage social and psychological trauma, Craig Dionne wonders whether Lear breaks off in mid-sentence in order to find "a proverb to communicate what seems obvious to him? That humans need more than just the bare minimum to survive?" For that has been the thrust of this speech, to define "the human' as the need for *inessential* things," for the symbolic, certainly, but also for "reckless spending and wasteful prodigality," for aristocratic excess or expenditure, which it seems, is the play's nostalgic drive to celebrate.³² The problem, Dionne suggests—and it is one that Shakespeare seems to recognize—is that the argument can be read to mean not that humans differ from animals, but that "humans are really animal in the first place."³³ As such, "Lear leaves the argument to wander wayward in the Phrygian half-light of the Anthropocene, desiring to articulate an absolute symbolics of human immanence, but seemingly bound in its relatedness to beasts in the bare world."³⁴

Insofar as Lear's argument breaks down, however, it might be more accurate to say that Lear *attempts* to so define the human. So, in contrast, Arden editor R.A. Foakes thinks Lear's invocation of "true need" refers to spiritual need: Lear shifts from "bodily need, which is scarcely met by the sumptuous clothes Regan or Goneril is wearing . . . to spiritual need, the capacity to endure suffering, which is beyond calculation."³⁵ But is this so? Is Foakes correct? Or Dionne? I agree with Dionne—Lear thinks that what makes us human is excess, excess consumption—and I would add that in this attempt, Lear anticipates Georges Bataille who, as degrowth proponent Onofrio Romano describes it, sees the encounter with excess as that which "qualifies us as 'human'."³⁶ Romano thinks the encounter with excess "forces human beings to question the meaning of life and their path in the world," which could be spiritual, as Foakes suggests, but which also may be merely practical: on what do we spend our excess? On gorgeous clothes? A Tesla? One hundred knights? A Rolex? A microwave from Walmart? Sexy escorts? Fancy meals? Monuments to the past? Common land? A feast for all? Lear, I would suggest, argues himself into a corner, understanding but not wanting to acknowledge, to recognize, that "his path in the world," the meaning of his life—articulated in this instance by his hundred knights—is not true need, that which separates him from animals, but desire, or want. One might go so far as to say that Lear breaks off because he recognizes that what he wants, what he desires, is not based on the prerogatives of status, a socially derived positioning in society that presumably benefits all, but is personal, individualized. And sumptuous clothes, or a Tesla or a Rolex, differ not from one hundred knights. Perhaps it is possible that this recognition becomes articulated in Lear's speech on the heath, in the storm:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfilled sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you

Shakespeare in the Anthropocene

From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp,
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
And show the heavens more just.³⁷

Slowly since the seventeenth century, and with an acceleration of late, almost all of us in the West and increasingly throughout the world, have become Lear, privatizing or individualizing the spending of excess, of *dépense*, and thereby denying the demands of the social and the spiritual. As noted above, Palfrey thinks Tom's is a life "profoundly removed from objects," even from selfhood, and this negation takes him (and Edgar, too) into "rarefied, perhaps saintly possibilities."³⁸ But if so, then Tom can only slimly represent the "homeless beggar[s]" of today or even then; "our basest beggars / Are in the poorest thing superfluous," observes the aged King, and the homeless beggars on my streets hold stuff and accumulate stuff—cell phones, certainly, and cigarettes or marijuana, but abandoned desk chairs, lamps, even vacuum cleaners, too.³⁹ Which is to say that despite Tom, or Shakespeare's achievement in creating him, seldom questioned in our culture is the right, the freedom, of each individual, even the homeless, the barely-hanging on, to find individually the meaning of life and to find it, in particular, through consumption.⁴⁰ Our current situation describes a democratization of the conspicuous and invidious consumption, associated with leisure, that once characterized the aristocracy, the priesthood, government, and sporting life, as Thorstein Veblen argued over a century ago. Such democratization does not make it more appropriate; it offers only more danger and stress to the planet.⁴¹ Such consumption and competition for status is also what the economics of degrowth would undermine, especially the enormous sums, well over 500 billion dollars in 2017, spent to market and "manipulat[e] our appetites in order to stimulate materialistic desire"⁴²: movies, music, video games, professional sports, cars, houses, and, well, everything.

Of course, part of degrowth's challenge is to unwind the culture that promotes growth, status competition, consumption, and materialism and instead to promote a culture that consumes and produces less, very much less. Constrained by the biosocial limits of the planet, the challenge requires us to accept limits, limits to growth, limits to personal expression, limits to consumption, even to human reproduction. Degrowth's challenges are daunting, since so far, at least, almost all of us—even ecocritics, environmental humanists, humanists, and novelists—have failed these challenges, if we have even acknowledged them.⁴³ Each of us gathers more and more objects (Poor Toms we are not), consume more and more services—travel, dining, entertainment—but is each of us better off, happier? As a society or as communities, we grow bigger and bigger: The SAA is bigger and so is the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment. But is society or the community better? Is the SAA better now than twenty years ago? Or the ASLE better now than ten? My sense is that we can do better with less, be better and happier with less.⁴⁴

Growing Pains

To conclude, I wish to return to Ghosh's *The Great Derangement*, which consideration I will introduce by invoking an essay I published in 2001, "On the value of Being a Cartoon, in Literature and in Life." In that essay, I critiqued the widespread—and by that point de rigueur—debunking by literary critics of "the bourgeois, autonomous, or 'essentialist humanist' self."⁴⁵ Agreeing with a handful of other critics—Graham Bradshaw and Richard Levin among them, neither very popular with the debunkers—I added to the critique of the debunking a class-based rejoinder: "the bourgeois self was, and is, unavailable to most of the people living and working in the contemporary world."⁴⁶ It was unavailable to my family and friends growing up. Unsurprisingly, my critique had little effect on those who posited that bourgeois self as universal (even as they also decried the universal), but I would like to point out the similarity of my argument then to Ghosh's in *The Great Derangement*. Like me, Ghosh attacks an article of faith among Western academics, including ecocritics, which is that modernity has crushed awareness of the "elements of agency and consciousness that humans share with many other beings, and even perhaps the planet itself." Instead, writes Ghosh, most people never "lost this awareness in the first place."⁴⁷ Furthermore, like my working-class people who never experienced the thrill of a bourgeois, autonomous self, Ghosh insists that neither were "we. . . all equally captive to Cartesian dualism . . . my ancestors were certainly not in its thrall, and even I was never fully acculturated to that view of the world. Indeed, I would venture to say that this is true for most people in the world, even in the West . . . Did anyone ever really believe, *pace* Descartes, that animals are automatons?"⁴⁸ Although abandoning the fiction of a universal bourgeois self or of a universal captivity to Cartesian dualism may be problematic for the arguments of some literary critics, recognizing the partiality, the narrowness, of these concepts, indeed their class- or ethnic-boundedness, should prove generative for accomplishing at least some of the cultural changes—consuming less, finding prosperity in craft, embracing idleness and leisure—necessary to think about and create a new society of degrowth.

Notes

1. *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1967* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce, 1967), 12.
2. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/CA/PST045216>. Accessed December 12, 2017.
3. Simon Palfrey, *Poor Tom: Living King Lear*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 125, 142. See also Chris Fitter, "'The art of known and feeling sorrows': Rethinking Capitalist Transition, and the *Performance* of Class Politics, in Shakespeare's *King Lear*," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 19, 1 (2016).
4. Lawrence Buell, "Ecocriticism: Some Emerging Trends," *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences* 19, 2 (2011), 101. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35, 2 (2009), 197-222.
5. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Climate and Capital: On Conjoined Histories," *Critical Inquiry* 41, 1 (2014), 11.

Shakespeare in the Anthropocene

6. Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 91.
7. Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, 92.
8. Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, 91. *The Financial Times* reports: a study released at the 2017 UN climate meeting in Bonn, Germany, a follow-up to the 2015 meeting in Paris, shows that “stronger economic growth” in China, the world’s largest emitter, “will push global greenhouse gas emissions to a record high in 2017 after remaining flat for three years.” Worse is the study’s finding that while the Paris accord agreed to keep temperature rise to 2C, “the emission reduction pledges made by individual governments since then do not go far enough to secure that overarching goal.”
<https://www.ft.com/content/ba4212b6-c63f-11e7-a1d2-6786f39cf675?emailId=5a098033495c7b0004b95df0&segmentId=13b7e341-ed02-2b53-e8c0-d9cb59be8b3b> Accessed November 13, 2017. In *The New Yorker*, Elizabeth Kolbert details the promise and peril of technologies of “negative emissions,” noting that in 2017, “. . . For the first time, [the report by the United Nations Environment Programme] contains a chapter on negative emissions. ‘In order to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement’, it notes, ‘carbon dioxide removal is likely a necessary step.’” But as Kolbert concludes, “As a technology of last resort, carbon removal is, almost by its nature, paradoxical. It has become vital without necessarily being viable. It may be impossible to manage and it may also be impossible to manage without.”
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/11/20/can-carbon-dioxide-removal-save-the-world> Accessed November 14, 2017.
9. Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, 109-100. In 2013, CO₂ levels passed 400 parts per million for the first time; it is now the norm. And in April 2017, levels passed 410 ppm.
10. Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, 110.
11. Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, 111, 115.
12. Cited by Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, 111.
13. Steve Mentz, “After Sustainability,” *PMLA*, 127, 3 (May 2012), 586.
14. For Alaimo, see Stacy Alaimo, “Sustainable This, Sustainable That: New Materialisms, Posthumanism, and Unknown Futures,” *PMLA* 127, 3 (May 2012), 558–564. And for LeMenager and Foote, see Stephanie LeMenager and Stephanie Foote, “The Sustainable Humanities,” *PMLA* 127, 3 (May 2012), 572–578.
15. Steve Mentz, “After Sustainability,” 588.
16. Paul Kingsnorth outlines why he is a “recovering environmentalist,” in his collection of essays, *Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist and Other Essays*, (Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2017). Kingsnorth, an environmentalist for most of his adult life, has retreated from civilization and environmentalism—and he encourages others to do so—because “a radical challenge to the human machine has been transformed into yet another opportunity for shopping. . . . Today’s environmentalists are more likely to be found at corporate conferences hymning the virtues of ‘sustainability’ and ‘ethical consumption’ than doing anything as naïve as questioning the intrinsic values of civilization” (268), of, crucially, growth.
17. Todd Andrew Borlik, “Iron Age as Renaissance Anthropocene: Periodization and the Ecology of War in Shakespearean History,” *Early Modern Culture* 13 (2018): 124
18. <https://www.laphamsquarterly.org/deja-vu/equal-climates>
19. [https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/search/search-results.php?link=con&works\[\]=*%&keyword1=growth&sortby=WorkName&pleasewait=1&msg=sr](https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/search/search-results.php?link=con&works[]=*%&keyword1=growth&sortby=WorkName&pleasewait=1&msg=sr)
20. William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. Giorgio Melchiori, (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 4.4.47.
21. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Juliet Dusinberre, (London: Thomson Learning, 2007), 3.2.168-69.
22. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 3.2.201, 203.
23. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 1.2.115-116; 121-122.
24. William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. David Bevington, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 1.3.1-9. On this, see also the exchange in 5.2 of *Henry V* between the Duke of

Growing Pains

- Burgundy and King Henry, lines 23-73 [William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, ed. J. H. Walter, (New York: Methuen, 1987)]
25. William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. E. A. J. Honigsmann (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), 5.2.7-15.
 26. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 1.1.6-15.
 27. William Shakespeare, "Venus and Adonis," in *Shakespeare's Poems*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and H. R. Woudhuysen, (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), ll. 163-168.
 28. William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. John Pitcher, (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 4.1.1-9.
 29. Tim Jackson, *Prosperity Without Growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow*, 2nd ed., (New York: Routledge, 2017), 5.
 30. Tim Jackson, *Prosperity Without Growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow*, 46.
 31. William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. R. A. Foakes, (London: Thomson Learning, 2004), 2.2.453-460.
 32. Craig Dionne, *Posthuman Lear: Reading Shakespeare in the Anthropocene*, (Lexington, KY: Punctum Books, 2016), 129, 124.
 33. Craig Dionne, *Posthuman Lear: Reading Shakespeare in the Anthropocene*, 127.
 34. Craig Dionne, *Posthuman Lear: Reading Shakespeare in the Anthropocene*, 129, 131.
 35. William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, note to line 2.2.458.
 36. Onofrio Romano, "Dépense" in *Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era*, ed. Giacomo D'Alisa, Federico Demaria, Giorgos Kallis (New York: Routledge, 2014), 87.
 37. William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 3.4.28-36.
 38. Simon Palfry, *Poor Tom: Living King Lear*, 142.
 39. Simon Palfry, *Poor Tom: Living King Lear*, 58; William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 2.2.453-454.
 40. Walter Benn Michaels critiques the contemporary effort to create a politics of wants and needs in *The Shape of the Signifier: 1967 to the End of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 16, 178.
 41. See Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1934). Conspicuous and invidious consumption is also crucial to Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984). See also Aaron James, *Surfing with Sartre: An Aquatic Inquiry into a Life of Meaning*, (New York: Doubleday, 2017). In a book of acknowledged "pop philosophy" (304), James argues that leisure is not the problem; consumption and especially invidious consumption, is the problem. An extension of leisure to everyone—urging a 20-hour work week, minimum incomes, and the like—could result in more time to pursue activities—in his case surfing; in mine, perhaps, reading or cooking—that depend less on carbon.
 42. Jackson, *Prosperity Without Growth*, 204.
 43. See, for example, Part Three of *The Great Derangement*, "Politics." Acknowledging that a few literary writers—Margaret Atwood, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Doris Lessing, Ian McEwan, among others—were able to communicate in their fiction a "specific sense of the accelerating changes in our environment," Ghosh insists that "the literary mainstream, even as it was becoming more *engagé* on many fronts, remained just as unaware of the crisis on our doorstep as the population at large. In this regard, the avant-garde, far from being 'ahead', was clearly a laggard" (124, 125).
 44. See, again, Aaron James, *Surfing with Sartre: An aquatic inquiry into a Life of Meaning* and Paul Kingsnorth, *Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist and Other Essays*, among many others.
 45. Sharon O'Dair, "On the Value of Being a Cartoon, in Literature and in Life," in *Harold Bloom's Shakespeare*, ed. Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 84.
 46. Sharon O'Dair, "On the Value of Being a Cartoon, in Literature and in Life."
 47. Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, 63, 63-64.
 48. Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, 64.

Shakespeare in the Anthropocene

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