

## Esoteric and Artistic Power vs. Political Power in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

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### Abstract

The present paper attempts to view Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as comprising two equally strong forces contesting for supremacy in the protagonist's mind: temporal power and art and magic. It begins with a brief synopsis of the various or rather incompatible implications emanating from this memorable play. The second section is the main corpus of the argument where the manifestations of the world of art and magic are presented. The final section is a conclusion stressing and explicating the political-artistic duality. .

**Key words:** politics, art, imagination, temporal.

### A. *The Tempest* and the Critical Controversy

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610) is by the consensus of the majority of scholars and critics of Shakespeare's canon his last play. It is his swan's song to the theatrical world and its dazzling lights. Essentially, it is not different from his other plays in being problematic and multileveled. Hence its apt title since the intellectual 'tempest' it has caused would not abate in the foreseeable future. Even the very title of the play has something to do with these two levels, namely, the esoteric and political, emanating simultaneously from the text. The "Tempest" in the play is virtually, 'concordant with magic, the world of Ariel. However, it is discordant with the world of Antonio, of real politics" (Hattaway, 119). As a matter of fact, Shakespeare, here, dovetails the worldly with the lasting and artistic inextricably. In this play, one comes across many topics which are of prime significance for the practitioners of modern literary theory such as the nature of art and its irresistible temptation, the nature of imagination, fancy and above all the verbal fascination. It is actually a linguistic bravura by a writer who knows that these are his last words to his audience. However, this is not all. The underlying theme of the play is his recurrent topic of political usurpation and the primordial attempt of fratricide. Antonio has ousted his own brother, Prospero, and replaced him as the duke of Milan. Worse still, Antonio

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does his best to kill Prospero and his daughter, Miranda, by forcing them to sail in a boat that has no facilities for survival; a conspiracy accomplished with the aid of Prospero's worst enemy, the king of Naples. Needless to say, this usurpation of political power has been the core of Shakespeare's tragedy, *Hamlet*, and the point of fulcrum of its action. Curiously enough, Prospero's position in the play is that of the imperialist, himself a usurper of the island which was originally Sycorax's. Therefore, the oscillation between the artistic and magical to the temporal is smooth and logical, given the play's own terms. As such, one notices a striking split among critics and scholars concerning the appreciation and assessment of the play and its signification. Some stress the artistic and theatrical, while others emphasize the political and even colonial aspect which lends itself to such readings. Therefore the rest of this paper will be a view of these diverse judgments and evaluations of the text and its overt or explicit views of the temporal and magical. It is because of this dominant political side of the play that scholars have laid much emphasis on the conspiracies and stratagems to gain power by all possible means. As such, it has been viewed as "amoral fantasia [that] had its deep roots in the English society" (Soliman, xii). This is not a mere guesswork supported by some extra-textual situations. Any close reading of the hectic years separating the play's publication and the outbreak of the civil war in England (1642) shows that the frantic pursuit of power, struggle and counter-struggle is a key issue and worth-mentioning. Frank Kermode identifies this 'political' side as engaging the forefront in the play's interests, in addition to the "autobiographical and religious" (Kermode, xxiv). The autobiographical side in Kermode's argument stems from the inescapable comparison held between the supreme master of that enchanted island (Prospero) and the matchless magician of the verbal art of the British island (Shakespeare). The religious and primordial level of the play already mentioned concerning the brother's attempt to kill his own brother and niece informs the action of the whole play, although there is nothing tragic about it. The protagonist has the moral integrity and stamina to transcend above his injuries and pardon his wrongdoers, including Caliban. This subhuman native of the island has his share of tolerance even though he has sought to rape Prospero's daughter. However, Prospero is not ready to abandon his political right as the legitimate duke of Milan. It is hoped that the present argument would not give the false impression that Prospero is the incarnation of good, if we recall his different attitudes towards his subjects: Ariel and Caliban. Many critics find in Prospero a different image. Aime Cesaire, for instance, finds in Prospero something else, different from the common view that he pardons his foes and embodies the Christian view of forgiveness. From his perspective he appears as "the man of cold reason, the man of methodical conquest—in other words, a portrait of the enlightened European" (qtd. in Baxandal, 172). Kermode's former

argument about the similarity, if not identification, between the writer and his dramatic persona is often taken with a pinch of salt. In this regard, argues L.Schucking that,

it is an amazing piece of irony that critics seek to discover the greatest humorist in that creation of his genius which is the least gifted with a sense of humor. (163)

If we leave aside these possible affinities in *The Tempest* between the creator and his character or their absence, we find other equally controversial topics such as the acculturation as seen in the marriage of Alonso's daughter (Claribel) and the King of Tunis. In other words, the play suggests that the British island is no longer a self-enclosed entity but it has begun to open up to other cultures and races. The play does talk about the cross-fertilization between cultures.

The other topic tackled here is the Platonic and ontological question pertaining to man's existence in this world. In one of the renowned speeches given by Prospero, Shakespeare elaborates on the issue of the apocalypse. He also stresses the ephemeral side of the human experience; a very serious issue cloaked by that exceptional poetic discourse that forces even his rival, Ben Jonson, to classify him as "the untutored genius of prodigious imagination" (Palmer, 17). Due to its significance and its thematic relevance to the purposes of the current study, there is a need to quote it in some detail,

Our revels are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-clap'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. (IV.i.147-56)

As far as art, imagination and authorship are concerned, the play has been viewed as a sort of "a myth of immortality" (Campbell & Quinn, 858). It is indeed a feat of artistic achievement that Shakespeare can transform this originally German tale (*Die Schone Siden*) into a text capable of portraying his own personal visions and local habitat. If the play, as already suggested, is his farewell to the world of the theatre and art, it is posterior to view it as a last-minute evaluation of this lifelong activity, both in its merits and demerits.

Prospero's position and practices in that island and "the tempest" he deliberately brings about - all these are evidence of the correspondence between the author and his character irrespective of what other critics may conclude or infer. One has to recall the fact that Prospero himself is "a dramaturge, like Shakespeare himself, and his project amounts to a justification of a playwright's art, with the 'island' serving as his theater" (Battenhouse, 251).

In general, *The Tempest* is a celebration of the supernatural where logic is suspended and only imagination is given full rein. Indeed it is the only power that is given its due emphasis, while the political power remains only on the periphery. The centre then is art and politics is on the margin although the two are interrelated. The whole play in its situations, events, and its very discourse keeps revolving around the different dimensions of such artistic and esoteric topics. In Shakespeare's case, this is not very surprising given the fact that many of his sonnets have already raised such an issue, albeit less emphatically. Even his great tragedy, *Macbeth*, chooses the topic of acting and theatre in the final speech given by the hero as he gropes his way to death. All these elements will be shown in the following section in the attempt to indicate that the disparaging account of the play and its writer as visualized by a critic of Henry James's caliber is not always sound and fair, "The story is a thing of naught, for any story will provide a remote island, shipwreck and a coincidence" (qtd. in Tanner, cxxix). The adventure itself is not that important. What is of primary interest is the unprecedented emphasis laid on the nature of the artistic enterprise, the temptations it offers as well as its countless costs. The play is, among other things, Shakespeare's own verdict on his craft and the countless sacrifices he has made for its sake.

As a play capitalizing very much on the imagination and collaboration of the audience, there is much space left for the spectators to view the play from more than one angle. If there is a common denominator these events, situations and relations share, it is the extraordinary and the fascinating power of art and magic. This power invites or rather forces us to keep all rationalization and common sense at bay. One point, however, has to be borne in mind: it is the fact that *The Tempest* draws upon the improbable, uncanny and fanciful. It is advisable here for the fruitful reading of the play and its uncommon worlds to recall Coleridge's famous dictum of the willful suspension of disbelief. Prospero and his daughter have been saved by chance. His full mastery of magic arts is so accomplished that all other creatures and spirits on that island surrender to his powerful will and show their readiness to undertake any task for his own purposes. For instance, Caliban, one of the indigenous beings, is the outcome of a union between an incubus and a sorceress (Sycorax). Ferdinand's passion for Miranda develops in no time. She herself can only cry ecstatically,

O, wonder!  
How many goodly creatures are there here!  
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,  
That has such people in't! (V.i.181-4)

The conspirators (Antonio, Alonso and Stephano) are morally punished and put to shame by Ariel, Prospero's loyal agent in his famous 'harpy' banquet. Indeed this memorable scene is highly comic and serious and shows the overwhelming power of art par excellence. In sum, *The Tempest* is a play that encompasses all that is exotic and impossible. Given all these, it is not surprising to find that the island has been described as "a place for transformation, reconciliation, education, regeneration and repentance" (Beck, 1). Northrop Frye epitomizes this salient aspect of the play in his laconic statement that *The Tempest* "shows the illusion of reality and the reality of illusion" (qtd. in Sandler, 182). This unusual overlap between two polar opposites is a key point in this play that lends itself entirely to the world of art and magic as the only counterpart to that of politics.

### **B. The Main Argument**

Out of this uncommon doubling of illusion and reality, the sublime and the mundane, the spiritual and the physical, suggested in the pages above, one can approach the main issue of this paper: types of power as manifested in this play and the rationale behind that. The practical premise for the feasible reading of this play and its unusual or even bizarre atmosphere is the reliance on the triple categorization of its people and their interests. There are those who argue rightly that the universe is divided "into three worlds: the elemental world of terrestrial nature; the celestial world of the stars; the super-celestial world of the spirits" (Yates, 94). In fact these worlds co-habit *The Tempest* and commingle to give the text its distinct flavor. The beings in the island are of three types: the subhuman or semi beast (Caliban), human beings (Prospero and Miranda), and spirits (Ariel). What is characteristic here is that the power is practiced by the middle ground beings that, by tremendous and fastidious efforts, overcome their inborn weaknesses and eventually force all others to succumb to their own wills. The authority, then, is something acquired by deliberate enterprise and human effort. If this is so, one can say that the structure of the play displays the three stages of power. At the beginning the audience realizes through a series of flashbacks how the two faculties (esoteric and temporal) contest with each other for supremacy. The actual situation in the play shows the second stage where all the potentialities of art and magic are fully explored. The third is the resolution

where this new force of art is abandoned and the protagonist will be devoting all his time and energy to the power of politics and its obligations.

Any useful reading of this play and its events has to take into consideration the fact that there is a correlation between the world of art and magic and that of politics. The two are inextricably united. It is noteworthy that for all the striking differences between the two worlds, there are some undeniable affinities between them. Both represent a point of conflict in the protagonist's mind. Also they reveal that Prospero is, essentially, not different from those whom he condemns, if we recall his treatment of the indigenous Caliban. The play does refer to the precarious position of the European in the colonies which will engage a wide-ranging position in contemporary postcolonial theory. Given this fact, the rest of the paper will point out how the topic of the esoteric and artistic underlies another equally influential side—politics and authority and their detrimental impact on people, including Prospero himself. Art and magic in Prospero's case can be a subversive force in his career as a ruler. Equally, it can be a potent force for subjecting others to his will as seen in Prospero's treatment of Ariel and Caliban. The inevitable conclusion is that any discussion of the world of art and magic brings with it the corollary of the temporal. Therefore, the postcolonial discourse is valid and helpful in understanding the intricacies of the world of *The Tempest*.

In retrospect and in a series of monologues and dialogues, Prospero expounds the reasons of his bitterness and pain, telling Miranda, and the audience indirectly, about his incessant grief,

My brother, and thy uncle, call'd Antonio,--  
I pray thee, mark me, that a brother should  
Be so perfidious!-- he, whom next to thyself,  
Of all the world I lov'd, and to him put  
The manage of my state; as at that time  
Through all the signiories it was the first,  
And Prospero the prime duke, being so reputed  
In dignity, and for the Librerar Arts  
Without a parallel; those being all my study,  
The government I cast upon my brother,  
And to my state grew stranger, being transported  
And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle-- (I.ii.66-76)

It transpires that Prospero has been subject to two equally potent powers of which he is unable to choose: the political and temporal on the one hand and the

artistic and magical on the other. Each contests for predominance and, obviously, Prospero surrenders to the allurements of the second, while the political wanes temporarily. As he rightly puts it,

I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated  
To closeness and the bettering of my mind  
With that which, but by being so retir'd,  
O'er-priz'd all popular rate, in my false brother  
Awak'd an evil nature; and my trust,  
Like a great parent. Did beget of him  
As falsehood in its contrary.(I.i.89-95)

For a monarch, to grow stranger to his state is unnatural, sacrilegious, a transgression against cosmic order of which both Prospero and Lear (echoed in "a great parent") are guilty.

Prospero explains the outstanding power of art in comparison with the temporal one by referring to the incredible sense of self-assertion fostered by art and magic. The boastful tone of the speech is self-evident and spares further comment,

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves;  
And yet that on the sands with printless foot  
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him  
When he comes back; you semi-puppets that  
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,  
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you whose pastime  
Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice  
To hear the solemn curfew, by whose aid---  
Weak masters though ye be--- I have bedimm'd  
The moontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,  
And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault  
Set roaring war.(V.i.33-44)

When we scrutinize the descriptions of the two powers linguistically, it turns out that the artistic had the upper hand. It has such an overwhelming authority that Prospero finds himself in its formidable grip. In other words, when Prospero was still in power, he has been of two minds as regards which one is the proper and convenient option. Prospero's pathetic failure to reconcile those

two has eventually led to his banishment and self-flagellation, though not full defeat.

What is striking in his moments of recapitulation is Prospero's belated realization that his studies of magic, no matter how useful and power-conferring they might be, are not worth the sacrifice and, at the end, it is better for him to get rid of their impact on him. Prospero is not a Faustus, nor is he meant to be. He never dreamt of entering into a pact with the devil to gratify illegitimate or evil intents. Nor would he use the newly-acquired power for hurting others unless it is necessary. It has to be emphasized that of all Shakespeare's plays this is the most Aristotelian, where he observes the Three Unities. The place does not undergo a change and the time is brought to a standstill. So the past is only recalled while the future is only conceptualized as the play ends and Prospero is about to embark to Naples. In other words, the author is content with narrating or telling the audience about the destabilizing and distracting effect of the pursuit of knowledge on his hero's position as a politician and ruler. The play shows and elaborates on the twists and turns of Prospero's capacity as a magician. Above all, Prospero is given a vantage-point for conceiving and assessing his magical and artistic faculty. We are to believe that even in his isolated island Prospero could manage to pursue such activities,

Gonzalo,

Out of his charity, who being then appointed  
Master of this design, did give us, with  
Rich garments linens, stuffs and necessaries...  
Knowing I lov'd my books, he furnish'd me  
From my own library with volumes that  
I prize above my dukedom.(I.ii.161-67)

In this speech, Prospero informs the audience indirectly that he has opted for esoteric knowledge at the expense of his temporal duty as a duke. Accordingly, after mastering its mechanism and secrets, Prospero employs magic to redress former wrongdoing and control the wild beings serving him or intimidating him.

The sense of place here is vital in conveying the meanings of the play. Indeed, it turns into a means for typifying or reflecting the feelings, aspirations or conflicts of those perceiving it. For instance, Gonzalo, kind-hearted and generous as he is, finds the place as "an earthly paradise [where] a spiritual pilgrimage of some sort is going on" (Frye, 156). Gonzalo's own utopia can come true here, away from the stratagems and distractions of worldly affairs,



I 'th' commonwealth I would by contraries  
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic  
Would I admit; no name of magistrates;  
*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. (II.i.143-51) (italics added)

What is noteworthy in this utopia is the verdict given on the necessity of banning all types of literature and arts. Gonzalo warns here against the drastic side-effects of the profession of art and learning that could lead to abject poverty, pain or even suicide. Indeed Prospero's current position in this dreary island is an irrefutable proof of the validity of Gonzalo's statement.

Conversely, Prospero (prior to his final epiphany and disillusionment), finds himself fully engrossed in its fascinating and exuberant world. The dialectic of gain and loss is evident here. If he has lost his dukedom as the aftermath of his artistic activities, he now reaps the fruits of his lifelong labor. This is felt through the attention the play pays to what is going on in that enchanted island and Prospero's treatment of his subjects. In fact Prospero's position and practices represent the core of the play's arguments. Prospero now rules by virtue of his esoteric powers. It is he who has done a spirit (Ariel) a valuable favor in setting him free from the pain the sorceress has inflicted upon him in tying him to a pine tree (I.ii.250-57). Ariel's ordeal springs from his failure to cope with Sycorax's black magic. Hence his temporary bondage to her till Prospero sets him free. Having done Ariel service, Prospero insists that Ariel serve him for a specific time and fulfill his whims and desires. It is in accordance with the terms of this agreement that the title of the play is unfurled: it is no more than the offshoot of the master-slave relation, where Prospero's enemies should be punished but not vanquished.

If we leave aside the Prospero-Ariel relationship which betrays an unmistakable power ideology, the Caliban-Prospero is more complicated and enhances the former relation. Caliban shares Ariel's dream of freedom and self-assertion in addition to being an aborigine. As such, Caliban's resentment is more formidable as he protests against the state of subjection to this alien, usurping power. Nietzsche reminds us that power "is fundamentally a matter of the imposition of some new pattern of ordering relations upon forces not previously subject to them" (Schacht, 418). That is what exactly happens to

Caliban, who finds himself doing manual work (piling logs) for his new master. Indeed, physical labor is conspicuous in this island where the very existence depends on it. As manifested in Ferdinand, Ariel and Caliban, it is evident that labor is of three types: "forced, contracted and volunteered" (Andreas, 194). Of course, the first type describes Caliban's case. Prospero himself recognizes the value of Caliban's contribution to his comfort when he states,

We can not miss him: he does make our fire,  
Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices  
That profit us. What, ho! Caliban  
Thou earth, thou ! speak. (I.ii.311-15)

In his unenviable situation, when he is virtually lonely and helpless, Caliban has to smart under all types of pressures and humiliation. His resentment does not transcend the merely verbal level for he is the victim of his own deterministic lot. He can only come to terms with his own miserable situation as he is essentially "a goblin who must endure the punishment of rendering menial services to the king of the fairyland" (Campbell & Quinn, 857). Caliban's statement is cogent enough (the audience is invited to accept the flamboyant contradiction between the range of his mind and his physical build) as he wraps his statement in a postcolonial discourse,

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,  
Which thou tak'st from me. When thou com'st first,  
Thou stok'st me, and made much of me; wouldst give me  
Water with berries in't; and teach me how  
To name the bigger light. (I.ii.333-37)

When Miranda reminds Caliban of the valuable language she has taught him, his answer is blunt: a total disparagement of the whole enterprise that has been used as a means of subjecting his own will to the power of Miranda and her father, "You taught me language; and my profit on't/Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you/For learning me your language" (I.ii.364-6). The Prospero-Caliban relationship, then, represents fully the power and dominance conflict. If Prospero has been the victim of the treachery of a brother and a rival ruler, his position in the Mediterranean island virtually embodies what he has been grumbling about. Of course he has his own reasons for treating Caliban in this way. He has done his best to "incorporate Caliban into the new order of moral realities" (Traveris, 375). This nature-nurture relationship proves to be of no avail, as Caliban can only react instinctively and reject all types of constraints imposed by civil conventions. Caliban's obsession is the fact that his master has decentred him from his former authority and privileges as he used to see himself "mine

own king" (I.ii.342). What Prospero could not grasp is that Caliban's conduct remains unpredictable and beyond his (Caliban's) own control. His other weakness is the bottle for which he surrenders everything, including his claims of the island. Failing to these factors into account, Prospero can only see in Caliban a totally hopeless case,

I have us'd thee  
(Filt' as thou art) with human care, and lodg'd thee  
In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to  
violate the honour of my child.(I.ii.344-47)

His belated perception of Caliban's character is indicative of the ever-growing chasm separating the dominant from the dominated,

This misshapen slave—  
.....  
this demi-devil  
(For he's a bastard one) had plotted with them to take my life...  
this thing of darkness.(V.i.268-75)

Foucault's account of the effect of power on individuals and objects holds true to Caliban's position, since the word 'subject' here has got another connotation "subject to some one else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (p.212). Foucault, of course, talks in general here but his findings apply to Caliban's pitiable position. Edward Said is no less outspoken in referring to this question as he regards Caliban "the excluded, that which is eternally below possibility [...], a state of existence which can be appropriated and exploited to the purposes of another's own development" (p.213). The direct corollary of Caliban's drastic state of bitterness and humiliation is the resistance; the flat rejection of anything offered by the powerful Prospero. His verbal assault against the tyranny of Prospero (the patriarch) is worth-mentioning,

As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd  
With raven's feather from unwholesome fen  
Drop on you both! A south-west blow on ye,  
And blister you all o'er!(I.ii.321-24)

This adamant refusal to abide by the dictates of the dominant force drives Northrop Frye to hail Caliban's persistence and unmistakable sense of dignity, "No character in Shakespeare retains more dignity under so constant a stream of rebuke" (Sandler, 181). If he is not qualified to topple Prospero, he can at least persuade those who can (Stephano and Trinculo). Given all this rationale about

Caliban's critical situation, it is hard to share the view that his plot against Prospero simply suggests "greed and drunkenness...bestial, trivial, vulgar" (Knight, 259). Such a view is reductive and oversimplifies a very intricate and ramified topic as the one in question. If *The Tempest* is a text that explores the manifestations of power through politics or esoteric studies, Caliban is the unmistakable victim of this power. The linguistic discourse Caliban uses does not go in line with his physical status as a dog, sea monster or even a cannibal as critics often argue. This is the voice of protest and dissent against the power of magic practiced by Prospero for colonial purposes. Caliban can resist Prospero's oppressive force by this verbal and psychological resentment besides the perennial caution against any detrimental sense of self-defeat that might infiltrate into his consciousness. His weakness lies in his drinking bouts where he can temporarily be released from the oppressive power of the 'alien'. As regards his thwarted attempt to rape Miranda, this act can be considered as the only possible revenge he can have against Prospero, as she is his biological extension. He heartily wishes to have consummated this "Oho, Oho! Would't had been done! Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else/This island with Calibans" (I.ii.350-52). Physically and psychologically, Caliban is out of place. He virtually remains the target Prospero's assaults, verbal and virtual. He remains "as strange as the anthropologist" (Bradbrook, 156).

For all his retarded nature, Caliban can instinctively identify Prospero's power as lying in his books and studies. This point needs further elaboration since both Prospero and Caliban have something to do with magic. Caliban, as the play is at pains to show, is the offspring of a witch. In other words he is closer to the primordial and dark type of magic. Prospero, in contrast, represents the artificial kind of magic which can be acquired by full indulgence in learning and books,

Remember

First to possess his books; for without them

He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not

One spirit to command; they all do hate him

As rootedly as I. Burn but his books.

He has brave utensils,--for so he calls them,--

Which, when he has a house, he'll deck withal. (III.ii.89-95)

As seen in this expressive statement, Caliban identifies Prospero's secret of power and weakness: if he is stripped from this, he will be as weak as any of his subjects. This power proves to be no less binding than the temporal and political power. What is striking, however, is the fact that Prospero, who never stops

complaining about the injustice he has received from his kinsmen, turns out to be no less tyrannical and usurping by virtue of his newly acquired power. In this enchanted island, it is very easy to exchange the roles and the victim can become a persecutor. This process of transmutation is keenly felt in Prospero's dealings with his dependent subjects. Indeed Prospero does 'usurp' their own art and appropriates it for his own self-interests, especially that "of the figures of Sycorax, Setebos and Caliban himself" (Cartell, 65). Even his dearest daughter, Miranda, is not fully exempt from this overriding patriarchal spirit. Indeed she appears totally passive in her love affair with Ferdinand, thanks to Prospero's intervention. The fact of the matter is that if Caliban has aroused much critical controversy about the dominant-dominated relationship, Miranda's case is equally controversial. All her gestures, actions and discourse have been put to close scrutiny in order to pinpoint the vast panorama of persecution prevalent throughout the whole play. "Miranda", one of the critics asserts, is "the Anglo-Saxon European other—offers us a feminine trope of colonialism" (Donaldson, 68). Prospero purports that he acts in good faith, especially in dealing with Caliban: namely, ridding him of the state of primitiveness and animalism. However, as the action of the play shows, the real acts run counter to the professed intentions. It is really a fallacy, if one borrows the diction of New Criticism, to take for granted Prospero's statement. What is needed is a contrapuntal reading that perceives the hidden designs of hegemony and predominance. The indigenous will remain always objecting to any mode of living imposed by the other. If Prospero has been stripped of his political power, his esoteric one proves to be no less powerful in inflicting pains on those who happen to be under his control. Persecutor-victim is a point the play explores through the complex relation tying Prospero to others—his equals and subjects alike.

### **C. Concluding Remarks**

Prospero is a good example of how two contradictory powers dwell within the same individual and can lead him in bifurcating and even contradictory routes. In general, Prospero, for all the similarities he has with his own creator, does not appear in a wholly favorable light. The esoteric power he has mastered by sheer personal effort and dedication reveals the other latent side in him—the failure to put in practice what he always reiterates about others' wrongdoing. The power of art, as we have seen, is no less effective than the temporal power. Nor is it less devastating to others as well as its practitioners. Prospero does exploit others and maltreats them. As such, he is not fit to be called "a religious recluse on the brink of magical power" (Knight, 1991: 115). What we have seen throughout the whole play is a parade of what learning and magic can offer or bring about. Prospero has subjected his traditional enemies—Alonso, Antonio,

Stephano—to a tantalizing and humiliating process in his revenge for former evils. Along with this justifiable act we notice that other innocent beings (the aborigines Ariel and Caliban) have been involved in this process in one way or another. Although their relationship with Prospero is more like a business deal, their situation, in the final analysis, suggests an unmistakable sense of bondage and servitude. His epiphany comes at last after gratifying his grudge and enjoying the privilege of being the supreme ruler, even though he has been stripped of the temporal power so far. The epilogue of the play is a synopsis of his long strife for power and supremacy which he is now ready to abandon willingly. If the present study has stressed the invaluable role of art and imagination in this play, its epilogue is the culmination of such a view. It is a metatheatrical speech in which the audience is invited to recall that the whole thing is make-believe. It is a fanciful act where the charms of the words and songs are dissipated and spectators are to remember that this imaginative work is a source of moral power and aesthetic pleasure, both for the performer and the recipient,

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,  
And what strength I have's mine own  
Which is most faint: now, 'tis true,  
I must be here confin'd by you,  
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,  
Since I have my dukedom got,  
And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell  
In this bare island by your spell;  
But release me from my bands  
With the help of your good hands:  
Gentle breath of yours my sails,  
Must fill, or else my project fails, (V.i.1-11)

Surprisingly, his last call or request for the audience is to set him free. This freedom is not confined to Prospero in his long march to authority, whether by the sword or art. It is also applicable to the other dramatis personae that have to abide by the dramatic conventions. However his position is marked by a particularity in that he has been displaced from his temporal power by treachery and vile means. His current displacement from art and magic is achieved of his own accord and by deliberate intention. Its power is no longer tempting for the wise Prospero, who is on his way to be a full-fledged politician and ruler of Milan. His stay on the island has been an occasion for self-discovery and atonement for delegating his authority to others.

The disquieting effects of art and magic are over and Prospero's power as a politician is not questionable anymore. The reason for such a surmise is that he has weathered the storm of art and magic. From this moment on, he will be devoting his full time to the temporal power and its commitments in the same way he has done to art and magic. The political power he will wield once again is not going to be as challenging and worry-inspiring as it used to be because of the chastening power of art. Also his terrible experience of loneliness and self-encounter would be sustaining and helpful in his forthcoming experiences. His brother and the rival king would not be the same because of what they have witnessed and undergone. It is because of the purging impact of the island and its esoteric worlds that everybody is expected to start afresh. Hence Prospero's manipulation of his temporal authorities and responsibilities is expected to be smooth, easygoing and free from the previous restraints. One of the implausible situations in the play that entails further reference is that usually people hear about a former politician or ruler who has been toppled or has finally come to the realization that ruling is not worth the strife any more. Nevertheless, we have not come across such a term as 'a former artist ', because usually this faculty is part and parcel of man's emotional and psychological build and only death or old age can mitigate or put an end to it. Prospero abandons his artistic and magical activities at the time when he has full command of its mysteries and advantages. However in *The Tempest*, everything is possible and one has to make allowance for anything that could move beyond reason and common sense. It is once again a reminder that the two faculties of art and politics can not be mastered simultaneously and a difficult choice has to be taken about which one to follow. They are dismissive of each other simply because the former relies heavily on imagination and wishful thinking, while the other draws upon the pragmatic and practical; hence the impossibility of having full command of both or reaching a reconciliation between them.

*The Tempest*, then, manifests three stages of power. Only the middle stage (art and magic) is fully explored. It is through Prospero and his dominance of the island and its beings by his powerful magic that we realize what Jonathan Goldberg calls "the voicing of power" (p.133). What precedes this stage appears as no more than a shimmering recollection dimly perceived. Underneath there lies the recognition that there is an extent of self-blame in his neglect of his primary duty as a ruler. As regards the third stage, the epilogue of the play makes it clear that Prospero is on his way to be a successful ruler, having overcome the distracting impact of art and magic. The audience is left to guess what sort of power it might be. In both cases, the past and future, Prospero's position is not as lucid as it is in his current island adventures. These adventures and deeds are inextricably associated with the power of art. Prospero's final position concretizes Gonzalo's speech about the harmful or useless effects of art

and esoteric learning in man's life, let alone a politician's. The two forces neutralize each other and the inevitable consequence will be a drastic loss. The peace of mind and freedom can only be attained by the termination or suppression of the inner "tempests" in the Freudian sense. The play finally suggests that it is high time to be down-to-earth and face reality without illusions, self-deception or self-indulgence.

### القوة السحرية والفنية مقابل القوة السياسية في مسرحية شكسبير "العاصفة"

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#### ملخص

يسعى البحث الحالي إلى اعتبار مسرحية شكسبير "العاصفة" بوصفها تنطوي على قوتين متكافئتين تتنازعان للسيطرة على ذهن الشخصية المحورية: السياسة من جهة والفن والسحر من جهة أخرى. يبدأ البحث بعرض موجز للمضامين المتباينة بل المتناقضة التي تضمها هذه المسرحية الخالدة. أما الجزء الثاني فهو المحور الرئيس إذ يركز على تمظهرات عالم الفن والسحر. والجزء الختامي استنتاج سريع يشرح الثنائية السياسية/الفنية ويؤكد لها. الكلمات الرئيسية: السياسة، الفن، الخيال، الدنيوي.

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