



# **Prospero's Game?**

A discussion of chaos and control in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*



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*Chaos (the Creation)*, 1841.

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During the countless hours I have spent reading Shakespeare, I have often let my mind wander to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, and the tragic story of Shakespeare's fictional sister Judith, who was "as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school" (105). Knowing how many illiterate women there are in the world, I am grateful to live in a country where I have had the opportunity to learn how to read, and how to write. I am also thankful for my wonderful parents who, unlike Judith's father, have never let me experience anything but love and support.

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## Introduction

*The Tempest* begins with a storm that wrecks a ship off the coast of an island, inhabited by Prospero, his daughter Miranda and their slave Caliban, as well as the spirit Ariel. As the scenery shifts from the storm to another part of the island, the audience learns that this is no ordinary island, and the storm that sets the play in motion is actually an act of Prospero's art, as he informs his daughter:

The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touched  
 The very virtue of compassion in thee,  
 I have with such provision in mine art  
 So safely ordered that there is no soul –  
 No, not so much perdition as an hair  
 Betid to any creature in the vessel  
 Which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink. (I.ii.32-37)

By an “accident most strange” (I.ii.208) all of Prospero's enemies – who usurped his dukedom and exiled him and his daughter to the island – are cast ashore on the island, giving Prospero the opportunity to take revenge for the pain and suffering he and Miranda have endured. In Peter Hulme's book *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* Hulme discusses how Christopher Columbus' reports of native Caribbean society have formed a background for all subsequent colonialist writing. An excerpt from one of the chapters in Hulme's book, “Prospero and Caliban”, is included in Peter Hulme and William Sherman's (Norton Critical) edition of *The Tempest*, and in it Hulme explores the “crucial point” that Prospero, like Shakespeare, is a dramatist and creator of theatrical effects (233).

According to Hulme, *The Tempest* is a frame narrative and there are actually two plays being enacted; the first being the play in which the audience are spectators, and only during Act I are we unaware of Prospero's plot. The play within the play is Prospero's alone and the

various actors and spectators on stage are unaware of their participation within his plot to take back his “kingdom”, and his authority. As such, Hulme argues that *The Tempest* stages Prospero’s staging of his own play (235), and that the play within the play is Prospero’s fantasized version of the original conspiracy, with the difference that, this time, he will defeat it: “Caliban must re-enact Antonio’s usurpation, enabling Prospero to take a part in his own play [...] this time [Prospero] can discover the plot before it comes to fruition and this time triumph over it” (238). Furthermore, Hulme discusses Prospero’s power over the characters on the island, and he compares Prospero’s authority over Caliban to the authority the colonizers had over the colonized. Because Prospero relies on an “accident most strange”, Hulme suggests that Prospero’s power limits itself to the island: “Prospero’s magic is at his disposal on the island but not off it; it can do anything at all except what is most necessary to survive. In other words there is a precise match with the situations of Europeans in America during the seventeenth century” (244). Hulme also argues that Prospero and Caliban do not only signify the archetypes of the colonizer and the colonized on the island, but Prospero also functions as a colonial historian, seeing as he does not offer Caliban the opportunity to present his own history. This leads Hulme into a long discussion about Caliban as a symbol of the natives in the Caribbean, and he sets *The Tempest* alongside a Caribbean story, told by John Nicholl in his “An Houre Glasse of Indian News”: “In April 1605, *The Olive Branch*, with some seventy passengers sailed from England to join Leigh’s recently established colony in Guiana” (244). Through Nicholl’s narrative Hulme reconstructs a story of initial hospitality, increasing suspicion, and eventual loss of patience with a “hostile drain” that, according to Hulme, shows a “congruence between, on the one hand, [Nicholl’s] and numerous other New World narratives, and on the other, the words and actions of the play” (246). In elucidation of Nicholl’s story, Hulme resumes his first discussion regarding Prospero’s power over the



characters on the island, and argues that the masque sequence in *The Tempest* is a turning point in Prospero's play:

We should now, finally be in a position to understand the interrupted masque. Formally, the moment of Caliban's conspiracy is merely the working through of the sub-plot to its appointed conclusion. But that moment also triggers the screen behind which Prospero's usurpation of Caliban can be concealed, his proven treachery providing a watertight alibi against any claims of prior sovereignty that might be lodged. [...] This hiccough in the running order of the masque, this seemingly trivial moment over which commentators have fretted, is quite simply the major turning point in the larger play because, as Prospero's anger briefly but dramatically holds the two plays apart, we are able to glimpse the deeper import of that conspiratorial sub-plot, able to realize that, though it is kept to a minor place within Prospero's play, that very staging is the major plot of *The Tempest* itself. (248-49)

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In other words, Hulme suggests that the characters in *The Tempest* are only a part of Prospero's game to create a microcosmic universe for himself and that his sole function in *The Tempest* is that of a puppeteer. Hulme marshals many supporting arguments, for instance, he suggests that Sebastian and Antonio are left deliberately awake in "the thwarted attempt on Alonso's life" and as such, Prospero gives Antonio and Sebastian the time and the opportunity for conspiracy, showing the audience their false nature (234). Likewise, Hulme argues that Prospero is fully aware of Caliban's attempt to take his life, and the conspiracy "fills the gap" between the conflicting histories that Prospero and Caliban narrates, proving to the audience that Caliban's subjection is justified (248). However, the intention of this is not to present equivalent ideas of Prospero as a playwright and stage director – arguments that have been

pondered throughout the centuries by critics such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, George Wilson Knight, Stephen Orgel and Anne Richter (see bibliographic references in the Works Cited section). Hulme's arguments depicting the island as a stage and Prospero as a puppeteer are supported by many critics, and in the biography *Will in the World*, the American literary critic Stephen Greenblatt, neatly sums up the arguments of Prospero's role in *The Tempest* within a few lines:

The protagonist in *The Tempest* is a prince and a powerful magician, but he is also unmistakably a great playwright – manipulating characters, contriving to set them up in relation to one another, forging memorable scenes. Indeed, his princely power is precisely the playwright's power to determine the fate of his creations, and his magical power is precisely the playwright's power to alter space and time, create vivid illusions, cast a spell. (372)

Even though Prospero's role as a playwright is shared by several critics, Hulme emphasizes the division between the two plays and the importance of "distinguishing between Prospero's play and *The Tempest* itself" (Masten, 103). Hulme's notion of *The Tempest* as a dual play is interesting, however as opposed to him and other critics, I do not think Prospero's function is that of a stage director or a playwright, nor do I think that the play within the play is a means for Prospero to regain power over his lost dukedom.

What I *do* think, is that there is in fact two plays, and that there is an emphasis on undertaking a certain role in the play within the play. That is, of *assuming* to possess lacking qualities in order to hide one's true nature, as in the case of Sebastian and Antonio, whose treacherous nature is, according to Hulme, exposed by Prospero. The island functions as a *tabula rasa*, it creates a clean slate for the characters, an opportunity Prospero seized when he first arrived on the island. As such, Prospero is, like Sebastian and Antonio, able to hide his character flaws from the characters on the island, as well as the audience. My focus will be on

the representation Prospero tries to maintain throughout the play, as the Lord on an island that serves as a substitute for the power he lost as the Duke of Milan. My argument then, is that Prospero's struggle to sustain his control on the island is reflected in his actions toward his two servants, Caliban and Ariel. Like Hulme, I think that Prospero's role in the play is a performance to suppress his failure as the duke of Milan. However, in contrast to Hulme's reading, I do not think Prospero has all the power, nor that he governs the characters like a puppeteer. Prospero's power and control is, in my opinion, limited to Prospero's ability to inflict his subjects with excruciating pain, and Ariel's enslavement is based upon Prospero's *awareness* of his dependency – because Prospero is in fact unable to perform without him. As such, Ariel becomes the most important character in the play, and what I intend to show in this thesis is that Ariel and Caliban are put in a position where they are able to challenge Prospero's presentation of himself, both subtly and directly. Through the continuous contest of performance between Prospero and Ariel, the limitations of Prospero's power shows itself, and due to Caliban's disobedience of Prospero's authority Prospero's desperate attempt to conceal his lack of power is revealed, thus showing Ariel as the true dramatist and creator of the play within *The Tempest*.

### *The Educator is Educated*

With the exception of Prospero's daughter Miranda, there are only two other individuals on the island, and during the first two scenes of the play Caliban and Ariel are introduced to the audience, and their relationship to Prospero is established.

When Prospero arrived on the island with Miranda he initially took Caliban in his care and served as a schoolmaster to both of them, and Prospero's role as a schoolmaster shows itself clearly during the first act of the play as he keeps reminding his daughter to "obey, and be attentive" (I.ii.38). Throughout his conversation with Miranda, Prospero frequently uses

phrases such as “I pray thee mark me” (I.ii.67), “Dost thou attend me?” (I.ii.78) and “Thou attend’st not?” (I.ii.86). Prospero warns Miranda once more during the conversation “I pray thee, mark me” (I.ii.88), before he continues to ask if she hears him, to which Miranda replies that his tale would cure deafness” (I.ii.106). Prospero’s story is so astonishing that even a deaf person would wish that he had the ability to hear it, but the speech also suggests the stern manner in which Prospero demands an observant audience – an attentiveness any teacher would demand in a classroom. Furthermore, Prospero uses words such as “hush” and “silence” repeatedly throughout the play. For instance, right before the introduction of the masque, Prospero orders Ferdinand and Miranda: “No tongue! All eyes! Be silent” (IV.i.59), and when Ferdinand utters his wonder for the “majestic wisdom”, Prospero once again orders him “Sweet, now, silence! / Juno and Ceres whisper seriously. / [...] Hush and be mute!” (IV.i.124-26). His insistence on their silence indicates a statement of the respect he believes he deserves, and that he needs constant appreciation of his work.

As books are important for any teacher, books are also a necessity for Prospero, and he tells Miranda that he was so consumed with his books that he “rapt [himself] in secret studies” (I.ii.77). Prospero was given the books that he “prized above his dukedom” (I.ii.168) when he was exiled from Milan, and ironically, during his twelve years of isolation on the island, he has been able to absorb himself in the exact same books that isolated him from his dukedom. According to Caliban, Prospero’s books are the source of his magic, and without them, he is helpless: “Remember / First to possess his books; for without them / He's but a sot” (III.ii.87-89). Caliban’s relationship to Prospero, and his reasons for claiming that Prospero is susceptible to harm only when his books are taken from him is important, and will be discussed in further detail during the following chapters of this thesis. As well as having a profound love of books, Prospero also seems to have a keen interest in telling stories, and he does so repeatedly throughout the second scene of Act I. Prospero sets the action on the island

in motion by telling Miranda that it was he who raised the sea-storm, shares the early history of her life with her, and informs her how they arrived on the island. The second scene of Act I serves as a history class for the audience, as Prospero shares the detailed histories of various characters, in order to shape the spectators' understanding of the play. Interestingly, Prospero's initial conversation with Ariel reveals one of the most interesting contextual histories of the play. Ariel is an androgynous airy spirit introduced to the audience shortly after Miranda has fallen asleep and the audience learns that Prospero has the ability to control the elements through Ariel, as Ariel states that he has performed the tempest "to the point" (I.ii 225). The audience also learns about the state of agony in which Prospero first found Ariel, and how Prospero released him from the twelve years of torture, which he endured because of Caliban's mother Sycorax; "What torment I did find thee in: thy groans/Did make wolves howl and penetrate the breast/Of ever-angry bears; it was a torment/To lay upon the damned" (I.ii.336-39). During Prospero and Ariel's first conversation, Prospero contrasts himself to Sycorax, the blue-eyed hag that was condemned to death in Algiers on account of her "mischiefs manifold, and sorceries terrible" (I.ii.264). However, "for one thing she did", presumably being pregnant with Caliban (I.ii.66), Sycorax was not executed, but exiled to the island: "this blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child/ And here was left by th' sailors" (I.ii.269-70). By the time Prospero arrived on the Island, Sycorax was already dead and he freed Ariel from his agony.

The stories Prospero tells reflect his need to have his audience judge his actions and to consider him the rightful ruler of the island. He narrates his story with an emphasis on good deeds and bad deeds, in an attempt to differentiate between the good and evil nature within human beings. However, despite Prospero's strong attempt to distance himself from Sycorax, it is hard to overlook the strong parallels drawn between the two characters. For instance, both of them possess the ability to control the spirit-world embodied by Ariel, they are both exiled

to the island because they are too consumed with “art”, whether it is the liberal arts in Prospero’s case or black arts which Sycorax is accused of being involved in. Furthermore, in another parallelism, both of them carry a child with them to the island. Additionally, when Ariel begs for his promised one-year deduction Prospero responds with anger and threats to peg him to an oak where he will remain howling for twelve winters (I.ii.344-50). Prospero’s threats are highly real to Ariel seeing as they reflect the torment he has already endured. It is interesting that Prospero would consider inflicting the same kind of agony that he initially released Ariel from, and the fact that Prospero justifies his own treatment of Ariel, and threatens to punish him just like Sycorax did, contradicts Prospero’s own portrayal of himself as a savior. It questions Prospero’s credibility, making the audience wonder how Prospero actually differs from Sycorax, and if Prospero really is the character he assumes to be. One moment in the play that particularly challenges Prospero’s portrayal of himself is found in Act V, when Prospero’s lack of essential human capacity is exposed, and ironically, the fundamental qualities of being human are taught to him by Ariel, the only character in the play that is without them:

Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir,  
In the line-grove which weather-fends your cell;  
They cannot budge till your release. The king,  
His brother and yours, abide all three distracted  
And the remainder mourning over them,  
Brimful of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly  
Him that you term'd, sir, 'The good old lord Gonzalo;'  
His tears run down his beard, like winter's drops  
From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works 'em

That if you now beheld them, your affections  
 Would become tender. (V.i.9-17)

Ariel's narration is interesting, because it reflects Ariel's view of Prospero's actions. Even though it is Ariel who has left the characters unable to move in the line-grove, Ariel emphasizes that the characters are there at Prospero's command, as he continually uses the word "you" throughout the speech; "Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir", says Ariel, they are unable to move until "your release", and "Your charm so strongly works 'em" that Gonzalo's face is covered in tears, and if *you* actually had beheld them, "your affections would become tender". It seems as Ariel is trying to establish the difference between his own art and Prospero's, as he distances himself from what Prospero has done by stating how the sight of the four men would have affected him, if he was human, an implication to which Prospero incredulously replies:

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling  
 Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,  
 One of their kind, that relish all as sharply  
 Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art? (V.i.21-24)

It is interesting to note that Prospero, driven by hatred and rage, is so consumed with the idea of vengeance that he has forgotten basic human qualities like sympathy, compassion and forgiveness. Prospero himself seems astonished to realize the fact that a non-human spirit, a nothingness like air, is able to recognize other peoples' suffering, when he himself could not. The schoolmaster has learned something about humanity from his servant, and the relationship between Prospero and Ariel will be discussed in detail during Chapter II of this thesis. The question of what it means to be human is an important issue raised in the play, and Prospero's conversation with Ariel leads to a further investigation of what the theme of humanness signifies in the play.

*Caliban's Rhetorical Misshapeness*

The concept of what it means to be human is a question embodied in the character of Caliban, and throughout the play, he is considered the “other” by the characters on the island. During Prospero and Ariel’s conversation the audience is introduced to Caliban’s character, the child Sycorax was pregnant with when she arrived on the island. One of Prospero’s first statements regarding Caliban is that he is not “honored with / A human shape” (I.ii.83.84) and one of his last remarks of Caliban is that he is as “disproportioned in his manners / As in his shape” (V.i.290-91). Both Ariel and Caliban enter the stage because Prospero has summoned them; however, their initial response to Prospero’s calling is strikingly different, as Ariel hails Prospero as a savior when he exclaims:

All hail, great master! Grave sir, hail! I come  
 To answer thy best pleasure; be't to fly  
 To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride  
 On the curled clouds: to thy strong bidding task  
 Ariel and all his quality. (I.ii.219-23)

Prospero’s relationship to Ariel is interesting because Ariel seems to have special part to play in Prospero’s plot. It is Ariel who tunes in on the conversations on the island, and Ariel who performs the acts that Prospero commands. Caliban on the other hand, shows his reluctance to being Prospero’s slave and responds by cursing, the minute he enters the stage:

As wicked dew ad e'er my mother brushed  
 With raven's feather from unwholesome fen  
 Drop on you both! A southwest blow on ye  
 And blister you all o'er! (I.ii.378-81)

Through Prospero’s conversation with Ariel, Prospero is able to shape the audience’s apprehension of Caliban as a deformed figure both in manners and in appearance, and



Caliban's initial response to Prospero, as opposed to Ariel's, substantiate Prospero's accusations. Seeing as Caliban is the only character on the island that challenges Prospero's presentation of himself directly, it seems important for Prospero to detain Caliban, and as such, Prospero attempts to control how Caliban is perceived as a character, through constant remarks on his physical deformity and his distorted nature. Thus, Caliban's first appearance in the play comes from the order of Prospero: "Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself / Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!" (I.ii.319).

There is, nevertheless, a certain complexity in Caliban's misshapeness because in the *dramatis personae* the details are limited, and he is merely described as being a "savage and deformed slave". It is only through characters on the island, such as Prospero, Trinculo and Stephano, who consistently remark upon Caliban's appearance, that an image of him can develop. Trinculo and Stephano's independent descriptions of Caliban indicates that Caliban indeed symbolizes some sort of otherness that separates him from the inhabitants of the island. One of the first impressions of Caliban is that he is some kind of bestial figure, chiefly because of Prospero's accusations against him as the son of Sycorax, presumably a witch who, according to Prospero, conceived a child with the devil. Because of the history that Prospero narrates and due to his accusations regarding Caliban's physical appearance, Caliban almost becomes an inhuman creature, and the various references to Caliban's animalistic features throughout the play substantiate this view.

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The references to Caliban's animalistic features are many and frequently mentioned by various characters throughout the play. One of the first references to Caliban's animalistic appearance is stated during Act I, when Prospero refers to Caliban as a "freckled whelp" (I.ii.283). The allusion to Caliban as a doglike character amplifies when Prospero states how Sycorax gave birth to Caliban. In contrast to a traditional human childbirth, Caliban was,

according to Prospero, *littered*, a typical term used to describe animal birth. Caliban's association to the devil and being doglike is interesting, and it brings connotations to the mythical hellhounds of old folklore, who are associated with features such as glowing eyes, black fur, obscene scent and at times, they had the ability to talk. Even though there is no mentioning of Caliban's eye color in the play, Sycorax is blue-eyed (I.ii.269), which is interesting, seeing as it is not a typical color to attribute an African woman, and if Caliban inherited the same blue eyes that his mother had, his eyes would indeed seem illuminating in contrast to his black skin. Furthermore, when Trinculo first encounter Caliban, his immediate response is to note his odor, which he compares to that of a rotten fish: "He smells like a fish; a very ancient and fishlike smell; a kind of not-of-the-newest poor-John" (II.ii.24-26).

Additionally, Caliban's ability to speak comes as a great surprise to Stephano because Caliban is a "monster of the island" (II.ii.63), and according to Miranda, Caliban initially only knew how to gabble like "a thing most brutish" (I.ii.355). One particular hellhound that comes to mind is *Cerberus*, a multi-headed dog in Greek mythology (Servi 76), and it is interesting to note the fact that Caliban has at times been portrayed as a multi-headed dog on stage (Dymkowski 49). Furthermore, the stage directions for Act II, also seem to bear some similarities to the ancient myth of the multi-headed dog who usually is depicted has having either two or three heads and Stephano's initial response to Caliban reflects this as well: "Four legs and two voices: a most delicate monster!" (II.ii.85). At the beginning of Trinculo and Caliban's first encounter, Caliban believes that Trinculo is one of Prospero's spirits, and as such, he "falls to the ground and covers himself with his cloak", thus making him appear as a four legged animal. However, it is not until Trinculo also creeps under Caliban's cloak in fear of bad weather that the parallels between Cerberus and Caliban amplifies. Stephano examines the four legged animal and concludes that the monster does in fact have two heads to drink from, and when Trinculo calls out Stephano's name, Stephano responds by exclaiming: "Doth

thy other mouth call me? Mercy, mercy! This is a devil, and no monster” (I.ii.92).

In relation to the concept of Caliban as a child that is “got” by the devil, *mooncalf* is also an interesting word used to describe Caliban, seeing as the word can be used to describe the abortive fetus of a farm animal. The word suggests that Caliban might share some of those animalistic attributes, perhaps the cloven hoof, a depiction that is widely associated with the devil: “there is no vulgar story of the devil's having appeared anywhere without a cloven foot. In graphic representations he is seldom or never pictured without one” (Qtd. in Brand 176). The allusion of the devil with a cloven hoof was a well-known myth in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, and it is reflected in some of the major plays at that time, such as in Christopher Marlowe’s *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*:

*Enter two DEVILS: and the CLOWN runs up and down crying,*

*Wag.* Baliol and Belcher, – Spirits, away!

*Clown.* What, are they gone? A vengeance on them! They  
Have vile long nails. There was a he-devil and a she-devil: I’ll tell you how  
you shall know them; all he-devils has horns, and all she-devils has cloven feet.  
(I.iv.41-44)

*Doctor Faustus* is a tragedy Shakespeare might have been well acquainted with, seeing as Marlowe was the most successful playwright at that time (Nuttall 25). As such, it is interesting to note the similarities between *Doctor Faustus* and *The Tempest* as Stephen Greenblatt observes, “*Doctor Faustus*, the powerful tragedy of the scholar who sells his soul to the devil, drew deeply on Marlowe’s theological education at Cambridge. [...] And in *The Tempest* [Shakespeare] explored the fate of a prince who becomes rapt in his occult reading” (*Will in the World* 257). The obsession with occult studies is not the only thing Prospero and Faustus have in common, ironically, they also share the same name, in the sense that both are variants of the word *fortunate* (Hopkins 75). It is also interesting to note Faustus’ relationship

to the Good Angel and the Evil Angel and the resemblance in the relationship between Prospero, Ariel and Caliban, which, according to David Lucking, can be seen as a representation of the “contradicting tendencies of [Prospero’s] own nature (158). I do not intend to go further into a discussion about Caliban and Ariel as a presentation of the different aspects in Prospero’s personality. However, the observation is interesting, and might be one of the reasons why Caliban is described as having animalistic features, because it makes him adhere to Prospero’s accusation, “a devil, a born devil” (IV.i.189). And, as Darren Oldridge states, the devil was often depicted with animalistic attributes:

The Devil played such a central role in Christian thought that he could not be ignored; and the need to communicate religious ideas to an illiterate population made pictorial representations indispensable, particularly during the expansion of Christianity in the later Middle Ages. [...] Unlike the robed figures of Angels and saints, they were always portrayed naked; their bodies were rendered in sinuous detail, emphasizing the flesh instead of the spirit; and the possession of animal attributes – typically horns, beaks, wings, claw, hooves, or webbed feet – indicated bestial qualities rather than spiritual ones. (81)

Caliban’s animalistic attributes do not merely restrict themselves to animals on land, and the webbed feet that Oldridge mentions are interesting, seeing as Caliban is also described as a sea creature various places in the play. For instance, when Prospero summons Caliban by calling him a tortoise, this might possibly suggest that Caliban has a kind of reptilian appearance, like a lizard or a snake. Furthermore, because Trinculo smells Caliban’s fishlike scent, he cannot properly decide whether Caliban is a fish or a human, and through a further investigation of Caliban’s features he notes that Caliban has human legs, however his arms are like fins (II.ii.32). Caliban’s fishlike appearance is noted by Trinculo and Stephano both, and they both recognize Caliban’s potential for exploitation, and consider taking him home as

a prize for their own profit: “If I can recover him, and keep him tame, and get to Naples with him, he’s a present for any emperor that ever trod on neat’s leather” (II.ii.65-67). Caliban’s potential for exploitation is also repeated at the very end of the play, when Antonio sees Caliban for the first time, and states that he is a “plain fish” undoubtedly marketable (V.i.266), which not only says something about the extent of monstrosity in Caliban’s appearance, but it also shows the distorted morals of these three characters. However, the play does not only show the distorted morals in the characters of the play; Trinculo first encounter with Caliban also reveal the morals in society itself:

Were I in England now (as once I was) and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver: there would this monster make a man; any strange beast there makes a man: when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lazy out ten to see a dead Indian. (II.ii.26-32)

All the different suggestions of what Caliban might look like makes the exact nature of his deformity highly unclear. This is also reflected in Alonso’s initial response to Caliban; he does not seem quite sure what it is that he is seeing: “This is a strange thing as e’er I looked on” (V.i.289), and as such, Caliban does indeed seem to be depicted on the border of what is considered humanness.

### *The Ambiguity in Caliban’s Character*

Despite Caliban’s portrayal as a monstrous character throughout the play, Caliban is nevertheless – as Trevor Griffiths argues – something above “the brutes”: “he has human feelings, and words to express them, and there are moments when he can even win our sympathy” (169). The “moments” referred to by Griffiths are arguably one of the most beautiful speeches in *The Tempest*, and it is possible to argue that through his speech Caliban shows that he is, *essentially* human:

Be not afeard: the isle is full of noises,  
 Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.  
 Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
 Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices  
 That, if I then had waked after long sleep,  
 Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,  
 The clouds methought would open and show riches  
 Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked,  
 I cried to dream again. (III.ii.133-41)

The speech is directed to Trinculo and Stephano because of their fear of the magical music they are hearing. Through this speech, Caliban is able to show that he actually can express himself gracefully, and Caliban's descriptions of the wonders of his dreams expose a different character and should be directly contrasted with the image that Prospero's has presented of him. Caliban's speech shows that he has the ability to experience genuine emotions, and he also shows that he is able to reflect upon those emotions when he states that he "would cry to dream again". The speech reveals a humanness within Caliban, which is not represented in any other character, and Prospero's presentation of Caliban is brought into question, seeing as Caliban expresses emotions regarding the island's beauty, that Prospero seems unable to see. For instance, there is no other character in the play that has lines directed specifically toward a description of how the beauties of the island effect emotions, and as such, Caliban is the only character that shows a deeply rooted love for the island. As the critic Jonathan Bate notes, Prospero has 30 percent the dramatic speeches in the play (20), and in all these speeches, Prospero never once describes the island's riches, nor its beautiful nature, the closest thing one can call a description, is that he often refers to his home as a cell (I.ii.23). To an audience capable of feeling compassion it is possible to see Caliban as exactly the opposite of a

monstrous animal, because he has the capacity to feel and express genuine emotions. Subsequently, it is impossible not to feel a sense of discomfort when acknowledging that Caliban is in fact restricted to a cave, unable to enjoy the island. It is almost only through Caliban that we are given an impression of what the island is like and why one might appreciate it so much, and it could be argued that through Caliban's speech about the island the audience is given a more clear justification as to why Caliban might feel he is entitled to claim: "This island's mine" (I.ii-389). However, Caliban is not the only character that claims his authority on the island, it is also interesting to note that Gonzalo claims his right as absolute monarch on the island, and I will come back to Gonzalo's speech later on.

It is important to mention that it is only because Caliban hears Ariel's music that he is able to express himself in the manner that he does, and one could argue that Caliban would not have been able to produce his speech, if it were not for Ariel. In contrast to Ariel, who is airy and associated with concord, music and loyal service, Caliban is earthly and associated with discord, drunkenness and rebellion (Bate 7). However, *synergy* becomes a key word when establishing their relationship. Ariel functions as a catalyst who generates and enforces Caliban's experience of the island. Interestingly, there is one other character having similar views upon the island as Caliban, when hearing Ariel's music.

According to Gonzalo, everything on the island is advantageous to life, and it does not seem like he has seen grass any greener: "How lush and lusty the grass looks!" (II.i.52). Gonzalo's lines are contrasted by Antonio and Sebastian's comments, and he seems to be the only character amongst the royal company that is able to see the opportunities on the island. He describes an almost utopian society, where he himself could be king, and utilize the prospects of the island:

I'th' commonwealth I would by contraries

Execute all things; for no kind of traffic

Would I admit; no name of magistrate;  
 Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,  
 And use of service, none; contract, succession,  
 Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;  
 No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;  
 No occupation; all men idle, all;  
 And women too, but innocent and pure;  
 No sovereignty. (II.i.157-66)

In Gonzalo's fantasized kingdom, there would be no schools or literature, no riches, no poverty, no work and no kingship. However, Gonzalo's speech is ironic and it amplifies the theme of power because Gonzalo is trying to create a society with no social ranks; yet, he himself would be the king, and Antonio amplifies the hypocrisy in Gonzalo's speech: "The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning" (I.ii.54). Furthermore, Gonzalo does not recognize Sebastian and Antonio's greedy and destructive nature, and as such, Gonzalo's naïve worldview is exposed: he is seeking to create a society that is impossible to attain, seeking to reach utopia.

Despite Gonzalo's naïve and credulous outlook, he is nevertheless the most attentive and observant character in the royal company. For instance, Gonzalo is the first character who notes the state of unnaturalness that they find themselves in, as he observes that their garments, which originally were drenched with water, are not stained with salt at all, looking as new as when they first put them on in Tunis (II.i.60-69). Furthermore, like Caliban, Gonzalo is the only character who does not seem frightened, as he exclaims "marvelous sweet music" (III.iii.19), upon hearing Ariel's tunes. And whilst they are gazing at the "strange shapes" entering in a banquet, Gonzalo has the most intrepid response:

(for, certes, these are people of the island)



Who, though they are of monstrous shape, yet, note,

Their manners are more gentle, kind, than of

Our human generation you shall find

Many, nay, almost any. (III.iii.30-34)

Like Caliban, Gonzalo also assures the other characters that they “need not fear” (III.iii.43), and seeing as he is the only one in his company that has a clean conscience, he can also be seen as an “other” in his group, and he does in fact contrast himself from them: “All three of them are desperate: their great guilt/Like poison given to work a great time after, / Now ‘gins to bite the spirits” (IV.i.104-06).

It is interesting to note the similarities in the character traits of Caliban and Gonzalo, seeing as Gonzalo’s initial response to the island is parallel to Caliban’s statement of the island. Even though Caliban expresses a love for the island that no other character seems to feel, Caliban and Gonzalo both see opportunities and riches, rather than desolation and inaccessibility, and they are the only two characters in their company that do not become frightened by Ariel’s music. They also expose a naïveté in their characters that no other character on the island seem to possess. As mentioned, Gonzalo imagines a utopian society on the island, however, the impossibility of such a society is clearly established in the opening scene of the play, when the world is turned topsy-turvy and everyone seeks to claim authority – a claim that is amplified by Antonio and Sebastian’s plot to murder the King – and during the first four acts of the play, Gonzalo seems oblivious to the treacherous nature that resides in Antonio and Sebastian. Likewise, Caliban also shows credulous and naïve character traits, when he fails to recognize that Trinculo and Stephano are only seeing him as a needed co-conspirator and that they in reality are two drunkards. Furthermore, it is interesting that Prospero, throughout the play, insists upon differentiating between good and evil, and as such, describes Gonzalo as a “noble Neapolitan” (I.ii.161), a “good old lord” (V.i.14) and his “true

preserver” (V.i.68), while Caliban is a “most lying slave” (I.ii.344) and a devil, “on whose nature / Nurture can never stick” (IV.i.189-90). Despite Prospero’s keen attempt to present the world as either black or white, good or evil, the similarities between Gonzalo and Caliban show that the world will always present characters with shades of grey, in the sense that there will always be good and evil in within a human being. As such, Caliban might be more human than Prospero will ever be able to grasp, because he has an ability to express emotions in such way that only Gonzalo – the most noble and good character in the royal company – comes close to doing.

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During the first two acts of *The Tempest*, the theme of power is revealed, not only through the relationship between Prospero, Caliban and Ariel, but also between the characters that are cast ashore on the island. The theme of authority is raised as soon as the play opens, during the chaos in tempest itself. Because the opening scene plays such an important role in establishing the theme of power and authority, I will discuss it in detail during Chapter I. By establishing the relationship between the characters on the island and discussing some of the major themes within the play, the focus and intentions of this thesis will be clarified. During the next chapters in the thesis, I will show to what extent I agree with Hulme, and where I do not agree with him. As opposed to Hulme, I do not think that the play within *The Tempest* is Prospero’s play, and I do not think Prospero’s powers extend to the degree that Hulme proposes. What I do think, however, is that Prospero has undertaken a role as a stage director, and that he assumes to be in control of that role by exalting himself to a Godlike figure. However, because Caliban constantly challenges Prospero’s presentation of himself, Prospero’s powers are called into question, and it is through Prospero and Caliban’s struggle to define each other that the limits of Prospero’s powers are exposed. Furthermore, in contrast to Hulme, I will show in the remaining chapters of the thesis that Ariel is the dramatic

manager of the action of the play and the creator of the play within the play itself. I think that the “game” that is presented in the play within parallels with the game of chess at the end of Act V, because it reflects Prospero and Ariel’s struggle to define their own roles in the play within the play.

When interpreting the play, I would also like to state that, unlike Hulme – who focuses mainly on the text itself – I believe it is necessary to consider the spectator, that is, the person who sees or reads the play, because all of the scenes affect the spectator’s impression of the play as a whole. As such, I will pay close attention to the biblical allusions in the play, seeing as Shakespeare’s audience would have been well acquainted with these allegories, and thus, the focus in this thesis becomes Prospero’s own presentation of himself, his words and his actions, in relation to his two servants. I am trying to refocus Hulme’s reading, and see the play in light of the relationships between the characters, and how these relationships shape the spectator’s interpretation of the play.



## Chapter I

After a brief summary of historical context around the time *The Tempest* was written, the main focus in this chapter will be the distinction between *The Tempest* as a play and the play within the play, an interpretation of the masque, as well as the theme of power and authority. Because the interest of this thesis lies in the play within the play, I consider it important to separate the two plays by discussing them independently in this chapter. In order to make the distinction between the two plays clear, I have chosen to label them as *Shakespeare's play* and *Prospero's play*, respectively. Because the masque is such an important part of what most critics consider "Prospero's play", I have devoted an entire section to a discussion of the masque and Caliban's relation to this part of the play. However, because Ariel plays such an important role in the entire play within the play, and not only in the masque, I have chosen not to stress Ariel's participation in the masque or in "Prospero's play" in this chapter, rather devoting an entire chapter to the character of Ariel in the succeeding chapter.

Furthermore, as it might be subjected to criticism, I want to clarify that I have chosen to rely so heavily on Hulme in this chapter because it is necessary to establish Hulme's arguments in order to affirm my position in relation to him, and then in order to show what I consider to be the limitations of his arguments, I deem it necessary to present his suggestions properly.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

*The Tempest* is commonly accepted to be the last play William Shakespeare wrote single-handedly before his death in 1616. Seven years after Shakespeare's death, two of Shakespeare's longtime associates and friends, Henry Condell and John Heminge, put together a collection of Shakespeare's complete works, known as the First Folio. Due to

Condell and Heminge's decision to categorize Shakespeare's plays into genres – comedies, histories and tragedies – rather than placing them in chronological order, an exact date as to when *The Tempest* might have been written is hard to determine. However, it is a common conviction that the play was written somewhere between 1610 and 1611. The earliest records of the play being performed was at court in 1611, yet, one should be careful to suggest that the first performance took place there, as Stephen Orgel argues in his edition of *The Tempest*: “A record of performance at court implies neither a play written specifically for the court nor a first performance there” (1). Shakespeare began his career as an actor, playwright and stockholder in the acting company the Lord Chamberlain's Men, founded during the reign of Elizabeth I. After Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603, the new ruler – James I of England – made the Lord Chamberlain's Men his own Theater Company and renamed them the King's Men. The King's men rose to become the leading playing company in London, when the King's Men were firmly established as the court's favorite entertainers: “they carried the royal stamp of favor upon them when they traveled; they attracted huge London audiences to their Bankside amphitheater, the Globe; and they would now cater as well to a more exclusive clientele at the Blackfriars stage, which could accommodate some five hundred higher-paying spectators” (Greenblatt *Will in the World* 368).

### *Shakespeare's Play*

As mentioned in the introduction, Hulme argues that *The Tempest* consists of two plays, the play written by William Shakespeare, and the play that Prospero creates within *The Tempest*. Being amongst the last plays Shakespeare wrote, *The Tempest* does in fact differ from some of the earlier plays he wrote. One of the main differences is that *The Tempest* is Shakespeare's only play featuring an original plot, not based on any earlier known story or work, unlike some of his other plays, which are based on historical figures and circumstances such as

*Antony and Cleopatra*, based on Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*; *Hamlet*, where parts of the story seems to derive from a Scandinavian tale of a Danish prince written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Wells et al. 681, 995) and *Macbeth*, which draws its inspiration from Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, of the reigns of King Duncan and Thane Mackbeth (Williams 13).

Furthermore, there is a constant reference to time in *The Tempest*, which might be a conscious choice of Shakespeare, in order to make *The Tempest* adhere to the three classical unities; the idea that a play should have a single focused unity of time, place and action as described by Louis Sigmund Friedland in his article "The Dramatic Unities in England" (61-66).

It is possible to trace the unity of time from the second scene of Act I, when Prospero promises to release Ariel from his service within two days (I.ii.350-51), and during Prospero's conversations with Ariel, he is always stressing the importance of time, asking Ariel to remind him what time it is, which makes it seem like he is in a hurry. The audience also learns that the time is two hours past mid-season (I.ii.239-40), and at the beginning of the Act V Prospero asks Ariel the time of day it one last time, whereupon Ariel replies that the time is "on the sixth hour" (V.i.4). This suggests that the time elapsed in the play is no more than four hours from start to finish, making it seem like the play takes place in "real" time. According to Frank Kermode in his Arden edition of *The Tempest*, Shakespeare uses the formal Five-Act structure, in concurrence to the traditions of Aelius Donatus and in accordance with the neo-Terentian regulations:

The first scene is like a prologue, and with the second we are plunged straight into a protasis [...] The presentment of the actors, one of the functions of the first part of a play, is accomplished in the first act. [...] In the third act the turbulence is intensified, according to the formula for the *epitasis*; the fourth act continues the *epitasis*, with the

direct threat of intervention from Caliban, but also prepares for the comic catastrophe.  
(lxxiv-lxxvi)

Because Shakespeare chose to use classical principals of structure and limited time, it seems as if he wanted to give time a distinct emphasis in the play. The role of *time* in the play is not restricted to the conversation between Prospero and Ariel, but relates to the themes and the plotting as well, and the issue of time will be returned to in the third chapter of this thesis. The action of *The Tempest*, that is, what impels the play, is neatly incorporated into Prospero's plot, which is driven by his desire to seek revenge on his enemies and reclaim his dukedom, and apart from the opening scene, the play restricts itself to the island. As such, the time, action and place are united in the play.

Unlike earlier plays written by Shakespeare, *The Tempest* is a play that requires both scenery and stage effects, something that was hard to accomplish while Shakespeare's acting company performed at the Globe. However, when the King's Men were moved to the Blackfriars Theatre it was possible to perform plays that required more scenery, and even though the theatre was smaller than the Globe, "it had the great advantage, given the vagaries of the English weather, of being roofed and enclosed. It was, at least by comparison with the open amphitheatres, a place of decorum and even luxury" (Greenblatt *Will in the World* 367). Furthermore, when comparing the stage directions in *The Tempest* to an early play such as *Richard III*, which could easily be performed at a theater with limited scenery, *The Tempest* have stage directions which indicates that it required more stage effects, especially in the banquet in Act III, where Prospero appears "on the top" and in the masque in Act IV, where Juno *descends* from heaven, which, according to John Astington, indicates an upper playing level (204). As previously stated, *The Tempest* is believed to be Shakespeare's final play, and many critics have chosen to look at *The Tempest* as more than just a *play* by Shakespeare. For instance, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was one of the earliest critics to argue that Shakespeare's



dramatic art as a playwright of *The Tempest* is equal Prospero's dramatic art as a stage director of the tempest in the opening scene of the play: "Prospero is the very Shakespeare himself, as it were, of the tempest" (Coleridge 96). Especially the reference to the Globe Theatre, where Prospero speaks of the dissolving of "the great globe itself" (IV.i.153) and the scene where Prospero abjures his magic, breaks his staff and drowns his books (V.i.54-57) as well as the epilogue has caused critics for the last hundred and fifty years to see *The Tempest* as a "representation of Shakespeare himself bidding farewell to his art, as Shakespeare's legacy" (Orgel, "Prospero's Wife" 4).

Exactly how much *Shakespeare* Shakespeare put into *The Tempest* is merely speculation, however it is interesting to note the theme of loss of a father's only son, a tragedy Shakespeare experienced in 1596, upon the death of his only son Hamnet (Nuttall 4). Prospero does not have a son, however, in his essay on how to read *The Tempest*, David Bevington argues that Prospero finds a son-in-law in Ferdinand, and as such, he serves as a replacement for the son Shakespeare and Prospero do not have (147). Even though *The Tempest* is Shakespeare's only play featuring an original plot, *The Tempest* does share a resemblance with certain contemporary events that took place during Shakespeare's time. One important event can be found in the written accounts of a storm and a shipwreck near the Bermuda Islands in 1609, and in the play, Ariel informs Prospero that the King's ship lies safely in harbor in "the still-vexed Bermudas" (I.ii.227-29). William Strachey, an English explorer, was onboard the ship in 1609, and through letters he shared the reports of the storm that wrecked the flagship of the Virginia Company, the *Sea Venture*. Strachey's True Repertory of the Wrack, is found in Gerald Graff and James Phelan's edition of *The Tempest*, and in it, Strachey reports that the storm:

Did beat all light from heaven; which like an hell of darkness turned black upon us, so much the more fuller of horror, as in such cases horror and fear use to overrun the

troubled and overmastered sense of all, which (taken up with amazement) the ears lay so sensible to the terrible cries and murmurs of the winds, and distraction of our company, as who was most armed and best prepared was not a little shaken. (121)

Some critics believe that Strachey's accounts reached England in 1610 and that the storm was a partial inspiration for Shakespeare to write *The Tempest* (Wells et al. 1221), and additionally in his book *Shakespearean Negotiations*, Stephen Greenblatt argues that since Shakespeare and Strachey were both shareholders in joint-stock companies – Shakespeare, a shareholder in the King's Men, and Strachey, a shareholder and secretary of the Virginia Company's colony at Jamestown – they had the common desire to market stories that would excite, interest and attract supporters. They had multiple positions, Greenblatt argues, "making them identify intensely with the interests of their respective companies", and furthermore Greenblatt proposes the idea that "the relation between the play and its alleged source is a relation between joint-stock companies" (148). Whether or not Shakespeare and the stockholders of the Virginia Company shared a mutual desire to profit from the story, Ariel's report to Prospero on how he boarded the King's ship does indeed echo Strachey's accounts of the storm:

Now on the beak,  
 Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,  
 I flamed amazement. Sometimes I'd divide  
 And burn in many places; on the topmast,  
 The yards, and bowsprit would I flame distinctly,  
 Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the precursors  
 O'th' dreadful thunderclaps, more momentary  
 And sight-outrunning were not. The fire and cracks  
 Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune. (I.ii.196-204)

Ariel's report of the storm is important because it reinforces the action of the opening scene and it prepares the audience for the chaotic situation on the island and fortifies the distortion of power and authority, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

### *Prospero's Play*

Hulme's arguments depicting *The Tempest* as a dual play, are reasonable, because there are several references to theatrical illusions in the play which indicate that there is in fact some stage director that organizes the play. For instance, *perform* is a word repeatedly used in the play, the first time being shortly after Miranda has fallen asleep, when Prospero asks Ariel if the tempest was "performed to point" (I.ii.195). The significance of the word is clearly established when it is repeated twice during Prospero and Ariel's conversation, and four more times throughout the play. The fourth time the word is used is in the conversation between Antonio and Sebastian, when they plot to murder Alonso and Gonzalo (II.i.248), however, in the latter three times, the word is uttered by Prospero.

Because the word reoccurs several times throughout the play, and because it is primarily used by Prospero, it indicates that the word has an important role in relation to Prospero's magic. It is interesting that Prospero only uses the word when he is referring to an action that needs to be performed, or an action that has already been performed. For instance, he is either applauding Ariel's work, such as in Act III, after Ariel has taken the form of a harpy to terrify Antonio, Sebastian and Alonso (III.iii.84), or he might be preparing to execute an action, such as when he is contemplating how to take advantage of Miranda and Ferdinand's newfound love for each other (III.ii.95), as well as in Act IV, when he calls out for Ariel's help to prepare for the masque sequence (IV.i.36). Prospero's constant reference to Ariel's performance implies that he himself is not able to perform his magic without Ariel, and that he is fully aware of the restrictions of his power. Gabriella Giorno argues that the

tempest at the beginning of Act I is a linguistic creation, and claims that Prospero's powers resides in his words: "Ariel 'Perform'd to point the tempest' [...] thus fulfilling the calling word of Prospero" (204). In order to conceal the limits of his own powers, Prospero seems to use *art* as a complementary word to illustrate his relation to the dramatic performance on the island. For instance, Prospero claims that it was his art that released Ariel from the cloven pine (I.ii-292), and as such, he stresses his ability to *give*, which amplifies when he says to Ariel "I give thee pow'r" (IV.i.38). In relation to this quote, an important question that needs exploring, is what kind of power Prospero has, and what kind he has "given" Ariel? Even though Prospero has stated that the power Ariel has, is granted by him, it is interesting to note that Prospero still needs to affirm that everything that happens on the island is a result of *his* art: "some vanity of mine art", "spirits, which by mine art", "by my so potent art". Prospero's use of the word *art* is interesting, because it is closely linked to his relationship with Ariel. Just as Prospero has a tendency to claim his ownership of art, Prospero also claims ownership of Ariel, and his avarice of Ariel will be discussed in closer detail during Chapter II of this thesis.

### *The Masque*

According to Caliban, Prospero's art is of such power that he is able to control Caliban's god Setebos and make him his vassal (I.ii.371-73). At times, it even seems as if Prospero executes his power, or his *art*, just for the sake of entertainment, and with the ambition of being admired for his abilities:

Incite them to quick motion; for I must  
Bestow upon the eyes of this young couple  
Some vanity of mine art: it is my promise,  
And they expect it from me. (IV.i.39-42)

The nuptial masque staged for Ferdinand and Miranda is arguably the most important part of *The Tempest*, because in the masque, Prospero is able to show himself as a director and a dramatist capable of producing theatrical effects.

The goddesses Ceres, Juno and Iris gathers to celebrate what Iris calls a “contract of true love” after Prospero has made Ferdinand swear upon his virtue, which in this case is synonymous with virginity, warning Ferdinand that premarital sex between him and Miranda would destroy their vows (IV.i.51-54). Ferdinand marvels at the sight of the spirits, whilst Prospero assures him that they are summoned there by his own art: “Spirits, which by mine art / I have from their confines called to enact / My present fancies” (IV.i.120-22), and Miranda and Ferdinand seem oblivious to the fact that it is actually Ariel who is creating the theatrical illusions.

The masque abruptly cuts short, and the figures vanish instantly when Prospero realizes the chaos Caliban might inflict by his conspiracy. The abrupt termination of the masque is interesting, because, according to Hulme, this is where the spectator is able to realize that the masque is the central element in the plot of *The Tempest*. Hulme argues that Prospero’s play is a fantasized version of Antonio’s original conspiracy, and as such, Caliban’s conspiracy is planned by Prospero, because it is merely a part of Prospero’s game: “Prospero *remembers*: so the conspiracy is no surprise to him and, even if he has been monitoring its progress off-stage [...] the fact that he has not bothered to immobilize the conspirators indicates that he desires the conspiracy to run its course” (Hulme 234). Furthermore, Hulme proposes that the interrupted masque is one of Prospero’s means of concealing his own usurpation of Caliban, and when Prospero remembers Caliban’s conspiracy, Caliban’s treacherous nature is exposed, thus Caliban’s claim of the island is invalid: “But that moment also triggers the screen behind which Prospero’s usurpation of

Caliban can be concealed, his proven treachery providing a watertight alibi against any claims of prior sovereignty that might be lodged” (248).

However, it is important to note that Prospero never once states, as Hulme argues, that he has remembered Caliban’s conspiracy. What Prospero actually admits to, is that he has *forgotten* all about Caliban’s plot:

I had forgot that foul conspiracy  
Of the beast Caliban and his confederates  
Against my life. The minute of their plot  
Is almost come. (4.1.139-42)

The minute Prospero realizes *what* he has forgotten, he commands the spirits to leave, because he wishes to see them “no more” (IV.i.142). If, as Hulme argues, Prospero wants the conspiracy to run its course, why would he cut the masque off so abruptly? The purpose of Prospero’s play, is according to Hulme, to:

manoeuvre Alonso both physically and psychologically in such a way that the revelation of his son’s seemingly miraculous return from the dead will be so bound up with Ferdinand’s love for Miranda that Alonso will be in no position to oppose the union that guarantees the security of Prospero’s Milanese dukedom. (233)

If Prospero’s ultimate purpose is to unite Miranda and Ferdinand in a holy matrimony, it seems absurd of Prospero to deliberately end the masque at its climax, in order to take control over Caliban’s conspiracy – a situation Hulme argues Prospero has under control and is a part of his own plot. If Prospero’s play is a project whose outcome depends upon his skill of presentation (233), it would seem more skillful to conclude the masque, thus keeping Ferdinand in a state of awe and wonder, and then deal with Caliban’s conspiracy afterwards. Calling abruptly for an end to the masque destroys the state of wonder that Ferdinand find himself in and he realizes that Prospero is strongly affected by an outer component –

something outside the actual masque, which Ferdinand and Miranda are unable to see: “This is strange: your father’s in some passion / That works him strongly”, to which Miranda replies: “Never till this day / Saw I him touched with anger so distempered” (IV.i.142-45).

After being isolated with her father on a desolated island for over a decade, Miranda has never once seen Prospero this angry. As such, Hulme’s argument – that Caliban’s conspiracy is a part of Prospero’s grand plan – becomes a strange suggestion, seeing as Prospero, being the puppeteer (in Hulme’s eyes), should be able to manage the actions of more than one marionette at once, without cutting short one of the greatest theatrical illusions in his own play. Furthermore, Prospero’s evident anger startles Miranda and Ferdinand to the extent that he needs to assure them that they need not to worry, but be cheerful:

Our revels now 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-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
 Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
 Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
 As dreams are made on, and our little life  
 Is rounded with a sleep. (IV.i.146-58)

Prospero speech is arguably one of the most famous speeches in *The Tempest* and as mentioned, this speech has been used as one of the many arguments of Prospero being a projected image of Shakespeare, because the speech seems not only to relate to what Prospero

has created on the island, but also to *The Tempest*, which Shakespeare presents in “the great globe itself” (IV.i.51).

However, I would now like to focus on the speech itself and show how it relates to Prospero’s fear of Caliban’s conspiracy. Prospero tells Ferdinand and Miranda that the show is over, and reminds them that the actors in truth are only spirits, who are now melted into thin air. Furthermore, Prospero tells them that just like the spirits, the “baseless fabric” of the vision itself, its high towers, its, beautiful palaces, its solemn temples, the entire world and everyone that lives in it, will dissolve just as the illusions of the masque dissolved, and nothing will be left behind (IV.i.146-56). Likewise, “we are such stuff as dreams are made on” (IV.i.156-57) implies that life is just a dream, an illusion of a reality. Prospero’s speech suggests that not only was the masque an illusion, but the universe that he has created on the island is but “an illusion” of his art. He has created in fact an entire life-like illusion which is but a dream: one that will be “rounded with a sleep”. When Prospero realizes that he has forgotten Caliban’s conspiracy, it seems as if Prospero finally comprehends his own lack of control. Perhaps – that life itself is uncontrollable, and as such, the characters in the masque and within the play are only living Prospero’s own fantasy of power and authority. Prospero’s realization of his own lack of control regarding Caliban’s conspiracy is ultimately a realization of his own lack of power and authority, which is constantly challenged by Caliban’s presence on the island, and as such, Prospero’s claim of authority on the island is questioned.

### *Power and Authority*

Because the theme of power and authority is such a major theme in *The Tempest*, I have chosen to devote a sub-chapter to this theme, and discuss how it relates to the different characters in the play. The main focus in this chapter has, up until now, centered on *The*



*Tempest* as a play, and Prospero's play within *The Tempest*, which I chose to label "Prospero's Play" in this chapter, mainly because it is commonly accepted to view Prospero as a stage director and controller of the play within the play. However, I would like to emphasize that I do not think the play within the play is Prospero's, rather, it is Ariel's and therefore we must pay closer attention to Ariel during the next chapters of this thesis. Nevertheless, I will still discuss the relationship between Caliban and Prospero, but with a different focus than up until now.

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According to Hulme, Prospero's play is, in its own terms, undoubtedly a success, and it achieves what Prospero wants it to achieve (237). Furthermore, Hulme says,

Caliban's conspiracy is seemingly a minor detail from the perspective of Prospero's main plot, however, in truth the conspiracy is far from "the mere echo of Prospero's main plot, but the enactment of a repression which takes from Prospero's consciousness the memory of his usurpation by Antonio, so that Prospero can resume his position as the duke of Milan, and Caliban is playing the part that Prospero has cast for him, not only as the false brother, but also as the treacherous slave, and Caliban serves as the perfect actor for the part because he is a 'natural usurper', a nature that is only held in check by Prospero's power. (238-39)

Unlike Hulme, I do not think Caliban is a "natural usurper" and that he is only restrained by Prospero's power; however, the "enactment of repression" is interesting, because I do believe that Prospero's actions on the island are based on repression. Prospero is putting on an enactment of his repressed guilt, the guilt he feels over his failure as the duke of Milan. As Prospero admits to Miranda, Antonio's overthrowing was only possible because Prospero had withdrawn from his duties as a ruler, and assigned Antonio to manage his state by casting the duties of his government upon him, which eventually caused Prospero's state to grow strange

to him (I.ii.70-77). Prospero puts on an act in order to uphold a presentation of himself as a character in control, in order to conceal his failure as a ruler.

The question of power becomes an interesting theme throughout *The Tempest*, and it is revealed to the audience as soon as the play opens. *The Tempest* begins at the core of a brutal storm with the king and his men on board, and thus, setting and characters are established. The conflict of power and authority is also immediately established when the boatswain orders the king and councilors to go below deck. Gonzalo does not appreciate the boatswain's order and reminds him of whom he has on board, to which the boatswain replies: "None that I more love than myself. You are a councilor: if you can command these elements to silence, and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a rope more – use your authority" (I.i.19-22). It is interesting to note that the ship consists of nobles and common people, however as the boatswain reminds Gonzalo, their titles mean nothing on board the ship in the midst of a sea storm: "What cares these roarers for the name of king?" Because the power of titles is challenged, the conflict of authority seems, at one point, more important than surviving the actual storm:

I have great comfort from this fellow. Methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows. Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging; make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth little advantage. If he be not born to be hanged, or case is miserable. (I.i.26-30)

As the boatswain is "born to be hanged" – not drowned, Gonzalo jests that he has great comfort in him, and presumably, the ship is safe, implying that the boatswain should know that his social status is submissive to the king and his court, regardless of the situation on board.

Seeing as *The Tempest* opens in *medias res*, the chaos and rebellion that the opening scene represent, signalizes what the audience can expect of the play. As such, the question of

power and authority becomes a central theme throughout the play, and it is raised yet again in the middle of Act I, scene ii, when Caliban says to Prospero: This island's mine by Sycorax my mother/ Which thou tak'st from me". According to Hulme, this scene opens a space between Prospero's narrative, and Caliban's version of that narrative (241). For Hulme, Prospero and Caliban become symbols of the colonizer and the colonized, and Prospero needs to control Caliban in order to conceal his own usurpation of the island (247). As mentioned, Hulme argues that there is congruence between New World narratives, and the words and actions in *The Tempest*. In this context, Hulme states that through the statement "I must eat my dinner" (I.ii.330), Caliban makes it plain that Prospero's "most powerful weapon over him is the withholding of food [...] Caliban is forced by Prospero's magic to labor in order to be able to eat even a small portion of the food he prepares" (247). Hulme's argument reduces Caliban to a semi-human figure that is dependent on his master in order to receive his meals, an assertion that hardly seems accurate, seeing as Caliban says to Stephano:

I'll show thee the best springs;  
 I'll pluck thee berries;  
 I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.  
 A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!  
 I'll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee,  
 Thou wondrous man. (II.ii.155-59)

If Caliban is not able to eat unless his master allows it, it seems odd that he should have knowledge of how to find the best springs, and how to gather food. Additionally, Caliban's diet seems mainly to consist of raw nuts and vegetables; food he can easily access whilst walking about the island, gathering wood for Prospero. Furthermore, in the historical context Hulme offers as a possible source for the play, it is the Caribs who starve the English settlers: "And finally the Caribs stopped bringing food, so the English started stealing it from their

gardens. Eventually the ambush came: the nineteen who survived it barricaded themselves in their stockade and prepared to die of hunger” (246). If Hulme is suggesting that Nicholl’s story is supposed to serve as a possible source for *The Tempest*, it would seem more reasonable if he argued that Caliban is the one who starves Prospero, seeing as it is Caliban who owns the knowledge of how to gather food – not the other way around. If Prospero’s only power over Caliban is his ability to starve him, then Hulme seems to have forgotten the excruciating pain that Prospero threatens to inflict on Caliban:

For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,  
 Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins  
 Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,  
 All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinch'd  
 As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging  
 Than bees that made 'em. (I.ii.325-29)

When Prospero approaches Caliban it is always with threats of inflicting him with pain, racking him with cramps, filling his bones with aches so painful that he will roar until beasts shudder at the sound (I.ii.368-70). The pain Prospero is able to inflict on Caliban seems to be Caliban’s greatest fear, a fear far greater than the thought of starvation:

For every trifle are they set upon me;  
 Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me  
 And after bite me, then like hedgehogs which  
 Lie tumbling in my barefoot way and mount  
 Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I  
 All wound with adders who with cloven tongues  
 Do hiss me into madness. (II.ii 4-15)

Prospero's constant threats of torture appears to be Caliban's highest motivation for exchanging one master for another, and Caliban's conspiracy is in my opinion, an attempt to release himself from a tyrant, rather than a puppeteer's pre-planned exposure of the monster's treacherous nature.

Prospero's specific reason for enslaving Caliban is, as he states it: "thou didst seek to violate / The honor of my child" (I.ii.347-48), and Hulme argues that that the violation of Miranda is a trespass on Prospero's property, because Miranda's virginity is an important political card for Prospero in order to fulfill the conspiracy of his play by marriage. Because Hulme chooses not to stress Caliban's rape attempt, he also reduces the importance of the fact that a rape would be the ultimate proof of Caliban's power, as Caliban states himself: "O ho, O ho! would't had been done! /Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else/This isle with Calibans" (I.ii.47-50). If Caliban had consummated the rape, and peopled the island with his children, Prospero would in truth have lost all his power, and according to Alden T. and Virginia Mason Vaughan it is Caliban's otherness which ultimately leads to Prospero's rejection: "Although Caliban is "a savage" [...] he is not, in Prospero's or Miranda's eyes, either admirable or an acceptable suitor" (11-12). However, according to Hulme, Prospero's rejection of Caliban is because Prospero knows Caliban's character, and he knows that Caliban will seize the chance of acting as the treacherous slave:

For Prospero this is merely conformation of what he knows already: Caliban, like Antonio and Sebastian, only has to act according to character. What is more, Prospero can in the end only see Caliban as acting according to character because Caliban does indeed seize upon the part offered to him and plays it with a gusto only diminished by the fatuity of his fellow conspirators (239).

The quote by the Vaughans is an important quote because it suggests that there is something more to the relationship between Prospero and Caliban than initially presented to the

audience. For instance, the confrontation scene between Caliban, Prospero and Miranda is a memory for the spectator throughout the play, and as such, Prospero can, as Hulme argues, construct a role for Caliban to play, and Caliban can act according to that role. However, what Hulme fails to mention is that because Caliban does not always act according to character, that is, he has moments, like in the speech about the island's riches, where he shows himself as a completely different character than the monstrous role Prospero has ascribed him, and as such, Prospero's presentation of Caliban is put into question.

Again, I would like to stress that my emphasis in this thesis lies in the *relationships* between the characters on the island. I am interested in how the characters represent themselves to each other, and how they act according to those representations, which is why I chose to use this opening chapter to establish Caliban's role in Prospero's play within *The Tempest*.

If we consider the moments in the play where Caliban challenges Prospero's presentation of him, either directly or indirectly, Hulme's suggestion, that Caliban is a treacherous character and Prospero need only wait until the right moment to step into that role, seems a bit absurd and it echoes an argument proposed by Lorie Jerrell Leininger in the late 1970s. According to Leininger, Miranda is only a part of Prospero's game and used by him as sexual bait: "and then [he] needs to protect her from the threat which is inescapable given his hierarchical world – slavery being the ultimate extension of the concept of hierarchy" (Leininger, 227). The arguments Hulme and Leininger both propose do not consider the earlier scenes of the play, and the relationships between the characters. They also suggest that Prospero knows the outcome of the characters actions before they have actually executed them, which exalts Prospero to a Godlike figure.

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As I mentioned in the introduction, I am interested in the relationship between Ariel and Prospero, and in the next chapters of this thesis I will emphasize the relationships between the characters on the island to a much greater extent. With that stress, I am looking at Prospero's relation to Ariel and Caliban. There is, in my opinion, not only a struggle between Caliban and Prospero to define each other; there is also a more subtle struggle between Ariel and Prospero to define themselves as the stage director of the play within *The Tempest*. I will also try to make a clearer distinction between Prospero and Ariel's role in the play within, in order to reduce Prospero's status as a puppeteer, and to expose him as a basic character within the play, in no more control of the island than mariners are in the midst of a sea storm.





## Chapter II

Ariel is an important character in Prospero's "game" because he executes Prospero's commands and in this chapter, I will largely focus on the relationship between them.

However, Prospero's presentation of himself in relation to his two servants will also be examined carefully. Often times, I will return to the relationship between Caliban and

Prospero because Caliban serves as an important character in the master/servant relationship between Prospero and Ariel, seeing as Ariel and Caliban are Prospero's subjects and endure

much of the same situation. As such, there will be a refocus of Caliban's relationship to

Prospero, with a different perspective than previously. Because the promise of freedom is so important in the relationship between Ariel and Prospero, I will discuss this in a sub-chapter in conjunction to the image of Prospero as a figure of God.

### *Prospero and Ariel*

One of the most important parts of Prospero and Ariel's relationship is Prospero's avariciousness of the spirit, which reveals itself through Prospero's repeated use of the word *my*. Prospero declares his ownership over Ariel before the character has been introduced to the audience: "I am ready now. / Approach, my Ariel. Come!" (I.ii.187-88). During Ariel's short narration of how he boarded the King's ship, Prospero tells Ariel two more times that he belongs to him: "My brave spirit!" (I.ii.207) and "Why that's my spirit" (I.ii.215). However, Prospero does not only restrict himself to state his possessiveness of Ariel during their first conversation, in various ways Prospero continues to address Ariel as *his* throughout the play: "My quaint Ariel" (I.ii.317), "my industrious servant" (IV.i.34), "my delicate Ariel" (IV.i.48), "my Ariel" (IV.i.83), "my dainty Ariel" (V.i.95), "my tricky spirit" (V.i.227) and "my

diligence”(V.i.241) respectively. In my opinion, Prospero has a need to affirm his own position in his relationship to Ariel, and it is interesting to note that just like the word *perform*, Prospero only states his ownership over Ariel, when Ariel is executing the dramatic performances on the island at Prospero’s command. Prospero’s reasons for claiming his ownership of Ariel might be based on the knowledge that he is actually *powerless* without Ariel’s help, and in Wolfgang Clemen’s book *The Development of Shakespeare’s Imagery*, he discusses the imagery of Ariel’s songs:

The next verses, however, direct the eyes of our imagination into that depth which, like “the veins o’ the earth”, is solely accessible to Ariel. The depth of the sea, the corals and pearls, the sea-change, remove us into a region of magic. The sea-imagery in these songs thus opens up a deeper level of nature, and we thus can trace throughout the scene a gradual development. (185)

Prospero is not able, nor will he ever be able to access the world of magic that Ariel controls, even though he has the power to control Ariel. As a substitute for the powers he knows he will never possess, he states that Ariel belongs to him, and as such, he subjugates Ariel and takes credit for his magic.

Like Caliban, Ariel is Prospero’s subject. However, as mentioned, there is a difference in their relationship to Prospero, because unlike Caliban, Ariel is not a slave to Prospero, he is his servant, and thus, there is an important difference in the way in which Prospero addresses Ariel. However, the sudden turn in Prospero and Ariel’s conversation when Ariel asks for his promised freedom is interesting:

Remember I have done thee worthy service  
Told thee no lies, made no mistakings, served  
Without grudge or grumblings. Thou did promise  
To bate me a full year. (I.ii.246-49)

From softly addressing Ariel as his servant, “Come away, servant, come!” (I.ii.187), Prospero’s turns completely in his way of addressing Ariel, and shows character traits resembling someone with a split personality, as he begins to remind Ariel of the torment he was freed from. He declares that Ariel considers his labors to be hard work, to which Ariel replies “I do not, sir” (I.ii.257). Prospero’s immediate response is to accuse Ariel of being a malignant liar, and he changes his mind about the master-servant relationship between him and Ariel, referring to Ariel as his slave (I.ii.270). Prospero’s sudden suppression of Ariel is interesting, and I would like to propose that Prospero’s power, above all, resides in his ability to repress the characters on the island.

Suppression techniques, or domination techniques is a term that was established by the Norwegian physiologist and philosopher Ingjald Nissen in the 1940s, further developed into seven master suppressive techniques in the 1970s (Sandvik et al. 14-17). I do not intend to go into detail about a term coined three centuries after the first performance of *The Tempest*; however, I will deal with two particular techniques, because it is interesting to note parallels between Prospero’s behavior towards the inhabitants of the island, and these suppression techniques.

The first suppression technique deals with the issue of “making invisible”, a technique used in order to gain control over another individual by marginalizing or omitting them.

Literally, this is what Prospero does to Ariel when he says:

be subject

To no sight but thine and mine, invisible

To every eyeball else. Go take this shape

And hither come in't: go, hence with diligence! (I.ii.301-04)

The stage directions emphasizes the fact that Ariel is never visible to anyone else than Prospero, and Prospero stresses the importance of Ariel remaining invisible twice during the

play: “Thy shape invisible retain thou still”(IV.i.185) and “To the king's ship, invisible as thou art” (V.i.97). It is reasonable to argue that Prospero’s repetition of Ariel’s invisibility is incorporated into Prospero’s speech as a way to remind the audience of the fact that the other characters are unable to see him, however, it also affirms Prospero’s role as a master in his relationship to Ariel.

The second suppression technique discusses the issue of violence, or threats of violence, which deprives individuals of their liberty and results in power and dominance. This suppression technique returns to one of my discussions in the introduction of this thesis, and deals with Prospero’s threats to torture both Ariel and Caliban. Ultimately, it is Caliban and Ariel’s fear of Prospero’s power to inflict excruciating pain that make them submissive to him, and his constant threats gives him the power to command them as their master. The second suppression technique relates to Prospero’s absolute distinction between good deeds and bad deeds and Prospero’s need to repeat the degree of his own *goodness*, as he says, “Dost thou forget / From what a torment I did free the?” (I.ii250-51). Prospero’s need to remind Ariel of his own deeds is ultimately a need to affirm his power and authority over Ariel, as George Lamming argues:

It is a dangerous partnership, and Prospero never hesitates to remind him of his servitude. Like some malevolent old bitch with a bad conscience, Prospero’s habit is to make you aware of his power to give. He is an expert of throwing the past in your face. (Qtd. in Hulme and Sherman 153)

Prospero stresses his “power to give” when he makes Ariel repeat who Sycorax was and the torment he was released from, and he even states that Ariel must go through this kind of reminder monthly: “O, was she so? I must / Once in a month recount what thou hast been, / Which thou fortget’st” (I.ii.262-62).

Like Ariel, Caliban is also given a reminder of Prospero’s generosity and of his

*goodness*: “I have used thee, / (Filth as thou art), with human care, and lodged thee / In mine own cell” (I.ii.345-47). However, unlike Ariel, Caliban refuses to acknowledge Prospero’s narration as he says to Miranda: “You taught me language, and my profit on’t / Is, I know how to curse” (I.ii.362-63). Because Prospero initially served as a schoolmaster for Caliban and treated him with kindness, Caliban became susceptible to their language, and without his ability to teach, Caliban regards Prospero as powerless. Caliban’s statement, that Prospero is vulnerable when is without his books (III.ii.87-89) is based on Caliban’s knowledge that without language, he would still be free, and as such, he curses Miranda and Prospero: “The red plague rid you / For learning me your language!”. Caliban’s statement contrasts Prospero’s portrayal of himself and questions the *goodness* in Prospero’s actions and his power to give. It also questions whether Prospero is the right master for Caliban, if he knows anything Caliban could benefit from learning, or if the vile nature Prospero accuses Caliban of possessing is in fact something that Caliban has been taught by Prospero himself.

Let me now return to the interesting phrase that I discussed in the previous chapter, which also relates to Prospero’s power to give. “I give thee pow’r”, says Prospero to Ariel, a statement that makes him appear as a Godlike figure. In my opinion, and what I intend to show in the next sub-chapter, the words uttered by Prospero throughout the play are not accidental, rather deliberate expressions that his audience would have been well acquainted with, which ultimately makes him stand above the rest of the characters.

### *Prospero as a Figure of Divinity*

It is interesting to note that throughout the play, Prospero tends to focus on his own goodness, and the fact that he is “doing good”, as in his relationship with Caliban, where he seems to demand a gratefulness from Caliban for learning him his language, and when Caliban says “You taught me language, and my profit on’t / Is, I know how to curse” Lytton Strachey sees

a biblical allusion in the relationship between Caliban and Prospero: “is this Caliban addressing Prospero, or Job addressing God?” (34). As many critics have argued, Prospero seems to have Godlike powers, and is interesting to look at excerpts from the Bible and the biblical allusions in *The Tempest* when interpreting the play, because, as Greenblatt argues, the translation of the Bible into English was a crucial moment in the development of the English language:

The moment in which the deepest things, the things upon which the fate of the soul depended, were put into ordinary, familiar, everyday words. Two men above all others, William Tynedale and Thomas Cranmer, rose to the task. Without them, without the great English translation of the New Testament and the sonorous, deeply resonant Book of Common Prayer, it is difficult to imagine William Shakespeare.

*(Will in the World 91)*

Because the 1525 translation had such a vast impact on the English language, it is reasonable to argue that Shakespeare was indeed familiar with the Bible, and as such, there is a possibility that the biblical allusions found in *The Tempest* are a conscious choice by Shakespeare, to give his audience in 1611 allegorical allusions they were well acquainted with, seeing as most of the people in the 17<sup>th</sup> century learned how to read, through the bible<sup>1</sup>.

As mentioned, Caliban and Ariel are two completely different figures within the play that contrast with each other because they represent two different states of being. However, Caliban and Ariel also mirror each other because neither of them are considered conventionally human. As such, they are detached from the human world, because they

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<sup>1</sup> When I compare quotes from the Bible, I have chosen to use the Bishop’s Bible (abbreviation BB), because that was, according to Greenblatt, the version Shakespeare knew and used most often (*Will in the World 35*), however, at other times, when I am not comparing texts, I will use Samuel Henry Hook’s edition of the Bible (abbreviation BBE).

represent an otherness that the other characters on the island can never experience, nor explain. Still, Caliban and Ariel are both closely linked to Prospero, which makes it possible for Prospero to be separated from his subjects and what they represent, as well as being connected to them, thus making him appear as a Godlike figure on the island.

Because Prospero has liberated Ariel from Sycorax' torment, he exalts himself to the position of a redeemer, that can release his subjects from pain. However, Ariel is not completely free; he is waiting for his ultimate release – his promised freedom. Seeing as Ariel's highest wish is to be set free, he willingly serves as Prospero's lackey and it is interesting to note Ariel's resemblance to Hermes, who, according to the myth, served as a messenger for the Olympian gods. Hermes is often attributed with wings, and he could move freely between the worlds of the mortal and divine (Servi 45), and interestingly, Prospero actually states that Ariel also has these attributes, in the sense that he calls Ariel his bird (IV.i.184). Even though Ariel brings connotations to the winged messenger of the Olympian gods, Prospero seems to represent a symbol of the Christian God, as I shall discuss during this chapter.

Prospero's power to grant Ariel his release is possibly Prospero most powerful weapon over him, and he tantalizes Ariel with the idea of his freedom throughout the play: "I will discharge thee" (I.ii.298), "Thou shalt be free" (I.ii.497), "Thou shalt have the air at freedom" (IV.i.265), "Thou shalt ere long be free" (V.i.87), "But yet thou shalt have freedom" (V.i.96) and "thou shalt be free" (V.i.241). Because Prospero emphasizes his power to release throughout the play, he asserts the role of a savior, because not only has he released Ariel from his pains, but also because he promises to release Ariel from his toils in the human world – bringing associations to the toils Jesus was released from when he returned to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The precise promises of Ariel's freedom are not the only symbols of Prospero's divinity in the play. The most interesting resemblance can be found in one of Prospero's speeches in Act V, when Ariel has guided the royal company back on stage to be confronted by Prospero. Prospero tells the mourning Alonso that he too, has lost a daughter in the tempest, and as such, they endure a similar situation, to which Alonso replies "O heavens, that they were living both in Naples, / The king and queen there!" (V.i.149-50) Prospero's statement shortly afterwards, seems to be a conscious lexical choice that has a biblical ring to it:

howsoe'er you have  
 Been jostled from your senses, know for certain  
 That I am Prospero and that very duke  
 Which was thrust forth of Milan, who most strangely  
 Upon this shore, where you were wreck'd, was landed,  
 To be the lord on't. (V.i.157-62)

Prospero's particular statement "I am Prospero" brings connotations to one of the seven names of God – I Am – which is connected to the Book of Exodus, where God responds to Moses' request for his name: "And God answered Moyses: I am that I am" (BB, Exod. 3:14). It might be incidental that Prospero has the particular words "I am Prospero" included in his speech, however, in this specific speech, Prospero also states that he is the lord (V.i.162), which is the second time he states his position as the lord on the island, the first being to Ferdinand: Thou dost here usurp / The name thou ow'st not', and hast put thyself / Upon this island as a spy, to win it / From me, the lord on it" (I.ii.451-54). Because Prospero states that he is the lord, in the same speech where he says, "I am Prospero", it resembles the biblical statement "I am the Lord", which I found repeated nine times in the Book of Ezekiel. Furthermore, I found a quote that is strikingly similar to Prospero's speech mentioned above,



and it is interesting to note that there are certain similarities between the themes in the Book of Ezekiel and the themes in *The Tempest*.

According to the Book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel experienced several visions of Jerusalem's damnation, Judgment against Judah, and judgment against foreign nations, however, the Book of Ezekiel also give prospects of hope after Jerusalem's fall. I will go into further details on how the three themes that the Book of Ezekiel centers around resembles the action in *The Tempest*. However, I would first like to look at a quote in the Book of Ezekiel, which shares certain lines with Prospero's speech above: "Then they will be certain that I am the Lord, when I have made the land a waste and a cause of wonder, because of all the disgusting things which they have done" (Ezek. 33:29). This quote can be found in the *Bible in Basic English*, an edition by Samuel Henry Hook, whose goal was to translate the Bible using 850 Basic English Words. The *Bible in Basic English* was printed in 1965, and thus, it is not representative for what Shakespeare wrote in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, if we compare Prospero's speech to the same quote in the Bishop's Bible, there are some important similarities: "Then shall they knowe that I am the Lorde, when I make the land desolate and waste, because all of their abhominations that they haue wrought" (Ezek. 33:29).

By creating *The Tempest* and wrecking the King's ship, Prospero has not only brought the characters to a "land desolate and waste", but has also made the world itself desolate, because the storm turned the world that the characters knew into disorder and chaos. The similarities in the plot of *The Tempest* and the three themes that the Book of Ezekiel consists of is also interesting. Before the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel had visions that depicted the loss of God's presence, and this loss of presence also took place in Milan, when Prospero consumed himself in his studies. In the book of Ezekiel there is much emphasis on the condemning of false prophets and people's sins, likewise in *The Tempest*, Prospero condemns his "false brother" (I.ii.92) and throughout the play there is an emphasis on the sinful nature of the

characters that are on the island, as Ariel states: “You are three men of sin” (III.iii.53).

Nevertheless, forgiveness and reconciliation concludes the play, with Prospero’s promise to return them all to Naples, and it echoes the hopes of a restoration after the fall of Jerusalem. Furthermore, Prospero’s conscious choice to let Alonso believe that Ferdinand has drowned, with the subsequent statement that he too, has lost a daughter “in this last tempest” is interesting. When he leads Alonso back to his cell, he reveals Ferdinand and Miranda playing a game of chess, and as such, Prospero presents an image of himself as if he has awakened Ferdinand and Miranda from the dead, and restored them back to life. The notion of bringing the dead back to life is mentioned by Prospero himself, right before he renounces his magic, and it is interesting to see how clearly Prospero states the extent of his own powers, and how precise the image of him as a Godlike figure is:

I have bedimmed

The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,

And twixt the green sea and the azured vault

Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thinder

Have I given fire, and rifted Jove’s stout oak

With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory

Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up

The pine and cedar. Graves at my command

Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let ‘em forth

By my so potent art. (V.i.39-50)

What is interesting here is that Prospero claims to have the ability to command the elements – the sun, the winds, the ocean, fire and lightning – he can pull trees up from the ground by its roots, and he even has the ability to open graves, and awake the dead. However, not once has the audience actually seen Prospero solely perform what he claims to have the ability to do,

and the only dead he has “awakened” are Ferdinand and Miranda, whose resurrection in truth is nothing than an unveiling of two characters that he has kept hidden.

Even though Prospero gives his audience clear implications of his Godlike powers, I would now like to return to the introduction of this thesis, where I stated that there is a high emphasis on undertaking a role in the play within the play, and as I shall argue, Prospero’s role as a Godlike figure is assumed, in order to uphold his presentation of himself, as a creator and controller of the play. In my opinion, Prospero’s presentation of himself as a Godlike figure falls through, and it connects to my discussion in the Introduction of this thesis, where Prospero is educated by Ariel. Throughout the play Prospero is consumed with hatred towards his enemies, all of his actions are driven by the idea of revenge, and he seems to take great pleasure in their suffering and enjoys the satisfaction of knowing that the characters are in his power: “Let them be hunted soundly. At this hour / Lie at my mercy all mine enemies: / Shortly shall all my labours end (V.i.262-64). It is interesting that Prospero uses mercy to describe his power over his enemies, which implies that he will not punish or treat his enemies severely, as in the sense that God is merciful. Nevertheless, what Prospero does to Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano cannot be said to be merciful:

Go, charge my goblins that they grind their joints  
With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews  
With aged cramps, and more pinch-spotted make them  
Than pard or cat o’ mountain.

The pleasure Prospero takes in the pain he causes his enemies is evident throughout the play, particularly if we keep in mind where Prospero punishes Caliban by torturing him, and it is clearly established after Prospero has sent his hounds to chase Caliban and the two drunkards. As I argued earlier, this is the point where Prospero is “educated” by Ariel, because he learns something about forgiveness and compassion from a character that ironically, does not

possess those emotions. This precise moment is also a turning point in the relationship between Prospero and Ariel, because Prospero is challenged directly by Ariel and Prospero entire presentation of himself as a Godlike figure collapses when Ariel utters three simple words: “were I human” (V.i.19), and causes the audience to see Prospero’s character as an assumed one, because he fails to recognize essential qualities such as mercy and forgiveness, qualities which are essential to a divine figure, seeing as forgiving *is* divine. When Prospero realizes that he actually has something to learn from Ariel, it causes him to change his mind, to end the characters suffering and to forgive, as an attempt to restore his image of himself. From Act V to the conclusion of the play, Prospero goal is to make the characters acknowledge him as the rightful duke of Milan and offer him genuine apologies for exiling him to the island, through the power of his own forgiveness. However, Prospero’s divine forgiveness of Antonio fails to manifest itself as such, because it does not seem like a genuine forgiveness at all:

For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother  
 Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive  
 Thy rankest fault; all of them; and require  
 My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know,  
 Thou must restore.

Prospero does utter words of forgiveness, but because he also calls Antonio a “most wicked sir” and refuses to call him brother because it would “infect” his mouth thus, the mercy in his forgiveness is lost. Antonio on the other hand, refuses to acknowledge Prospero and fails to respond to any offers of forgiveness. Because Ariel challenges Prospero and another side of Prospero is revealed, it is possible to see Ariel in a new light, which calls for a reexamination of Ariel’s relationship to Prospero and his role in the play within the play.

Throughout *The Tempest*, it becomes more and more evident that there is an emphasis

on playing a role, or pretending to be a different character. This is exposed in the masque, which assumes that the island is surrounded by harmony and order. It is also present within the characters on the island who all try to assume a different persona. Trinculo and Stephano let Caliban believe that they actually can help him revolt against his master and that they are gods worthy of worship. However, their true nature is exposed to the audience when they recognize that they can exploit Caliban and consider taking him home as a prize for their own profit. Antonio and Sebastian pretend to be loyal, but show their lack of morality when they plot to murder Alonso and make Sebastian the new King of Naples, and the conscientization of the theme of pretending makes us more aware that the only characters who does not assume a different persona are Caliban and Ariel. Ariel does in fact *expose* the true nature of the characters, and he exposes Prospero as well, thus showing himself as the true controller of the play within the play.

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During this chapter I have discussed Prospero's relationship to his two servants, his need to state his ownership, not only verbally – as in the case of the word *perform*, which I discussed during the introduction – but also in his relationship to Ariel, and how the suppression techniques Prospero uses are an important means for him in order to detain his two servants. Furthermore, I have connected the suppression techniques with Prospero's need to assert his own goodness, in order to raise himself above the characters on the island as a God. Nevertheless, because of Caliban's rejection of Prospero's goodness, the audience is able to see a different history than the one presented by Prospero, and as such, his self-presented image is questioned. In my opinion, Prospero's suppression of Ariel and Caliban is closely connected to his game within *The Tempest* because he needs the two characters to act according to his own rules. During Chapter III of this thesis, I will explore Ariel's role within

said game, with the purpose of showing how Ariel is trying to establish his own authority within the game.

### Chapter III

In order to affirm my assertion that Ariel is the true dramatist of the play within *The Tempest*, I will use the first sub-chapter of this chapter discussing the contest for control of the theatrical performance, fought out between Prospero and Ariel, and, hopefully, Ariel's role in the play within *The Tempest* will be illuminated towards the end of the thesis. However, much of this chapter will focus on Prospero, because I think it is important to look at the different aspects in his character, in order to see Prospero's actions in relation to Ariel, and also in order to see what kind of role Ariel has in the play within *The Tempest*. As such, I would like to call attention to the game of chess at the end of Act V because, in my opinion, the three-part structure in a game of chess is parallel to Ariel's role in the play within the play. Furthermore, just as the final scene of *The Tempest* brings all of the characters and conspiracies to an end, I will bring all of my arguments from the two previous chapters together in this chapter. I will also look at the plotting and the different conspiracies that take place on the island, and show that Prospero is not the only character trying to control the outcome of the play within the play. As I stated earlier, Ariel is also attempting to influence the outcome of the actions of all the characters within the play. In my opinion, the various conspiracies at work in the play are important, because they relate to the important theme of forgiveness, which concludes the play. Furthermore, as I will show during this chapter, when the different conspiracies are revealed at the end of the play, it sets up a *need*, not only for forgiveness, but also for release.

#### *Ariel's Game.*

In my opinion Ariel has two ways of showing his power in the play, one subtle and one direct. I will start by discussing Ariel's subtle ways, because it does not even seem to be recognized

by Prospero himself, the character that assumes to be in control.

It seems that Ariel's power lies in his deeper ability to interfere in the actions of the characters, without wanting to take control over them. As such, he is able to work *with* the characters in order to make them see something about themselves, and also about the island. As shown clearly in the play, Ariel's music is sedative, and he is capable of luring the characters, in order to make them follow him, as Ferdinand states:

Where should this music be? i' the air or the earth?

It sounds no more: and sure, it waits upon

Some god o' the island. Sitting on a bank,

Weeping again the king my father's wreck,

This music crept by me upon the waters,

Allaying both their fury and my passion

With its sweet air: thence I have follow'd it,

Or it hath drawn me rather. But 'tis gone.

No, it begins again.

It is Ariel's music that makes Ferdinand go in the direction he goes, because he is "drawn" by the music. Thus, his music has an almost hypnotic effect, and very much like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, who lured the children of Hamelin with his pipe, Ariel's music attracts Ferdinand in Miranda's direction— the direction that Ariel desires. Miranda – who has never seen any other men than Caliban and Prospero – takes Ferdinand's beauty as a sign of his divinity: "I might call him / A thing divine, for nothing natural / I ever saw so noble" (I.ii.415-17). During Miranda and Ferdinand's first encounter, Prospero seems astonished by what is going on, and he is sidelined by Ariel's art. Prospero has promised to release Ariel throughout the play, however, in Act I, Prospero makes it clear: Spirit, fine spirit, I'll free thee / Within two days for this" (I.ii.417-19). It seems that Ariel has hit upon something that Prospero himself had



not considered, and with his fanatic overenthusiasm, he repeats his promise: “Delicate Ariel, / I’ll set thee free for this!”. The repetition of Ariel’s promised freedom is important, because in contrast to all of Prospero’s promises of release, it is only in this specific scene that Prospero uses the explicitness in the word “this” to underline what Ariel has done. In fact, it does not seem as if Prospero had considered the possibility of a relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda, as he says with astonishment: “At the first sight / They have changed eyes”. When Prospero realizes the brilliancy of the idea, he does not hesitate to sink his claws into Ferdinand, with the act of his manipulative words: “A word, good sir, I fear you have done yourself some wrong. A word” (I.ii.440.41).

Indeed, it seems like it is Ariel’s music that has made Miranda and Ferdinand “change eyes” – an implication that they have fallen in love –and it is a subtle but powerful way for Ariel to establish his power. However, Ariel also has direct lines where he clearly states what he has done. For instance, because of Ariel’s “solemn music” all of the characters in the royal company, except Sebastian and Antonio, fall asleep. In other words, it is Ariel – not Prospero – who offers Antonio and Sebastian the opportunity to usurp the kingdom by killing Alonso, thus exposing their treacherous nature. Ariel reenters the stage with music and sings in Gonzalo’s ear:

While you here do snoring lie,

Open-eyed conspiracy

His time doth take.

If of like you keep a care,

Shake off slumber and beware

Awake, awake! (II.i.296-300)

As such, it is Ariel who warns Gonzalo about the murder attempt, and he plainly states his involvement: “Prospero my lord shall know what I have done” (II.i.323). Furthermore, while



Trinculo      Why, what did I? I did nothing. I'll go farther  
                 off.

Stephano      Didst thou not say he lied?

Ariel          Thou liest

Stephano      Do I so?

Even though the stupidity of Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban's conversation is most prominent, Ariel recognizes Caliban's potential threat and uses the well-known tactic, *divide et impera*, in order to split the characters and prevent an alliance between them. Before Ariel leaves the stage he makes sure that the audience is aware of his participation in the scene and his new gained knowledge by stating: "This I will tell my master" (III.ii.113).

It is interesting to note that Ariel enters the banquet as the shape of a harpy; however, Prospero has not stated that he wanted Ariel to appear as the figure of a harpy, and Ariel actually does this by his own accord:

*Thunder and lightning. Enter ARIEL, like a harpy; claps his wings upon the table; and, with a quaint device, the banquet vanishes*

Ariel    You are three men of sin, whom Destiny,  
                 That hath to instrument this lower world  
                 And what is in't, the never-surfeited sea  
                 Hath caused to belch up you; and on this island  
                 Where man doth not inhabit; you 'mongst men  
                 Being most unfit to live. I have made you mad;  
                 And even with such-like valour men hang and drown  
                 Their proper selves. (III.iii.53-60)

In this scene, it is evident that Ariel has taken control, and Prospero has no authority over what is happening, which amplifies when Ariel states the extent of his power by saying, that it



I have left asleep; and for the rest o' the fleet  
 Which I dispersed, they all have met again  
 And are upon the Mediterranean float  
 Bound sadly home for Naples,  
 Supposing that they saw the king's ship wreck'd  
 And his great person perish. (I.ii.219-237).

Just like an ordinary game of chess, Ariel has placed the pawns around the island, and the game is ready to begin. One of the most important parts in the middle game in chess is to ensure the King's safety, and it is interesting to note that Prospero actually asks Ariel, whether or not the characters that were on board the King's ship are safe (I.ii.218). Furthermore, Ariel does ensure the King's safety when he prevents Antonio and Sebastian from murdering Alonso. When it comes to the endgame, the goal is not literally to capture the king, but to checkmate the king, leaving the opposite player with no moves to defend himself with, thus concluding the game. It is reasonable to argue that Alonso is checkmated when he believes that Ferdinand has drowned, because he has lost the heir to his throne, and as such, he has lost his power to ensure that the kingdom remains in his family leaving him to wishfully cry out that Ferdinand and Miranda should live in Naples as the King and Queen. Thus, when Ferdinand and Miranda are revealed, Alonso is left with no other choice than to accept the marriage between them.

Even though most critics tend to see the chess game in Act V as Prospero's checkmate on Alonso, that is, he has delivered what "gamesmaster Charles Cotton calls 'the neatest and most prejudicial trick' [...] – checkmate by discovery" (Qtd in Poole 50), I would like to propose that the play within *The Tempest* is like a game of chess, however, it is a two-player game between Prospero and Ariel, and they are both trying to establish their own rules within that game.

Indeed, throughout the play Ariel stresses the fact that it is he who has taken control of the island, and it is interesting to note Ariel's role in the masque as well, where Prospero states that he needs Ariel's help in "in such another trick" (IV.i.37) as he performed in the banquet. During the masque, Prospero realizes that he has forgotten Caliban's conspiracy to murder him, and I would like to propose the idea that Ariel deliberately chose not to remind Prospero, because his main desire is to consummate the wedding masque between Ferdinand and Miranda – an important part of fulfilling Prospero's desire and complete his offer to release Ariel from his servitude. Ariel's excuse for not reminding Prospero is, as he states it: "When I presented Ceres / I thought to have told thee of it, but I fear'd / Lest I might anger thee" (IV.i.167-69). It seems odd that Ariel, who has always done Prospero worthy service, told him no lies, and made no mistakes (I.ii.246-47) should suddenly *forget* to remind his master of the threat that Caliban proposes, a threat Ariel himself recognized. What I propose is that like so many of the characters on the island – Prospero, Sebastian and Antonio, and Caliban – Ariel also decides to take control of his own destiny. Ariel seizes the moment and he states it clearly at the end of the play when he says, "Sir, all this service / Have I done since I went" (V.i.225-26). Ariel's choice is to acknowledge his own control on the island is important, and it connects with all of the conspiracies on the island, which centers on an issue that I discussed in Chapter I of this thesis, the issue of time, and taking control of time. The conspiracies also connects to the theme of forgiveness, and as such, I will conclude this chapter with a discussion of the power of forgiveness, as well as the *need* for release.

### *The Conspiracies*

The conspiracy to marry Ferdinand and Miranda is Prospero opportunity to get off the island, and reclaim his dukedom in Milan. The masque allows Prospero to present himself as a character that is in control, in the sense that gives an impression of *staging* the masque, by

choosing to emphasize that the masque is a “vanity of [his] art” (VI.i.41). Prospero’s masque also assumes a state of harmony and order, when the pagan Gods Juno and Ceres are summoned by Iris. In Roman mythology, Juno was the goddess of marriage and Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, crops, and fertility. Thus the combination of the two Gods can be seen as a blessing of Ferdinand and Miranda that wishes them fortune and wealth. However Ceres fears that Venus or her son will be accompanying Juno, because they “did plot” for Ceres’ daughter to be abducted by dusky Dis, the god of the underworld (IV.i.87-90), to which Iris replies that they will not attend, and they have, unsuccessfully, tried to cast “some wanton charm upon this man and maid” (IV.i.94-95). Even though Ferdinand and Miranda are safe from the charms of Venus and Cupid, Iris and Ceres’ conversation does echo the danger that Caliban imposes, as he previously tried to rape Miranda, and the abruptness of the masque suggests that they will never be safe. Thus, it is interesting to note some of the parallels that are drawn between Caliban and Ferdinand. For instance, Prospero sees the immediate danger that Ferdinand embodies and he warns Ferdinand not to untie Miranda’s “virgin knot” (IV.i.15) before they are married. Because Ferdinand and Caliban represent a threat, they are both seen on stage carrying wood for Prospero.

As previously discussed, the masque ends abruptly when Prospero realizes he has forgotten Caliban’s conspiracy to murder him and it is Caliban’s rebellion which is one of the most obvious conspiracies in the play. Caliban spends a lot of time planning how to murder Prospero and there is a great anticipation as to what will happen, until the conspiracy reaches its climax when Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano are chased away by Prospero’s hounds, Mountain and Silver. Because Stephano and Trinculo in reality are two drunkards, it is hard to see how they can impose any kind of threat to Prospero, seeing how easily distracted they are: “O king Stephano! O peer! O worthy Stephano, look what a wardrobe here is for thee!” (IV.i.221-222). At the foot of Prospero’s cell, the two characters are more interested in

retrieving their lost bottles from the pool and dress up. Caliban on the other hand does not get distracted by their pratfalls: “The dropsy drown this fool! What do you mean / To dote thus on such luggage? Let alone/ And do the murder first” (IV.i.229-230). Caliban is determined to reach his goal and the only failure in his conspiracy is the belief that he could get any help from Trinculo and Stephano, as he states himself: What a thrice-double ass / Was I, to take this drunkard for a god / And worship this dull fool! (V.i.295-297). Thus, it is reasonable to argue that Caliban does indeed pose a threat to Prospero. He knows his weaknesses (III.ii.88) his daily routines (III.ii.83-84), and as such, he has planned in detail how to end Prospero’s life: “knock a nail into his head” (III.ii.59), “with a log / Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake, / Or cut his weasand with thy knife” (III.ii.85-87) Throughout the plotting, it is hard to overlook the apparent comedy presented throughout the scenes where Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano appear, like in the two scenes mentioned previously, where Caliban appears as a four-legged monster, and when Ariel tricks Caliban and Stephano into thinking that it is Trinculo who speaks. According to Kevin Pask, Caliban’s conspiracy functions as an antimasque to Prospero’s masque (752), and as such, the conspiracy parodies the usurpation against Prospero, and mirrors Sebastian and Antonio’s conspiracy against Alonso.

Even though Antonio and Sebastian’s conspiracy to murder Alonso and Gonzalo is plotted, and averted by Ariel within one scene, it is nevertheless interesting to look at the conspiracy and why the two characters decides to murder Alonso. The King’s Company, all but Antonio and Sebastian are put to sleep, and Antonio tells Sebastian that Ferdinand is most likely dead, and because Claribel – being the next heir of Naples – dwells “ten leagues beyond man’s life” (II.i.244), Sebastian can get away with murdering Alonso and seizing the throne for himself, to which Sebastian replies: “I remember / You did supplant your brother Prospero” (II.i.267-68), making the parallel to Prospero’s overthrow clear. Sebastian and Antonio also expose their malice as they tell Alonso that he has himself to thank for the death



of Ferdinand, because he chose to marry his daughter to the King of Tunis. They also expose their lack of reason as they conspire to kill the King on an island that is, as far as they know, desolated with no kingdom to usurp. Furthermore, they never once mention the prospects of being rescued from the island, which makes the whole the idea of murdering Alonso an ironic and absurd one.

Prospero's conspiracy relates to the issue of time, of seizing the moment and taking control of one's destiny. The issue of time was immediately raised in Act I when Prospero tells Miranda that all the people onboard the ship are safe: "You have often / Begun to tell me what I am, but stopped / And left me to a bootless inquisition, / Concluding, "Stay: not yet" (I.ii.33-36). Miranda's statement implies that Prospero has waited for the exact right moment in time, which he confirms by saying "The hour's now come; / The very minute bids thee open thine ear (I.ii.36-37)". By raising the sea storm Prospero has taken control, and he repeats the issue of time and control right before the masque is introduced, when he commands Ariel to "go bring the rabble" (IV.I.37). Ariel asks if Prospero wants the masque to be performed *now*, to which Prospero replies "Ay, with a twink" (IV.I.43), emphasizing the urgency of the matter. Even though Prospero stresses his power and control throughout the play, he is not the only character who attempts to seize the moment. Actually, all of the conspiracies within the play relates to the issue of time. By plotting to kill the King, Sebastian and Antonio are not only plotting to commit an unforgivable crime, they are also taking destiny in their own hands, and Antonio states that this is the moment: "[Their] occasion speaks thee, and / My strong imagination sees a crown / Dropping upon thy head". Because the characters are asleep, it is almost as if Sebastian and Antonio are taking control over time itself, as if time stands still while they are plotting. The same notion of *now* and "this is the moment" is represented in Caliban's conspiracy, when he says to Trinculo and Stephano: "Within this half

hour will he be asleep” (III.ii.110). Caliban know that if he does not take action and kill Prospero within the amount of time he has, his conspiracy will have failed, and as such, he seizes the moment and takes control of his destiny.

It is reasonable to argue that Ariel enacts a conspiracy of his own when he moves around the island influencing the characters and controlling the action. In relation to the issue of time, it is important to note that Ariel seems to be the only character that knows exactly what the time is, as he tells Prospero: “Past the mid-season” (I.ii.239), and informs him yet again at the end of the play: “On the sixth hour” (V.i.3). Prospero has told Ariel that the time from two to six must by them both be spent “most preciously” (I.ii.241), and one can argue that Ariel has spent the time he has been given most carefully, in order to be released on the sixth hour. As mentioned, it is Ariel who prevents the murder of Alonso and Antonio, and even though we do not see Ariel telling Prospero about Caliban’s conspiracy, it is reasonable to assume that Ariel does in fact inform Prospero, because he states, “this I will tell my master” (III.ii.113). Consequently, Ariel averts all of the conspiracies in order to consummate the wedding masque, and giving Prospero what he wants. As such, it is reasonable to argue that it is in fact Ariel who is pulling the strings on the island, and leads the characters into the final act of the play.

Act V of *The Tempest* brings all of the different conspiracies and characters together for the first time. Prospero declares that he will renounce his magic by breaking his staff and drowning his book (V.i.33-57), however, the characters are literally *surrounded* by Prospero’s magic when Ariel leads Alonso, Gonzalo, Sebastian, Antonio, Adrian and Francisco into the circle that Prospero has drawn. While the characters stand spell struck in the circle, Prospero passes his judgment on them and then he commands Ariel to bring him the clothes that he once wore as the duke of Milan. Prospero releases the King and his companions from the charms, and like an illusionist who has been invisible, he reveals himself by saying: “Behold,

sir King, / The wronged duke of Milan, Prospero". Act V is an interesting scene because it returns to the theme of power and authority, as Prospero reclaims his dukedom. However, the scene also opens to a discussion of the question of responsibility. Initially, Prospero lost his dukedom because he did not perform his duties or acknowledge his responsibilities as a ruler, and throughout the play Prospero denies any responsibility for Caliban. However, when Ariel drives Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano on stage, it is interesting to note that Caliban shares the same amazement over seeing all of the characters on stage, as Miranda did when she exclaimed "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.182-85). Caliban does not have the same ability to express himself as Miranda; however, he is just as amazed by the people he is seeing: "O Setebos, these be brave spirits indeed!" (V.i.261). Miranda and Caliban's shared amazement also reflects Prospero's role as a schoolmaster, and at the very end of the play he finally admits his responsibility for Caliban. He seems to recognize that Caliban is closely connected to him when he states: "This thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine" (V.i.275-276). Even though Prospero does not state that he *forgives* Caliban, Prospero's acknowledgement of his responsibilities towards Caliban relates to the theme of forgiveness in the play.

### *Forgiveness*

"Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an / acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze, anything. / The wills above be done! but I would fain die a dry death" (I.i.61-63). This speech uttered by Gonzalo when they realize that the ship will sink, and that they are going to die. The speech concludes the first scene of Act I in *The Tempest*, and it says something about the desperation that the characters are feeling, and their powerlessness in the midst of a sea-storm.

It is possible to imagine that Prospero felt the same kind of desperation and powerlessness when he was driven out of his dukedom, carrying his crying child with him into a rotten “carcass of a butt, not rigged / Nor tackle, sail, nor mast” (I.ii.146-47), only to let the sea decide their fate. As such, it is reasonable to argue that the storm is a reflection of Prospero himself, of the storm that is raging inside him, causing him to seek revenge on the people that have wronged him. Thus, the plot against Prospero becomes an important part of Prospero himself, because it has made him the character he is. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Prospero arranges all of his enemies together in a circle and forgives those who have wronged him. However, as I have said, Prospero’s forgiveness of Antonio does not seem like a genuine forgiveness, and the relationship between Prospero and his false brother, echoes the story of Cain and Abel, the first and second son of Adam and Eve. According to the Book of Genesis, Abel was a “keeper of sheep, but Cain was a farmer” (BBE, Gen. 4:3) and after God had rejected Cain’s offering, Cain persuaded Abel to go into the field with him, where he killed him. First, it is interesting to note the issue of trust that is present in both of these stories, and Abel and Prospero’s unawareness of the betrayal. Furthermore, there seem to be a similarity between Cain’s reasons for killing his brother, and Antonio’s reasons for usurping the dukedom from Prospero.

The story of Cain and Abel is not central to the Book of Genesis, and the murder of Abel is told in only one line. However, it is still possible to recognize the trust between Abel and Cain, when Abel chooses to walk into the field with his brother, only to be betrayed and killed, and the unexpectedness is intensified seeing as there is so little explanation devoted to the murder of Abel. The same kind of trust is found in the relationship between Prospero and Antonio, when Prospero trusted his dukedom to his brother, only to be betrayed and sent out into the open sea. Furthermore, when Cain decides to murder his brother, it is reasonable to assume that he does so because God did not take pleasure in Cain’s sacrifice (BBE, Gen. 3:4),

as such there is a sense of jealousy between the two brothers, a jealousy Antonio also must have felt when he was assigned to manage *Prospero's* state, which caused an evil nature to awaken in him (I.ii.93). As such, temptation becomes a central theme in the relationship between the brothers, and Cain and Antonio both seize the moment attempt to take control of their own fate. However, when God realizes that Cain has murdered his brother, he curses Cain and banishes him from the Garden of Eden: "And now you are cursed from the earth, whose mouth is open to take your brother's blood from your hand / No longer will the earth give you her fruit as the reward of your work; you will be a wanderer in flight over the earth" (BBE, Gen. 4:11-12). It is interesting to note, that God does not forgive Cain, he banishes him and makes sure he must live with his sin, throughout his lifetime: "If Cain is put to death, seven lives will be taken for his. And the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one might put him to death. (Gen. 4:15). As such, it is reasonable to argue that some acts are unforgivable, and when Prospero forgives Antonio, he is not only being magnanimous, because there is also a sense of Antonio not being worthy forgiveness when Prospero says, "I do forgive thee, / Unnatural as thou art" (V.i.78-79). Furthermore, when Antonio does not respond to Prospero's offers of forgiveness, it raises the question if some people might be beyond repentance and redemption.

After Prospero has forgiven his enemies, and tormented Alonso with the thought of his dead son, Prospero exposes the two lovers playing a game of chess, and it is interesting to note Miranda's accusation when they are revealed: "Sweet lord, you play me false" (V.i.171). The theme of falsehood, or being played false reoccurs several times during *The Tempest*, for instance when Prospero tells Miranda of his overthrowing, he calls Antonio Miranda's "false uncle" (I.ii.76), and Antonio's falsehood is repeated to the audience when Antonio exposes his desire to murder the king. Nevertheless, it is Prospero's fear of being played false that rings throughout the play, and it is reasonable to argue that Prospero's fear of being falsely

played is so great that he even mistrusts the characters that are closest to him. When Prospero and Miranda first encounter Ferdinand, Ferdinand declares that he is the King of Naples, to which Prospero replies:

One word more.

I charge thee

That thou attend me. Thou dost here usurp

The name thou owest not, and hast put thyself

Upon this island as a spy to win it

From me, the lord on 't. (I.ii.450-55).

Right before Prospero starts to attack Ferdinand verbally, he says, "I must uneasy make, lest too light winning / Make the prize light" (I.ii.449), and it is reasonable to assume that Prospero wants to see how Miranda will respond to the accusations, as he goes on to call Ferdinand a traitor. When Miranda defends Ferdinand and says that he is a good and brave man, Prospero seems surprised, and it becomes a confrontation between Prospero and his daughter, rather than a confrontation between Prospero and the supposed traitor:

Prospero

What, I say,

My foot my tutor? [*TO FERDINAND*] Put thy sword up, traitor,

Who mak'st a show but darest not strike, thy conscience

Is so possessed with guilt. Come from thy ward,

For I can here disarm thee with this stick

And make thy weapon drop.

Miranda

Beseech you, father –

Prospero

Hence! Hang not on my garments.

Miranda

Sir, have pity.

I'll be his surety

Prospero      Silence! One word more  
                   Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee. What,  
                   An advocate for an imposter? Hush! (I.ii.468-75)

It seems like Prospero's fear of being played false is closely connected to his effort to maintain his role as a controller of the play within *The Tempest*. There is a small border between trust and mistrust for Prospero, and in my opinion, Prospero's need to ensure that he is not being played false, reflects his knowledge of how little control he actually has on the island, which subsequently, might be one of the reasons why he has chosen to enslave Caliban and Ariel. Prospero made the mistake of trusting Caliban, and as such, he has enslaved him, and it seems like Ariel has to prove that he is worthy of Prospero's trust, by doing worthy service, telling no lies, and serving without grudge or grumble (I.ii.246-48), in order to gain his freedom.

### *I'll Set Thee Free*

Prospero's promise of freedom echoes throughout the play and it relates to the theme of power and authority as well as the theme of forgiveness.

As I said in the previous chapter, Prospero's power lies in his ability to repress and suppress the characters on the island, and while I mentioned two suppression techniques that Prospero uses in order to claim his ownership of Ariel and Caliban. I would also like to argue that there is a doubling in Prospero's suppression, because he is also suppressing himself. In order to function on the island Prospero has suppressed his own guilt and his failure to act as the rightful Duke of Milan. As such, he has assumed a role that has all the power and control, enslaved the two characters in position to challenge his claim of authority, and concerned himself with his hurt pride and the idea of revenge, rather than realizing that the usurping was a result of his own failure in acting as a proper Duke.

As an enactment of his repression, Prospero has presented an image of himself as a Godlike character, a character that knows everything, sees everything and can control everything on the island. As mentioned, not only does the Book of Ezekiel reflect certain themes in the play itself, it also reflects Prospero and his assumed role as a character who seeks control. However, because of Prospero's relationship to Caliban and Ariel, there is a tension in his control, a sense that the power and control that he has assumed will not be his much longer. The Book of Ezekiel concentrates on damnation and judgment, but also gives the prospect of hope. Bearing in mind the Book of Ezekiel, there is arguably an anticipation of collapse in Prospero's presentation of himself. In my opinion, Caliban and Prospero's struggle to define each other become a central issue in the play, and through their relationship, it is possible for the spectators of the play to realize the character flaws in Prospero's Godlike presentation, for he is vicious, avaricious and vindictive. Because Caliban's relationship to Prospero makes it possible to see other sides to Prospero's presentation of himself, it is interesting to look at Prospero's notion of forgiveness.

While *The Tempest* focuses a lot on power, strategy, falsehood and betrayal, it nevertheless, concludes with reconciliation and forgiveness. As such, forgiveness becomes an important theme in *The Tempest*. As mentioned, Prospero's "forgiveness" of Antonio is interesting, and according to R. J. O'Shaughnessy, Prospero's speech is not really a promise to forgive, rather a promise not to retaliate:

It expresses his awakened sense of compassion for his victims, his recognition of the senselessness of mere vengeance for its own sake. Forgiveness, then, even in a case most favorable to regarding it as tied to the remission of punishment [...] seems to involve something more than, something over-and-above the *mere* letting off the forgiving person [...] This is the sense in which, even in the case of a wrong-doer, we must always *feel* (acknowledge) compassion for a sufferer, even while we must



desire the punishment of this wrong-doing [...] This, perhaps, is what Ariel has brought Prospero to understand. (344-45)

If Prospero's desire to forgive is not based on a need to present a genuine forgiveness, it is interesting to look at the plays epilogue, which relates to the Lord's Prayer, and the notion of Christian mercy, but also connects to Prospero's relationship with Ariel, because it is Ariel who reminds Prospero of the importance of mercy and forgiveness – qualities that should reside in every human being.

In the epilogue, we might expect an answer to some of the questions that remained open at the end of Act V, questions such as, what happens to Caliban, and will the dukedom of Milan be given back to Prospero as easily as the final act suggests? However, the epilogue leaves all of these questions unresolved, and in my opinion, there are more questions that need answering after Prospero has left the stage. First, I would like to call attention to the way Prospero opens the epilogue, because it relates to the issue of time, and of seizing the moment: "Now my charms are all o'erthrown, / and what strength I have's mine own" (Epilogue, 1-2). It is interesting to note that Prospero, being alone on stage, states once more, that "this is the moment", when his initial plan – the plan that was at its right moment at the opening of the play, during his conversation with Miranda – has concluded successfully. As such, it is reasonable to argue that Prospero has had another agenda all along, and that the moment of *now*, the moment when he appears naked and bare – because he has no powers, no Ariel – in front of the audience, is the precise moment the play has been leading up to.

Prospero has renounced his magic and pardoned the crimes of his enemies, however, it is interesting that Prospero asks the audience for prayer, which in turn implies that Prospero himself is in need of pardon and mercy for his sins. As Frank Kermode argues in his edition of *The Tempest*, it is the weighty allusion to Christian mercy and the Lord's Prayer

in Prospero's epilogue that lends force to some of the many allegorical interpretations in *The Tempest* (133). Even though Prospero's reasons for stating that he needs forgiveness seems rather unclear in the epilogue, it does seem like the epilogue has a happy conclusion, seeing as he implores pardon and mercy through a request for applause.

Prospero has kept Ariel yearning for his release throughout the play and he has given the audience an impression of himself being the only character on the island with the ability to grant release, both in the sense that he has enslaved Caliban and promised to release Ariel, but also because he has "pardoned the deceiver" (Epilogue 7), thus, *released* his brother from punishment. As such, it is interesting to note that Prospero does not only ask for prayer and mercy; in fact, Prospero asks for *release* twice during the epilogue: "But release me from by bands" (9), and "Let your indulgence set me free" (20).

It is reasonable to argue that the *Now* at the beginning of the epilogue is closely connected to the request for release at the end of the play, because this is the moment that Prospero himself has waited for, the moment where Prospero's own masque is slipping, which ultimately reveals a powerlessness within the character of Prospero. Without Ariel, it seems like Prospero is no longer able to uphold the image of himself as a character in control, and it is reasonable to argue that Prospero would never have been able to release himself from his crimes, and his repression if it were not for Ariel. As such, I would like to conclude Chapter III of this thesis by repeating one of Ariel's final statements, and his most powerful words:

All this service, have I done (V.i.225-26).

## Conclusion

Seeing as I have used parts of Chapter III to discuss Ariel's own role in the play within *The Tempest*, connected him to the different conspiracies and looked at his role in connection to important themes such as forgiveness and release, I would now like to return to the introduction of my thesis, and discuss role of the play within the play.

When I started out writing this thesis, my aim was to focus on Ariel as a character and show how he presented himself as the true dramatist of *The Tempest*. What I have realized more and more throughout this process, it that I have always been interested in the relationships between the characters on the island, how they present themselves, and also how they are presented by others. As I stated in the beginning of my thesis, I believe that Prospero's role is assumed, that is, he has put on a tempest, a masque, and the play itself to conceal, not only his guilt over his loss of power in Milan, but also his lack of power to control chaos on the island. In order to hide his failure and his powerlessness, Prospero has assumed a role as the most powerful character in the play – a Godlike character, and as such, he believes he is entitled to suppress the other characters on the island. Through Prospero's relationship with his two servants we are, nevertheless, able to see a different kind of character in Prospero, than the one he initially introduces us to. Because of Prospero's assumed role as a figure of God in the play, I have found it important to look at certain biblical allusions, which Shakespeare's audience would have been familiar with, because it helps to understand Prospero's behavior in the play, and also why he chooses to act the way the does in all his relationships.

Thus, my thesis is not only focused on Ariel, but the relationship *between* Prospero and Ariel. Prospero and Ariel's relationship is also connected to the game of chess at the end of Act V. The game of chess has often been considered Prospero's checkmate on the King,

and it ties in well with Hulme's argument of the island being a stage where Prospero can govern the characters like a puppeteer. However, as I showed in Chapter III, Ariel's actions in the play is parallel to the three-part structure of a chess game, and as such, it is important to consider what kind of role Ariel has in the play within *The Tempest*. As mentioned, chess is a strategy board game that *requires* two players, and as such, the game in *The Tempest* also requires two players, which ultimately reduces Prospero's role in the play within *The Tempest*. In my opinion, there is a constant struggle between Ariel and Prospero, because they both try to determine the rules of the game, but on their own terms. It seems to me that Ariel and Prospero have two completely different sets of rules in the play, and their rules consist of three parts. As mentioned, Prospero's goal in his game is to reclaim his dukedom and return to Milan, and the rules of his game are confinement, viciousness, and revenge. Ariel, on the other hand, does not play by those rules, and he is trying to establish a different set of rules, which consists of mercy, forgiveness, and release. In my opinion, Ariel asserts his role in the play within the play and wins the game when he utters the three prevailing words "were I human".

As this conversation between Ariel and Prospero shows, Prospero is so consumed with the idea of vengeance toward his enemies, that he forgets the basic qualities within a human being: the need for mercy and forgiveness. As such, their relationship is not really a struggle for power, but a struggle for Ariel to remind Prospero of what he has lost – in order to release him from his hatred. What Ariel does, is to give Prospero the understanding of the need for a humanity based upon the capacity for forgiveness. Because Ariel is able to show Prospero and the audience that even a spirit without the capacity to feel human emotions is able to reflect upon the issues of mercy and forgiveness, Prospero's Godlike presentation of himself is limited. As such, the rules of Prospero's game change from confinement, viciousness, and revenge, into the wish to forgive his enemies, to release Ariel, and also, into an

acknowledgement that *he* needs to be released.

What think is interesting, is that the game between Prospero and Ariel is also connected to the idea of art – both the liberal arts and the dark art – and its role in preserving power and authority, not only on the island, but also over the past and in education of lovers, servants and slaves, as well as the rulers of Milan. As mentioned, Prospero tries to take control over the different histories of the island by giving the audience one kind of presentation, both of himself but also of the other characters on the island, and he also tries to control Caliban, as well as his daughter in an authoritarian manner, and *through* what he calls his art – which he contrasts to Sycorax'. My argument is that Ariel is able to present Prospero's art differently than Prospero, and the contradiction in Prospero's presentation of himself gives the audience an ability to question Prospero's character. Ariel's art then, becomes a demonstration of the education of a "Christian Prince": Prospero. Consequently, Ariel makes Prospero acknowledge his responsibilities for his family, his kingdom as well as his subjects.

As such, I would argue that *humanity* becomes the most important theme of *The Tempest*, because it relates to all of the characters in the play, and the exposure of Prospero's lack of essential human qualities becomes a turning point in the play, both for Prospero as a character, but also for the audience and the way they have perceived him as a character.



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