

Criticism on Tempest

**P.S.R.Ch.L.V.Prasad (M.A, P.G.D.C.A,
P.G.D.C.S)**

Assoc.Prof Of English,
Bvc College Of Engineering
Rajahmundry
A.P, India
pulugurthaprasad@gmail.com

G.V.Ratnam

Assoc Prof
Kits Engg College
Divili Paddapuram
A.P

INTRODUCTION

The Tempest is generally it is a romance and frequently interpreted as Shakespeare dramatic art. It counted one of Shakespeare's most original plays. critical argument on 'The Tempest' has centered for centuries. It is he who embodies the debate over colonialism, over the clash of cultures, and over the humanity of the play's heroes: Prospero, Miranda, Ferdinand and others. No source for the central plot has been definitively identified. The Tempest is set in an unidentified age on an unnamed island, which some critics have suggested evokes themes of European colonialism in the New World. The plot centers on the magician Prospero, exiled Duke of Milan, who has been unfairly deposed and set adrift in the ocean with his daughter Miranda. After arriving on the island he uses magic to free the fairy-like Ariel and enslave. Prospero then punishes his usurpers, his brother Antonio and King Alonso of Naples, by luring them to the island and destroying their ship in a magical storm. After exacting his vengeance, Prospero closes the drama with a gesture of reconciliation by announcing the union of his daughter and Alonso's son, prince Ferdinand. In the final scene, Prospero confronts his brother, who rules in his place, and demands his dukedom back. He leaves the island under the control of Caliban, forsakes his



magical powers, and returns triumphant to Milan. The character of Prospero, who some critics believe represents Shakespeare himself.

Analyses of the main characters of The Tempest have frequently sought to understand the interpersonal dynamics of the relationships among Prospero, his servants, and his daughter. Sharon Hamilton focuses on the relationship between Prospero and Miranda, and views the play, in large part, as a matter of Miranda's coming of age and betrothal. In Hamilton's reading, Prospero, her magician-father, seeks to guide Miranda through her emergence into womanhood, and in this respect proves himself to be a caring

and skilled mentor and protective patriarch. Similarly, Paul A. Cantor emphasizes the wisdom and heroism of Shakespeare's Prospero, valorizing his contemplative attitude and control of his passions in surmounting threats of conspiracy and in choosing an appropriate romantic match for Miranda.

Offering an allegorical approach to character in *The Tempest*, Grace R. W. Hall (1999) interprets the drama as Shakespeare's imaginative reworking of a medieval Mystery Play, arguing that the play shares much in common with these didactic dramas designed to instruct audiences in

Christian morality. While Hall does not seek to reduce the play to an exclusionary formula, she does examine its major characters in terms of their scriptural counterparts.

Discuss Prospero's multiple roles as enlightened philosopher, authoritarian figure, vengeful magician, and slave master. His daughter Miranda presents herself as a somewhat demure but willful individual, who largely embodies Prospero's obsessions with chastity, fertility, and obedience. Ariel would likely have evoked ideas of angels or spirits to Jacobean audiences, the critics observe, and are indeed described as a magical sprite or nymph associated with the elements of air and water. Ariel's earthly counterpart Caliban, however, remains a much more controversial figure. A savage, possibly evocative of New World cannibals to audiences of the early modern period, Caliban is undeniably a recalcitrant slave, whom Vaughan and Vaughan argue should be viewed as human, despite numerous theatrical interpretations that have suggested otherwise.

The considerable potential for character interpretation offered by *The Tempest* has made it an enticing text for contemporary directors and actors. Nevertheless, early twenty-first-century performances of the drama continue to demonstrate the widely acknowledged difficulty of satisfactorily staging this work, which relies on romance, magic, and spectacle, and requires both an eloquently realized Prospero and a strong ensemble cast. Karen Fricker reviews director Conall Morrison's 2000 production of *The Tempest* at the Abbey Theater in Dublin, finding its exaggerated met-theatrical themes overdone, and its superficial references to political unrest in Northern Ireland out of place. While noting that individual performances by its cast members were generally good, Fricker laments the failure of Lorcan Cranitch's "inconclusive" Prospero to unite the cast and effectively orchestrate the action of the play. According to critic Matt Wolf, Vanessa Redgrave proved to be a disappointing Prospero in the 2000 staging of the drama directed by Lenka Udovicki at the Globe Theater in London. Wolf contends that the solid supporting cast, including excellent comic performances by actors in the roles of Caliban, Trinculo, and Stefano, failed to save this production. Wolf's assessment of another *Tempest*, (see Further Reading) under the direction of Jonathan Kent in 2001 at the Almeida Theater, again suggests the central importance of Prospero to the drama on stage. Skillfully played by Ian MacDiarmid, Prospero delivered a vital performance matched by an elaborately designed stage, which Wolf considers a mirror into Prospero's clouded psyche. Amy Rosenthal deems director Michael Grandage's 2003 *Tempest*, after its transfer from the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield to the Old Vic in London, far less inspired.

Colonialist themes predominated in another 2003 production of the drama by the Royal Shakespeare Company. In his review, Thomas Larque commends the production and admires the strong performances by Kananu Kirimi as Ariel and Geff Francis as Caliban, noting the deftness of both actors as they emphasized their characters' exploitation by an authoritarian Prospero.

The multidimensional text of *The Tempest* has inspired a rich variety of critical analyses on such themes as human salvation, power, magic, and politics. Surveying the play as a whole, Charles Stephens (1994) studies its historical context, mythic resonance, political overtones, etymological signification, and concern with magic and illusion. The critic describes the work as fundamentally "a play about the salvation of ordinary individuals" from natural, supernatural, and human threats. Power is the principal focus of Alexander Leggett's (1999) reading of *The Tempest*. Leggett follows Prospero's efforts to finally surrender control of his servants, his daughter, and his enemies once he becomes aware of the ultimate emptiness of his power over others. David Daniell (1989) surveys, and study allegorical, mythic, and ritual elements in the drama. John S. Mebane (1989) explores the occult context of *The Tempest* in its varied depiction of magic. In Mebane's interpretation, Prospero's access to supernatural forces should be viewed in terms of his closeness to divinity. The critic thus sees Prospero as a benevolent magus figure who wields redemptive powers temporarily granted by God. In the critic's view, Prospero's final act of burying his magical book and forsaking his magical knowledge, therefore, can be taken as a reminder of the limits of art and the efficacy of faith. Lastly, Kevin Pask examines the genre and politics of *The Tempest*. Pask describes the drama as an inversion of the pastoral tradition that displays politicized motifs of colonialist, aristocratic, and sexual domination. Identifying the drama as "counter-pastoral," Pask emphasizes political themes associated with Caliban's conspiracy, Prospero's colonialist control of his underlings, and the magician's strict domination

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of his daughter's sexuality—motifs that combine to undercut the ostensibly romantic framework of *The Tempest*. Finally, and most tragically, Caliban becomes a parody of himself. In his first speech to Prospero, he regretfully reminds the magician of how he showed him all the ins and outs of the island when Prospero first arrived. Only a few scenes later, however, we see Caliban drunk and fawning before a new magical being in his life: Stephano and his bottle of liquor. Soon, Caliban begs to show Stephano the island and even asks to lick his shoe. Critical approaches to *The Tempest* from the second half of the twentieth century, including those that emphasize a conflict between nature and art.

Footnotes

Contemplative attitude, pastoral tradition, multidimensional text, benevolent magus, possibly evocative, fawning, surmounting threats.

REFERENCES

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Author's Biography



This is bringing it to your notice that I have more than 11 years of exp in English language teaching in all levels. I got selected best faculty award in 2004. I have published article 13 articles international journals and 3 in national journals .i am the Editorial board Member of Four international journals.Redcross program officer and presently I am working as an associate professor in BVC COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING ,RAJAHMUNDRY. (A.P) INDIA.