

# **Sacramento Theatre Company**

## **Study Guide**



## **The Tempest**

**By: William Shakespeare**

**Study Guide Materials Compiled by Anna Miles**

# **Sacramento Theatre Company**

## **Mission Statement**

The Sacramento Theatre Company (STC) strives to be the leader in integrating professional theatre with theatre arts education. STC produces engaging professional theatre, provides exceptional theatre training, and uses theatre as a tool for educational engagement.

## **Our History**

The theatre was originally formed as the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre in 1942, an ad hoc troupe formed to entertain locally-stationed troops during World War II. On October 18, 1949, the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre acquired a space of its own with the opening of the Eaglet Theatre, named in honor of the Eagle, a Gold Rush-era theatre built largely of canvas that had stood on the city's riverfront in the 1850s. The Eaglet Theatre eventually became the Main Stage of the not-for-profit Sacramento Theatre Company, which evolved from a community theatre to professional theatre company in the 1980s. Now producing shows in three performance spaces, it is the oldest theatre company in Sacramento.

After five decades of use, the Main Stage was renovated as part of the H Street Theatre Complex Project. Features now include an expanded and modernized lobby and a Cabaret Stage for special performances. The facility also added expanded dressing rooms, laundry capabilities, and other equipment allowing the transformation of these performance spaces, used nine months of the year by STC, into backstage and administration places for three months each summer to be used by California Musical Theatre for Music Circus.

Sacramento Theatre Company can accommodate 292 patrons in the proscenium-style auditorium of its Main Stage, while the Pollock Stage offers a more intimate experience with only 87 seats in a black box-style theatre. Both provide good acoustics and sight-lines. This professional, Equity theatre presents seven professional productions per season with a reputation for excellent stage adaptations of classic literature. Three annual productions in the Cabaret Stage, which seats 100, round out the experience with high-quality Broadway musical revues.

The Young Professionals Conservatory, a training program for young theatre artists, was founded in 2003. The program, as well as the entire STC School of the Arts, is directed by Michele Hillen-Noufer.

**For further information about the Sacramento Theatre Company please visit us online:**

**<http://www.sactheatre.org>**

# The Tempest

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## Synopsis: *The Tempest*

As the play opens, a tempest-tossed ship is wrecked upon the shores of an enchanted isle whereon dwell Prospero and his lovely daughter, Miranda, alone save for Caliban, a deformed and brutish half man/half beast whom Prospero has enslaved, and Ariel, a dainty spirit of the winds and Prospero's servant. After the ship is split apart on the rocks and as the tempest begins to subside, Prospero tells his daughter of his past life: Formerly duke of Milan, Prospero allowed his affairs of state to lapse in order that he could study magic. Eventually his dukedom was usurped by his wicked brother, Antonio, and Alonso, the king of Naples. The conspirators then set Prospero and Miranda adrift in a "rotten carcass of a boat," where they would have perished except for a humane Gonzalo, who provisioned their craft with enough food and water for them to reach the island. During the twelve years of their exile, Prospero has perfected his magical arts, gained control of the various spirits and creatures that inhabit the island, and educated Miranda.

Knowing through his magic that his ancient enemies are in the wrecked vessel, Prospero brings the voyagers safely ashore and scatters them in groups about the island. Ariel, at Prospero's bidding, leads Ferdinand, gallant son of the king of Naples, to the cave of Prospero—and Miranda, who does not remember ever having seen any other man than her father, immediately is smitten with the handsome prince. Prospero, who had hoped the two would fall in love, pretends to frown upon him, subdues him with magic arts, and sets him to work hauling logs.

On another part of the island, Alonso, his brother Sebastian, Antonio, and others wander sadly, convinced that the young Prince Ferdinand is dead. All but Sebastian and Antonio are lulled to sleep by Ariel, but these two remain awake to plot the death of the sleeping king and their taking over of his kingdom. They might have succeeded had not the watchful Ariel awakened the intended victim just in time.

On a third isolated part of the island, Trinculo, the king's jester, is reeling drunk. He encounters Caliban, and they are soon joined by the butler, Stephano, who so delights Caliban with "moon-liquor" that Caliban swears to follow him forever. The three then make their own drunken plot to break free, through force, of their various masters, but Ariel, who has heard every word, lures them astray with magical music.

Meanwhile Miranda and Ferdinand have exchanged vows of love, and Prospero, who is now convinced of their true love, blesses their engagement. While the lovers are conversing, Prospero and Ariel mock the king's court with a lavish banquet which vanishes as soon as they try to eat. They then rebuke them for their crimes against "good Prospero . . . and his innocent child."

Finally, after Miranda and Ferdinand are treated to a prenuptial masque enacted by the spirits of Iris, Ceres, Juno, and their nymphs, Prospero decides that all have suffered enough and that it is time to forgive for injuries of the past. Spellbound by Ariel's magic, everyone, for the first time, is brought before Prospero, where he reveals himself as the wronged duke of Milan. Prospero first brings in Prince Ferdinand, supposed dead, and announces his engagement to Miranda. He then frees his faithful servant, Ariel, and returns the island to Caliban. The crew of the ship, which is magically afloat again, arrives to take all back to Milan, and Prospero renounces his magical powers, with a last order to Ariel to command "calm seas and auspicious gales" for the voyage ahead.

## Characters: *The Tempest*

**Alonso:** The king of Naples and father of Ferdinand, Alonso plotted in the past with Antonio to take over Prospero's dukedom but is now struck with deep remorse. He takes the discipline meted out by Prospero in all humility.

**Sebastian:** Alonso's ambitious younger brother, Sebastian at one point plots with Antonio to kill his brother, the king, and take over his kingdom.

**Prospero:** The rightful duke of Milan, Prospero has been exiled with his daughter, Miranda, on a magical island for twelve years. He is intelligent, has studied magic for many years, and has achieved a far-reaching power.

**Antonio:** The brother of Prospero, Antonio twelve years ago usurped his brother's dukedom and set Prospero and Miranda adrift in a leaky boat. Even after Prospero uses his magic to punish him and show him his evil ways, Antonio remains largely unrepentant.

**Ferdinand:** The son of Alonso, Ferdinand is both pure himself and appreciative of the innocence and purity of Miranda. He is courteous and respectful of Prospero, despite the harsh treatment he receives.

**Gonzalo:** An honest and noble old counselor, Gonzalo was responsible for the survival of Prospero and Miranda when they were set adrift by Antonio.

**Caliban:** A savage and deformed slave, Caliban is a creature of the earth but not honored with a human shape. Prospero tells us that Caliban's father was the devil himself, and his mother was Sycorax, a wicked witch.

**Trinculo:** Alonso's jester and Stephano's sidekick, Trinculo is often drunk, often funny, and almost always at odds with someone.

**Stephano:** Alonso's butler, Stephano is a genial bully. He provides Caliban with liquor, thus guaranteeing his devotion.

### Master of a Ship

#### Boatswain

#### Mariners

**Miranda:** The daughter of Prospero, Miranda was exiled with his father twelve years ago. Since that time she has seen no other human being and has now matured into a young woman.

**Ariel:** An airy spirit, Ariel is not human, and yet is endowed with personality and intelligence. Ariel was too delicate to do the evil bidding of Sycorax, who imbedded the spirit in a cloven oak. When Prospero liberated the spirit, Ariel became his agent.

**Iris:** A spirit

**Ceres:** A spirit

**Juno:** A spirit

#### Nymphs

#### Reapers

## Suiting the Fashion

*The Tempest* was probably the last play Shakespeare wrote entirely by himself before he left London to lead the life of a man of property in Stratford. During the score of years that he had been active in London, he had seen many changes in the theatre and in popular taste, and, shrewdly sensitive to what the public wanted, he had always managed to provide plays that suited the fashion.

Indeed, few Elizabethan playwrights were more conscious of the box office than was Shakespeare, but he had the genius to put together popular dramas with enduring quality, so that in 1611 when he sat down to write *The Tempest*, he was able to create a play that would appeal first to King James and his nobles and later to the London public. The result was a mature play with a serene outlook and just the right mixture of fantasy, philosophy, spectacle, and humor. Themes of sin and forgiveness, repentance and salvation pervade the play; evil is present, to be sure, but never for a moment is there the least likelihood that its stratagems will succeed.

By 1611 a new style of drama had gained popularity on the London stages; tragi-comedies were setting the pace with writers like Beaumont and Fletcher attracting great followings, and, while Shakespeare's later plays were not precisely imitative of the younger playwrights, they nevertheless reflect the fashion which Beaumont and Fletcher exemplified. Although now considered an "older" dramatist, Shakespeare was too original and experienced to need to imitate lesser writers, and he could conform to the new style and outshine them all. *The Tempest* is proof of this skill.

*The Tempest*, one of Shakespeare's shortest plays, is also the only play in which he faithfully adheres to the dramatic unities of time, place, and action called for in the classical Greek tradition. We may have to remind ourselves after we have finished reading or watching *The Tempest* that, despite the play's many and varied events, the entire action occurs during the course of a single afternoon and in a single locale.

Plot elements in *The Tempest* are common to romance and folklore and appear in many places, but sources of the play remain vague and dispersed, with no definite and provable genesis. Shakespeare, like any creative artist, drew upon his memory for many elements that went into the play of the imagination. Yet, one of the identifiable influences seems to have been a group of pamphlets published in 1610 and generally known as the "Bermuda Pamphlets." These writings describe a wreck on the Bermudas in 1609; they caused a good deal of comment and excitement in England, and there are a great many parallels between Shakespeare's play and the story told in the pamphlets.

*The Tempest* is likely Shakespeare's most poetic play, as well as his most original. While many attempts have been made to expound its "meaning," the total impression left by the play is estrangement and reconciliation, sin and forgiveness, repentance and salvation. It shows how, in the fullness of time, a power like Divine Providence may work upon the wills and souls of sinful men to bring about their regeneration. The truest justice is not vindictive and punitive, but merciful and forgiving; and repentance is always necessary for salvation.

## Physical and Emotional Storms

By Michael Flachmann

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), like so many of his later plays, features an intense storm scene which profoundly restructures the plot and characters within their dramatic universe. Through his "so potent art" (5.1.50), Prospero causes a shipwreck at the outset of the action, marooning on his island not only his two most bitter enemies, but also the future husband of his beloved daughter, Miranda. Suspended between his lust for revenge and his need for regeneration and renewal, Shakespeare's magician-hero forgives his adversaries, bestows his daughter upon the future king of Naples, and then abjures his "art" by breaking his magic staff and drowning his book of charms "deeper than did ever plummet sound" (5.1.56).

Not surprisingly for a play so devoted to tempests both physical and emotional, Shakespeare's comedy has elicited a storm of controversy from a number of different sources during the past four centuries. Even the long-accepted conventional interpretation of the play as Shakespeare's farewell to the stage, complete with Prospero as playwright renouncing his theatrical magic, has recently come under close scrutiny by bibliographers who believe the script was written before *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and may even have preceded *The Winter's Tale*. So much for dramatic tradition!

Five areas of disagreement that offer particular fascination to modern readers and theatregoers include characterization, colonization, images of the new world, magic, and the masque. Through his soaring poetry, Shakespeare dramatizes the inherent conflicts within each of these categories, organizing his play around a series of debates that are as intriguing today as they were nearly four hundred years ago. Since *The Tempest* is a theatrical "script," however, it can only be completely realized through performance. Solely in that artistic venue can the infinity of choices available to readers of the play be narrowed and refined to a single production, unique to the particular place, time, and audience of the Utah Shakespeare Festival during the summer of 1995 in Cedar City.

This wide range of interpretive possibilities is nowhere more startling than in the contrast between such characters as Prospero and his "abhorred slave" (1.2.351) Caliban. Prospero, for example, has been identified variously in recent theatrical productions and in scholarly books and articles as a noble ruler, tyrant, necromancer, neoplatonic scientist, imperialist, and magician, while portrayals of Caliban have ranged from ugly, deformed savage to sensitive, victimized new-world native. The precise degree of interpretation of these and such other seminal characters as Ariel, Miranda, Ferdinand, Antonio, Alonso, and Gonzalo will depend, of course, upon the director, design team, and individual actors at the Festival this summer, since they will make all the necessary decisions that must transform the play from "page" to "stage."

Likewise, any good theatrical performance of the script must on some level respond to the charge that Prospero has stolen the island from its original inhabitants in the same manner that Renaissance England was slowly beginning to colonize much of the civilized world. Caliban, whose name is an anagram of "cannibal," had previously "owned" the island with his dam, Sycorax, and had his power and authority over the territory usurped in much the same way Antonio had stolen Prospero's dukedom in Milan. As the great popularity of Montaigne's essay "Of the Cannibals" (translated into English by John Florio in 1603) indicates, the colonization of relatively unspoiled lands where pre-lapsarian natives led an Edenic existence had become a wildly controversial topic by the later stages of Shakespeare's career. What were the proper moral and ethical responsibilities of colonial exploration? And what obligation, if any, did the invaders have in educating and Christianizing the primitive inhabitants they found during their travels? Perhaps, the play seems to suggest ironically, it is the Europeans who are savage, predatory, and inhuman in their enslavement of indigenous citizens like Caliban. Such

Shakespearean debates about colonization are always played out within the larger and more provocative context of images of the new world. As Gonzalo's utopian monologue in act 2, scene 1 implies, Renaissance Europeans were fascinated by the concept of discovering a new, pristine paradise which would provide a fresh opportunity to experiment with laws and social customs not already encrusted by centuries of English tradition. Just four years prior to the first performance of *The Tempest*, in fact, British explorers had founded Jamestown in 1607, and in 1609 they sent a fleet of four hundred new colonists across the Atlantic who, after being lashed by a ferocious storm, were forced to land in Bermuda where they spent the winter. Prospero's island, hard by these "still-vexed Bermoothes [Bermudas]" (1.2.229), provides a wonderful "new world" (5.1.183) laboratory in which the various theories of colonization and civilization popular during the Renaissance could be dramatized before an attentive audience.

Much of Prospero's political and moral power on the island is accomplished through magic, of course, which introduces yet another important area in which modern productions of the play must make some specific choices between extreme interpretations that are often quite contradictory in their aim and scope. In one sense, the magic of *The Tempest* is Baconian in origin: a systematic study of nature which leads to the understanding and control of all its forces. On another level, magic can be portrayed in the play as pure theatre and illusion: both a source of power for Prospero the artist and a retreat from its demands and responsibilities. And finally, magic can be associated with the black arts, as it is in *Macbeth* and other plays, where it is often depicted as profane, irrational, unholy, and malicious. Prospero's theatrical magic may, in fact, contain elements of all three of these aspects of enchantment, though each actor playing the role must at some point decide which of the trio will be most heavily weighted in his performance.

One final dramatic crux in *The Tempest* requiring careful and deliberate choices by the production team will be the illusion of the masque in act 4, scene 1, the magnificent culmination of Prospero's magic, which can either be a genuine celebration of Miranda's betrothal or a boastful display of power from a retiring sorcerer who desperately wants to preserve his authority and position in Milan by providing a priceless bride for the royal husband of his choice. As Sir Walter Raleigh's selection of the name "Virginia" for his new American colony implied, virginity was seen as an attribute of power, a possession worthy of kings and queens. In this sense, Prospero's masque may also be viewed as a victory ceremony for keeping Miranda's chastity safe from Caliban's lustful desire to "people" the island with their children. Through such extra-textual elements as music, costuming, lighting, set design, props, blocking, and dance, each different production of the play will create its own masque as a unique and special blend of illusion, celebration, braggadocio, and ceremony appropriate to the director's concept and the actors' skills and abilities.

The brilliance of Shakespeare is that all these various interpretations--and others too numerous to mention in such a brief article--coexist harmoniously within the script of such a play. Conversely, much of the agony and exhilaration of directing *The Tempest* accrues from the fact that the production will be sequentially defined by the hard choices made between these different interpretations at each phase of the rehearsal process. This is, of course, the collaborative "rough magic" of theatre. Will these choices be the same ones you would have selected? Will they fulfill your expectations of the play, or will they challenge, amaze, and delight you with their distinctive creative energy? There's only one way to find out, of course: Come see the show!

## A Microcosm of Behavior and Emotion

By Stephanie Chidester

*The Tempest* is one of Shakespeare's most universal plays and, not coincidentally, is very much concerned with human behavior and emotion. As John Wilders observes in *The Lost Garden*, "Prospero's island is what the sociologists call a 'model' of human society. Its cast of characters allows Shakespeare to portray in microcosm nearly all the basic, fundamental social relationships: those of a ruler to his territory, a governor to his subjects, a father to his child, masters to servants, male to female, and the rational to the irrational within the human microcosm itself" ([London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1978], 127).

Prospero himself is an observer of and experimenter with human behavior: he saw human nature at its worst when his brother usurped his dukedom and sent Prospero and Miranda off to almost certain death; he has tried to nurture Caliban's human half and to teach the monster acceptable human conduct; he demonstrates a working knowledge of reverse psychology when he maneuvers his daughter into love with Ferdinand; and, finally, he examines his own behavior and emotions in relation to his enemies, relatives, and friends.

Prospero and the play ask two questions: Is behavior such an Antonio's the basic nature of human beings; and, if so, can nurture improve upon nature? In modern terms, the play struggles with the ever-present debate over the impact of heredity and environment.

His first observations--of Antonio's and Alonso's treachery--were inadvertent and even unexpected; however, they prompted Prospero to shift the focus of his studies from "the liberal arts" to human behavior. Prospero has devoted himself to gaining knowledge and, as he admits to Miranda, neglected his dukedom and perhaps even his own humanity; "His learning and the exercise of his occult powers make him god-like, but they also make him inhuman" (David L. Hirst, *The Tempest: Text and Performance* [London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1984], 28).

Prospero's two servants, Ariel and Caliban, are the first subjects of his experimentation. Terry Eagleton explains, "If Ariel needs to be tied down to the life of the body, the creaturely Caliban needs to be cranked up to the level of language. Ariel and Caliban symbolize, respectively, pure language and pure body, a freedom which threatens to transgress all restraint and a sensuous enslavement to material limit. Prospero strives to bring both of them within that dialectic of activity and passivity, bondage and transcendence, which for Shakespeare is prototypically human" (*William Shakespeare* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986], 95).

When he first arrived on the island and discovered Caliban, Prospero treated the monster "with human care" (1.2.346; all references to line numbers are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974]). He tried, with Miranda's assistance, to educate and civilize Caliban, the offspring of a witch and an incubus, the very epitome of ignorance, bestiality, and treachery.

Caliban explains that Prospero taught him "how / To name the bigger light, and how the less, / That burn by day and night" (1.2.334-36), and Miranda says, "I pitied thee, / Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour / One thing or other" (1.2.353-55). This particular experiment is an unfortunate failure: Caliban's reaction to learning language is to curse, and his responses to Prospero's civilizing influence include attempts to rape Miranda and to kill Prospero. Prospero comes to the conclusion that Caliban is "a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains, / Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost" (4.1.188-90).

One might argue, as Anthony Harris does in *Night's Black Agents*, that Caliban's "avowal that he will be 'wise hereafter, / and seek for grace' . . . with its suggestion that he is about to enter the first

stage of the upward progression of the soul, comes when Prospero has apparently abandoned” his magic and his attempts to uplift Caliban ([Rowman and Littlefield: Manchester University Press, 1980], 131).

However, if Caliban has learned anything by the end of the play, it is only in relation to his island and potential usurpers. The only times Caliban actually admits to making mistakes are when he expresses regret for showing Prospero the island, saying, “Cursed be I that did so” (1.2.339), and when he sees Stephano and Trinculo for what they are, promising “to be wise hereafter” and exclaiming, “What a thrice-double ass / Was I to take this drunkard for a god” (5.1.295-97).

Prospero finds more subjects for experimentation when his enemies sail within his sphere of influence. Once he has orchestrated the shipwreck, he scatters the passengers across the island, guiding Ferdinand to Miranda; leading Stephano and Trinculo to Caliban and into treason; and leaving Alonso with his own grief, Gonzalo's optimism, and Sebastian's and Antonio's conspiracies.

Prospero finds little to recommend human nature through his experiments with these other people, sees no remedy for “natural” human corruption; and, furthermore, he observes no sign of penitence in Antonio, who has demonstrated that his “sin's not accidental but a trade” (Measure for Measure 3.1.148).

But Prospero's most important (and most successful) experiment involves himself. “Within Prospero himself . . . we glimpse intermittently the struggle, or internal tempest, between the humane impulse towards mercy and the instinctive appetite for revenge” (Wilders, *New Prefaces to Shakespeare* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988], 273).

Initially, Prospero is determined to avenge the wrongs he has suffered, but his revenge rarely takes a physical form. He is almost obsessed with inflicting emotional pain on Antonio, Alonso, and Sebastian; although he expresses concern for the physical well-being of the ship's passengers in act 1, scene 2, Prospero is very much pleased with the maddening effects of Ariel's tempest. The punishments Prospero inflicts on the “three men of sin” (3.3.53) are purely mental ones. The only people Prospero deliberately causes bodily harm are Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo, and they are harmed only because they do not possess the sensibilities necessary to respond to (and learn from) intellectual discipline.

While Antonio, Alonso, and Sebastian may, under Prospero's influence, regret their actions, it is unclear whether they have learned from their mistakes and have changed their natures, or whether they are merely more sophisticated Caliban, “Which any print of goodness wilt not take, / Being capable of all ill” (1.2.352-53).

Whatever the case, Prospero realizes, with Gonzalo's tears and Ariel's prompting (“Mine would, sir, were I human” [5.1.20]), that if he is to become fully human, he must forgive his enemies, abandon his magic, and return to his dukedom. With this realization, Prospero gathers everyone together for the final scene and makes a brave attempt at forgiveness and understanding.

Ultimately, Prospero discovers what it means to be human; the Prospero of the epilogue is the result of his own self-nurturing, his own proof that, in some circumstances, environment can triumph over (or at least counter-balance) heredity. He has recognized “the Ariel and the Caliban of which his own—and our—nature consists” (Wilders, *New Prefaces to Shakespeare*, 273); he has found the answer to the dilemma of nature vs. nurture in his own psyche, and with this knowledge he returns to the human society of Milan a more balanced, more complete human being than when he left it.

## The Wizard in *The Tempest*

By Ace G. Pilkington

As I write this, wizards are everywhere—in movies, television, books, and even theme parks. J. R. R. Tolkien's Gandalf has just been featured in the first film of a three-part adaptation of *The Hobbit*. The six books of the Harry Potter series are inescapable, and their eight film incarnations (completed in 2011) have racked up \$7.7 billion, making it the highest grossing film series ever, if inflation isn't taken into account ("Movie Franchises," The Numbers—Box Office Data, Movie Stars, Idle Speculation [February 9, 2013, <http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/franchises>]). The BBC television's *The Adventures of Merlin* is running on the Syfy channel, and has been broadcast in 182 other countries (Steve Clarke, "BBC Conjures Up More Merlin," *Variety Europe* [October 25, 2010, <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118026310>]). Disney recently purchased the *Star Wars* franchise, and there will soon be additional films, complete with more versions of George Lucas's wizards in space. And this is without mentioning writers such as Terry Pratchett and Jim Butcher, whose very successful careers have been driven by men with magical wands.

Wizards were popular in Shakespeare's time as well. In fact, David Woodman maintains that "most audiences possessed such a truly commonplace knowledge of magic, both black and white, that a popular response to Prospero as a white magician was assured" (*White Magic and English Renaissance Drama* [Rutherford, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1973], 73). While such a subject might seem unlikely or even dangerous in a time when witches were still burned, Anthony Harris argues that, "Such an attitude is in accord with the spirit of the romantic comedies of the early sixteenth century, where wizards and enchanters were honoured and the legality of their magical practices was unquestioned" (*Night's Black Agents: Witchcraft and Magic in Seventeenth-Century English Drama* [Rowman and Littlefield: Manchester University Press, 1980], 117). Or as Leontes puts it in *The Winter's Tale*, "If this be magic, let it be an art/ Lawful as eating" (5.3.10–11; all references to line numbers are from *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, Ed. Alfred Harbage [Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1971]).

It is, after all, very different from the black magician who dealt with demons to do good or ill, and still further removed from witchcraft that required the witch to trade his or her soul for power. White magic even had an elaborate philosophical justification. Those writers who believed with Cornelius Agrippa that "good daemons can be attracted and bad ones repelled" (Wayne Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972], 151–2) were willing to accept the white magician on his own terms, as a Neoplatonist philosopher who "sought to refine his soul and gain a direct knowledge of God" (Woodman 30). In this view a creature like Ariel is not an evil demon but, as C. S. Lewis puts it in *The Discarded Image*, a member of "a third rational species distinct from angels and men" ([Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964], 134), which served as a bridge between them. So in the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode "Emergence," Data, who is playing Prospero on the holodeck, responds to Captain Picard's criticism by saying, "I am supposed to be attempting a Neoplatonic magical rite."

It is, indeed, in this elaborate context that Shakespeare's original audience would have viewed Prospero and from this perspective that they would have seen that the wizard has both multiple motives and magical means for revenge. He has struggled to control his passions as he has worked to master his spells, bending both to his benevolent ends. He has all the marks of the white magician, from his emphasis on chastity to his challenge to the dark power of the witch Sycorax. He has planned from the first to forgive Alonso and marry Miranda to Ferdinand. When the last moment of decision comes,

Prospero's resolve holds firm, "The rarer action is/ In virtue than in vengeance. They being penitent,/ The sole drift of my purpose doth extend/ Not a frown further" (5.1.27–30).

Ariel, his daemon, who possesses what Katharine Briggs describes as "a certain ethereal benevolence" (*The Anatomy of Puck* [New York: Arno Press, 1977], 53), stands beside him. As Caliban sinks below humanness with the heavy load of his unnatural appetites, Ariel rises above it into the fire and air which are his natural elements. Prospero stands on the edge of a heavenly transcendence, ready to rise past his humanness to something greater. This too is characteristic of the white magician.

But Prospero, and this is at the center of Shakespeare's play, makes a different choice. He has the power to abandon all his troubles by going beyond them. And if he stays where he is, he has the means to create the utopia that Gonzalo only talks of. Ferdinand foresees a perfect society with Prospero in control, "Let me live here ever!/ So rare a wondred father and a wise/ Makes this place Paradise" (4.1.122–124). The wizard's society would require no effort; magical servants would do everything. As in Stephano's fantasy, everyone on the island would have his music (and all else) for free. However, Prospero is wise enough to see in the midst of his wonders that this society without struggle, this community of concord, would either be something like Gonzalo's vision of nonhuman innocence or Sebastian's picture of inhuman evil. John Wilders says, "The effortlessly happy existence imagined by Gonzalo would be possible only if the consequences of the Fall could be annulled" (*The Lost Garden: A View of Shakespeare's English and Roman History Plays* [London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1978], 130). Only if, in fact, Prospero and his subjects could cease to be human.

Ultimately, the white wizard, the overreacher who has his impossible gift almost within his grasp, chooses humanness. The expression of this decision comes just after the most poignant of all his encounters with Ariel, that guardian of a strange and alien threshold who has made a kind of reverse crossing. Ariel reports the sufferings of the three men of sin and the "good old lord Gonzalo"; then he says, "if you now beheld them,/ Your affections would become tender." Prospero responds, "Dost thou think so, spirit?" The line that follows is hedged round with wonder, "Mine would, sir, were I human" (5.1.18–20). In the words of Katharine Briggs, "It seems to contain in it the meaning behind all those stories of the Neck and the mermaid and the Scottish fairy who long for human souls, a sudden sharp reminder of the humanity we lose and insult by silly grudges" (53).

Whatever Prospero's state of mind may be at this point (perhaps it is that last hesitation which comes before a great decision, long ago made, carefully reached for and at last grasped), his next speech is definitely an affirmation of human values, "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?" (5.1.21–24). Like Marlowe's Mephistophilis with his comment on heaven, "'tis not half so fair/ As thou, or any man that breathes on earth" (*Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Text and Major Criticism*, Ed. Irving Ribner [New York: The Odyssey Press, Inc., 1966], 2.2.6–7), Ariel speaks from beyond the boundaries of earth about the value of humanness. It cannot be an accident, a chance textual juxtaposition, that places Prospero's final renunciation of his powers only a few pulse beats later.

The wizard has crossed the boundary, enlarged his mind, subdued his passions, and come back to everyday reality with a new appreciation for the complex, confusing, contrary but glorious nature of humanness. As John Wilders puts it, "Gonzalo's dream is an ideal by which we can measure the painful temporary, half-successful attempts at government made by Shakespeare's historical rulers generally" (130). But Gonzalo's dream (and Prospero's experience) is also a means by which we can measure the limits of the human condition, the dangers beyond it, and the values which it shelters.

The power and passion of humanness transcend the perfection that is above humanity and the destruction that is below it; they are more immediately vital and ultimately meaningful than the airy

spheres of daemons or the earthy circles of demons. Perhaps it is this complexity in the play, this multiplicity of vision, this complicated humanness that has generated so much argument. Barbara A. Mowat, in "Prospero, Agrippa, and Hocus Pocus," points out the conflicting traditions from magus to conjuror, from dramatist to illusionist, that make up the play. But this "blending of seriousness with jest, of revelation with bewilderment," (*English Literary Renaissance* issue 2, 1981, 303) is not only "the wonder of Prospero himself" (303), it is also the wonder of being human and the central subject of this magical play.

The white wizard, the powerful mage, is also a duke, a father, and though it may "infect" his mouth to say it, a brother. At the last, he acknowledges not only Antonio but also Caliban, he breaks his staff, frees Ariel, and goes back to Milan—with the help of the audience's applause. Shakespeare has made it clear that no Neoplatonic rite will save us from our lives by making us more than human, though it may show us the way to a better, sharper humanness, guided as Prospero is by his love for Miranda and for that fiery helper of his who lighted him on his true way.

## But This Rough Magic I Here Abjure

By Diana Major Spencer

Obviously the dominant character in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Prospero is most often portrayed as just that: the Supreme Chess Master, the Sovereign Puppeteer. He imperiously floats in and out of scenes (even when Shakespeare doesn't mention him), hanging about the wings to observe and approve Ariel's achievements and to plot occasional diversions for Ferdinand and torments for Caliban—always in charge, always above the fray. He serenely gathers his enemies around his cell for his even-tempered, if condescending, forgiveness.

Often identified with the Bard at career's end, an old man with flowing robes and beard, bidding adieu to his books and magic and to "ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves" (5.1.33), with a fifteen-year-old daughter, he could be anywhere between thirty and ninety. Perhaps Shakespeare meant this tempest, this brush with revenge, to be not the expression of an old man's indignation, pique and superior power, but rather an important lesson for a younger man on his way to maturity, which includes among its qualities forgiveness, peace, and humanity.

Many lines suggest a younger man, confused by anger, deeply wronged by his brother and his king, and genuinely impassioned by the opportunity for retribution presented by "bountiful Fortune . . . [that] hath mine enemies / Brought to this shore" (1.2.178 80). Quickened by the "most auspicious star" upon which his "zenith doth depend," he must expedite his revenge or watch his "fortunes . . . ever after droop" (1.2.181 84). For twelve years, caught between despair over his "extirpation" from Milan and the "fortitude" he derived from the "cherubin . . . that did preserve me" (1.2.152 54), he has ruled a diminished "dukedom"—Miranda, Ariel, Caliban, and his "meaner ministers" (3.3.87). Now, at last, he has power to get even.

Prospero's agitation and anger, symbolized by the storm, punctuate the long family-history exposition. Miranda usually fidgets or nods off—as teenagers are wont to do at such times—requiring that Prospero call her attention back to his narrative. But consider the context of the alerts: "My brother and thy uncle, call'd Antonio— / I pray thee mark me—that a brother should / Be so perfidious" (1.2.66 68); "Thy false uncle— / Dost thou attend me?" (1.2.77 78); "Now he was / The ivy which had hid my princely trunk, / And suck'd my verdure out on't. Thou attend'st not!" (1.2.85 87); "Hence his ambition growing— / Dost thou hear?" (1.2.105 106). Every time, Antonio is the topic, illuminating, like a thunderbolt, the focus of Prospero's anger. Miranda's boredom or somnolence is irrelevant.

Then Miranda meets Ferdinand, which rattles Prospero's composure in another direction. Three asides during their first conversation express Prospero's delight that his spell is working: "It goes on, I see, / As my soul prompts it" (1.2.430 31); "At the first sight / They have chang'd eyes" (1.2.441 42); "It [my spell] works" (1.2.494). Each time, moreover, he gleefully adds, "Ariel, I'll set you free for this." Rather than, "Ho-hum, just as I expected, the spell's working; nice work, Ariel," the tone I hear is, "Hey! Wow! The spell's working. I owe you big-time for this, Ariel! Yes!"

Sometimes Prospero's outbursts are calculated, as when Miranda demands, "Why speaks my father so ungently?" (1.2.445), at Prospero's attempts to make "this swift business . . . uneasy, lest too light winning / Make the prize light" (1.2.451 53). After forty more lines of his chiding, she assures Ferdinand that "my father's of a better nature, sir, / Than he appears by speech. This is unwonted / Which now came from him" (1.2.496 99). Later, he is beset by spontaneous agitation when his joy in entertaining the lovers overshadows Caliban's plot. Ferdinand notes, "Your father's in some passion / That works him strongly." Miranda replies, "Never till this day / Saw I him touch'd with anger, so distemper'd" (4.1.143 45). Prospero himself admits to being "vex'd" and having a troubled brain and "beating mind" (4.1.158 63).

The truest test of Prospero's changing emotions, however, occurs as Act 5 opens. Prospero appears in full regalia, boasting of the certainty of his success: "Now does my project gather to a head. / My charms crack not; my spirits obey; and Time / Goes upright with his carriage" (5.1.1-3). Reporting on the "King and 's followers," Ariel observes, "Your charm so strongly works 'em / That if you now beheld them, your affections / Would become tender" (5.1.17-20). Would become tender signifies that Prospero's affections (i.e., emotions) are not affectionate (i.e., tender); if Prospero were already leaning toward compassion, would Ariel use these words?

Prospero queries, "Thinks't thou so, spirit?" "I would, sir, were I human." "And mine shall," resolves Prospero. The next twelve lines dissolve Prospero's anger, confusion, distemper, and vengefulness. "Have you," he asks Ariel, "who are but air, a feeling for their afflictions, and shall I, a member of the human race with human passions as keenly felt, not be more humanely mov'd than you are?" (5.1.21-24, paraphrased). Ariel has reminded Prospero, not of his power, but of his humanity.

Shakespeare has revealed a man as furious as the storm, who increasingly relishes the discomfiture of his enemies until now, when Ariel suggests a better way. "Though with their high wrongs I am strook to th' quick," Prospero continues, "Yet, with my nobler reason, 'gainst my fury / Do I take part" (5.1.25-27). Because "The rarer action is / In virtue than in vengeance" (5.1.27-28), Prospero opts for mercy: "They being penitent, / The sole drift of my purpose doth extend / Not a frown further. Go, release them, Ariel" (5.1.28-30).

Commentators on Prospero as Shakespeare's end-of-career alter-ego sometimes merge the two "farewells to the stage." It is well to remember that "Our revels" refers specifically to the masque prepared for the newly betrothed to occupy their attention while they're being chaste. "Ye elves" follows Prospero's revealing change of heart: Immediately after instructing Ariel to release the captives, he adds, "My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore, / And they shall be themselves" (5.1.31-32). Ariel leaves to "fetch them, sir" (5.1.32), whereupon Prospero "traces a magic circle with his staff" and begins, "Ye elves of hills," etc., and all you other creatures "by whose aid . . . I have bedimm'd / The noontide sun" and made huge storms that uprooted trees, "and all my other spells and charms—But this rough magic / I here abjure," and when I've restored those now "in my pow'r" (3.3.90), "I'll break my staff, / Bury it certain fadoms in the earth, / And deeper than ever did plummet sound / I'll drown my book" (5.1.33-37).

Recalling that his books and studies prompted Prospero's "abdication" of Milan—"me (poor man) my library / Was dukedom large enough" (1.2.109-10); "Knowing I lov'd my books, [Gonzalo] furnish'd me / From mine own library with volumes that / I prize [present tense] above my dukedom" (1.2.166-68)—we can appreciate the powerful transformation he has undergone. As much as he loved his books and his power, thanks to Ariel he now understands, after much turmoil, that the greater goods are forgiveness, peace, and humanity.

**(All line numbers refer to *The Riverside Shakespeare* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974]; emphases are the author's.)**

## The Outer Show and the Inner Truth

By Elaine Pilkington

One of Shakespeare's last plays, *The Tempest* is a culmination of his life's work with familiar situations, common motifs, and echoing themes. Audiences are immediately comfortable with *The Tempest*—the oft repeated relationships of ruler and subject, master and servant, father and daughter, young lover and worthy lady; its use of the transforming power of music, magic, and time; and its exploration of the nature of humanity and the disparity between illusion and reality, between the outer show and inner truth. Despite its familiarity, *The Tempest* is unique unto itself, a new story that also summarizes and perhaps even transcends the old ones.

Central to the play is Prospero's island. Like the woods outside of Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It*, this uncharted island is part of the green world, as Northrop Frye called that natural place where characters find themselves and lose a few of their flaws. However, it is more than just a place removed from the ordinary traffic of man. "[T]he isle is full of noises, / Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not" (3.2.135–36; all references to the play are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974]). Originally peopled only by the spirit Ariel, the monstrous Caliban, and all manner of supernatural entities, the island providentially becomes the home of Prospero and Miranda.

As Duke of Milan, Prospero had been absorbed with the pursuit of knowledge, delegating his brother Antonio to rule for him, but he was oblivious to his brother's greed for power and position. With the help of Alonzo, the King of Naples, Antonio seized the dukedom and banished Prospero and Miranda to an almost certain death cast adrift in a "rotten carcass of a butt, not rigg'd, / Nor tackle, sail, nor mast" (1.2.146–47).

Shipwrecked on the island, Prospero continues his study, but his focus is broadened in his twelve-year exile. Separated from Milan, he creates a new kingdom over which to reign. His rule is benign. He teaches Caliban, attempts to civilize him, and punishes him only because he must. He cannot allow him to rape Miranda or destroy the order of the island. Ariel and the other spirits of the island are also his subjects. They are not mistreated and are eventually freed. Prospero serves his apprenticeship and learns how to rule.

His talents are demonstrated when his brother and the Neapolitans are shipwrecked in a storm on his island kingdom. With Ariel to do his bidding and other spirits to perform as commanded, Prospero carefully orchestrates the tempest, the dispersing of the characters, and what they are allowed to see and do. His art is perfected. Never are they harmed, never are they in danger. Any discomfort, either physical or emotional, is temporary, occurring only to lead them to the possibility of a positive transformation.

Prospero's exile on the island has also taught him to be a father. Here he has learned to care for another and has integrated human interaction into his character. Miranda remembers a time when more than four or five ladies waited upon her. On the island Prospero is exclusively in charge of her upbringing. With his loving guidance, Miranda has become a consummate princess—in speech, in bearing, in compassion.

Prospero tells her that as her schoolmaster he made her "more profit / Than other princess' can, that have more time / For vainer hours, and tutors not so careful" (1.2.172–74). According to Caliban, Prospero calls Miranda "a nonpareil" (3.2.100). Ferdinand immediately falls in love with her and says to her, "[Y]ou, / So perfect and so peerless, are created / of every creature's best!" (3.1.46–48). As a child, her gentle, compassionate nature prompted her to teach Caliban (1.2.353–58). She fears greatly for the

ship's passengers in the tempest (1.2.1–13), and later offers to perform Sebastian's labor for him (3.1.23–25).

*The Tempest* shows the positive traits of humankind exemplified by Prospero and Miranda, but no character is merely a representation of virtue. Prospero is still understandably angry about his brother's treachery, and he harshly (but wisely) tests Ferdinand's love for Miranda. Gonzolo helped Prospero when he was exiled and seems a positive character, but his optimism is not without naivety. Antonio and Sebastian, on the other hand, seem to lack any virtues. They are arrogant and rude to the crew during the tempest, contributing nothing but interfering with the dangerous job of saving the ship.

In short, all characteristics of humanity are represented in the play. One of the most prevalent is lust. Antonio's lust for temporal power compels him to displace Prospero as duke and banish him and his daughter Miranda. Antonio also easily seduces Sebastian to attempt to murder his own brother Alonzo, the King of Naples, to usurp his kingdom even though he and his brother are shipwrecked together with no certain means of return. Stephano is just as easily convinced to kill Prospero in order to rule the island with Miranda as his queen and Caliban and Trinculo as viceroys, his drunkenness preventing him from deducing that Miranda might object to such a bond with her father's murderer.

Tied to the desire for power are lust and greed. Both Caliban and Stephano desire Miranda. Quelled in his attempt to possess her himself, Caliban readily offers her to Stephano as part of the reward package for killing Prospero. Being the sovereign of the island or of Milan has the added inducement of wealth, appealing to the greed of Stephano and Sebastian. Alonzo helped Antonio because of an established enmity toward Prospero but also because Antonio agreed to pay him tribute for his help. Having paid Alonzo for twelve years, Antonio eagerly urges Sebastian to kill Alonzo and become the King of Naples, ending Antonio's payment.

In so many plays, Shakespeare explores the differences between illusion and reality, but in *The Tempest* illusion and reality are the same. Though the courtly figures from Naples and Milan cannot see Ariel and are mystified by his spells questioning their own senses, Ariel is real. Prospero's magic is real. The tempest, the food, the entities that deliver it and remove it, the sea-drenched clothing made fresh and new, the rich apparel to transform Stephano from drunken butler to lord of the island are real. They seem illusion because they are foreign to the common experience and cannot be explained by the newcomers. Life is a mixture of good and evil, spiritual and temporal, the magical and the mundane. Perspective alters individual perception, but *The Tempest* offers a full vision of reality.

# Shakespeare: Words, Words, Words

By S. S. Moorty

“No household in the English-speaking world is properly furnished unless it contains copies of the Holy Bible and of The Works of William Shakespeare. It is not always thought that these books should be read in maturer years, but they must be present as symbols of Religion and Culture” (G.B. Harrison, *Introducing Shakespeare*. Rev. & Exp. [New York: Penguin Books, 1991], 11).

We, the Shakespeare-theater goers and lovers, devotedly and ritualistically watch and read the Bard’s plays not for exciting stories and complex plots. Rather, Shakespeare’s language is a vital source of our supreme pleasure in his plays. Contrary to ill-conceived notions, Shakespeare’s language is not an obstacle to appreciation, though it may prove to be difficult to understand. Instead, it is the communicative and evocative power of Shakespeare’s language that is astonishingly rich in vocabulary—about 29,000 words—strikingly presented through unforgettable characters such as Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Othello, Rosalind, Viola, Iago, Shylock, etc.

In the high school classroom, students perceive Shakespeare’s language as “Old English.” Actually Shakespeare’s linguistic environment, experience, and exposure was, believe it or not, closer to our own times than to Chaucer’s, two hundred years earlier. Indeed, the history and development of the English language unfolds as follows: Old English, 449-1100; Middle English 1100-1500; and Modern English 1500-present. Shakespeare was firmly in the Modern English period.

At the time Shakespeare wrote, most of the grammatical changes from Old and Middle English had taken place; yet rigid notions about “correctness” had not yet been standardized in grammars. The past five centuries have advanced the cause of standardized positions for words; yet the flexible idiom of Elizabethan English offered abundant opportunities for Shakespeare’s linguistic inventiveness. Ideally it is rewarding to study several facets of Shakespeare’s English: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, wordplay, and imagery. The present overview will, however, be restricted to “vocabulary.”

To Polonius’s inquisitive question “What do you read, my lord?” (Hamlet, 2.2.191) Hamlet nonchalantly and intriguingly aptly replies: “Words, words, words” (2.2.192). This many-splendored creation of Shakespeare’s epitomizes the playwright’s own fascination with the dynamic aspect of English language, however troubling it may be to modern audiences and readers. Shakespeare added several thousand words to the language, apart from imparting new meanings to known words. At times Shakespeare could teasingly employ the same word for different shades of thought. Barowne’s single line, “Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile” (Love’s Labour’s Lost, 1.1.77), as Harry Levin in his *General Introduction to The Riverside Shakespeare* (9) explains, “uses ‘light’ in four significations: intellect, seeking wisdom, cheats eyesight out of daylight.”

Another instance: Othello as he enters his bedroom with a light before he smothers his dear, innocent Desdemona soliloquizes: “Put out the light, and then put out the light” (Othello, 5.2.7) Here ‘light’ compares the light of Othello’s lamp or torch to Desdemona’s ‘light’ of life.

In both instances, the repeated simple ordinary word carries extraordinary shades of meaning. “Usually such a tendency in a Shakespeare play indicates a more or less conscious thematic intent.” (Paul A. Jorgensen, *Redeeming Shakespeare’s Words* [Berkeley and Los Angeles; University of California Press, 1962], 100).

Living in an age of the “grandiose humanistic confidence in the power of the word” (Levin 9), Shakespeare evidently felt exuberant that he had the license to experiment with the language, further blessed by the fact that “there were no English grammars to lay down rules or dictionaries to restrict word-formation. This was an immeasurable boon for writers” (Levin 10). Surely Shakespeare took full

advantage of the unparalleled linguistic freedom to invent, to experiment with, and to indulge in lavishly.

However intriguing, captivating, mind-teasing, beguiling, and euphonious, Shakespeare's vocabulary can be a stumbling block, especially for readers. "In the theater the speaking actor frequently relies on tone, semantic drive, narrative context, and body language to communicate the sense of utterly unfamiliar terms and phrases, but on the page such words become more noticeable and confusing" (Russ McDonald, *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: An Introduction with Documents* [Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996], 184).

Unlocking the meaning of Shakespeare's vocabulary can prove to be an interesting challenge. Such words include those which "have dropped from common use like 'bisson' (blind) or those that the playwright seems to have created from Latin roots . . . but that did not catch on, such as 'conspicuities' (eyesight or vision) or 'unplausible' (doubtful or disapproving). Especially confusing are those words that have shifted meaning over the intervening centuries, such as 'proper' (handsome), 'nice' (squeamish or delicate), 'silly' (innocent), or 'cousin' (kinsman, that is, not necessarily the child of an aunt or uncle)" (McDonald 184). Because of semantic change, when Shakespeare uses 'conceit,' he does not mean 'vanity,' as we might understand it to be. Strictly following etymology, Shakespeare means a 'conception' or 'notion,' or possibly the 'imagination' itself.

Perhaps several Shakespeare words "would have been strange to Shakespeare's audience because they were the products of his invention or unique usage. Some words that probably originated with him include: 'auspicious,' 'assassination,' 'disgraceful,' 'dwindle,' 'savagery.'" Certainly a brave soul, he was "a most audacious inventor of words." To appreciate and understand Shakespeare's English in contrast to ours, we ought to suspend our judgment and disbelief and allow respect for the "process of semantic change, which has been continually eroding or encrusting his original meaning" (Levin 8).

Shakespeare's vocabulary has received greater attention than any other aspect of his language. Perhaps this is because it is the most accessible with no burdensome complications. Whatever the cause, Shakespeare's language will forever be challenging and captivating.

## Not of An Age, But for All Mankind

By Douglas A. Burger

After an enormous expenditure of money and effort, Shakespeare's Globe Theater has risen again, four centuries later, on London's south bank of the Thames. Designed as a faithful reconstruction of the original, it uses the building methods of the time and traditional materials (oak timbers, plaster walls, wooden pegs, water-reeds for thatching the roof). From above, the shape seems circular (actually, it is twenty-six sided) with three covered tiers of seats surrounding a central area which is open to the sky.. There the "groundlings" may stand to see the action taking place on the stage, which occupies almost half of the inner space. There are no artificial lights, no conventional sets, no fancy rigging.

Seeing a Shakespeare play in the afternoon sunlight at the new Globe must come very close to the experience of those early-day Londoners, except, of course, that we in the twentieth-century behave better. We don't yell insults at the actors, spit, or toss orange peels on the ground. We also smell better: the seventeenth-century playwright, Thomas Dekker, calls the original audience "Stinkards . . . glewed together in crowdes with the Steames of strong breath" (Shakespeare's Globe: The Guide Book [London: International Globe Center, 1996], 42). And we are safer. The first Globe burned to the ground. The new theater has more exits, fire-retardant insulation concealed in the walls, and water-sprinklers that poke through the thatch of the roof.

That hard-headed capitalists and officials would be willing, even eager, to invest in the project shows that Shakespeare is good business. The new Globe is just one example. Cedar City's own Utah Shakespeare Festival makes a significant contribution to the economy of southern Utah. A sizable percentage of all the tourist dollars spent in England goes to Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-on-Avon, which would be a sleepy little agricultural town without its favorite son. The situation seems incredible. In our whole history, what other playwright could be called a major economic force? Who else--what single individual--could be listed along with agriculture, mining, and the like as an industry of a region? Why Shakespeare?

The explanation, of course, goes further than an attempt to preserve our cultural traditions. In an almost uncanny way, Shakespeare's perceptions remain valuable for our own understandings of life, and probably no other writer remains so insightful, despite the constantly changing preoccupations of audiences over time.

The people of past centuries, for example, looked to the plays for nuggets of wisdom and quotable quotes, and many of Shakespeare's lines have passed into common parlance. There is an old anecdote about the woman, who on first seeing Hamlet, was asked how she liked the play. She replied, "Oh, very nice, my dear, but so full of quotations." She has it backwards of course. Only the King James Bible has lent more "quotations" to English than Shakespeare.

Citizens of the late nineteenth century sought in the plays for an understanding of human nature, valuing Shakespeare's character for traits that they recognized in themselves and in others. The fascination continues to the present day as some of our best-known movie stars attempt to find new dimensions in the great characters: Mel Gibson and Kenneth Branagh in Hamlet, Lawrence Fishburn in Othello, Leonardo de Caprio in Romeo, to name just a few.

Matters of gender, class, and race have preoccupied more recent audiences. Beatrice sounds a rather feminist note in Much Ado about Nothing in her advice to her cousin about choosing a husband: Curtsy to your father, but say "Father, as it please me." Coriolanus presents a recurring dilemma about class relations in its explorations of the rights and wrongs involved in a great man's attempt to control the masses. Racial attitudes are illuminated in Othello, where the European characters always mark the hero by his race, always identify him first as the "Moor," are always aware of his difference.

London's new/old Globe is thus a potent symbol of the plays' continuing worth to us. The very building demonstrates the utter accuracy of the lines written so long ago that Shakespeare is not "of an age" but "for all time."

## **Mr. Shakespeare, I Presume**

By Diana Major Spencer

Could the plays known as Shakespeare's have been written by a rural, semi-literate, uneducated, wife-deserting, two-bit actor who spelled his name differently each of the six times he wrote it down? Could such a man know enough about Roman history, Italian geography, French grammar, and English court habits to create Antony and Cleopatra, The Comedy of Errors, and Henry V? Could he know enough about nobility and its tenuous relationship to royalty to create King Lear and Macbeth?

Are these questions even worth asking? Some very intelligent people think so. On the other hand, some very intelligent people think not. Never mind quibbles about how a line should be interpreted, or how many plays Shakespeare wrote and which ones, or which of the great tragedies reflected personal tragedies. The question of authorship is "The Shakespeare Controversy."

Since Mr. Cowell, quoting the deceased Dr. Wilmot, cast the first doubt about William of Stratford in an 1805 speech before the Ipswich Philological Society, nominees for the "real author" have included philosopher Sir Francis Bacon, playwright Christopher Marlowe, Queen Elizabeth I, Sir Walter Raleigh, and the earls of Derby, Rutland, Essex, and Oxford--among others.

The arguments evoke two premises: first, that the proven facts about the William Shakespeare who was christened at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon on April 26, 1564 do not configure a man of sufficient nobility of thought and language to have written the plays; and, second, that the man from Stratford is nowhere concretely identified as the author of the plays. The name "Shakespeare"--in one of its spellings--appears on early quartos, but the man represented by the name may not be the one from Stratford.

One group of objections to the Stratford man follows from the absence of any record that he ever attended school--in Stratford or anywhere else. If he were uneducated, the arguments go, how could his vocabulary be twice as large as the learned Milton's? How could he know so much history, law, or philosophy? If he were a country bumpkin, how could he know so much of hawking, hounding, courtly manners, and daily habits of the nobility? How could he have traveled so much, learning about other nations of Europe in enough detail to make them the settings for his plays?

The assumptions of these arguments are that such rich and noble works as those attributed to a playwright using the name "Shakespeare" could have been written only by someone with certain characteristics, and that those characteristics could be distilled from the "facts" of his life. He would have to be noble; he would have to be well-educated; and so forth. On these grounds the strongest candidate to date is Edward de Vere, seventeenth earl of Oxford.

A debate that has endured its peaks and valleys, the controversy catapulted to center stage in 1984 with the publication of Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. Ogburn, a former army intelligence officer, builds a strong case for Oxford--if one can hurdle the notions that the author wasn't Will Shakespeare, that literary works should be read autobiographically, and that literary creation is nothing more than reporting the facts of one's own life. "The Controversy" was laid to rest--temporarily, at least--by justices Blackmun, Brennan, and Stevens of the United States Supreme Court who, after hearing evidence from both sides in a mock trial conducted September 25, 1987 at American University in Washington, D.C., found in favor of the Bard of Avon.

Hooray for our side!

## Shakespearean Snapshots

By Ace G. Pilkington

It is hard to get from the facts of Shakespeare's life to any sense of what it must have been like to have lived it. He was born in 1564 in Stratford-on-Avon and died there in 1616. The day of his birth is not certain, but it may have been the same as the day of his death—April 23—if he was baptized, as was usual at the time, three days after he was born. He married Anne Hathaway in the winter of 1582-83, when he was eighteen and she was twenty-six. He became the father of three children. The first was Susannah, who was born around May 23, close enough to the date of the wedding to suggest that the marriage was not entirely voluntary. Shakespeare's twins, Hamnet and Judith, were baptized on February 2, 1585. Hamnet died of unknown causes (at least unknown by us at this distance in time) in 1596. Shakespeare's career as actor, theatre owner, manager, and, of course, playwright began in the vicinity of 1590 and continued for the rest of his life, though there are clear indications that he spent more and more time in Stratford and less and less in London from 1611 on. His work in the theatre made him wealthy, and his extraordinary plays brought him a measure of fame, though nothing like what he deserved or would posthumously receive.

It's hard to get even the briefest sense of what Shakespeare's life was like from such information. It is probably impossible ever to know what Shakespeare thought or felt, but maybe we can get closer to what he saw and heard and even smelled. Perhaps some snapshots—little close-ups—might help to bring us nearer to the world in which Shakespeare lived if not quite to the life he lived in that world. In Shakespeare's youth, chimneys were a new thing. Before that, smoke was left to find its way out through a hole in the roof, often a thatched roof, and there were even some who maintained that this smoky atmosphere was better than the newfangled fresh air that chimneys made possible—along with a greater division of rooms and more privacy.

In the year of Shakespeare's birth, Stratford had more trees than houses—"upwards of 400 houses as well as 1,000 elms and forty ashes" (Peter Thomson, *Shakespeare's Professional Career* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 1). Peter Levi says, "The town was so full of elm trees that it must have looked and sounded like a woodland settlement. For example, Mr. Gibbs's house on Rothermarket had twelve elms in the garden and six in front of the door. Thomas Attford on Ely Street had another twelve. The town boundaries were marked by elms or groups of elms (The Life and Times of William Shakespeare [New York: Wings Books, 1988], 7). Shakespeare's "Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang" becomes a far more majestic image with the picture of Stratford's elms in mind. And the birds themselves had a sound which modern ears no longer have a chance to enjoy. "We must realize that it was ordinary for . . . Shakespeare to hear a dawn chorus of many hundreds of birds at once. . . . as a young man thirty years ago I have heard a deafening dawn chorus in the wooded Chilterns, on Shakespeare's road to London" (Levi 10).

Exactly what Shakespeare's road to London may have been or at least how he first made his way there and became an actor is much debated. He might have been a schoolmaster or fifty other things, but he may well have started out as he ended up—as a player. We can then, in John Southworth's words, "Picture a sixteen-year-old lad on a cart, growing year by year into manhood, journeying out of the Arden of his childhood into ever more unfamiliar, distant regions, travelling ill-made roads in all weathers, sleeping in inns, hearing and memorising strange new dialects and forms of speech, meeting with every possible type and character of person; learning, most of all perhaps, from the audiences to which he played in guildhalls and inns" (*Shakespeare the Player: A Life in the Theatre* [Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000], 30). At some time in his life—in fact, many times—Shakespeare must have known theatrical tours very like that.

In London itself, the new Globe, the best theatre in (or rather just outside of) the city, was in an area with a large number of prisons and an unpleasant smell. "Garbage had preceded actors on the marshy land where the new playhouse was erected: 'flanked with a ditch and forced out of a marsh', according to Ben Jonson. Its cost . . . included the provision of heavy piles for the foundation, and a whole network of ditches in which the water rose and fell with the tidal Thames" (Garry O'Connor, *William Shakespeare: A Popular Life* [New York: Applause Books, 2000], 161). The playgoers came by water, and the Globe, the Rose, and the Swan "drew 3,000 or 4,000 people in boats across the Thames every day" (161). Peter Levi says of Shakespeare's London, "The noise, the crowds, the animals and their droppings, the glimpses of grandeur and the amazing squalor of the poor, were beyond modern imagination" (49).

England was a place of fear and glory. Public executions were public entertainments. Severed heads decayed on city walls. Francis Bacon, whom Will Durant calls "the most powerful and influential intellect of his time" (*Heroes of History: A Brief History of Civilization from Ancient Times to the Dawn of the Modern Age* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001], 327), had been "one of the persons commissioned to question prisoners under torture" in the 1580s (Levi 4). The opportune moment when Shakespeare became the most successful of playwrights was the destruction of Thomas Kyd, "who broke under torture and was never the same again," and the death of Christopher Marlowe in a tavern brawl which was the result of plot and counterplot—a struggle, very probably, between Lord Burghley and Walter Raleigh (Levi 48).

Shakespeare, who must have known the rumors and may have known the truth, cannot have helped shuddering at such monstrous good fortune. Still, all of the sights, smells, and terrors, from the birdsongs to the screams of torture, from the muddy tides to the ties of blood, became not only the textures and tonalities of Shakespeare's life, but also the information and inspiration behind his plays.

# Ghosts, Witches, and Shakespeare

By Howard Waters

Sometime in the mid 1580s, young Will Shakespeare, for reasons not entirely clear to us, left his home, his wife, and his family in Stratford and set off for London. It was a time when Elizabeth, “la plus fine femme du monde,” as Henry III of France called her, had occupied the throne of England for over twenty-five years. The tragedy of Mary Stuart was past; the ordeal of Essex was in the future. Sir Francis Drake’s neutralization of the Spanish Armada was pending and rumors of war or invasion blew in from all the great ports.

What could have been more exciting for a young man from the country, one who was already more than half in love with words, than to be headed for London!

It was an exciting and frightening time, when the seven gates of London led to a maze of streets, narrow and dirty, crowded with tradesmen, carts, coaches, and all manner of humanity. Young Will would have seen the moated Tower of London, looking almost like an island apart. There was London Bridge crowded with tenements and at the southern end a cluster of traitors’ heads impaled on poles. At Tyburn thieves and murderers dangled, at Limehouse pirates were trussed up at low tide and left to wait for the water to rise over them. At Tower Hill the headsman’s axe flashed regularly, while for the vagabonds there were the whipping posts, and for the beggars there were the stocks. Such was the London of the workaday world, and young Will was undoubtedly mentally filing away details of what he saw, heard, and smelled.

Elizabethan people in general were an emotional lot and the ferocity of their entertainment reflected that fact. Bear-baiting, for example, was a highly popular spectator sport, and the structure where they were generally held was not unlike the theatres of the day. A bear was chained to a stake in the center of the pit, and a pack of large dogs was turned loose to bait, or fight, him. The bear eventually tired (fortunately for the remaining dogs!), and, well, you can figure the rest out for yourself. Then there were the public hangings, whippings, or drawing and quarterings for an afternoon’s entertainment. So, the violence in some of Shakespeare’s plays was clearly directed at an audience that reveled in it. Imagine the effect of having an actor pretend to bite off his own tongue and spit a chunk of raw liver that he had carefully packed in his jaw into the faces of the groundlings!

Despite the progressing enlightenment of the Renaissance, superstition was still rampant among Elizabethan Londoners, and a belief in such things as astrology was common (Ralph P. Boas and Barbara M. Hahna, “The Age of Shakespeare,” *Social Backgrounds of English Literature*, [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1931] 93). Through the position of stars many Elizabethans believed that coming events could be foretold even to the extent of mapping out a person’s entire life.

Where witches and ghosts were concerned, it was commonly accepted that they existed and the person who scoffed at them was considered foolish, or even likely to be cursed. Consider the fact that Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* was supposedly cursed due to the playwright’s having given away a few more of the secrets of witchcraft than the weird sisters may have approved of. For a time, productions experienced an uncanny assortment of mishaps and injuries. Even today, it is often considered bad luck for members of the cast and crew to mention the name of the production, simply referred to as the *Scottish Play*.

In preaching a sermon, Bishop Jewel warned the Queen: “It may please your Grace to understand that witches and sorcerers within these last few years are marvelously increased. Your Grace’s subjects pine away, even unto death; their color fadeth; their flesh rotteth; their speech is benumbed; their senses bereft” (Walter Bromberg, “Witchcraft and Psychotherapy”, *The Mind of Man* [New York: Harper Torchbooks 1954], 54).

Ghosts were recognized by the Elizabethans in three basic varieties: the vision or purely subjective ghost, the authentic ghost who has died without opportunity of repentance, and the false ghost which is capable of many types of manifestations (Boas and Hahn). When a ghost was confronted, either in reality or in a Shakespearean play, some obvious discrimination was called for (and still is). Critics still do not always agree on which of these three types haunts the pages of *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, or *Hamlet*, or, in some cases, why they are necessary to the plot at all. After all, Shakespeare's ghosts are a capricious lot, making themselves visible or invisible as they please. In *Richard III* there are no fewer than eleven ghosts on the stage who are visible only to Richard and Richmond. In *Macbeth* the ghost of Banquo repeatedly appears to Macbeth in crowded rooms but is visible only to him. In *Hamlet*, the ghost appears to several people on the castle battlements but only to Hamlet in his mother's bedchamber. In the words of E.H. Seymour: "If we judge by sheer reason, no doubt we must banish ghosts from the stage altogether, but if we regulate our fancy by the laws of superstition, we shall find that spectres are privileged to be visible to whom they will (E.H. Seymour "Remarks, Critical, Conjectural, and Explanatory on Shakespeare" in *Macbeth A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare* [New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1963] 211).

Shakespeare's audiences, and his plays, were the products of their culture. Since the validity of any literary work can best be judged by its public acceptance, not to mention its lasting power, it seems that Shakespeare's ghosts and witches were, and are, enormously popular. If modern audiences and critics find themselves a bit skeptical, then they might consider bringing along a supply of Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief." Elizabethans simply had no need of it.

## The Tempest in Modern Terms

**Activity:** Have the students translate one of the two speeches below into their own words, encouraging the use of slang, colloquialisms, or regional jargon.

**Caliban** I must eat my dinner.  
This island's mine by Sycorax my mother,  
Which thou tak'st from me.  
When thou cam'st first,  
Thou strok'st me and made much of me, wouldst give me  
Water with berries in't, and teach me how  
To name the bigger light, and how the less,  
That burn by day and night; and then I lov'd thee  
And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,  
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.  
Curs'd be I that did so! All the charms  
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!  
For I am all the subjects that you have,  
Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me  
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me  
The rest o' th' island (1.2.330–344).

**Caliban** All the infections that the sun sucks up  
From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall, and make him  
By inch-meal a disease! His spirits hear me,  
And yet I needs must curse. But they'll nor pinch,  
Fright me with urchin-shows, pitch me i' th' mire,  
Nor lead me, like a fire-brand, in the dark  
Out of my way, unless he bid 'em; but  
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 (2.2.1–14).

## Elementary School - Discussion Questions

1. Why is it significant that the play begins with a storm at sea?
2. If you were shipwrecked, what five personal items would you try to save and why?
3. Think about how you might tell a close friend the story of your past. How would you tend to characterize yourself and your actions in your story? What about Prospero's story? Does he take any responsibility for what happened to him? Should he?
4. What connection does Shakespeare establish between outward appearance and inner spirit? Do you think this is true? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever been angry with a friend or sibling? Has a friend or sibling ever been angry with you? How upset were you? How did you deal with your anger? Looking back on the experience, would you have done anything differently? How did Prospero deal with his anger? Did he deal with it appropriately?

## Middle/High School Discussion Questions

1. Why does Miranda have such immediate empathy for the men in the ship? Why is she so merciful towards the shipwreck victims but has only contempt and hatred for Caliban? Since we learn that she has lived on the deserted island with her father since childhood, where would she have learned these ideas? Why do they differ between the men and Caliban?
2. What is your reaction to Prospero's treatment of Caliban? Does Caliban have a legitimate complaint against Prospero? Why does Prospero keep Caliban as his servant even when he despises him? Why do you think Caliban attempted to "violate the honor" of Miranda? Did he or is this the way his acts were interpreted by Prospero and Miranda?
3. How has Caliban changed throughout his time with Prospero and Miranda? After they leave, how will he respond to having the island to himself again? View clips of Tom Hanks in Castaway. Do human beings require human interactions to survive?
4. What does it take to form a real relationship? Do Miranda and Ferdinand form a real relationship through the course of the play? Does love-at-first sight really exist?
5. What is power? Why do people want power? How do people go about obtaining power? Is the quest for power worth it at all costs? How does Prospero go about regaining his power? Are his methods just? If you could obtain your ultimate power what would it be and how would you go about obtaining it?
6. One of the reasons The Tempest is sometimes considered a comedy is that all the characters are forgiven for their misdeeds. Prospero forgives everyone in the very last scene of the play. Discuss when you think he makes the decision to forgive the characters that have betrayed him. Did those forgiven really repent? Do you think there is a possibility of Prospero being wronged again? Are there any characters that deserve an apology from Prospero?
7. An allegory is defined as a work in which the characters and events are to be stood as representing other things and symbolically expressing a deeper, often spiritual, moral, or political meaning. The Tempest could be an allegory for Shakespeare's life. At the end of the play, Prospero gives up his book and his staff. This was Shakespeare's last play. After The Tempest was written he did not write again. What similarities are there between Prospero and Shakespeare? Find four lines that could be interpreted as Shakespeare moralizing about life and the end of his career.

## Study Questions

1. Prospero's speech to Miranda (1.2) is unusually long. What purpose other than clarifying the narrative background and how the father and daughter came to be on the island, does this section of the scene serve?
2. Compare and contrast Ariel and Caliban. In what ways are they the same? In what ways are they different?
3. Describe the first meeting between Miranda and Ferdinand. How is Ferdinand introduced and what is Miranda's impression of him?
4. How are the purposes of Antonio and Sebastian thwarted?
5. What was Prospero's purpose in giving laborious work to Ferdinand?
6. What sort of duke was Prospero before he was overthrown? What sort of duke is he likely to be after he reclaims his dukedom?
7. Nature and society are frequently contrasted in *The Tempest*, and they occasionally conflict. Trace this theme throughout the course of the play.
8. *The Tempest* is a play with relatively little action. What are some of the reasons for its continued popularity?
9. In Greek mythology, Ceres, who appears in the masque of Act 4, is associated with the concept of rebirth, a return to life, a theme that a number of the characters refer to in their closing speeches. In your opinion, has Shakespeare restored the characters to their former selves, or has he changed or developed them during the course of the play?
10. The epilogue of the play is, in many ways, ambiguous. What are some possible interpretations of its meaning? What do you feel may have been Shakespeare's reasons for including it?
11. What is symbolized when Prospero breaks his staff and buries his books of magic?

## **Activities**

### **From The Shakespeare Theatre’s First Folio Curriculum Guides**

#### **Stormy Weather**

It’s no surprise that a play named *The Tempest* opens in the middle of a huge storm at sea. But how can a director and a team of designers create that storm onstage? Ask students to brainstorm different ways to present the storm and shipwreck onstage. Then break the class into three groups and assign each a budget—one group has a high school drama club budget, one has a regional theatre budget, and one has a Broadway theatre budget. Each group should develop a concept or proposal for the storm scene, complete with lights, set, sound, props, and costumes, considering their respective budgets. Have each group present their ideas to the class. How does budget affect the staging of the storm? How realistically should the storm be staged?

#### **Be a Sound Designer**

*The Tempest* is one of Shakespeare’s most sound-heavy plays. Have students read Caliban’s speech: “Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,/Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not” (3.2.135–136). Then go back and ask students to pick out as many references to sound as they can find, both in the text and in the stage directions. Creating a sound design for a play or movie is an important part of telling the story. What kinds of sounds exist on the island in *The Tempest*? Ask students to create one sound cue for a moment in the play, using music, voices or found items (recorded or live) to create the sound. How does sound help to tell the story?

#### **Ariel and Caliban in Visual Art**

Ariel and Caliban, two of Shakespeare’s non-human characters, have left much room for interpretations in how they can be portrayed. The nineteenth century produced a number of artists who were inspired by Shakespeare and put scenes of his play on canvas. Visit [http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/TempestPaintings.html](http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/TempestPaintings.html) and find a painting depicting Ariel or Caliban from *The Tempest*. Compare how you expected these characters to look with the artist’s rendering. How do artists take ideas from literature and incorporate them into their own work. Ask students to create their own work of art based on character descriptions. Keep these images in mind when you see the play and compare all three interpretations.

#### **Slaves and Servants**

In *The Tempest*, Ariel and Caliban both serve Prospero and Miranda. In the Folio version of the play, Caliban is described as a “savage and deformed slave.” Given that Ariel and Caliban are “natives” of the island, what class issues does their relationship to Prospero bring up? What responsibilities does a director have in staging *The Tempest* for a contemporary audience? Are Ariel and Caliban positive or negative characters? How would you portray them today? How did the director at the Sacramento Theatre Company portray Caliban and Ariel?

#### **The Tempest Themes**

Create a song, a poem, or a piece of artwork to demonstrate the themes of *The Tempest*.

## Apology Letter

Apologizing to another person is often a difficult task. Write an apology letter as one of the characters in *The Tempest* to another character.

## Are You My Mother?

Many female characters in Shakespeare's later plays grow up never knowing their mothers. Ask students to consider why Shakespeare would make this choice? How would these plays be different if a mother was present? Ask students to rewrite Act 1 Scene 2 of *The Tempest*, adding a third character—Miranda's mother. How does the scene change? How might this change affect the rest of the play?

## Water, Water Everywhere

Water imagery abounds in *The Tempest* and plays a vital role in the events that unfold. Ask students to share all of the ways that water is used in the play. Then ask students to pick one example of water imagery to recreate. They can make a collage, write a poem, use their bodies, voices, instruments, or any other form of expression to demonstrate the feeling that water evokes.

## What To Do After You See This Play

Encourage your students to reflect on the play in some of the following ways. We would love to have copies of some of the writings or artwork your students create.

- 1. Write:**
  - Write a play or scene in response to the play.
  - Improvise a scene with a partner and then write it down.
  - Write a soliloquy for one of the characters in *The Tempest*.
  - Write a scene for two of the characters in the play that you think we should have seen but that was not in Shakespeare's play. For example, a prologue scene set in Milan between Prospero and his brother Antonio before the coup.
  - Write an epilogue. For example, what happens to Miranda and Ferdinand after the story ends? How about Trinculo and Stephano? Prospero and Antonio? Brothers King Alonso and Sebastian?
  - Write a review of the production.
- 2. Draw**
  - Draw images from the production.
  - Draw a poster for the production of *The Tempest*.
  - Create a collage of images from magazines in response to the play.
- 3. Create a performance of scenes from *The Tempest*.**

## Lesson Plans

### From A Teacher's Guide to the Signet Classic Edition of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

#### Revenge or Mercy

To enable students to see personal relevance in the revenge or mercy theme of *The Tempest*, present the class with a problem situation such as the one below. Have them free write their responses and then share their reactions in pairs or small groups. Lead a whole class discussion using the students' responses or asking students to take a stand about the way they would act in the situation: take revenge or be forgiving.

You have been elected president of the Student Council during the last election, but your brother betrays you. Because you are very involved with your studies, you allow your brother, who is vice president of the Student Council, to take most of your duties.

He seems to enjoy the work, and this allows you to be free to really get into your multimedia and English classes. But you also enjoy the status of being president, and you make sure that the work of the council is being done. However, early in the spring semester, your brother engineers your downfall. He goes to the faculty advisor with whom he is friendly and enlists his help in deposing you. At a council meeting, the advisor charges you with dereliction of duty and kicks you out of office. He installs your brother as president. Hurt and aggrieved, you withdraw within yourself and reflect on what has happened to you.

Through reflection, meditation, and study of the classics, you develop powers that you did not know you had before. Also, you discover an audio tape you had been using to record environmental noise for your multimedia class somehow picked up the conversation of your brother and the advisor when they plotted to force you out. When the activity bus breaks down on a field trip that the council officers and the advisors are taking, you offer the two a ride to get help. They are stunned when you put the tape in your player and play back their conversation to them. You have them in your power. Now you have a choice. Do you go for vengeance, get the advisor fired and your brother publicly dishonored and maybe suspended from school? Or do you go for mercy, forgive your brother and the advisor and have the advisor reinstate you as president and your brother as vice president? What would have to happen before you could feel merciful to your brother?

#### Utopias

While for most Europeans the new American colonies represented vast economic advantages, at least some thinkers saw the new lands as an opportunity to experiment in forms of government and social systems, to overcome some of the failures of the past. Shakespeare alludes to this utopian urge in the speeches of Gonzalo. To help students understand the utopian theme, have them do the following:

1. Describe the world you would create if you were given the chance to design an "ideal" society.
2. Compare your ideas to Gonzalo's description of an ideal commonwealth in Act 2.1.148–168. What do you think of his vision? Have you used any of these features in the world you described? Would such a state be able to survive? How would success be defined in this world? What would keep people from competing?
3. Role play: How would it feel to live in the utopia described by yourself or Gonzalo? To prepare for the role play, make a list of the positive and negative aspects of life in an ideal state. Then with

two other students, prepare a scene from the daily life of your utopia. Create a dialogue for the scene which suggests some positive and negative aspects of the life.

4. Read another piece of utopian literature, such as the following (the entire book, or a short selection):

- *Candide* by Voltaire
- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- *Herland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- *The Republic* by Plato
- *Utopia* by Sir Thomas More

The selection can be short, such as the description of Candide's journey to El Dorado or More's description of the daily life of the people in Utopia.

**Ask:** What elements do these writings have in common with Gonzalo's speech? Are you aware of similar attempts to create ideal communities in the modern world? What is the impulse behind such communities? Why do they so often fail? Do these writers intend for these ideas to be a blueprint for a community, or do they have some other purpose in mind?

# Study Guide Questions: Engage With the Play

By Anna Miles

Take charge of your theatre-going experience and make it your own by asking yourself questions before, during, and after watching a play.

## Questions to ask before the play:

If you **HAVE** read the play:

How did you envision the set, or the visual world of the play, while reading?

How did you imagine the characters looked while reading the play?

What themes did you notice repeating throughout the play?

What images jumped out at you while reading the play?

How would you describe the central theme of the play in one sentence?

If you **HAVEN'T** read the play:

Do you know anything about the play? If so, what do you know?

In General:

When you think about "theatre," what impressions come to mind? What does "theatre" mean to you?

What do you expect your experience to be when you watch a play? Do you expect to be bored? Excited? Engaged? Curious? Angry? Tired?

## Questions to ask after the play:

If you **READ THE PLAY BEFORE SEEING IT:**

How did the production set differ from what you had imagined while reading the play? How was it similar? How did these changes affect your understanding of the story?

Did the characters look different from how you envisioned them looking while reading the play? Did they sound different? Act differently? How did these changes affect your understanding and opinion of each character? How did these changes affect your understanding of the overall story?

How did the themes and images you noticed while reading translate to performance? Did the same themes and images jump out at you? Did you notice new ones?

Did this particular production seem to have the same central theme, or a different central theme from the one you discovered while reading? What elements of the staging, acting, or design helped convey the theme?

Did they play gain or lose anything in performance? Did you enjoy reading it more, or watching it?

If you **DIDN'T READ THE PLAY BEFORE SEEING IT:**

How did the play live up to your expectations? Did it turn out the way you thought it would? Was your knowledge of the play correct?

Were you able to follow the story?

Which part of the story did you most respond to? What themes and images jumped out at you?

Which character did you most relate to? Why?

In General:

How did this production change or confirm your original impressions of "theatre"?

How did your experience watching the play differ from how you expected it would go?

In your own words, how would you summarize the plot of the play? How is the plot different from the story, or the thematic implications, in the play?

Did you feel the story was relevant to your life? How and why?

Did you feel the story said something about our society, or about the world at large? If so, what?

Do you feel this story is an important one to tell and keep telling? How and why?

What kind of stories do you most respond to?

# Theatre Etiquette

- Arrive at the theater on time.
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
- Turn off your cell phone. Do not speak on the phone or text during the performance.
- Pay attention to announcements that are made prior to the show about the rules of the theater you are attending and the location of the fire exits.
- Don't speak during the performance unless you are encouraged by the performers to participate.
- Remember that the Overture (introductory music) in musical theater is part of the performance, so be quiet when it begins.
- Do not take pictures during the performance. It can be very distracting to the actors and can cause a mishap. It can also be a violation of an actor's contract.
- Remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, wait for an appropriate break in the show. It is rude to get up in the middle of a quiet moment.
- Do not eat or drink in the theater.
- Do not put your feet up on the seats or balcony and do not kick the seat in front of you.
- Don't put or throw anything on the stage.
- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when it is appropriate during the performance.
- Do applaud when the performance is over... this tells the performers and crew that you appreciate their work.
- Stand and applaud if you really thought the show was great (a standing ovation).
- Do not whistle, stomp your feet, or scream out to the performers except for a Bravo or Brava.

## Additional Resources

### ArtsEdge

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/>

ArtsEdge offers free, standards-based teaching materials for use in and out of the classroom, as well as professional development resources, student materials, and guidelines for arts-based instruction and assessment.

### Utah Shakespeare Festival Education Website

<http://www.bard.org/education.html>

Expand your horizons, your outlook, your understanding with our myriad of educational resources, not just for students, but for students of life.

### ProjectExplorer, Ltd.

<http://www.projectexplorer.org/>

ProjectExplorer, Ltd. is a not-for-profit organization that provides an interactive global learning experience to the kindergarten through twelfth grade community. Providing users globally the opportunity to explore the world from their own computer, it is a free, all-inclusive site that uses story-based learning to spark students' imaginations.

### The Complete Works of William Shakespeare

<http://shakespeare.met.edu/>

The web's first edition of the complete works of William Shakespeare. This site has offered Shakespeare's plays and poetry to the internet community since 1993. Downloadable plays are available by scene or in their entirety.

### Absolute Shakespeare

<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>

Absolute Shakespeare provides resources for William Shakespeare's plays, sonnets, poems, quotes, biography and the legendary Globe Theatre. Absolute Shakespeare also offers a review of each character's role in each play including defining quotes and character motivations for all major characters.

### Royal Shakespeare Company

<http://www.rsc.org.uk/learning/Learning.aspx>

This site provides resources materials for teachers and students from Royal Shakespeare Company.

### Folger Shakespeare Library

<http://www.folger.edu/>

The Folger Shakespeare Library, located on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., is a world-class research center on Shakespeare and on the early modern age in the West. It is home to the world's largest and finest collection of Shakespeare materials and to major collections of other rare Renaissance books, manuscripts, and works of art.