

Perception of the Supernatural Worlds in Shakespeare's <i>The Tempest</i>			Literature
		Keywords: Caliban, Magical Power, Prospero, Shakespeare, Supernatural Worlds, The Tempest.	
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Abstract			
<p>In this paper, our aim is to focus on Shakespeare's <i>The Tempest</i> in the light of the supernatural worlds, where they play the crucial functions in the form of fairies, goblin, ghosts, apparitions, witches, and evil spirits to develop the thematic materials including ambiguity, confusion, ambivalence, domination, the plot-construction, the art of characterization and the general philosophical suggestions. It aims to look at applying the critical comments of several critics and scholars including Thiselton, Dodgers, Clark, Sears, Gibson, Nuttall, Dobree, Egan, Puck, Traversi, and Strachey through whom our study is minutely analyzed with a view to exposing the supernatural elements. In this paper, we will also discuss on Shakespeare's background, the attitudes of the Elizabethan people towards the metaphysical elements of the supernatural worlds in literature, and to a limited extent, its dramatic qualities and techniques. This paper also looks at the character, Prospero illuminated by the magical power through whom the whole submission will be unveiled to the modern audience and the readers. Actually, Shakespeare has emphasized the supernatural frameworks to undermine the traditional values of Romance, which basically resolve around the celebration of human love and adoration.</p>			

Introduction

In Shakespeare's time, many superstitions and supernatural beliefs were current. Faiths in magical power were very widespread. Two kinds of magicians were supposed to exist during the Elizabethan England those who commanded the services of certain superior supernatural beings; and those who were believed to have entered into a contact with the devil. The Supernatural, in the form of fairies, ghosts, witches or visionary phenomena, play a crucial role in defining the thematic materials, plot, the characters and the general philosophical suggestions articulated in the play. We refer to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which lacks the depth of intensity and seriousness having characterized the others and a discussion of the role of the supernatural would add little to my study, which is concerned with the philosophical repercussions afforded by Shakespeare's treatment of the supernatural material. Throughout the play, we rely for our support on what we consider to be the fairly typical response of an audience, Elizabethan and modern alike, and in this way, we feel justified in offering an assessment of the supernatural worlds in this play.

Within the chosen play, the term "supernatural" describes any occurrences that cannot be rationally explained by the characters. As these supernatural situations or events dominate the victims, they would seem to imply a certain spiritual presence or existence that man cannot control or comprehend. The ambiguity surrounding this independent level of spiritual life is essential to my interpretation of this play, and in fact, constitutes the cardinal characteristics. To anticipate our study: Shakespeare seems to use the supernatural for its very indefinable and perplexing nature. In this play, as we will show, it is used as a dramatic strategy to portray uncertainty, ambiguity and doubt, as well as the more obvious functions such as transformation and prophecy through pertaining to the plot. Shakespeare intends this ambiguity in all cases as it is closely related to the characterization of the hero and the problems we encounter here. The sinister air of dubiousness surrounds the realm of fairies in *The Tempest*. In this way, the supernatural seems to be fundamental to the moral subject matter in the play which dictates certain moral values by negative implication.

There is a critical material on this connection between the supernatural and characterization and the dramatic features. There are two types of literary critics who have commented on Shakespeare's treatment of supernatural worlds. In the first group of critics, Rev. T.F. Thiselton (*Folklore in Shakespeare*) and I.W. Dodgers (*Ghosts in Shakespeare*) study the kinds of supernatural beliefs and superstitions; Shakespeare was dealing with the documented Elizabethan background of his contemporary thoughts and imaginations. There are numerous books and articles that deal with the affairs of the witches, the ghost and the fairies in the Shakespearean plays. The second group of literary critics attempt to co-operate Shakespeare's attitude towards the supernatural along with his biography. These critics like C.Clark (*Shakespeare and the Supernatural*) and L.C.Sears (*Shakespeare's Philosophy of Evil*) generally follow the moods suggested by the supernatural plays as indicative of Shakespeare's mental and spiritual development. The following reference applied by C. Clark focuses on historical rather than interpretive:

Studying Shakespeare's history from the supernatural plays alone, we surmise that he embarked upon life with all the easy optimism of youth (A Midsummer Night's Dream); that he soon came face to face with obstacles, temptations, and difficulties which sobered his light heartedness; (Hamlet) that, as he battled with all the disillusionment and disappointment which seemed to be the inevitable concomitants of human life he found himself the prey of cynicism and despair (Macbeth) and finally, that he passed through the valley, and came once more to the peace and calm of a new faith and a new confidence in a benign providence (The Tempest) (Clark, 1931: P.105).

J.Paul S.R. Gibson in *Shakespeare's Use of the Supernatural* focuses on the useful survey of all the supernatural materials encountered in his canon. His aim is to list the material and to discuss its significance as far as it relates to Shakespeare's background, his contemporaries's treatment of the supernatural in literature, and to a limited extent, its dramatic qualities. His readings of the Shakespearean plays in this regards are cursory and orthodox. Although our reading for our article has been influenced by different critics there seems to be no one who proceed from a dramatic view point with regard to the supernatural. Evidently, Shakespeare used the supernatural consistently as a dramatic tool to portray similar ideas and themes including ambiguity, confusion, ambivalence and domination as articulated in *The Tempest*.

Our intention in this study is to discuss various types of moral and metaphysical elements of the supernatural worlds that are not encompassed by the general term of "romance" in *The Tempest*. Shakespeare focused the supernatural issues to undermine the usual philosophical standpoint on the traditional Romances, and new areas of metaphysical speculation. While not disputing his use of the "Romantic" framework, we will argue that he invested it with a quality of philosophical suggestion by rejecting this general title. The term "Romance" implies a final situation of harmonious conflict, reconciliation and total contentment on the part of the characters entangled.

To interpret the play, *The Tempest* is to ignore certain dubious elements which are incorporated in the medium and realm of the supernatural. Our study concentrates mainly on the ambiguous nature of the play, on both of the physical and metaphysical levels. The discussion will cover three major areas. There is a study of the major dramatic theme, an analysis of the character, Prospero as illuminated by his magical power, and finally, a general discussion on the value structure offered in the play which is defined by the supernatural worlds.

Our argument with A.D.Nuttall's concept of *The Tempest* can be interpreted metaphysically and not allegorically.¹ As Nuttall says: "It will not keep still long enough for one to affix an allegorical label."² I will attempt to show that Shakespeare used black magic as a dramatic strategy with a view to unveiling the traditional norms of the Elizabethan period dealt with necromancy and romances structured by the supernatural

worlds. There appears to be two major issues in the play. There are first bewilderment leading to a questioning and distrusting of external appearances, demonstrated by most of the characters exposed to Prospero's necromancy, and secondly, tyranny or domination following usurpation, shown in the plot and in Prospero's relationship with Caliban and Ariel. Incidentally, these themes correspond to the states of mind experienced by the victimized of Prospero's white magic.³ These themes are: confusion and uncertainty, which is related to the theme of the ambiguity of appearances, and surrender to the magical influence, which leads to the thematic structure and domination.

This connection deals with the integral role of the supernatural play through containing the sources for the theme in the very nature of its influence. The theme broadens out to form a general philosophical speculation on the very nature of reality and freedom. The thematic area is, closely, linked by the general premise that "things are not what they seem." This refers to the deceptive ambitions of men as well as to the physical level of transforming reality for which the magical power proceeds. Through the study of the supernatural occurrences, I will attempt to show the accumulating *aura* of ambiguity that surrounds appearances, and this metaphysical insight that has been insinuated by Shakespeare. Ariel's song to Ferdinand serves as an appropriate introduction to the strange nature of the enchanted island:

These are pearls that were his eyes:

Nothing of him that doth fade,

But doth suffer a sea-change

Into something rich and strange.

Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell: (I.ii.401)⁴

The song suggests a demise that does not decay but rejuvenates. It is suggested to Ferdinand that his father has been transformed into something "rich and strange" yet this is not picked up again or amplified which express the supernatural occurrences directly related to Prospero's course of revenge. These events exude an air of uncertainty that is never resolved by involving the audience along with the characters in the sense of confusion entertainingly. While the play opens with the apparently violent "tempest", its scale is measured by the terrific sense faced by the passengers on the ship. The earthy insults of the boatswain firmly lodge the scene in realistic mood and there is no questioning the physicality of the storm. We, the audience, have experienced in the same way as the characters have, and we must concentrate our thoughts and imaginations on the comic verve that Ariel appears on the scene with an experiencing psychology:

Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,

I flam'd amazement: sometime I'd divide,

And burn in many places... (I.ii.196)

The situation has changed from the fear of imminent disaster to the controlled suavity that Prospero exudes. In *The Tempest*, while watching Prospero to set up the situations, we are also influenced and affected by them. Miranda, who is the representative of the audience by the initial reaction to the disaster, says: "Oh! I have suffered/With those I saw suffer," and she must be informed of the safety. This dramatic situation characterizes the form of tragi-comedy that defines the play. Significantly, these two realms of tragedy and comedy are placed together to laugh away an apparent tribulation in an unnatural process.

The two dramatic norms are held in an uncertain balance and contribute directly to that ambiguity that we are pursuing here. Another type of reversal is also observed in Prospero's description of the trip to the mysterious island. He remembers that Miranda's childish smiles were interfused with his sighs. We are faced with a situation that fared contrary to our expectations. The position has been established in this scene, that the storm was, surprisingly, harmless and illusory and that Prospero is about to work some program of revenge. However, Miranda and the audience are not informed in details; instead she is lulled to sleep and the audience remains as ignorant as she does. Not only do we feel a certain frustration in half believing in the reality of the storm, but now, we are forced to speculate on Prospero's plans. We are offered no alternative "norm" characters and our attention comes to focus on Prospero than on the magic that he is about to perform.

The next magical occurrence he manipulates is the "exchanged eyes" of Ferdinand and Miranda. While they intend to glance at one another, Prospero addresses the former in a harsh manner that he has manipulated the encounter. He threatens to "hate" Miranda if she pleads for Ferdinand, and denounces him as a spy and a traitor. His attitude is significant as he behaves contrary to what one would expect of him in his reception of an innocent unsuspecting prince. Despite his good intentions, he tries to invert the significances of appearances for her. At the end of Act One, we are in a state of suspicion, not only about Prospero's intentions, but also about the purpose of the necromancy that lulls Miranda to sleep and which plagues and enchants Ferdinand with music.

The courtly group, in Act Two, propagates a different kind of reversal of expectations through their dialogue. Gonzalo, the kind hearted counselor with his sincere views on the government, is mocked by the witty but crooked pair, Antonio and Sebastian. As Bonamy Dobree points out⁵ that Gonzalo is, in fact, portrayed as a garrulous old man, and the jibes against him are accurate and humors. As Dobree indicates, it would have been easy enough for Shakespeare to show Antonio and Sebastian eventually beaten down by the old man, but he chose not to reflect the social truth that often true virtue is capped by empty rhetoric.

Thus the situation is transformed by Ariel's magical power, and then sleep is forced upon the characters. The strangeness of this languor is emphasized by the men: "wondrous heavy"; "What a strange drowsiness possesses them." Antonio handles this opportunity to sound out Sebastian's inclinations in joining him to murder Alonso. Sufficiently confused by the sudden drowsiness that has overcome the others, Antonio answers with the image of sleep walking: "This is a strange repose to be asleep/ With eyes wide open, standing, speaking moving/ And yet so fast asleep." Although this image articulates Antonio's surprise at Sebastian's instruction, it picks up the idea of the island's "strangeness" in its suggestion of unnatural behavior. Anxiety is, then, evident in their rapid questioning. We sense that the supernatural influence has affected their language as they now resort to riddles to discover "meanings", and speak at one remove;

*Antonio: Thou let'st thy fortune sleep - die, rather; wink'st while thou art
waking.*

*Sebastian: Thou dost snore distinctly;
There's meaning in thy snores.*

*Antonio: What a sleep were this
For your advancement! Do you understand me? (II.i.210)*

Meaning has been relegated to a level of ambiguous intercourse, reflecting a general distrust of outward appearances in language.

The exchange indicates the way in which experience on the island is becoming harder to tangibly contain and define. The sleep image they speak about the murder with their subsequent deceptive behavior as they pretend loyalty to Alonso. When their plot is ruined by Ariel's intervention, their "excuse" depends on the strangeness of the isle: "We heard a hollow burst of bellowing/ Like bulls or rather lions./... It struck mine ear most terribly." We, as the audience, have been one step ahead of the action in this case why men were given a chance to murder the king. This is never resolved as the couple never repents outwardly and the conspiracy is concealed. The event should be seen in the light of Shakespeare questioning the validity and importance of ambition through the dramatic medium of necromancy, as it distorts the face of reality and manipulates events outside of chance. Magic renders their maliciousness futile and impotent, and thus ambition is mocked by the Elizabethan dramatist in this way.

The theme of ambiguous appearances leads to the realm of farce and is developed into a lower comic in the next scene with Stephano and Trinculo. Although the accidents and mistaken identities provoke laughter, the main focus seems to be concerned with the strangeness of perception that is mainly being investigated by Shakespeare. Stephano's song is not in a tune that he knows or recognizes. He does not respond to the peculiarity with the same seriousness and fear the courtiers did. On meeting Caliban, he assimilates his surprise in an earthy logical manner: "I have not scap'd drowning to be afeard now of your four legs." When Trinculo emerges, Stephano is in a state of mind where he can believe anything. His bliss acceptance of the logically impossible constitutes an amusing: contrast to the courtier's responses to the magical events. Although no specific magic is being observed in this scene, its expectation influences their thoughts and expressions. Deception and confusion are still being explored but in a comic vein, and in this way, a more insidious, less obvious control over the audience's reactions is being exerted. The creature's worshipping of the bottle as "celestial liquor" shows a pathetic, misplaced idealism, which develops the theme of confused loyalties and principles. On a comic level, this infatuation parallels Prospero's. His final renunciation of magic suggests that his worship was also misguided and unwise.

The supernatural interventions become more of a challenge and create confusions that cannot be easily assimilated. The farcical situation of Ariel speaking for Trinculo succeeds on the comic level when the latter gets repeatedly cudged by Stephano. It also develops the theme of ambiguous meaning in the argument over lying. Caliban's righteous words to Trinculo: "I do not lie" elevate him above the level of counterfeit and pretence because of his simplicity. He can express his bare fancy, which, in the context of the play's plot of duplicity and facade, is a virtue. However, this is mocked in the face of human pseudo sophistication and "knowledge" when Trinculo sneers: "That a monster should be such a natural." Shakespeare hardly offers Caliban as the recommended "norm", but his strait-forward honesty and narrowness of perception are preferred above the scheming pretensions of the courtiers. However, this is only a half truth as both sides are condemned, and Shakespeare's attitude to the natural savage is never completely apparent. Caliban's language is more melodious than Ariel's, which raises the problem of their relative values. His gentle reassurance to Stephano near the end of the Third Act is winning in its expression of trusting vulnerability:

Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,

Sounds and sweet airs, that gives delight and hurt not (III.ii.133).

Our attitude is divided over Caliban and never resolved as he deserves neither punishment nor praise for his natural instincts. His speech also emphasizes the supernatural nature of the island which defies definition. Back to the dramatic situation, the tunes of Ariel perplex the two fools despite their denials. Stephano in his confusion associates the experience with a fairy tale: "I remember the story." and it is obvious that he is in a state of semi-reverie, blindly following Ariel's cues. As Nuttall points out that *The Tempest* is a study of the

configurations different people put on the events, rather than an entertainment based on the sensational events themselves. Sebastian thinks of his stomach; Alonso is mystified and frightened to eat; and Gonzalo is, happily, contented admiring the gestures of the spirits, because he has no moral cause for alarm. The sudden disappearance of the banquet with Ariel's rebuke develops the theme of expectation on the dramatic level of the moral plot. Gonzalo realizes the significance of their horrified attitudes: "All three of them are desperate: their great guilt/ Like poison given to work a great time after/ Now 'gins to bite the spirits." Here is an example of the supernatural operating from moralistic grounds and the audience's response is directed and fixed.

However, the next scene perplexes again, and the value of Prospero's magical powers is questioned. The masque of the reapers is conjured for Ferdinand and Miranda in celebration of their betrothal. R.Egan describes Iris words as "Overtly artificial and calculatedly unconvincing".⁶ Her description of nature is in contradiction to the pastoral abundance and fertility:

To make coid nymphs chaste crowns; and thy broom groves

Whose shadow the dismissed bachelor loves,

Being lass lorn; thy pole clipt vineyard;

And thy sea marge, sterile and rocky hard (IV.i.66).

Although the rest of the masque is conventional in its dialogue, its general lack of vivacity, particularly in the early imagery, promotes a flat "sterile" mood. This accord with Prospero's insistence on the preservation of Miranda's virginity indicates certain "sterility" in his aesthetic withdrawal from the world. It seems appropriate that the masque, which seems to have been conducted on a discordant note, should suddenly "heavily vanish... to a strange hollow and confused noise." The seriousness has imposed itself upon the light hearted scene, although in this case, there is a certain nervous tension and awe in the atmosphere anyway, due to Prospero's command:

...Silence!

Juno and Ceres whisper seriously;

There is something else to do: hush, and be mute,

Or else our spell is marred (IV.i.124).

His seriousness is perplexing as it suggests a certain tone of menace which should not attend the trivial, merry demonstration of the Aerial creatures. Prospero's depression also seems out of place in the midst of a marriage celebration; the sudden recollection of Caliban's plot is insufficient explanation for it. His thoughts deal with our discussion: appearances mocking at the nature of true reality. He tells Ferdinand that the spirits are actors, which are confusing in itself, and they have vanished into "thin air." However, his thoughts leave the stage and extend over the audience into life itself in his existential conclusion;

We are such stuff.

As dreams are made on; and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep (Iv.i.156).

The dreamy image is very apt in the play's context as it takes the question of physical reality one step further than the immediate situation, to contain all of life. Again the audience's standpoint has been undermined. From the stance of watching the masque with Prospero, we are now included in his general vision of life and the dramatic framework has been abandoned. Reference to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is appropriate to illustrate, through contrast, the type of security that the audience is not given in *The Tempest*. Puck's last words firmly implant the audience in reality and urge the interpretation of a fictional dream upon them:

If we shadows have offended,

Think but this, and all is mended,

That you have but slumbered here

While these visions did appear (V.ii.54).⁷

There is little significance suggested other than the sheer entertainment value of the play. The audience, in this rationalizing approach, can confidently suspend its disbelief. Puck's speech is reassuring and delightful, and in no way unseats the common sense through the question of reality. In *The Tempest*, suspension of disbelief is not always possible when it is set aside by Prospero's meditations on the insubstantiality of life. His ideas are not contained within the supernatural framework to the situation in hand. They extend outside, without explanation and attribute a greater seriousness to the magical scene that has been played out. The speculation can be set beside other metaphysical utterances by Shakespearean characters. Unlike *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the normal fictional scope of dramatic terms has suffered a metaphysical revision, for reasons that we are not sure of. We, as the audience, suffer that same kind of disorientation where the dramatic boundaries of credibility have been ignored. Nuttall describes this feeling as a sense of being "cheated" of our rights as an audience. The accumulative sense of disorientation and uncertainty has been built up through unexplained capricious feats of magic such as the eerie quality of voices and song in the air, such as the boatswain's report of "...strange and several noises / Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains/ And no diversity of sounds, all horrible." The peaceful music of which Caliban spoke earlier is evidently not consistent. Other examples are the unexplained drowsiness, the sudden lapse of attention in Stephano's song, and the strange tune they find themselves singing. "flout 'em and cout 'em (Caliban) That's not the tune." These confusions, rather than promoting the general benevolence of magic, such as that seem in their "new dyed" clothes, tend to evoke a mood of wonderment and curiosity which is in keeping with the metaphysical theme.

By undermining the traditional stance of the audience, Shakespeare demands a reassessment of values which will not accord with the "Romantic" principles that envisage a life lived "happily ever after." Having forsaken his magic in preparation for his return, Prospero seems to be weak and begs for help, in the epilogue. Apart from the conventional request for applause, these words convey a seriousness that leaves one wondering how far *The Tempest* can be termed as Romance of a comedy:

Now I want

Spirits to enforce, Art to enchant;

And my ending is despair,

Unless I be reliev'd by prayer (Epilogue, 13-16).

The religious terms in the middle section of this speech would appear in a conventional epilogue which deals with the desired reaction from the audience.

Also, this epilogue seems to take on a didactic, almost confessional form judging from Prospero's choice of words: 'crimes', 'faults', and 'despair.' This professed weakness is too striking to warrant a metaphoric interpretation for the sake of a conventional ending. These words are understood as a cry for help from a man who has learnt certain truths about himself and human nature, who has put his faith in something which has proved empty, and who is now bereft of any philosophical form of comfort. His words to the courtiers emphasize this: "And thence retire me to my Milan, where / Every third thought shall be my grave." This attitude of resignation has already been witnessed in the masque scene. Prospero speaks of his disillusionment from the point of view of an old, tired man: "Sir, I am vexed;/ Bear with my weakness; my old brain is troubled: / Be not disturbed with my infirmity." From the point of view of the main character, a "happy" ending would seem to be very far away at the conclusion of this play.

Satisfaction in the revenge plot is also frustrated at the end of the play. The characters are more frightened into submission than moved by repentance. Stephano and Trinculo are sobered by being caught in the act by Ariel. Antonio and Sebastian are, equally, dumbfounded by the discovery of their schemes, but do not show signs of repentance. Sebastian has nothing to say to Prospero, thus emphasizing his unchanged, sullen rebelliousness. The audience is not offered a scene of reconciliation, but a situation portraying truthful, likely reactions of real men. Shakespeare, at this point, seems to have moved beyond the premise of the sonnets that love is man's salvation. His final philosophy, like the conclusion of the play, seems to be one of a compromise of discordant elements. This accumulation of evidence around the supernatural medium seems to indicate a dissatisfaction with the traditional benevolence of a love story, and a desire to prove that life is, at best, ethereal and transitory, and at worst, deceptive, many faceted and not to be idealized in any way.

This leads us into the second related theme of tyranny and usurpation, as this is, closely, associated with the duplicity of external reality. There are two obvious areas of reference here, both of which are defined by the supernatural framework of the play. These are: Prospero's domination of the elemental spirits and the witch-born Caliban, and the attempted plots against himself and Alonso which are curtailed by Ariel. The theme is introduced by Miranda's question: "What foul play had we that we came from thence?" Prospero's bitter account of the usurpation of the dukedom by his brother sets a general tone which will be associated with other instances of tyranny when we meet them "foul play" has been suggested early on, and its seriousness emphasized. Prospero's disillusionment is evident in his harsh words:

I pray thee mark me that a brother should

Be so perfidious...

...he was

The ivy which had ham my princely trunk

And suck'd my verdure out on't (I.ii.66).

He is bitterly resentful and is constantly brooding on the crime. When he accosts Ferdinand and accuses him of "usurping" his island, one can believe that for Prospero it was a crime of the greatest magnitude, because it involved a breach of trust. By usurping some of the courtier freedom through magic, he sets about to take his revenge, and to punish the two confederates in the crime.

Herein lies one of the anomalies of the play, which having suffered himself, Prospero should attempt to dictate to others. This dominating behavior grates in connection with the innocent creatures, Caliban and Ariel. In the First Act, we hear them both bewailing the loss of their liberty. "Is there more toil?" asks Ariel, "Since

thou dost give me pains/ Let me remember thee what thou hast promised/... my liberty.” Prospero’s assumption of control over Ariel seems to stem from nothing more than an obligation, owed to him by the creature, following his release from the “cloven pine”. He reminds the spirit in violent terms to elicit an apology and a renewal of his vows. Later, he uses freedom as an incentive, whereby his obedience will be strengthened: “Thou shalt be free/ As mountain winds; but then exactly do/ All points of my command.” What the resentment Ariel feels here is reflected by the feelings of all the nameless spirits under Prospero’s hand. His charge over Caliban is more justified because of the attempted rape of Miranda, but the imprisoning within a rock seems unwarranted punishment. Prospero speaks of Caliban as a slave who carries out certain menial functions and for that purpose is of service to them. His words smack of that easy colonial attitude of expectancy of service from inferiors. He calls him away from his dinner it seems to curse him. Caliban accuses him of usurpation following his early loyalty, exactly the same history that Prospero has experienced.

*This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,
Thou strokist me, and made much of me; wouldst give me
Water with berries'ift't;
and then I lov'd thee (I.ii. 194-96).*

His simple, gentle attitude of trust, followed by a reasoned sense of courage seems at this point to lay the onus of responsibility and condemn Prospero. Caliban is endowed with endearing child – like qualities. When he thinks he has escaped Prospero, albeit to bondage, his delight is pathetic and heart touching:

*'Ban, 'Ban, Caliban
Has a new master: - get a new man.
Freedom, high day: high day! Freedom! Freedom,
High day, freedom! (I.ii.184)*

His devotion to his new master is, equally, warming in its total trusting commitment: “I will show thee the best springs. I'll pluck thee berries/ I'll fish for thee and get thee wood enough.” His fate is, finally, left unresolved other than his vow to “seek for grace hereafter”, which means to show no opposition to Prospero's will. If this portrayal represents Shakespeare's answer to Montaigne's essay on the noble savage, then it shows both sympathy with the latter's views on individual freedom, as well as the traces of the colonial attitude. Prospero’s control over these creatures is never considered unjust or wicked by himself, and his reversion is concerned with his own aestheticism. The play is left open ended; with the note of menace that attends the seriousness of his acts of bondage. The fact that there is little repentance from the courtiers as a result of the magic tricks, suggests that despite tyranny and domination, man alone cannot change human nature or the face of reality. This is reality in Prospero’s bitter reflections on his failure to “nurture” Caliban: “On whom my pains/ humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost.” The reiteration shows his great sense of failure and disillusionment. His high ideals have suffered a serious setback, ideals not only for personal grandeur and influence, but of faith in the noble qualities of man. This can be linked with his utter abhorrence of his brother, in his words of “forgiveness.” The influence that Prospero found in magic, he used to effect moral change. His failure to do so is shown by his downcast mood at the end.

The impulse to dominate is exhibited by most of the human characters, from the boatswain's orders at the beginning to Stephan's at the end; "Monster, lay to your Fingers: or I will turn you out of my kingdom. Go to carry this." This must have been intended by Shakespeare, to be a comic paralleling of Prospero's domination of Caliban. Stephano's attitude is as domineering as was his previous master's as Caliban finds out. Antonio and Sebastian are impelled by ambitious thoughts which are not dispensed with finally. Gonzalo's commonwealth offers a norm of individual freedom against which the pretensions of the others may be assessed:

Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,

And use of service, none: contract, succession,

Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none; (II. i.P.146).

Shakespeare is hardly recommending a communist way of life, in the play, as he seems to support the hierarchical system when Prospero accepts his dukedom. However, the problem of individual liberty and men's pretensions over one another is raised and considered from all aspects. The words "Flout 'em and scout 'em.../ Thought is free" which Stephano finds himself singing after he has accepted Caliban as a subject, mock his own pretensions to power. The words express the fundamental truth that despite external violence, thoughts and opinions cannot be controlled as shown by Caliban's example.

However, Prospero can control physical events and can produce a situation which challenges the character in some way. In this manner, he engineers the meeting between Miranda and Ferdinand and encourages her to respond. Hence, it can be said that he even attempts to direct feeling and thought: "The fringed curtains of thy eye advance / And say what thou seest yond." His constant, watchful hovering on the borders of each scene indicates his general role of stage manager of each situation. The game of chess at the end is a felicitous symbol of Prospero's attitude towards his victims, as he moves them around the island like chessmen. This statement suggests that Prospero was ignorant of the type of domination he effected. Prospero shows through his example that man can dominate another's fate. Shakespeare does not seem to move to any moral position in this issue, but seems intent rather, to question and explore the act of usurpation. He exhibits tyranny from the point of view of master and victim. He indicates the impossibility of thwarting ambition in others. This is suggested by Sebastian's lasting resentment and sullenness and by Caliban's plot against Prospero, despite the latter's earlier efforts to "nurture" him. Shakespeare also suggests, by Prospero's example, the difficulty of repressing ambition in oneself. Prospero never seems actually to recall how far he has been guilty of a certain kind of tyranny, although he comes to a new wisdom when he realizes the limits of his power. He has, in fact, behaved in a domineering way which is similar to his enemies' former treatment of him, although he exerted this influence over Alonso and the courtiers for more virtuous reasons than those which had motivated the latter; retribution rather than greed: The agencies, what Prospero did not share his motivation, were not morally obliged to assist him. Instead, they were, forcibly, obliged to participate by Prospero.

There is some form of benign charity exhibited at the end by Prospero, but this is, heavily, undercut by his tone and attitude which indicate: the behavior of an individual rather than a god-like bountiful figure. As Bonamy Dobree remarks⁸, his forgiveness has a Senecan quality in its bitterness; "For you most wicked Sir, whom to call brother/ Would even infect my mouth. I do forgive/ Thy rankest fault". An obvious observation is that if he cannot accept or assimilate his brother's crime as he suggests, then he cannot have properly forgiven him. He hardly sympathizes with Caliban for his "faults!" Ariel is released for services rendered with no response of gratitude. Prospero, the name is Italian for 'Faustus' is engrossed in himself to be able to cast a truly tolerant eye over the proceedings. His newly learnt pessimism shadows the ending. His cynical reply to Miranda's delighted exclamation undercuts the expected atmosphere of harmony in reconciliation, and his plea in the epilogue to "Set me free" enhances this qualification.

These words, in the epilogue can be interpreted as Prospero asking the audience for reassurance that he has done the right thing in taking up the dukedom and abandoning his magical powers. He is in grave doubt about his new philosophical position of accepting human folly, following his former retreat from men.

The nihilistic mood following the masque seems to mark the scene of his “epiphany” in the sudden realization of his true status and position. The futility of life that he speaks of in his muttered reply to Ferdinand after the masque has vanished, is hardly Christian in its bitter rejection of all faith in human nature and divinity. It is the lament of the artist who, having committed himself to his aesthetic ideals through magical powers, becomes aware of the hopelessness of his aspirations and the extent of his egoistical self-indulgence.

The essential artificiality of these ideals is demonstrated by his general impatience with the other characters. Being involved with his own thoughts and schemes, he responds unsympathetically to others. His behavior is anti-social. This can be demonstrated by his anger with Ferdinand on two occasions, his treatment of Caliban and his state of irritability in the opening conversation he has with Miranda: “Dost thou hear? I pray thee, mark me,” It also explains his inordinate relishing of his revenge. His ferociously stern attitude towards Caliban seems to suggest a sadistic pleasure in exerting pain, He tells Ariel:

Go charge my goblins that they grind their joints

With dry convulsions; shorten up their sinews

With aged cramped and more pinch-spotted make them

Than pard or cat O' mountain (IV.i.25).

Prospero is malicious but this extreme behavior springs from unrealized ideals on how he feels life should be. His cruelty is his expression for the intense suffering he feels when he cannot organize his life as he would. He attempts to construct a world around himself where he can not indulge his interest in white magic without regard to others. Having been betrayed by his brother and having turned in disillusionment to his scholastic studies, he has now emerged firstly, with an “academic” set of absolute moral values, and secondly, with a distorted sense of his own power and ability to be able to establish those ideals in his life style. Failings in others will not be tolerated in his new aesthetic world view. In the course of the play, he learns the limits and dangers of his egoistical excesses, shown by the masque soliloquy, and eventually, learns a new tolerance out of his ensuing self-disillusionment.

The study and practice of magic is morally neutral as it can be used for virtuous or mischievous purposes. We see Prospero using it to mock the ambitious pretensions of others seriously, as in the banquet confrontation, and mischievously, in the hounding of Stephano and Trinculo through bogs. We see magical occurrences that bewilder, confuse and frighten, which do not seem to serve any obvious end: the music, the songs, the harpies, and the violence of the storm. In this way, Prospero cannot be respected in his whimsical use of magic, despite the fact that the whole magical situation was conceived and set up by him for a dramatically acceptable purpose to bring the usurpers to justice. As Derek Traversi⁹ says “Intuitions of value are encountered in a context instinct with the atmosphere of ambiguous imagery.” Magic in *The Tempest* is not a representative of the moral norm which measures and judges the actions of others. The supernatural machinery and Prospero’s motivation is controlling it, whether for egoistical or altruistic reasons, have been questioned and a firm moral standpoint, denied to the audience.

The other obvious subject which indicates some measures of identification and orientation of values is the love between Ferdinand and Miranda. When compared to the love exhibited by the other Shakespearean

couples such as Romeo and Juliet, or Antony and Cleopatra, they emerge faded or simplified. They seem “sweet” or “delightful” but hardly dynamic. Dover Wilson¹⁰ suggests a very convincing explanation of this. He calls *The Tempest* a “father's play”, as the relationship is conducted through Prospero’s perception and illuminated by his comments. His cynicism undermines its value, shown by comments such as: “Poor worm, thou art infected.” The affair seems to diminish in importance beside other matters that occupy Prospero. He utters one instinctive blessing that recalls his old idealism. The play has Prospero and not Miranda at its centre, and her love is on the periphery of the main concerns. Prospero and his growing maturity of vision form the main focus to which all other events are secondary. This is made obviously in the masque where the major significance is Prospero's reaction rather than Ferdinand's. Shakespeare has used the supernatural framework to undermine the traditional values of Romance, which basically revolve around the celebration of human love.

Conclusion

Our conclusion must be a reiteration of that “insidious ambiguity that pervades the play and which cannot be conclusively resolved. Lytton Strachey's¹¹ conclusion that Shakespeare was bored with real life, bored with drama, bored with everything except poetry and poetical dreams. However, there is some truth in this statement concerning the "poetical dreams", as the play can 'be seen to represent Prospero’s playing out of a dream which is, eventually, shattered and rejected for reality whatever that future might involve for the purposes of this study, we cite Dover Wilson's evidence that the last part of the play to be written was the masque which was “added for the second court performance, given for the nuptial celebration of the Princess Elizabeth early in 1613”. Prospero’s speech seems inseparable from the masque as it is directly related to it, and would appear to be the last note sounded by Shakespeare. His mood of dissatisfaction with temporality and impermanence and his general uncertainty concerning the status of human life is in keeping with the speculative material. One could feasibly present this speech as articulating in Shakespeare's philosophical attitude underlying the whole play, following the themes and the characterization of Prospero, which as we have shown are at best ambiguous and pessimistic. We must realistically conclude that there are sufficient "delightful" and convincing elements in the play to support the term “Romance”, such as the wooing of Miranda, the dance of the spirits, the reconciliation between Alonso, Gonzalo and Prospero. This supports my argument that *The Tempest* is a "problem play”, as the two sides (Romance and non-Romance) co-exist simultaneously to use Nuttall's words: "The minutely perceptive skepticism of *The Tempest* defeats the stony allegorist and the rigid cynic equally.”¹²

References

1. A.D.Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.138.
2. *Ibid.* p. 159.
3. We take the type of magic Prospero uses to be the polarized opposite to that used by the witch, Sycorax and the witches in *Macbeth*. He has the same type of control over nature but does not exercise it for evil or wanton ends, and hence his magic can be labeled 'white' rather than 'black'.
4. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. Arden edition. All further references will be to this edition.
5. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Tempest*, ed. Smith *The Tempest*, Bonamy Dobrae. p. 47.
- 6 “*The Tempest: A Problem Play*,” R. Egan, *Shakespearean Studies*. VII.
7. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Tempest*, ed. Smith.
8. Derek Traversi, *Shakespeare: The Last Phase*, p. 108.
9. Dover Wilson, *The Meaning of The Tempest*. p. 11.
10. *Ibid.* p. 24
11. *Ibid.* p.23.
12. A.D. Nutall, *Two Concept of Allegory*. P.140.