

Paradoxical Aspects in *The Tempest*

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Abstract:

Shakespeare in his last play *The Tempest* dramatizes Prospero, the dethroned European Duke from Milan, as the rational, civilized and the benevolent agent with humanitarian concern. He uses his power of magic for good and the welfare of others in contrast to the malignant magic power possessed by Sycorax, his non-European rival. At an early stage of the play, the distinction between Prospero as a benign power and Sycorax, the foul and abhorred evil witch is breaking down.

Keywords: Self, other, ideology, usurpation, representation, ambivalence, magic power.

1. Introduction:

Shakespeare's hierarchal representation concerning people of other world invites the reader to think about the problematic issue of race, culture and an ideology that detriment one's ways of seeing concerning the other and the complexity of the pattern of white and black. This ideology, and during the Elizabethan time, has dictated the English relationships, and European in general, with people of other race and urged a system of representation based not on the assumption of difference but rather on the assumption of superiority and inferiority in classification.

1.2 The Paradoxical Aspects:

Prospero is presented as the wise, and the powerful agent whose capability exceeds that of an ordinary mortal. He is capable of controlling nature and natural phenomena like raising storm and roaring the sea, cable of reading people minds and inner thoughts. He is the caring father and the forgiving person who replace his revenge and fury against those who

wronged him once by usurping his kingdom with forgiveness, mercy and grace. He raises storm and roars the sea in his usurpers not to harm them but rather to bring them to forgiveness and to teach them grace and repentance. Yet this God-like character soon and in early scenes of the play he loses the audiences' sympathy at displaying aspects of irascibility, tetchiness and unjustified "unmitigated rage" in dealing with the natives of the island he controls who turns them into slaves by means of threat and nightmare to serve him and be at his disposal. However, this legendary Prospero who controls and enslaves Ariel that "is more a figure of vast suggestiveness than a character possessing an inwardness available to us" (Bloom 1994) is faced by Caliban's disturbing resistance, curse and accusation that drive him atrocious and resentful. A sub human, a low creation and "mis-shapen knave" (V.i.268) like Caliban is able to provoke the God-like character and deprive Prospero from his heavenly wisdom and serenity by dragging him down to the level of a common revengeful and resentful human being,

1.3 Conclusion:

The Tempest is not a fixed text in history or has no dimension beyond the moment of its production. As a fiction, *The Tempest* is a text designed to assert an antithetical structure to normalize the imperial rule and to canonize the colonial enterprise. Such structure imposed arbitrarily and forcibly in the life of people and against their will is doomed to failure and contradiction becomes it is "an intervention in an ambivalence and even a contradictory discourse" (Brown 1985). One of the ambivalence and contradiction of the colonial discourse *The Tempest* represents can be seen clearly in the cause which disposes and evicts Prospero from his dukedom. His obsessive indulgence in books of magic to master the craft of sorcery which led to dethrone and dispose Prospero is the same reason

that accords him the ultimate and insurmountable authority and limitless power in another land and over another race.

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