

VOLVO PRESENTS  
**the bell | shakespeare | company**

Artistic Director, John Bell AM

# THE TEMPEST

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Des James

Teacher's Notes abstracted from notes by Neville Harrison  
*With extra observation and discussion by Nell Hourn*

## Teacher's Kit

Containing 4 lessons and extra discussion material  
for use before and after seeing the performance.

## FORWARD

*The Tempest* in its physical simplicity can be seen on one level as a medieval mystery play: Prospero as God taking us through crude theatrical emotional stages of betrayal, isolation, nursing of wounds, retribution, repentance, forgiveness, unity, and freedom – which could also be seen as the course of life itself; Prospero as God showing us that all sorrow, pain, and circumstances are given by God with loving, even comic intent, ultimately to be brought together in healing and unity where the whole thing no longer matters.

(It) ..shall dissolve,  
And like this insubstantial pageant fade  
Leave not a rack behind

*The Tempest* and life itself show us, ‘the divine comedy’.

Stefano, Trinculo, and Caliban set about goofishly to do to Prospero what Antonio had done to him maliciously. The serious shadow juxtaposed against this comedy in the play is Antonio and Sebastian’s plot to kill Alonso, there, as if to confirm the verity of Prospero’s story of his brother’s perfidy. It is also a reminder of the painful edge of such machinations.

Prospero in *The Tempest* creates a performance of his own theatrical and magical making from beginning to end, demonstrating the clear path to balanced happiness by the resolution of pain and sorrow through forgiveness.

Although the play cannot be said to be entirely allegorical, such a view does help to magnify and understand some of the broader and deeper meanings of the play: Prospero as God, or director of a theatrical pageant, revealing to us that he has been stuck on an unforgiving island of isolation with his base humanity (Caliban), his trapped spirit (Ariel), and his heart, (Miranda). Here he must tutor and attend to these parts of himself studiously, learning to relinquish control of them and their servitude, until he reaches the point where he can release them all, and so release himself.

Caliban teaches a reminder, by contrast to those around him, that rank or any perceived higher status will be no saviour, or safe haven. So do the characters and events of the opening storm. All men are equal in nature and God’s eyes. Despite the best efforts of man through education, furnishings, and rank, the beast of humanity (Caliban), the dominance of nature (the storm) and the dominance of super-nature (represented by Sycorax) cannot be obviated. Caliban wisely says of Prospero, “Without his books he is but a sot as I am”.

Prospero himself indeed demonstrates the character of a man who takes ‘the divine comedy’ too seriously, at least until the end of the play. He rules Caliban, Ariel, and Miranda by fear, threats, and intimidation.

Perhaps through study, books, and magic, Prospero has sought to control, even to transcend, his fate and his humanity – maybe as we all do in the strength of youth. But his ultimate realisation, theatrically presented as it is, is an acceptance of his own humanity and the things that have happened, and mortality itself.

Perhaps this realisation is fuelled by the thought that time is limited. If he does not forgive and bring all disparate parts of himself together, he and his daughter will stay on their island of isolation, and at his death, Miranda will be left there alone with Caliban. It seems his heart, his love, Miranda, possibly brings him out of his isolation and the grudge he bears. The way forward is thus to heal the past.

*The Tempest* has often been called one of Shakespeare's greatest plays. There is so much in this ostensibly simple play it would take a lifetime to understand fully the many interpretations and possibilities it offers. Being Shakespeare's last play, it very possibly represents and contains the culmination of his knowledge and learning acquired through his dedicated life in art.

The worn and battered wreck of a ship will be the setting and abode for the characters of Des James' production of *The Tempest*, suggesting the shipwreck of Prospero's soul.

This production will visually emphasise the forces of good and evil and of the supernatural and magic set against the forces of nature, using visual illusion and a strong choir of voices in every style from disco to angelic serenade.

*The Tempest* is a powerful rumination on the past versus the future, nature set against supernature, dark versus light, compassion versus tyranny, vengeance against forgiveness, and enslavement versus freedom. It is Prospero who chiefly has a choice to make in all these things, and it is the young people of the play and the slaves of earth and spirit, Caliban and Ariel, who are at his mercy, and yet are his teachers.

All young people can readily relate to some degree of enslavement by the older generation, a theme that will be greatly emphasised in this production. The character of Miranda will represent Prospero's agent of awakening, and the voice and spirit and liberation of the future, free from the tyrannical control of the past and patriarchy. More than anything it is Prospero who must concede to Miranda and to the present and the future – nature as it is. Not the other way around.

The play is also about neglect: neglect of duty, of love, of personal responsibility, and neglect of value. It is about the fundamental restoration of order – a theme that Shakespeare alludes to in all of his plays. When something is out of order, a major change must be undertaken to restore order.

Bell Shakespeare's production of *The Tempest* is about the students themselves. No doubt it will expound and develop and perhaps expurgate for them their own patriarchal relations with parents and society and so give them a greater understanding of themselves and their place in the present and the future.

The following notes are written for use by teachers, not students. Interests vary greatly from school to school, city to country, and among different sexes and age groups, and it is the teachers who know which areas of concentration in these notes better suit their group.

Thus we offer a range of discussion ideas from the relatively simple to the more senior and academic, as well as those for theatre studies students studying drama in a more practical way.

The main concentration in the notes is, on the whole, upon issues which we anticipate the youth of today will find interesting, such as the relationship between Miranda and Ferdinand, and the duty bound relationships of Caliban and Ariel to Prospero.

It is our hope that discussion of such issues will create great empathy, sympathy, antipathy and self-discovery through debate, and that the young people seeing this production will be touched by passion for Shakespeare's art.

Nell Hourn  
Education, 2001

## COMPANY LIST – THE TEMPEST

### PRODUCTION

Director	Des James
Designer	Jill Halliday
Lighting Designer	
Composer	Jonathon Maher
Movement Director	Gavin Robins

### CAST

Prospero	Peter Sumner
Miranda	Belinda Sculley
Caliban/Ferdinand	Matthew Moore
Ariel	Georgia Adamson
Antonio/Stefano	Philip Dodd
Sebastian/Trinculo	Jillian O’Dowd
Alonso	David Whitney
Gonzalo	Edwin Hodgeman
Adrian	Josef Ber

All other parts will be played by members of the company.

### CREW

Company Stage Manager	Firtha Truscott
Technical Manager	Geoff Yeomans
Driver/Mechanist	Jock Allan

# LESSON ONE

## THE PLOT UP TO ACT I

The play begins in turmoil. A tempest rages and the crew of a ship strive to prevent it from sinking. On board are Alonso, the King of Naples; Sebastian, his brother; Ferdinand, his son; Antonio, the Duke of Milan and Gonzalo, a courtier. Their plight is desperate and in the panic of the situation niceties of rank are forgotten, but characters are revealed. The boatswain orders and upbraids his superiors, Antonio and Sebastian consider desertion, Ferdinand leaps for his life, and Gonzalo provides the glimmer of hope that all on board are not to be lost, by declaring his intuition that the boatswain is destined to hang rather than drown. Alonso prays. The scene ends as the ship founders.

The contrast in mood as the second scene commences could not be greater. Although the storm still rages outside, an air of peace and calm pervades the interior of Prospero's cell.

Miranda entreats her father to allay the storm, for she has observed the shipwreck and pities the souls cast into the sea. So Prospero lays aside his cloak, the instrument of his magic art, and relates to her their history, and how they came to be on the island.

Prospero was once Duke of Milan, but having handed the reins of office to his brother, Antonio, so that he, Prospero, could pursue learning, soon found his title usurped by Antonio, who was acting in league with Alonso, King of Naples. Provided with his books by the honest old courtier Gonzalo, Prospero and the three year old Miranda were expelled from Milan in a rotten hulk of a boat, and by "providence divine" brought to their island home. In the twelve years since, Prospero has devoted himself to the education of his daughter and to developing a powerful magic through occult wisdom.

Afterwards, as Miranda sleeps in a drowsiness induced by her father, Prospero summons Ariel – his servant spirit who is able to move through all elements. Ariel serves Prospero, though somewhat reluctantly, for he would have his freedom. From Ariel, Prospero learns that his plan has been accomplished. Fortune has brought his enemies to his shores. His power has called up the tempest, and the shipwreck, and all who were on board are unharmed, though scattered about the island, ready for Prospero's intent, be it reconciliation or revenge. Ariel is commanded to take the form of a water nymph and he departs, having been given a secret task.

Miranda is awakened, and father and daughter visit Caliban, their enforced servant. This creature of the earth, discovered by Prospero on the island, had been conceived by spirits of evil and born of a witch. Prospero had first attempted kindness and education upon him but this proved futile - indeed had only exacerbated the baseness of the creature who had attempted to rape Miranda, and so now must be held suppressed and enslaved. Caliban is packed off to bring wood for Prospero's fire.

Ferdinand, charmed by the invisible Ariel's music, is led in. This was obviously the task given to Ariel by Prospero who intended the meeting, then the attraction one for the other, and ultimately the union of Ferdinand and Miranda. The mutual love of these two youths,

whose demeanor and words leave no doubt as to their beauty and nobility, is immediately apparent, but Prospero must test both of them.

Prospero disarms Ferdinand and renders him powerless, then seemingly denigrates his worthiness to Miranda. She declares her love and admiration, offers to go surety, and perhaps sees through her father's intent by her comforting words to Ferdinand:

My father's of a better nature, sir,  
Than he appears by speech: this is unwonted  
Which now came from him. (I: ii: 499 - 501)

For his part, Ferdinand is prepared for prison

Might I but through my prison once a day  
Behold this maid. (I: ii: 493 - 494)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION

### **The Historical Setting**

When *The Tempest* was first performed, its audience would have been familiar with the rewards and the dangers of colonial expansion. Storms and shipwrecks, exotic location, and natives whose "primitivism" cast doubt upon their humanity were commonly spoken of, and the public of the day were eager to know more of them. So the opening scene of falling yardarms, wildfire, storm, and panic as the ship founders would have been a contemporary excitement, and might have actually induced terror, rather as might a modern disaster movie. In fact, not long before *The Tempest* there had been printed a description of a wreck in the Bermudas of ships on their way to the new colony in Virginia. The survivors in the play are cast upon a desert island and the audience would have been eager to discover what would befall the cast aways. Their interest in such stories might parallel our own in tales of outer space and of aliens.

In the second scene they would find the mood changed. Panic and impending disaster give way to calm, almost repose, for the shipwrecked lords have been preceded to the island. Prospero and Miranda have been there for twelve years, and Prospero is no less than king. His right to colonize it, to assume command over its inhabitants, Caliban and Ariel, would not have been doubted in the least by Shakespeare's audience, for "primitive" lands and peoples were there for the taking.

- ❖ The students might like to compare and contrast modern attitudes to subjugation of one nation or human group over another, colonization, with how we imagine Elizabethan and indeed many generations before us, would have received such issues when watching the play.

Stefano expresses a mercenary desire to capture Caliban and parade him in the marketplace back home where the general public would gladly pay to view him.

- ❖ Have we changed so much? Would the same be true of a captured alien today?
- ❖ What is the basis of the Elizabethan curiosity in native antipodean people?
- ❖ What is the basis of our modern curiosity in aliens?
- ❖ What are we hoping to find out?

## Reconciliations

*The Tempest* is not a tragedy. Perhaps it is not a comedy either; a romance being a far better classification if one is necessary. It therefore ends in reconciliation rather than revenge. But as well as reconciliation between characters, the play is interesting in its reconciling of dualities and oppositions at work within it.

- ❖ It would perhaps be opportune to make the students aware of these so they may look for them as they experience the performance. They could look at aspects of:
  - freedom and confinement
  - idealism and pragmatism
  - compassion and revenge
  - innocence and experience
  - illusion and enlightenment.

## The Transformation of Miranda

As Prospero tells Miranda the story of their history, her state of innocence and reliance on parental protection is almost over, and the approach of intruders upon her life will require self-reliance for the first time. Prospero is aware of this, and his revelations to her will transform her, prepare her for self-reliance, and enable her to make proper individual judgements when she subsequently meets Ferdinand and those whom she has only just heard about from her father. Just now she is mature in knowledge, but naive in life, and she soon shows herself to be far more interesting than the conventional romantic heroine.

Her meeting with Ferdinand shows that she has succeeded in trusting her own emotions in opposition to her father, perhaps beyond Prospero's expectations. Her ardour displays innocence and inexperience, but it is undeniably genuine. She may not have seen any man other than Prospero or Caliban, but she will trust her own judgement in having "no ambition, To see a goodlier man". She reveals to us, and possibly to Prospero, a passionate nature beyond that which we might have suspected as she listened to her father's story, and a determination to get what she wants. Whether taken aback or not,

Prospero is delighted. The bringing together of Miranda and Ferdinand was part of his plan in arranging the shipwreck, and part of what he meant in telling his daughter that in causing it there was

No harm.  
I have done nothing but in care of thee.  
(I: ii: 15 - 16)

Miranda is often played in many productions as meek and obedient, and sometimes with nauseating sweetness and innocence, as a sort of paragon of someone's idea of how young women *should* be.

- ❖ However, there are other choices, and the students might enjoy discussing and creating, perhaps performing, a modern Miranda who excites a modern audience, using the text as a firm guide.
- ❖ What do the students think of Miranda's sexual innocence? Is it of any value at all to a modern audience, or indeed in a modern relationship?

Miranda and Ferdinand will rule as queen and king of Naples, high ranking political positions that do have some parallels today.

- ❖ Is Prospero's demand for their sexual restraint before marriage a test of their skill to rule passion by reason, a required skill for politicians?

### **Prospero's magic**

- ❖ A word about his "magic art" might not be amiss. Shakespeare's audience would not have had any difficulty in believing in the power of magic, as such a concept was readily accepted. Today, we do have difficulty, yet we live in an age where through scientific discovery and technology far greater things are possible than the drawing of a ship into a sphere of influence by seemingly invisible means. We have, for instance, bounced a ball on the surface of Mars which opened out to allow pictures of a distant planet to be beamed to us and a vehicle to roam about on the planet's surface.

RELEVANT TEXT REFERENCES Taken from The Arden Edition

(1) Miranda, pitying the souls on board the vessel which she saw founder in the tempest, asks her father to still the storm. Prospero allays her fears and begins to tell her the history that led to their life on the island.

**Miranda** I (ii) 1 – 63

*From*

If by your Art, my dearest father, you have..

*To*

**Prospero:** But blessedly help hither

(2) Prospero tells Miranda of his brother's growing ambition and eventual treachery.

**Prospero** I (ii) 66 - 132

*From*

My brother, and thy uncle, call'd Antonio

*To*

Me and thy crying self.

(3) Prospero tells of the voyage to the island, of how Miranda was a comfort to him and of the part Gonzalo played in providing for them.

**Miranda** I (ii) 138 - 169

*From*

Wherefore did they not

*To*

But ever see that man!

(4) The meeting of Miranda and Ferdinand.

**Prospero** I (ii) 411 - 496

*From*

The fringed curtains of thine eye advance

*To*

**Ferdinand:** Have I in such a prison.

## LESSON TWO

### THE PLOT UP TO ACT III

Except, of course, for Ferdinand, the shipwrecked lords have found one another. They are none the worse for their ordeal, other than that Alonso grieves for his "lost" son.

Prospero, through Ariel who watches over them now, has his two enemies, Antonio and Alonso, completely in his favour, and provides them with a situation in which they have the opportunity to awaken their own consciences.

The conversations of the lords reveal their characters: Alonso says little, but grieves the loss of his daughter in a political marriage, and that the voyage home from the wedding caused him to lose his son; Gonzalo attempts to cheer and encourage, and inspired by the island, talks of an utopian realm which might be possible; Antonio and Sebastian are cold and cynical.

These latter two are put to the test by Ariel who induces sleep upon Alonso and Gonzalo, and no sooner has this occurred than Antonio reveals that nothing of his scheming nature has changed, for he entices Sebastian to enter into a plot to kill Alonso and rule in his place. Antonio is prepared to repeat his previous crime, to overthrow and usurp to gain temporal power. But Ariel awakes Gonzalo before any harm can be done to him or his king, and Sebastian must make excuse of the noise of beasts to explain their drawn swords.

Meanwhile, two sailors, Stephano and Trinculo, have been washed ashore - Stephano on a wine cask of which he has since generously partaken. They come across Caliban, whom they see as an oddity. Caliban, for his part, sees them as an opportunity for freedom from a stern master's rule, and he offers to be their servant, to show them and provide for them the riches of the island. Stephano, thinking he and Trinculo to be the only survivors of the shipwreck, "we will inherit here", is glad they already have a willing servant. Caliban is overjoyed, he "Has a new master - (got) a new man", his idea of freedom.

Prospero has set Ferdinand to piling up logs, a task usually given to Caliban. He watches as Miranda approaches, and the lovers converse, unaware that they are overheard.

In this scene are put to the test Prospero's power, Ferdinand's will, and Miranda's passion. Ferdinand's menial task is a pleasure to him, for he does it in service for Miranda - the urgency of whose passion for him is apparent in her outburst of a marriage proposal, readily accepted by Ferdinand. In this scene, too, Miranda is prepared to follow her own judgement - she reveals her name to Ferdinand against her father's instruction, and she proposes marriage, not only without Prospero's consent but as far as she knows against his desire. But Prospero's desire is fulfilled beyond his expectations.

So glad of this as they I cannot be,  
Who are surpris'd with all; but my rejoicing  
At nothing can be more.

(III: i: 92 - 94)

Caliban has told Stephano and Trinculo of the other two inhabitants of the island, and although their conversation is comically interrupted by Ariel who overhears all and sometimes interjects in Trinculo's voice, which earns the latter a "clip over the ear", the trio set off to establish their new kingdom by the murder of Prospero and the rape of Miranda. Ariel causes music to be played which frightens Stephano and Trinculo at first, but their fears are allayed by Caliban who speaks of the musical delights of the island. So the comic trio continue on their way, unaware that Prospero will soon know of their purpose from Ariel.

Meanwhile, Antonio and Sebastian have not given up on their plot to kill Alonso and decide to act when night falls. The lords hear gentle music, and spirits enter, laying a banquet before them. After some trepidation, Alonso decides to eat. It may be his last meal, but for him "the best is past" and he has little to hope for in the future. Suddenly, the banquet is whisked away and Ariel, costumed as a harpy, stands before them: "You are three men of sin", cries Ariel, confronting them with their wickedness in deposing Prospero and endangering his and Miranda's lives on the sea. Already the "Ministers of Fate" have bereft Alonso of his son and pronounce "lingering perdition" on all three. Alonso sinks again into self-recrimination, while Sebastian and Antonio set off to seek someone or something to fight.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Servants of Prospero: Ariel and Caliban**

Ariel might be seen as the active agent of Prospero's magical will, his spiritual energy. Prospero conjures up the tempest; Ariel enacts it. Prospero would confuse the drunken plotters against him; Ariel stirs up trouble through interjections. Prospero would confront the "three men of evil" with their crimes; Ariel appears to them as a harpy (a figure of vengeance; the harpy was meant to be a constant reminder of old wrongs). So Ariel might be thought of as the manifestation of the magician - the magician's imagination.

There is no doubt a Puck-like quality to Ariel's actions - he enjoys the tasks given by Prospero - but there is a melancholy too, a desire to be free. It seems that Ariel, a spirit of air, seeks release back to air, where he will have no master.

If Ariel can be thought of as a spirit of air, then Caliban must be related to earth. Like Ariel, Caliban seeks freedom. However, Caliban's idea of freedom is to "get a new master", one who will let him indulge his base nature and not restrict him in his earthiness. He would see freedom as serving masters, such as Stefano and Trinculo, who ply him with liquor rather than afflict him with stings and cramps; who would rather rape Miranda themselves than punish Caliban for wanting to do so.

Prospero discovered Caliban on the island and took him in, treated him

... with human care; and lodg'd thee  
In mine own cell. (I: ii: 348 - 349)

Caliban could be viewed, in a modern production, to fulfill the role of Prospero's illegitimate, delinquent son. He is twenty-four, Miranda is fifteen. They grew up together, Miranda taught Caliban language, and now all he wants do is curse. In this sense, Caliban is like a contemporary, dispossessed, street kid banished from family with only oaths and graffiti as weapons in life.

However, such an interpretation leaves a director with a moral problem at the end of the play if Prospero abandons Caliban on the island. So alternatives would have to be investigated. (See Observations and Discussions **Lesson Three**)

Yet Caliban's feelings are expressed with some of the finest and most beautiful poetry in the play. He is moved by the music he hears. He revealed his beloved island to Prospero, and in return was educated by Prospero and later, Miranda. One reading of events is that his lust for Miranda caused him to be cast out of their magic circle into penury. Another, is that Prospero is a tyrant, who accuses Caliban of attempting to violate Miranda's purity when it may not in fact have occurred at all. Caliban's response

Oh ho ho Would't had been done!  
Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else  
This isle with Calibans  
I (ii) 349-

would thus be delivered as a sarcastic goading of Prospero and his ridiculous accusation.

Unlike Miranda, for whom education has been a preparation for life, and indeed a life of leadership, education has only exacerbated the baseness of his condition. Language is his enemy - for him it is a learned, painful thing. He is in tune with another language - the sounds of the island where he was once sole owner and occupier.

Caliban also can be said to illuminate by contrast how the world of art, education, and civility can provide choices so that a person can rise above the base and earthy. That is not to say that the "courtly" world is incapable of base evil - it produces the malice of Antonio and the guilt of Alonso, but these characters are capable of the choice of repentance and forgiveness. Caliban does not seem to have so many choices, though he certainly finds a stronger self-determination by the play's end. In his interchanges with Stephano and Trinculo, we can contrast the rashness and naivety of Caliban's actions with the foolish but none-the-less calculated schemings of Antonio and Sebastian. Here Shakespeare shows how much baser the corruption of civilisation can be than the bestiality of the natural "savage".

- ❖ The students might like to experiment in a presentation of scenes with an interpretation of Caliban as a contemporary, dispossessed street kid. Imaginatively, perhaps his mother was not literally a witch, but a junkie, who died leaving him on the island.

## Music

No other Shakespeare play employs music to the extent to that used in *The Tempest*. Ariel, as Prospero's agent, makes much use of music, and this production of the play recognises its impact and significance.

- ❖ It will be of advantage to alert students to this, and have them observe how music helps achieve Prospero's objectives, and then discuss it further later. It seems that Prospero is the master composer who literally and metaphorically orchestrates situations and characters to fall in with his design. If the music charms characters to do Prospero's bidding, the employed music might also be called Prospero's will itself.

Music links his two servants, Ariel and Caliban, who have little else in common. Caliban may suffer stings and cramps, but he can be beguiled and calmed by the "sounds and sweet airs" he hears. Characters are led by music sometimes to delight (Ferdinand), sometimes to distraction (Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban by the tune of their catch "played by a picture of nobody"), sometimes to alert to danger (Gonzalo and Alonso), and sometimes, as later in the play, to face reality, repentance, and regeneration.

- ❖ After seeing the production, the students might like to examine what the music communicated to them about the island and the setting itself chosen by Shakespeare.

### **Ferdinand Enslaved, and Miranda Liberated?**

Prospero has put Ferdinand to piling up logs - he has given him the Caliban treatment to test his moral character in order that he might prove himself worthy of Miranda. The young prince, newly elevated to young king, so he thinks, is now made a slave.

The earthy Caliban complains and curses beneath his piles of wood; Ferdinand rejoices in his task.

The very instant that I saw you, did  
My heart fly to your service; there resides,  
To make me slave to it; and for your sake  
Am I this patient log-man. (III: i: 64 - 67)

Prospero looks on and approves of his future son-in-law.

Whilst Ferdinand is bound to his task by Prospero, Miranda begins to break free of her father's control. She reveals her name to Ferdinand against Prospero's expressed instruction, and she begins to

.... prattle  
Something too wildly, and my father's precepts  
I therein do forget. (III: i: 57 -59)

Ferdinand reveals that he is not inexperienced when it comes to romance. Miranda, needless to say, is completely naive. The meeting of their two worlds is quite wonderful and humorous. Wonderful, as they vie with each other to be the more devoted and humorous, as Ferdinand, who has admired several women for "several virtues" and now sees all of the virtues in Miranda with none of the defects, tries to apply rules of courtship, wooing, and marriage which are

inappropriate to their situation on the island. His courtly language breaks down to a sort of renewed innocence - from

No, noble mistress: 'tis fresh morning with me  
When you are by at night.

which is fairly standard courtly love imagery, to his outburst

... but you, O you,  
So perfect and so peerless, are created  
Of every creature's best! (III: i: 34 - 35, 46 - 48)

The rules have broken down completely by the point that Miranda, without parental consent or even knowledge, so far as Miranda is aware, proposes to Ferdinand.

For Miranda, acting upon her own judgment will not mean just freedom but liberation, because her judgment has been developed within the discipline of wise parental concern and true education. Prospero looks on, has the last word in the scene, and approves.

## **RELEVANT TEXT REFERENCES**

**(1)** Ariel answers his master's summons

**Ariel** I (ii) 189 - 193

All hail, great master! grave sir, hail! I come  
To answer thy best pleasure; be't to fly,  
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride  
On the curl'd clouds, to thy strong bidding task  
Ariel and all his quality.

**(2)** Ariel asks for freedom and is reminded of how Prospero discovered him on the island.

**Prospero** I (ii) 244 - 299

*From*

How now? moody?

*To*

I will discharge thee.

**(3)** Prospero and Miranda visit Caliban

**Caliban** I (ii) 323 -373

*From*

As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd

*To*

That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

**(4)**Caliban curses Prospero for the pain inflicted upon him.

**Caliban II (ii) 1 - 14**

*From*

All the infections that the sun sucks up

*To*

Do hiss me into madness.

**(5)**The testing of Ferdinand and his betrothal to Miranda

**Ferdinand III: i: 1 - 96**

*From*

There be some sports are painful, ...

*To*

**Prospero:** Much business appertaining.

**(6)**The comic plot to over throw Prospero

**Caliban III (ii) 85 - 107**

*From*

Why, as I told thee, 'tis a custom with him

*To*

**Stephano:** Dost thou like the plot, Trinculo?

**(7)**Caliban speaks of the music of the island.

**Caliban** III (ii) 133 - 141

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

**(8)**Ariel, in the form of a harpy, upbraids Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian for their wickedness.

**Ariel** III (iii) 53 - 82

*From*

You are three men of sin, whom Destiny, -

*To*

And a clear life ensuing.

## LESSON THREE

### THE PLOT TO END ACT V

It is almost time for all the characters to be brought together. Ferdinand, having passed the test set for him, is relieved of his menial labour by Prospero who now gives to him Miranda to be his wife, but not before twice warning him of the dangers to their union of unchastity before marriage.

Prospero then conjures up a masque or entertainment for the lovers wherein spirits bestow their blessings on the couple. The masque is interrupted, though, when Prospero remembers that danger threatens. His demeanour gives Ferdinand and Miranda cause for concern, but Prospero tells them that the "revels now are ended" and the spirits which brought them have simply melted away. So the young couple are quietly left to themselves as Prospero and Ariel prepare to meet those who still wander on the island.

First, Caliban and the drunken sailors are easily foiled by Ariel who leads them into briars, thorns and bogs, then distracts them from their purpose with gaudy clothes left in their way. Caliban proves himself to be more sensible than his accomplices, for he alone recognises the danger of delay in carrying out their plan. The three are put to flight when Prospero unleashes his hunting dogs on them.

At last Prospero can confront those for whom he has been waiting. Ariel has become moved to pity for the king and his lords, and would treat them kindly. Prospero decides on compassion rather than vengeance, reconciliation rather than retribution, and sends Ariel to fetch them.

Prospero prepares a "charmed circle," and avers that after he has called up music for his purpose in meeting his former enemies he will relinquish his magic powers. Ariel leads to him Alonso, Antonio, Sebastian, and Gonzalo, and places them in the charmed circle where Prospero can observe them, himself unseen as he has them in a trance.

Whilst his visitors are held, asleep to themselves as it were, Prospero speaks to each in turn. His words are not taken in by their physical sense of hearing but it is as though the meaning

will resound in their souls, where it will have a lasting effect, if the "heaven" chooses to accept them. The loyal Gonzalo he thanks, the others he chides, and forgives, and then reveals himself to them.

Alonso has been transformed by his experiences. Immediately he asks for pardon and releases Prospero from any subservience to himself as king. Prospero forces Antonio to restore to him his dukedom, but Antonio speaks no word of relinquishment or repentance.

To Alonso, still grieving over the loss of his son, Prospero reveals the intimate view of Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess, and Miranda's words reveal that she is becoming aware that in future she, who has until now been completely protected by her father, must be on her guard against those who might play her false. Alonso immediately recognises the virtue and nobility of the couple, and Miranda recognises a "brave new world", and is caught up in wonder at this new experience of humankind. It is given to Gonzalo to speak a benediction on the couple and to refer to their future rulership.

Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo are ushered in, chastened by their experience and fearful of dire punishment. However, the mood of general well being extends to them as well. The lords must look to Stephano and Trinculo; Prospero will take responsibility for Caliban.

Prospero plans the next morning's voyage to Naples where the wedding of Miranda and Ferdinand will take place and thence, for him to Naples and his restored dukedom where  
Every third thought shall be my grave.

Prospero can now release Ariel to the elements, and then asks his audience to set him free also.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION

### **Chess, Chastity and a Brave New World**

Prospero might be more worried about his daughter's passions than Ferdinand's when he gives two more stern warnings concerning the necessity of sexual restraint before marriage. She was the more ardent wooer, she has been remarkably frank in her offers of love, and perhaps Prospero is warning his future son-in-law of the strength of her sexual awakening. He was responsible for her education and we can only assume, particularly after Caliban's approach, this included the "facts of life". But he could not have overlooked his daughter's words, "my father's precepts, I therein do forget".

- ❖ Twice Prospero warns. What prompted the second warning, "Do not give dalliance too much the rein"?
- ❖ What occurred in this production to draw that comment, and what does Ferdinand mean by his reply that

The white cold virgin snow upon my heart  
Abates the ardour of my liver?

(IV: i: 55 - 56)

The masque which follows is a celebration of the young couple's betrothal and gives the bestowing of blessings and hopes for a fulfilling and fertile life.

We do not again encounter Miranda and Ferdinand until they are revealed at chess, to the amazement of Alonso who is convinced that his son was lost in the tempest.

Miranda's first words reveal that she has learnt another lesson: that even those she trusts and loves may not always play fairly - the intrigue of court is before her. The world beyond the island will not have changed as those who have been brought to the island have done, and even here, Ferdinand might bend the rules, although only in a game. The amazement of the spectators to this little scene is reflected as Miranda turns to see them.

O, wonder!  
How many goodly creatures are there here!  
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,  
That has such people in't! (V: i: 181 - 184)

Her last words in the play are revelatory. For the first time she fully grasps the magnitude of the world and humanity. We see her now as one who is mature, both in knowledge and in life. Miranda has everything – prudence and innocence, and she is also filled with the wonder of humankind without any cynicism.

### **The Island Dynasty**

What has really happened to Prospero since the day of his overthrowal? Surely he has undergone a "sea-change" greater than any other character in the play. His thirst for knowledge, which unbalanced and misplaced him as ruler in Milan is not so misplaced on the island. He puts it to good use, gaining for himself magical powers that enable him to educate his daughter. His passion for revenge he tempers, perhaps very recently, and perhaps with the guidance of Ariel, but nevertheless, he has the princely skill to submit his fury to his reason. His magic art, when providence brings his adversaries nearby, enables him to bring them within his reach and power.

For twelve years he has ruled a tiny kingdom of four inhabitants, but what he has achieved allows him to regain his dukedom and strengthen his former rulership by a royal marriage. He has been studious, and contemplative, and now he has a choice to use his knowledge as a powerful ruler in active life.

- ❖ But will he? There is also a reading of Prospero which sees him as old and resigned by the play's end, with the words, "every third thought will be my grave". What do the students think? Is Prospero preparing for death?
- ❖ It is also open to debate as to whether Prospero has fully forgiven his brother:

For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother  
Would infect my mouth, I do forgive  
Thy rankest fault – all of them;

What do the students think?

OR Is Prospero- as God- demonstrating to us, that in order to completely forgive, we must first honestly and fully acknowledge our feelings before we can release them and so forgive?

- ❖ It might be of advantage to encourage discussion on the students' perceptions as to whether Prospero intended revenge or reconciliation as the play opened. If revenge, when did his attitude change? Did Ariel have anything to do with his decision, or did Ariel only voice what Prospero really intended? Doubtless, different productions could express different intents so what line did this one take?
- ❖ The students' views on individual reactions of the courtiers would also be appropriate. How do Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian accept forgiveness? What is Gonzalo's reaction to the closing mood? How indeed have they revealed themselves throughout the play, and are their final attitudes predictable or do they surprise us?

There is much evidence to support repentance, grief, and self-recrimination on the part of Alonso who expresses relief, gratitude, and joy as the burden of guilt is lifted from him. He does all he can to make retribution. The silence of Antonio and Sebastian could very well mean rejection of forgiveness - Antonio might relinquish the dukedom because he knows he cannot hold out against the power of Prospero and Alonso.

- ❖ Does the silence of Antonio and Sebastian indicate that, for them, nothing has changed? They are offered forgiveness but do not necessarily accept it.

It is interesting a little earlier that Ariel seems to think that they have repented:

The King,  
His brother, and yours, abide all three distracted,  
...Brimful of sorrow and dismay; ...  
(V: i: 11 - 14)

and Prospero's reaction:

they being penitent,  
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend  
Not a frown further.  
(V: i: 28 - 30)

- ❖ The students might like to proffer several alternative staging solutions to the problem of the ending pageant of the play, where we are left with a silent Antonio and Sebastian: Do they stand alone, unforgiving, while the others enter Prospero's cell, rejoicing?
- ❖ Or do they repent, and enter the cell with the others and join in the celebrations and stories as the lights come down?
- ❖ What other possibilities are there?

### **Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban**

When these three are led into the happy ambience of reconciliation they appear to have changed as well. Trinculo speaks of "a goodly sight", and Stephano's words, "Every man shift for all the rest, and let no man take care of himself" exhibit a humility, gentility, and altruism of which we would never have imagined him capable earlier in the play. Perhaps

though, for these two, order has been restored, and they are happy to return to their proper place in society. After all, they were really not cut out for king and viceroy.

Caliban, for the first time, seems to have a glimpse of humanity. "How fine my master is!" he says, seeming to really see him for the first time, although he still fears punishment. He is offered a pardon that elicits from him a promise "to be wise hereafter, And seek for grace". It may be that Caliban's new attitude has come about because he has a better image of himself. He has proven himself to be more sensible than his foolish companions. For the first time he does not experience himself beneath everybody else. He has come up in the world.

- ❖ What happens to Caliban? Ariel is released to the air, and the rest will sail to Milan or Naples. Will Caliban accompany Prospero, or once again be sole inhabitant and owner of the island? The students' opinion might be quite interesting.

### **RELEVANT TEXT REFERENCES**

**(1)** Prospero grants his daughter to Ferdinand, extracting from him a vow of chastity before marriage.

**Prospero** IV (I) 1 - 31 and 51 - 56

*From*

If I have too austerely punish'd you,

*To*

**Ferdinand:** Abates the ardour of my liver.

**(2)** Ariel is moved to pity the shipwrecked lords, and Prospero declares his purpose to be forgiveness rather than revenge.

**Prospero** V (i) 1 - 32

*From*

Now does my project gather to a head:

**To**

And they shall be themselves.

**(3)**Prospero reveals himself to the shipwrecked lords and leads Alonso to believe that he lost his own daughter in the tempest.

**Prospero** V (i) 105 -171

*From*

Behold, sir King,

*To*

As much as me my dukedom.

**(4)**Ferdinand and Miranda are revealed to Alonso, and the play ends in rejoicing and celebration. Gonzalo invokes a blessing upon all.

**Miranda** V (i) 172 - 214

*From line 172*

Sweet lord, you play me false.

*To*

**Gonzalo:** When no man was his own.

## LESSON FOUR

### Reconciliation

In *The Tempest* Shakespeare leads his characters and his audience to experience various dualities and opposing concepts and, in many cases, brings them to a point of reconciliation.

- ❖ Some examples, certainly not an exhaustive list, are given below and students will probably be able to add to these.

### **Freedom And Confinement**

- ❖ The confinement on an island allows Prospero freedom to pursue knowledge.
- ❖ The "enslavement" of Ferdinand is a test of character that confirms his capacity to rule and his worthiness of Miranda.
- ❖ Service to Prospero by Ariel is a lesser confinement than to be pinned in the cloven pine, but Ariel seeks more freedom. What is the freedom he seeks? He does want release to the airy element on one level, but does Shakespeare here suggest an aspect of Prospero which needs release?
- ❖ The freedom of Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban as they rampage about the island proved to be delusion. Although they might have learned something from their experience, they are sent back to menial work once more, which they are glad to accept to escape the freedom that has been so disappointing and painful.

### **Idealism And Pragmatism**

- ❖ Prospero, the idealist and seeker for knowledge when he should have been more pragmatic as a temporal ruler, ultimately balances these dualities. He has achieved his ideal, and in abjuring his "rough magic" and returning to Milan he takes on the practical life again.
- ❖ Gonzalo, the loyal and ever practical servant, is also the great idealist with his ideas of a utopian commonwealth.
- ❖ The innocent, compassionate Miranda, finding her ideal in Ferdinand, learns in the game of chess a pragmatism to help her deal with the world she is about to enter.

Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,  
And I would call it fair play.  
(V: i: 173 - 174)

An interesting comment when we remember that her father lost his dukedom through treachery.

## Compassion And Revenge

- ❖ When his enemies fall into his power, Prospero has an inner conflict over which path to pursue. When does he decide on compassion rather than revenge? Was it before the shipwreck or after? What role did Ariel play?

## Innocence And Experience

- ❖ Miranda, of course, is the prime example of these dual concepts. Her maturity of knowledge but naivety of life have become balanced by play's end.
- ❖ Ferdinand, who thought himself experienced in the ways of women, is rendered almost innocent when he encounters true love.
- ❖ Gonzalo, who has lived his life at court, by his very nature remains the perpetual innocent.

## Illusion And Enlightenment

- ❖ Prospero's thirst for knowledge has led to loss of a dukedom, but the pursuit of it brings enlightenment and power for justice, revenge or compassion.
- ❖ Miranda is secure on the island with her father, unaware of a world beyond but discovers the treachery of the court and a "brave new world".
- ❖ Ferdinand realises that he is not a prince first and foremost, but a man who falls in love.
- ❖ Caliban mistakes a fool for a god but glimpses "brave spirits" and vows to  

be wise hereafter, And seek for grace.
- ❖ For Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban, freedom is an illusion. Enlightenment for them is the realisation that they must rely on outer authority; they need a master.

## Prospero

- ❖ Who really is Prospero?
- ❖ It would be interesting, before looking in some depth at this character, to find out what the students think of him.

He is certainly more than just the central character in a theatrical entertainment. He is a ruler who has to learn how to become a good ruler. He is a scholar whose thirst for knowledge, whose confinement to isolation, enables him to develop the magic skills of an artist. There is immense power in his magic. In his great speech, renouncing his power, there is almost an apocalyptic vision of power. He says that he has:

.... bedimm'd  
The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,  
And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault  
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder  
Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak  
With his own bolt; the strong-bas'd promontory  
Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up  
the pine and cedar: graves at my command  
Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth  
By my so potent Art.

(V: i: 41 - 50)

On one level, the plot of *The Tempest* has made use of Prospero's powers to bring about resolution. But it is in this play that Shakespeare draws many of his most potent parallels between life and the stage. Is Prospero's power just an illusion? We can see a parallel between Prospero's power on the island and Shakespeare's power as a theatrical illusionist. Shakespeare is certainly orchestrating his desired dramatic effects upon his audience, as Prospero does to everyone on his island.

When the shipwrecked lords are brought to Prospero, they are entranced in a charmed circle; Shakespeare's audience were similarly entranced in the "O" of the Globe Theatre, willingly transporting themselves from their present into the imaginative world on stage. The play will end, players and audience released, and as Prospero/Shakespeare says as the wedding masque is dissolved

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
..... were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on; and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

(IV: i: 148 - 158)

Perhaps Prospero/Shakespeare is reminding us that the world and life itself is fragile and little more substantial and enduring than the brief moment of a play.

So Prospero/Shakespeare renounces illusion, and Shakespeare returns to his country town. But Prospero remains, and 400 years later we still look to him for meaning, perhaps because he is invested with such an image of humanity.

In renouncing his "rough magic" he will return to Milan, the real world. His abjuration is perhaps a statement that what he previously needed to draw on from outside, from the realm of magic he can now produce from within. He has the capacity to govern with greater skill and wisdom that his pursuit of knowledge and artistic magic brought to him. Now that he has achieved the necessary control over himself and nature, he has achieved his ends and has no more need of his instrument, "rough magic".

It is interesting, too, to look at other characters as possible projections of the being of Prospero:

- ❖ It could be that Ariel might be his imagination, his playful inventiveness which would seek freedom from confinement or limitation.
- ❖ Caliban, the physical earth - the bound body, whose basic appetite must be controlled and would suck freedom from drudgery and control, but can only find freedom when serving a master who exercises control over unbridled passion.
- ❖ Miranda might be his heart, her beautiful innocence and compassion given practicality and worldliness through her union with Ferdinand.

In this way we can see Prospero as the picture of humankind. Like Prospero, we humans, in order to achieve fulfillment, need to come to terms with justice and mercy, to develop our capacities to strive for wisdom, and to balance the dualities and opposites within us. One senses that, through Prospero, Shakespeare has finally accepted this world in all its marvellous and devious complexity and, in so doing, is able to let it go.

## **RELEVANT TEXT REFERENCES**

**(1)**Prospero, in ending the wedding masque likens the nature of the spirits who performed it to the earthly existence of humankind.

**Prospero** IV (I) 146 - 158

*From*

You do look, my son, in a mov'd sort,

*To*

Is rounded with a sleep.

**(2)**Prospero soliloquises upon the powers which his magic art has given him and then abjures them.

**Prospero** V (i) 33 - 57

*From*

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves;

*To*

I'll drown my book.

**(3)**Prospero's epilogue in which he takes leave of his island and his audience.

**Prospero** V (i)

*From*

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,

*To*

Let your indulgence set me free.

# THE TEMPEST

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