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RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND GENDER INEQUALITY

IN "THE TEMPEST"

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ABSTRACT

The Tempest is one of the most famous and widely popular plays written by renowned writer and playwright William Shakespeare. The play revolves around the main protagonist Prospero who emerges as an all-knowing, benevolent patriarch who acts as the puppet-master who determines the fate of all the other characters in the play by virtue of his magic. Until the advent of post-colonial criticism, Anglo-American critics frequently read *The Tempest* as an allegory about artistic creation and Prospero was perceived to be a representation of Shakespeare himself whose motives are beyond reproach.



The Post-colonial readings of *The Tempest*, provides us a deeper and a more insightful perspective of the play. A close inspection of his masterpieces gives us a glimpse of various aspects of the prevailing social structures, gender and cast roles, political conditions, beliefs and superstitions. The prevailing gender discrimination becomes evident by Prospero's treatment toward Caliban (a black slave) as opposed to his behavior toward Ariel (a white slave) and his depiction of Sycorax. Claribel wedding also provides a glimpse of racial prejudice and the discrimination based on colour.

Another major concept that comes to the limelight with the Post-colonial readings of The Tempest is the gender discrimination. These patriarchal ideals are heavily noted in The Tempest, especially with the appearance of the single female character, Miranda. Claribel is yet another example of how women were expected to play a passive, submissive role in the society. This is further enhanced by the lack of any other female character in the entire play. Depiction of Sycorax also provides us a glimpse of the deep rooted misogyny in the patriarchal society.

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Shakespeare often used social issues as a way to explore the way society functioned, using the stage to present a microcosm that represented the larger macrocosm of the universe. Thus critical analysis of The Tempest provides us with an accurate depiction of the social constructs, gender bias and the racial discrimination prevalent in the Elizabethan Era.

KEYWORDS

The Tempest, Post-colonial readings, gender inequality, racial discrimination, colonization, modern adaptations

INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare is widely regarded as the greatest writer in the history of the English language, and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He transformed European theatre by expanding expectations about what could be accomplished through innovation in characterization, plot, language and genre.

Plays have been one of the most effective means of communication as it attracted a large audience from general folk to dignitaries and noblemen. Apart from being one of the most popular forms of entertainment, plays also played a key role in influencing the masses. Thus not only did the plays have to be aligned with the customs and social norms of the era in which they were written, they also had to be portrayed in a manner in which the audience would enjoy the show. Thus, the portrayal of villains, protagonists, female and male characters provide us an accurate depiction of the traits and behavior which were applauded as well as the ones that were looked down upon. A close inspection of his masterpieces gives us a glimpse of various aspects of the prevailing social structures, gender and cast roles, political conditions, beliefs and superstitions.

EARLY POST-COLONIAL RESPONSES TO THE TEMPEST

Until the advent of post-colonial criticism, Anglo-American critics frequently read *The Tempest* as an allegory about artistic creation. As *The Tempest* was considered to be Shakespeare's final play, Prospero has been defined as a surrogate playwright, shaping the main action through his magic. Prospero is projected as a representation of Shakespeare himself. He is portrayed as the mastermind who has the entire play and every character under his control by virtue of his magic. Prospero emerges as an all-knowing, benevolent patriarch and artistic creator whose motives are beyond reproach. Since the play is a romance in terms of its genre, its plot was generally approached as a fanciful tale with little connection to the history of the period or its aftermath. The entire play was perceived in a positive light without much critical analysis of aspects such as racial discrimination, gender inequality and color bias.



A God-like Prospero and a devilish Caliban; The Enchanted Island before the cell of Prospero. The Tempest, Act 1, Scene 2 by Henry Fuseli

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Post-colonial readings of *The Tempest* were inspired by the decolonization movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. Post-colonial criticism is a method of analysis that addresses questions of racial identity and equality, and also of gender equity via two main modes of inquiry.

- First, it investigates how Shakespeare's plays relate to the social codes and conventions by which early modern Europeans defined non-European and non-Christian people and races they encountered.
- Second, it explores the more recent history of the *reception* of Shakespearian drama within non-Western societies and settings – in Africa, India, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

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Ariel And Caliban - A Comparative Study

Ariel and Caliban can both be viewed as the "colonized subjects" of Prospero. Both of them are undoubtedly oppressed by Prospero, yet each develops a different relationship to their master based on their natural character as well as their prior circumstances.

The complexity of *The Tempest* lies in its essential ambiguity. This ambiguity stems from the juxtaposition of the brutish and pathetic character of Caliban with the sprightly and sympathetic character of Ariel. There is a striking contrast in which Prospero treats them.

The scenes of *The Tempest* are structured so as to emphasize the differing characterizations of Ariel and Caliban in their relationship to Prospero. Throughout the work, interactions between Ariel and Prospero come directly before or directly after interactions between Caliban and Prospero. Although

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both Caliban and Ariel are natives of the island, the contrasting nature of these interactions occurring dramatically portrays the contrast between the attitudes of these central characters.

It is evident that Ariel, who is written as more of a white, civilized character, is treated much better by Prospero than Caliban, who is written as a non-white, non-civilized character.

Unlike Ariel, Caliban has no future promise of freedom that will justify an attitude of deference. His rebellious attitude is a reaction to his feeling that he is being unjustly used and subjugated.

It is Prospero's art which controls both Ariel and Caliban, binding them to his authority as their master. Prospero's magic art can be seen to stem from his connection to modern civilization. One can see how he utilizes his art, akin to modern technology, in order to suppress and subjugate. He is portrayed as a colonizer who exploits the innocence of his subjects to his own advantage. Prospero uses his power over Caliban in a malicious, vengeful manner. He influences Caliban by intimidating him with threats of bodily discomforts and annoyances.

*Prospero: "For this, be sure, tonight thou shalt have cramps,
 Side-strokes that shall pen thy breath up. Urchins
 Shall forth at vast of night that they may work
 All exercise on thee. Thou shalt be pinched
 As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging
 Than bees that made 'em."*

Caliban dramatically emphasizes the extent of this power when explaining why he does not simply run away:

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*Caliban: "I must obey. His art is of such pow'r
It would control my dam's god, Setebos,
And make a vassal of him."*

Prospero's relationship towards Ariel is of a quite different nature than his relationship towards Caliban. Whereas Prospero uses his magic in order to subjugate Caliban, he uses it in order to free Ariel from the curse of Sycorax. The submissive attitude of Ariel in his relationship with Prospero stems from the debt that this engenders in him towards his master. When Ariel becomes so bold as to ask Prospero when he is to be set free from his authority, Prospero has only to remind him of this debt and Ariel's submissive attitude is restored:

*"Ariel: Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains,
Let me remember thee what thou hast promised,
Which is not yet performed me
... My liberty.*

*Prospero: If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak
And peg thee in his knotty entrails till
Thou hast howled away twelve winters.*

Ariel: Pardon, master.

*I will be correspondent to command
And do my spriting gently."*

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The Tempest was written during the time of colonialism and it is easy to see when looking at the interactions between Prospero and Ariel (a spirit), and Prospero and Caliban (a savage). The difference between the ways Prospero treats these two characters really showcases the ideas and attitudes surrounding Europe during colonialism.

Prospero: Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself

Upon thy wicked dam, Come forth!

In the first sentence that Prospero says to Caliban he calls him “got by the devil himself”, this is exactly how European colonizers thought of the Native Americans. They were perceived as savages because they were not civilized like them, and had no knowledge of god, they were obviously of the devil-“ A freckled whelp, hag-born not honored with / A human shape.”

It is interesting to observe the contrast in behavior in terms of the curses hurled at Caliban- “*poisonous slave*”, “*lying slave*”, “*lying slave*” and the endearment bestowed on Ariel – ‘*my dainty Ariel*’, ‘*my bird*’, ‘*My brave spirit*’. The interactions with Ariel showcase a much more affectionate side of Prospero.

Ariel: Will be here with mop and mow.

Do you love me, master, no?

Prospero:Dearly my delicate Ariel. Do not approach

Till thou dost hear me call.

As Brown says "...for Ariel he is a rescuer and taskmaster; for Caliban he is a colonizer whose refused offer of civilization forces him to strict discipline..." . Ariel is a spirit, who, if they were to have a nationality, would probably be from one of the "civilized" nations. Ariel is treated as more of an indentured servant who has been educated and is civilized. Prospero treats Ariel relatively well, he tells them what to do, but he treats Ariel more like a human than the way he treats Caliban. Caliban, Prospero sees as an uncivilized savage because he is non-white, and from a place that is not in Europe.

Language

One of the most significant differences in character that separates Ariel from Caliban is the way in which each uses language. Caliban communicates almost entirely by means of vulgar curses and complaints, whereas Ariel communicates through poetry and song. Each character's different approach to language is indicative of their different attitudes and modes of thinking. Ariel's language is ordered and stylistic. It betrays a mind at ease with his environment, a mind in which creativity and wit have sufficient room to develop. Caliban's language, on the other hand, is the product of a mind surely in a state of general discomfort and ill ease. Caliban, unlike Ariel, is not of the mind to produce anything remotely similar to poetry or song. Caliban has entirely rejected language itself:

*Caliban: "You taught me language, and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
For learning me your language!" --(I, ii, 363-65)*

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This is significant in that by rejecting language, Caliban is rejecting knowledge itself. With knowledge comes a realization of one's inadequacy, and Caliban prefers to remain in that more primitive state of blissful ignorance.

Miranda and Prospero's justifications of their enslavement of the 'savage' Caliban, whose 'vile race' lacks natural goodness, are strongly challenged by post-colonial criticism. Unlike generations of earlier readers, post-colonial critics view Prospero's and Miranda's relations with Caliban as an allegory of European colonialism – one that reveals Shakespeare's own ambivalence toward Prospero's power. Europeans' colonizing activities among non-European natives they encountered in the Americas, Africa, and the Caribbean were based on the premise of the 'civilising mission'. This mission assumed that the natives lacked any culture or formal language until the Europeans brought them the 'gifts' of Western language and culture. If the natives resisted European paternal rule, then they were labeled as 'savages', beyond redemption. It is ironic that Shakespeare makes Caliban articulate this dilemma when he exclaims to Miranda and Prospero:

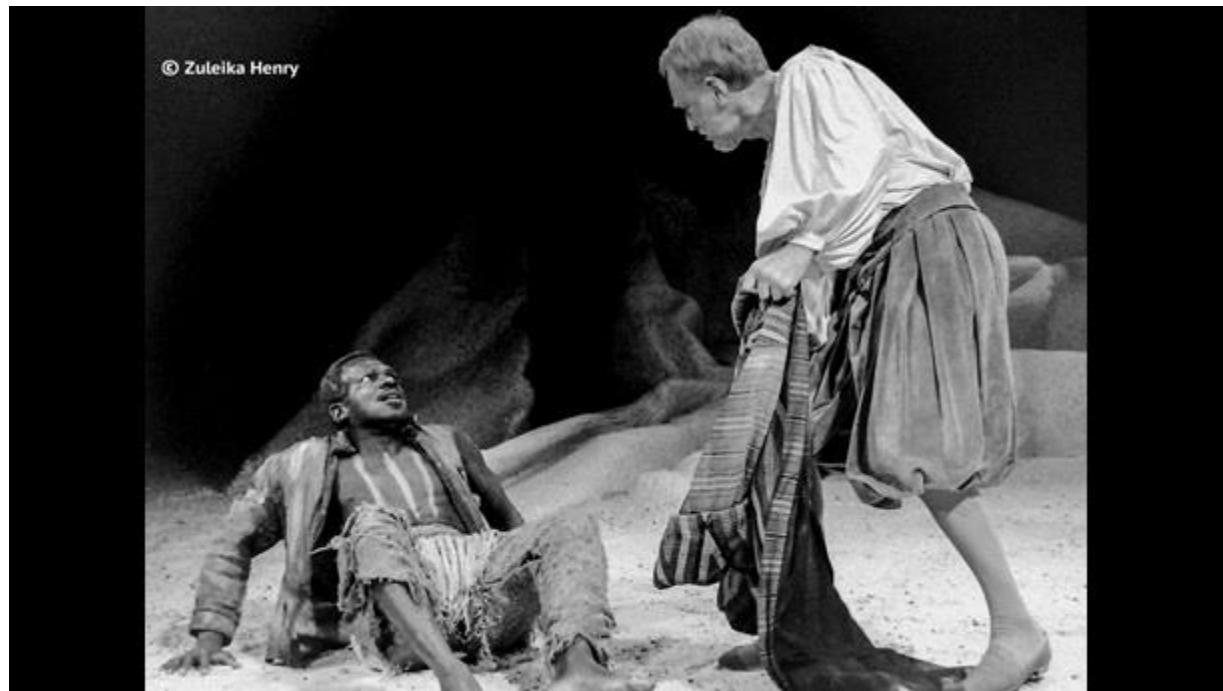
Caliban: You taught me language, and my profit on 't
 Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
For learning me your language!

Aimé Césaire, a black writer and activist from Martinique, re-wrote Shakespeare's play in 1969 in French. *Une Tempête* (translated into the English *A Tempest* in 1985) celebrates Caliban's verbal attacks on Prospero and questions the latter's claims to the island. Set in a colony – a prototype of a Caribbean or African setting – in the throes of resistance and unrest, Césaire's play focusses initially

on Caliban's resistance to Prospero's control over language. Here, Césaire is clearly sensitive to the way in which the name Caliban/Cannibal appears in Shakespeare's play and in colonial history as a cultural stereotype for the natives of the New World. Accompanying Caliban's challenge to language are references to an actual guerrilla movement and an impending black independence.

Colonization

Africans and Caribbeans saw that widespread national liberation was imminent – that is from 1959 onwards – they began to revise and mobilize the play in defence of Caliban's right to the island on which he is born prior to Prospero's arrival. Caliban's assertion in the play, 'This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother, / Which thou tak'st from me', became the rallying cry for African and Caribbean intellectuals from the 1960s to the 1970s. The long tradition of privileging Prospero's creative powers as beneficent and god-given began to be overshadowed by the growing stature of Caliban, following the de-colonisation movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America.



In Jonathan Miller's radical production of The Tempest, Prospero was a white colonist and Caliban was a black slave. Here Rudolph Walker plays Caliban and Max Von Sydow is Prospero

The Tempest revolves around Prospero enacting his revenge on various characters who have wronged him in different ways. Prospero, the "rightful" duke of Milan, primarily seeks revenge against his brother Antonio. It is ironic how the entire play revolves around Prospero wanting to take revenge on his Antonio for usurping his kingdom from him and yet when viewed from Caliban's perspective it is Prospero who usurped the island that rightfully belonged to Caliban

Caliban: I must eat my dinner.
*This island's mine by Sycorax, my mother,
 Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,
 Thou strok'st me and made much of me, wouldst
 give me*

Water with berries in 't, and teach me how
 To name the bigger light and how the less,
 That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee,
 And showed thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
 The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and
 fertile.

Cursed be I that did so! All the charms
 Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you,
 For I am all the subjects that you have,
 Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
 In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
 The rest o' th' island.

Ariel, who is labelled a 'mulatto' in this play, represents the mixed races more able to accept their limited oppression. Overall, this play characterises the changes undergone by the figure of Caliban in productions of the play: in 18th- and 19th-century European productions he was represented as a primitive or 'missing link' from Darwin's theory (i.e. a being in between apes and humans in the evolutionary process). However, with the advent of national liberation of the non-European races, as in Césaire's play, Caliban was widely depicted as a defiant subject under European rule, or simply an embodiment of any oppressed group.

Such identifications with Caliban and an accompanying unease about his alien language typify numerous Latin American and Caribbean responses to the play in the wake of decolonization in the 1960s. In Africa too, the play became a site for anti-colonial responses.

Claribel's Marriage

Although Claribel, Alonso's daughter is briefly mentioned in *The Tempest*, in Act II scene i, the audience is given an idea of the fate of Claribel. Sebastian savagely attacks Alonso for marrying his daughter to the King of Tunis, seemingly blaming the shipwreck on divine retribution for his monstrous choice of husband for Claribel.

Sebastian: "Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,
That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,
But rather loose her to an African"

At the time this play was being written (1610-11), James I was in negotiations with various European royal houses to secure a dynastic marriage for his daughter, Princess Elizabeth (she eventually married Frederick V, Count Palatine of the Rhine, in 1613). Thus these lines may have been intended as flattery for James, who was "bless[ing] our Europe with [his] daughter".

Sebastian goes on to say:

Sebastian : "You were kneeled to and importuned otherwise
By all of us"

suggesting that the idea of marriage to an African was so widely viewed as unnatural and revolting, that everybody tried to dissuade Alonso. Even Claribel was physically revolted by her future husband and was torn between the desire to escape marriage to someone she "loathed" and desire to do her filial duty and obey her father's command to marry his choice of suitor

Sebastian: “the fair soul herself
Weighed between loathing and obedience at
Which end o’th’ beam to bow”.

A postcolonial analysis, shows us how the descriptions of Claribel’s marriage conveys a racist Jacobean mindset, whereby the idea of union with an African is assumed to inspire “loathing”. The idea of marriage to an African is depicted as animalistic, while marriage to a European is depicted as holy “blessing”.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN “THE TEMPEST”

Gender roles within *The Tempest* portray how women’s roles were shaped during the Elizabethan Era. Even though England had been ruled by a female monarch for over four decades, women still had limited rights.

During this time, women had hopes for only two pathways: marriage or joining a convent. Other limitations women had during this era included being unable to receive a proper education, be heirs to their father’s titles, enter politics, or even act in theatre. These patriarchal ideals are heavily noted in *The Tempest*, especially with the appearance of the single female character, Miranda.

In the Tempest, the only woman on stage is Miranda, who is both assaulted and honoured for her virginity. The only other female character to be mentioned is Sycorax, who is projected as an evil witch. Prospero turns Sycorax into a symbol for ideas that threaten his own patriarchy, especially maternal succession, a concept that would reverse the island’s hierarchy and limit his power.

There is no mention of “Prospero’s wife ” or any other female character for that matter. The lack of women on stage leads Ann Thompson to wonder, “what feminist criticism can do in the face of a male-authored canonical text [The Tempest] which seems to exclude women to this extent”

Portrayal Of Sycorax

Apart from Miranda, Sycorax is the only other female character to be mentioned in The Tempest. Sycorax is not present to represent herself; therefore, Sycorax exists purely through secondhand accounts that Prospero edits into slander.

Prospero constructs Sycorax as evil by projecting his anxieties about women and power onto her. As the mother of Caliban and the previous ruler of the island who died before Prospero could take direct action against her, Sycorax bears the brunt of Prospero’s misogyny. He calls Sycorax a “foul witch”, “damned witch Sycorax,” and “hag” in his first discussion of her. When describing the men who betrayed him, his words never reach this extreme, but he uses such language to describe a woman he never met.

With Sycorax absent, Prospero envisions her as his female opposite. Through Prospero, Sycorax symbolizes everything that may question patriarchy. Sycorax exists only in male characters’ accounts; however, Sycorax influences the men’s perception of power because she is absent. Prospero is a white, male patriarch, and Sycorax is a woman, possibly of color. Yet, their genders push them into opposing extremes, and this opposition creates tension in the patriarchy and space for potential female power.

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Sycorax, however, is not like the women in early modern England; she is not even physically present. Her absence is an extreme example of women lacking agency and representation. Hélène Cixous claims that the dichotomy of man/woman also creates “the proliferation of representations”, meaning that Prospero sees Sycorax as a representation of women and everything womanhood represents, in contrast to how he glorifies himself. As a woman, Sycorax is weaker, more evil, and more sexually deviant than Prospero. Cixous claims that these representations create gender stereotypes and give women little existence outside this dichotomy of man/woman. In the mind of the male characters, Sycorax is only a gender stereotype, or a symbol of Prospero’s views on women. Sycorax exists only as a contradiction to Prospero and his masculinity. Sycorax’s absence gives Prospero the opportunity to construct her fully into a symbol of the evil woman, the opposite of himself; however, this construction also makes her an antagonist to Prospero and the patriarchy he represents.

In *The Tempest*, gender is only one opposing force between Prospero and Sycorax. Gender combines with race to determine the degree of power each person holds. Many of today’s critics view Prospero as an aggressive upholder of patriarchal and colonial power. Ania Loomba bluntly states that Prospero uses “language of misogyny as well as racism” (328). Both Loomba and Rachana Sachdev define Sycorax as black and claim that her racial identity colors her gender identity: “Therefore Prospero as colonialist consolidates power which is specifically white and male, and constructs Sycorax as a black, wayward and wicked witch in order to legitimize it” (Loomba 329). According to Loomba, Sycorax’s race and gender oppose Prospero’s. While Sycorax is a woman, possibly of color, Prospero is a white patriarch who censures the rule of Sycorax.

In demonizing Sycorax and projecting his fears onto her, Prospero only creates her into something powerful enough to incite fear. Although constructed and absent, Sycorax is a serious threat, because

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Prospero names her a witch. Attempting to make her out to be as evil as possible, Prospero endows Sycorax with his greatest fear: losing his patriarchal power. In calling her a witch, Prospero reveals his anxiety about women, especially their potential power to challenge patriarchy. Witch was a common insult in early modern England and was usually directed towards women because women were believed to be “desirous of power” (Mendelson and Crawford 71). Gendered insults “built on specific fears.” Most of all witch meant the “mirror reversal of all that the patriarchy deemed good in a woman” (69). It was a name for women who threatened to upset the patriarchy. In calling Sycorax a witch, Prospero is identifying her as a threat to patriarchy, and his anger shows that the threat is serious enough to enrage him. Sycorax represents for Prospero an unfettered female sexuality that breaks the gender boundaries, threatening greater female autonomy.

Miranda's Role In "The Tempest"

Miranda, the only female character in the play is merely a submissive character who's fate lies in the hands of her father. Miranda serves as the example of how women were expected to behave during this time period.

Throughout the play, Miranda is subordinate to Prospero and is expected to be attentive to his every speech and command. Prospero controls every aspect of her life, including her education, who she marries, and when she sleeps. Even though she feels sincerely attracted to Ferdinand, Prospero manipulates her psychologically in order to stoke the fire of her attraction further. The fact that Prospero manipulates Miranda like a pawn in his larger political game indicates how men in The

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Tempest subordinate women to their desires. His speech, in blessing the upcoming wedding, indicates Prospero sees his daughter as his property:

Prospero: "*Then, as my gift, and thine own acquisition*

Worthily purchased..."

For Prospero, Miranda's value lies mainly in her virginity, which makes her politically advantageous marriage to Ferdinand possible. Miranda's marriage represents the promise of a new beginning, which Prospero desperately wishes for himself. Prospero's future therefore depends on Miranda's virginity, which is why he must guard against all sexual advances, whether from Caliban or Ferdinand.

Sycorax represents an alternative to the chasteness that Prospero imposes on Miranda. Prospero's obsession with Miranda's sexuality demonstrates the value of chastity in a patriarchal society. With her chastity determining her future, Miranda is objectified and dependent. Prospero warns Ferdinand that if he "break her virgin-knot" before marriage, he will condemn the couple with "Sour-eyed disdain" and barrenness (4.1.15-20). Prospero obsessively protects Miranda's virginity, making it more important than her future happiness. Prospero's treatment of Miranda reinforces virginity as the key to a woman's value and future. Upon meeting Miranda, Ferdinand informs her and Prospero that he will make her "The Queen of Naples," but only "if a virgin" (1.2.451-53). Ferdinand's proposal wages Miranda's future on her virginity. Ferdinand quickly asks,

Ferdinand: "*If you be maid or no?*"

His immediate concern is to her chastity. They love one another instantly, and if she is a virgin, she has value to Ferdinand, who can only wed a virgin. Virginity is a matter of politics. Ferdinand may

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love Miranda, but he cannot wed her unless she is pure. A man of property, especially a king or his son, must be assured that his offspring are truly his. A woman's virginity, which implies her chastity, is promise that her husband's paternity will never be questioned. Miranda's virginity is not her preference but a commodity that men may control or own. Because of the men's patriarchal views, Miranda is restricted in her sexuality, which is constrained by the men's desire for her virginity.

Miranda is a commodity, as was her mother and her value as barter is in her nobility and purity. Virtue is a characteristic of nobility, and in telling his daughter about their past, Prospero emphasizes his own wife's nobility:

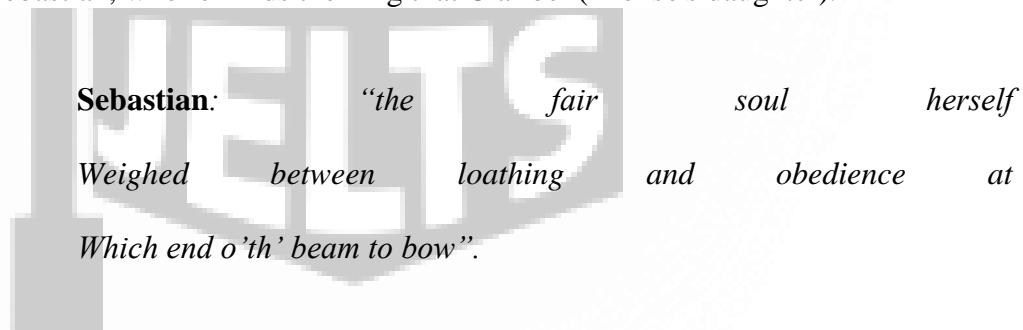
Prospero: "Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and
She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father
Was Duke of Milan, and his only heir
And princess no worse issued."

Prospero emphasizes that Miranda's mother was an excellent example of chastity and nobility, and her offspring is just as noble. Miranda is provided little information about her mother, except that which is most important about her — her chastity.

Marriage

Marriages based on forming allies and political intentions were widely prevalent in that era. Political marriages were normal parts of Elizabethan life. This was after all the plight of princesses everywhere, who were nothing more than political pawns in a game of diplomacy.

The union of Ferdinand and Miranda is also entirely influenced by Prospero , Miranda appears to be nothing more than a pawn in her fathers' scheme of The audience learns in Act II that Alonso's daughter has been married to the king of Tunis. She was also married in opposition to her wishes, according to her uncle Sebastian, who reminds the king that Claribel (Alonso's daughter).



Claribel was physically revolted by her future husband and was torn between the desire to escape marriage to someone she “loathed” and desire to do her filial duty and obey her father’s command to marry his choice of suitor. She had to weigh her obedience to her father against her own desires. Obviously, her obedience to her father weighed more heavily than her own desires about marriage. This supports the argument that a woman's primary value is as chattel, to be bartered on the marriage market for the husband her father most desires.

Shakespeare often used social issues as a way to explore the way society functioned, using the stage to present a microcosm that represented the larger macrocosm of the universe. The marriage relationship is a microcosm of the larger relationship between man and king, which was in turn a microcosm of the

larger relationship between man and God. In focusing on the political implications of Miranda's marriage, Shakespeare is offering the audience a chance to consider the alliances that women form and the means by which they are constructed.

MODERN ADAPTATIONS OF “THE TEMPEST”

A number of attempts have been made to analyse the play and present it to the audience in a different perspective. These renditions aim to bridge the gap of racial and gender discrimination and portray a picture of equality and tolerance.

- Aimé Césaire, a black writer and activist from Martinique, re-wrote Shakespeare's play in 1969 in French. *Une Tempête* (translated into the English *A Tempest* in 1985) celebrates Caliban's verbal attacks on Prospero and questions the latter's claims to the island. Set in a colony – a prototype of a Caribbean or African setting – in the throes of resistance and unrest, Césaire's play focusses initially on Caliban's resistance to Prospero's control over language. Here, Césaire is clearly sensitive to the way in which the name Caliban/Cannibal appears in Shakespeare's play and in colonial history as a cultural stereotype for the natives of the New World. Accompanying Caliban's challenge to language are references to an actual guerrilla movement and an impending black independence. And Ariel, who is labelled a 'mulatto' in this play, represents the mixed races more able to accept their limited oppression. In Césaire's play, Caliban was widely depicted as a defiant subject under European rule, or simply an embodiment of any oppressed group.

- In 2000, Lenka Udovicki directed a stage adaptation of The Tempest in the Globe Theater in which Venessa Redgrave played the role of the cross-gendered Prospero.
- In the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2001, Demetra Pitman played the role of the Duchess of Milan, Prospera, who had been exiled from Milan, directed by Penny Metropulos, who changed not only Prospero to Prospera but also Antonio to Antonia.
- Julie Taymor's movie "The Tempest", in 2010, was the first cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare's play in which the director decides to change the Duke of Milan, Prospero, into the Duchess of Milan Prospera. Changing "the exiled white father of Miranda and the master of Ariel and Caliban" into a mother and a female master changes the direction of the play from Prospero's patriarchal approach to Prospera's maternal one .



Female Prospera in Julie Taymor's movie, The Tempest (2010)

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