

# RULE IN *THE TEMPEST*: THE POLITICAL TEACHINGS OF SHAKESPEARE'S LAST PLAY

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## INTRODUCTION

*"You have often  
Begun to tell me what I am, but stopped  
And left me to a bootless inquisition" 1.2.42-43*

*The Tempest* is considered Shakespeare's final play. As such, it holds great value as the culmination of a career spent examining beauty, love, comedy, tragedy, politics and the human soul. No doubt, the tale told is a strange one. The exiled duke of Milan has landed on a small Mediterranean Island, of which he has named himself lord. There, he raises his daughter from infancy and also encounters strange and fascinating creatures. The spirit Ariel acts as Prospero's aid in all he does while the monster Caliban is held as a slave. Twelve years after Prospero's landing upon the island, the King of Naples along with his entourage is returning to Italy from Tunis, where the king has recently married his daughter to African royalty. A tempest, which Prospero claims to have created through his use of magic, tosses the king's ship and strands those on board. Alonso lands on a beach with his own brother Sebastian and Prospero's brother Antonio,

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who usurped Prospero years ago. Accompanying these men are Francisco, Adrian and Gonzalo, royal advisors. Together, Antonio and Sebastian plot to kill Alonso and take Naples for themselves, only to be foiled through Prospero's intervention. On another beach, two servants named Trinculo and Stephano land and drunkenly discover Caliban taking shelter under a cape. These three attempt to claim rule of the isle for themselves and also plot an assassination, this time of Prospero. Yet, the duke again ruins their attempts. Finally, Ferdinand, Prince of Naples, is stranded on a beach separate from his father. He is taken under Prospero's custody and falls in love with and marries Miranda. Finally, all parties are reunited and confronted by Prospero.

While *The Tempest* is filled with the supernatural, it must be remembered that these characters are, above all, integral pieces in Prospero's political experiment. The former duke begins his political evolution as a philosopher back in Milan. But after being overthrown and challenged by Caliban's low nature, he comes to understand the political necessity of Machiavellian politics. Prospero acts according to this political philosophy, but it is not his motivation. Rather, he aims to create the best possible regime. It is here in the story that many parallels to the Old Testament and the creation of Israel are drawn. As it will be explored, the royal party and the drunkards come to represent the deepest flaws within human nature. Prospero observes these flaws and attempts to

moderate them through establishing a sort of modern Israel. Like Israel, Prospero's regime will not be built upon the notion of a renewed paradise, but it is intended to be a place where justice will not be viewed simply in terms of political necessity, but in terms of virtue. To build this Israel, the duke must find his David. He must find that ruler who embodies the qualities most suited to the establishment and maintenance of prosperous a regime based upon virtue rather than vice, much like God found in David.

As one explores the Platonic, Machiavellian, Biblical and mythological themes throughout *The Tempest*, it is imperative that one approach it as a political text rather than simply a literary one. For Shakespeare's value reaches far beyond a world of books. Instead, he searches for and presents basic truths about man which are, after all, the basis of politics.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Prospero's Political Evolution

*"Hear a little further,  
And then I'll bring thee to the present business  
Which now's upon's, without which this story  
Were most impertinent"* 1.2.161-63

Prospero, ousted Duke of Milan and master of the Island on which a grand political experiment unfolds, lives his political life in various stages. This evolution gives way to a man whose own astuteness will lead to the establishment of new and, he hopes, virtuous modes and orders under his daughter Miranda and her husband Ferdinand. But Prospero does not begin his political development with political ambitions. Rather, as Shakespeare introduces him, Prospero begins as a philosopher. But in order to understand just how Prospero and, for that matter, Shakespeare views the

role of a philosopher in society, one must begin with what a philosopher is and how he behaves. For such a definition, one can turn to Plato's *Republic*, the volume in which Plato recounts Socrates' offerings concerning the meaning of justice and the establishment of the best regime. As they will be further explored, there are numerous parallels to be drawn between Socrates' philosopher king and the role which Prospero desires to fill both in Milan and during his initial time on the island.

Socrates' most in depth discussion of the philosopher in his City in Speech begins with the statement, "Unless, I said, 'the philosophers rule as kings or those now called kings and chiefs genuinely and adequately philosophize, and political power and philosophy coincide in the same place...there is no rest from ills for the cities...nor I think for human kind, nor will the regime we have now described in speech ever come forth from nature.'"<sup>1</sup> Socrates understands the enormity of his assertion, but finds it to be the swiftest way to rid the city of those things that plague it. The thinker then goes to great lengths to define what sort of soul defines a philosopher in order that he may be identified as a ruler. He lists certain characteristics, including steadiness, courage, good looks, a good memory, and a hard working spirit, among others. However, there seem to be a specific set of characteristics that Socrates offers that apply directly to Prospero.

The first and most important of these qualities is a love of learning, especially when that learning leads philosophers to discover truth. Such learning, it seems, is Prospero's passion in Milan and when he arrives on the island. Again and again Prospero alludes to his deep love of study and the liberal arts. In Act One, Scene Two, Prospero explains to Miranda that he was greatly reputed in Milan for his study and

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<sup>1</sup> Plato *The Republic*, Basic Books, 5.473c9-d7.

that his books and learning were enough to please him. Shakespeare suggests that Prospero's study continued over at least a few of the twelve years he considered the island home. In Act Three, Scene One, Miranda urges Ferdinand to rest from the labor Prospero has set him to, saying, "My father/ Is hard at study. Pray now, rest yourself./ He's safe for these three hours"<sup>2</sup> While Miranda is mistaken concerning her father's whereabouts, her certainty in the depth and length of his study demonstrates a knowledge of Prospero's intent on learning and the seriousness that he puts toward the effort. Later, while Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano attempt to carry out their plot against Prospero, Caliban insists that before murdering Prospero they ensure that they have "first seized his books."<sup>3</sup> Caliban clearly links Prospero's power to his learning. And while he, like Miranda, is ultimately wrong about Prospero's study, the monster's awareness is a testament to the continued important role books and learning held for Prospero when he landed on the island.

The next trait that links Prospero to Socrates' true philosopher is his disregard for bodily or earthly pleasures. As Plato recounts, Socrates affirmed that a philosopher would "forsake those pleasures that come through the body," and be "in no way a lover of money." Prospero seems to fit this particular description most fully when he is being thrown from the city. Knowing Prospero's deep love of learning, Gonzalo, who was in charge of the duke's removal, bestowed Prospero with several amenities. Prospero says,

Some food we had, and some fresh  
water, that/ A noble Neapolitan,

Gonzalo,/ Out of his charity, who  
being then appointed/ Master of this  
design, did give us, with/ Rich  
garments, linens, stuffs, and  
necessaries,/ Which since have  
steaded much. So, of his gentleness,/  
Knowing I loved my books, he  
furnished me/ From mine own  
library with volumes that/ I prize  
above my dukedom.<sup>4</sup>

While the first few lines of the excerpt serve to explain Prospero and Miranda's extended existence on the island, the real significance lies in Prospero's mention of his books. Not only does this reference point to the seriousness of Prospero's study and his disregard for material possessions compared to his sources of learning, but it also reveals the problems of Prospero's rule in Milan and that of philosophers, even in Plato's city in speech. But before examining the political failure of the philosopher king and Prospero's own evolution, one must continue to evaluate the ex-duke's merits as a philosopher and how he came to discover the shortfalls of such merits.

Perhaps the most interesting and, for Prospero, useful quality of a philosopher's soul according to Socrates is a musical nature. Socrates tells Glaucon, "Further, we would deny that what has an unmusical and graceless nature" into the ranks of philosophers.<sup>5</sup> This may seem like a trivial point on which to focus when compared to other elements of the philosopher's soul. However, if Prospero truly has the soul of a philosopher, than his inclination to music is critical to understanding the motivation behind his political experiment. Socrates says that a philosopher ought to love music because it reflects a desire for "measure, "or "emmetria," otherwise known as order and

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<sup>2</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger edition, ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine (New York: 1994), 3.1.21-23.

<sup>3</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 3.2.98.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 1.2.191-200.

<sup>5</sup> *Pl. Rep.* 6.486d.

harmony. As one will come to see, Prospero is driven by the desire to establish a more just rule, based upon a proper order. The future success of his experiment also lies in Prospero's interest in music in that it brings him to Ariel, who will become a significant tool. The spirit Ariel, an embodiment of religion on the island, becomes extremely important in Prospero's Machiavellian manipulation of those who have landed on the island. And while it remains unclear as to how Prospero frees Ariel from the tree that had been his prison for twelve years, a philosophic love of music explains what initially drew Prospero to the spirit. Throughout the play, Ariel's musical nature is referenced. In the presence of Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano, Ariel plays a tabor while invisible to the eye; he also sings deeply moving songs to Ferdinand and Gonzalo. Of his discovery of Ariel, Prospero says, "What torment I did find thee in. Thy groans/ Did make wolves howl, and penetrate the breasts/ of every-angry bears."<sup>6</sup> While Prospero calls Ariel's noises "groans," there was clearly something about the groans that seemed otherworldly, as Ariel is. Prospero never mentions the possibility that such noises were coming from animals or other creatures on the island, but insists that he came immediately to the spirit's rescue. This tale begs the question: was there something about Ariel's groans that moved Prospero's soul in the way that music moves the human soul? And, if so, would an unphilosophic soul search to understand and release the origins of such music as Prospero did? Prospero understands Ariel's power more than anyone else on the island at any time. Caliban has no thorough understanding of the spirit. In one instance, he tells Trinculo and Stephano, "The isle is full of noises,/ Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not."<sup>7</sup>

However, Caliban earlier spoke of spirits that "mow and chatter at me/ And after bite me."<sup>8</sup> Caliban is apparently unaware of Ariel as an independent entity. There is nothing to suggest that there are multiple spirits on the island, aside from those ancient goddesses that are under the control of Ariel during the masque. Therefore, one must assume that Ariel is the source of those noises and forces that both sooth and torment Caliban. Yet the monster is unaware of Ariel as an independent entity. This ignorance of the source of such a power and interpretation of what he hears as noises and sounds rather than music suggests that Caliban is not moved by Ariel's music in the same way that any human on the island is moved. Not only does this deficiency in soul mark a distinct difference between Caliban and those with whom he shares the island, but it also underlines Prospero's nature as a philosopher in his ability to appreciate and understand music and its source.

Caliban's unthoughtful nature lends one the opportunity to think about the key image in Plato's *Republic* while at the same time comparing Socrates' thought to the island. This image is, of course, the cave. Plato's cave is an extended metaphor for the human condition when man does not know truth, but rather knows only the appearances of things. In the cave, men are prisoners who never know the outside world. They are bound so that they cannot move or even turn their heads. There is also a fire in the cave, in front of which men carry images of humans, animals, and other beings and objects, the shadows of which are projected on the wall in front of the men and are perceived by them to be true things in and of themselves. When a man comes out of the cave he will be dazzled and blinded at first by the sun and will be unaccustomed and therefore reluctant to see the true objects in front of him as reality; but eventually his

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<sup>6</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.341-43.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 3.2.148-49.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 2.2.7-8.

eyes will adjust and he will acclimate himself to truth. He will also take pity on those left in the cave. If he should return to the cave, he would disdain the game men play trying to guess and name the objects that appear before him on the wall, because they are only shadows of things created by artificial light. Soon, the others will call him corrupt and might even try to kill him; having never been out of the cave and seen the sun for themselves, they have no knowledge of true things, and only want to preserve the things they are accustomed by tradition to calling true. Socrates likens the condition of this man who sees the truth to the philosopher in the city: both will be constantly ridiculed and called corrupt.

The cave metaphor, then, applies to both Prospero and Caliban. It seems that Prospero is that philosopher who has come out of the cave and suffers ridicule and attempted murder as Duke of Milan. Prospero is usurped by his brother, Antonio. As it will soon be discussed in greater detail, Antonio establishes a reputation for himself that, in its making, also paints Prospero as “variable, light, effeminate, pusillanimous, [and] irresolute” just before Prospero’s dukedom is taken from him; Prospero is then cast to sea to suffer death—if not physically, at least to the memory of Milan.<sup>9</sup> Upon reaching the island, Prospero seemingly returns to the cave when he meets Caliban. However, he makes the mistake that Socrates says founders of cities must prevent philosophers from making. Socrates establishes that rather than bringing men out of the cave, if philosophers are to rule, they must re-enter the cave themselves. Prospero, however, tries to bring Caliban out of the cave. Caliban recounts that Prospero and Miranda alike attempted to educate him, teaching him “how/ To name the bigger

light and how the less,/ That burn by day and night,” and for their attempts to bring him out of the metaphorical cave, Caliban hates them both. Of his education the monster says, “You taught me language, and my profit on ‘t/ I know how to curse. A red plague rid you/ For learning me your language!”<sup>10</sup> Prospero has attempted to bring Caliban out of the cave, and yet Caliban, perhaps due to his not-quite-human nature, does not move past the point of being disgruntled and disoriented at his release. Therefore, Caliban must figuratively and literally move back toward the cave and, for the sake of Prospero and Miranda, be kept there. Caliban truly does live in a cave. Upon the audience’s first encounter with the monster, Caliban says to Prospero, “and here you sty me/ In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me/ The rest o’ the island.” What is more, Caliban’s chief responsibilities (the only ones specifically mentioned) involve chopping and hauling wood and building fire. While this is a very practical thing for a slave to do for his master, it is also a subtle metaphor referring back to the cave. While Prospero physically and symbolically keeps Caliban in the cave, the monster himself is perpetuating the images that offer him a distorted sense of truth. However, as it will later be explored, Caliban is not a victim of the cave, but the master over it. The perpetuation of his discontented state is not the fault of Prospero, but of Caliban’s nature as an instrument of a darker force that wishes to undermine Prospero and his larger goal.

Another image from Plato’s *Republic* that applies very well to *The Tempest*, is that of a ship. While Socrates discusses the necessary qualities of philosophers and seems to insist that they must rule, it must be remembered that when he began to discuss the nature of philosophers, he agreed

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<sup>9</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey Mansfield (Chicago:1998), 19.72.

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<sup>10</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.400-03, 437-38.

to their uselessness in the city. In order to demonstrate the philosopher's uselessness to the city, he provides Adeimantus (one of Socrates' interlocutors in the book) with an account of how a captain must manage a ship. Interestingly, *The Tempest's* opening scene portrays the royal party upon a ship, its master unseen. However, the Boatswain seems to have taken charge of the vessel during the torrential storm. King Alonso of Naples comes to the deck wishing to order the Boatswain as to what should be done. The Boatswain chastises Alonso and his councilor Gonzalo for their interference saying, "What cares these roarers for the name of king?" Gonzalo, in turn, defends the dignity of those on board, saying, "Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard," to which the Boatswain answers, "None that I love more than myself."<sup>11</sup>

Here, there are great parallels to be drawn to Plato's *Republic*. Aboard Socrates' ship, men are quarrelling over the proper way to pilot the vessel while they have occupied the ship owner with other entertainments, most notably alcohol. If the parallel be a true one, this offers an explanation as to where the master of King Alonso's ship has gone. The Boatswain and the other sailors aboard have been fighting about how to best pilot the ship during the tempest. And despite the fact that the Boatswain has taken control of the ship, he may not be the best pilot amongst them. In Socrates' image, he notes that the man called pilot is merely "the man who is clever at figuring out how they will get the rule, either by persuading or by forcing the ship owner, while the man who is not of this sort they blame as useless."<sup>12</sup> One may examine the Boatswain's character in much the same way. When Gonzalo reprimands the Boatswain and reminds him of his royal cargo, the Boatswain contends that there is

no one aboard who he loves more than himself. This unapologetic desire not only to preserve himself, but also to acquire control of the ship, is distinctly Machiavellian in contrast to the motives of Plato's Philosopher King. When considering the parallel, there seems to be an implication that through his own cleverness and desire for rule, the Boatswain has managed to become captain of the ship and is therefore one representative of a practical man in *The Tempest*. The tempest and the havoc it wreaks on those aboard the ship seem to foreshadow the events that will follow and the political natures of each character that will later be revealed.

Aboard Socrates' ship, the one who is called useless is the man who does not spend his time quarrelling over power, but rather learning to chart the stars and learn other skills pertinent to navigation and the captaining of a ship—in other words, the sailors wrongly call the true master pilot "useless." Just as this man is called useless aboard Socrates' ship, so is the philosopher in the city. One can certainly draw a parallel between Socrates' philosopher and Prospero, who became so immersed in his studies that he became useless to the city of Milan. However, it is the man who studies who is the true pilot of Socrates' ship, and so it is Prospero who is truly captaining the vessel in the opening scene of *The Tempest*. It is Prospero who creates the tempest and therefore determines the course of the vessel by his learning, or as it will be argued in the following chapters, through his evolved understanding of politics. Just as the true master of a ship studies those things pertinent to sailing, such as charts and stars, so Prospero studies the things pertinent to ruling, namely human nature.

Shakespeare introduces Prospero as a philosopher, not so that the audience understands the protagonist's current political thought, but so that one may come

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<sup>11</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.1.21.

<sup>12</sup> *Pl. Rep.* 6.488d.

to understand from where Prospero came. As a philosopher, Prospero failed to rule Milan properly, if at all. And yet he continued in his philosophic nature during his early encounters on the island. He attempted to bring Caliban out of his cave and teach him truth. Yet Caliban remains unruly, evidenced most clearly through his attempted rape of Miranda and later conspiracy against Prospero. But it seems that in his extended exile, Prospero has begun to study the world as it is, the world that allowed his usurpation and rewarded his usurper along with the world in which a creature like Caliban exists. It is in this world of necessity that Prospero will conduct his experiment. While it may seem that he has abandoned the notion of an ideal city, it must be remembered that Prospero's political scheming on the island will serve the end of a better regime for Italy and, perhaps for posterity. But first, one must examine the most important experience that leads him to adopt a more Machiavellian outlook and style of rule.

The influence of the political teachings of Niccolò Machiavelli on Shakespeare's final work is undeniable. In one sense, like Machiavelli, Shakespeare avoids "imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist in truth."<sup>13</sup> *The Tempest* is Shakespeare's only play in which the action takes place in an imagined land. However, this land is given distinct boundaries. It is an island located in the Mediterranean Sea. And while this island is certainly not a known and studied commonwealth, the actions that take place upon it are set against the backdrop of the kingdom most studied by Machiavelli—Italy. The rule of Milan and Naples are the focus of most of the characters' political scheming while only the basest among them care to rule the island

itself. While the Mediterranean island may be the setting, it is certainly not the principality around which the Bard's story revolves.

The politics of Italy presents itself even in the first scene. In this scene the King of Naples and his men are being tossed about by the storm, all the while speaking of politics. The Boatswain cares only for his preservation; Gonzalo is dismayed by the crew's insolence toward the royal party, and the others attempt to rule the ship in their own way, finally resigning themselves to their fate. But this, of course, is politics in the most basic sense—politics of preservation. But it is not long until the audience is introduced to the sort of politics around which the rest of the play will revolve. This higher understanding of politics reaches beyond preservation and delves into themes of philosophy, virtue, and political astuteness. Most importantly, this understanding raises the question of who ought to rule.

In Act One, Scene Two, the audience is introduced to the two central figures of *The Tempest*: Prospero and Miranda. In this scene, each acts according to their characters as they will be explored throughout the rest of the play. Miranda is portrayed in all her virtue, caring deeply for the souls who she believes have perished in the storm, while Prospero assures his daughter that all was done for the best. Even early in the play, one cannot help but envision Prospero as a great manipulator, positioning all the players in his experiment in order that his plans for rule might succeed. The next character to be introduced, however, is also a great manipulator and one might wonder if he—Antonio—is Prospero's real teacher concerning ordinary politics.

After Prospero has calmed Miranda, he decides he must share with her, after twelve years, how they came to live on the island. It is within this tale that Prospero introduces his brother, Antonio. Through

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<sup>13</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 15.61.

Prospero, the audience learns that Antonio conspired with the King of Naples, Alonso, to usurp his brother's dukedom. This introduction of the current Duke of Milan is not only important in understanding each brother's thoughts concerning rule, but it also tells something of Antonio's success as a Machiavellian Prince. While Antonio and a few other characters (for example, Gonzalo) speak while on the ship in Act One, Scene One, their dialogue gives little insight to their characters. Therefore, through his brother's introduction, Antonio is the only character of whom the audience has some understanding before his appearance on the island. Shakespeare does not allow the audience to form their first opinions of Antonio through observation. Rather, Antonio is introduced by reputation. Reputation is essential to the Machiavellian Prince's efforts in acquiring, and more importantly, maintaining his rule. Machiavelli dedicates several chapters of *The Prince* to how a prince ought to appear to those around him and how he ought to act concerning liberality, parsimony, cruelty, mercy, and religion, all in an effort to build a reputation favorable to the acquisition, reacquisition or maintenance of a principality. In Chapter Nineteen, "Of Avoiding Hatred," Machiavelli speaks to the power of reputation in regard to Severus, who took his army to Rome and was named emperor by the Senate, Machiavelli says, out of fear. He says, "For his very great reputation always defended him from the hatred that the people could have conceived for him because of his robbery." Machiavelli calls Severus a "very fierce lion and a very astute fox," praising him not necessarily for his usurpation, but for the reputation that Severus built for himself in order to make his own usurping, ambitious character appear virtuous.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 19.79.

From this tale one can see that, for a Machiavellian Prince, reputation is of the utmost importance. Therefore, it is telling that Antonio is introduced by his reputation. Antonio has been so astute in acquiring Prospero's dukedom that his own brother feels compelled to share Antonio's reputation with his daughter, just as Shakespeare shares it with his audience. And so, what is Antonio's reputation? One might expect his exiled brother to speak with contempt for Antonio and his actions. And while Prospero is certainly unkind regarding his brother's virtue, there is a certain respect for Antonio's methods in Prospero's tone, even as he admits to his own mistakes. There are several key passages in Prospero's tale that not only help one understand Antonio's reputation, but also shed light on his most Machiavellian tendencies.

Prospero begins by sharing that he was only concerned with his own studies and willingly gave his duties to Antonio, but it is understood that while the responsibilities were Antonio's, the dukedom still belonged to Prospero. Yet, Antonio saw in his brother's disregard for government an opportunity for rule. The ability to recognize opportunity and translate it to tangible power is essential to rule. Machiavelli attributes this quality most to founders of societies. However, one need not be the founder of a society to introduce new modes and orders of government, or at least new ways of obtaining governmental power. Machiavelli introduces four historical figures and the opportunities that each seized to secure his place in history. He says,

It was necessary then for Moses to find the people of Israel in Egypt, enslaved and oppressed by the Egyptians, so that they would be disposed to follow him so as to get



out of their servitude. It was fitting that Romulus not be received in Alba, that he should have been exposed at birth, if he was to become king of Rome and fonder of that fatherland. Cyrus needed to find the Persians malcontent with the empire of the Medes, and the Medes soft and effeminate because of a long peace. Theseus could not have demonstrated his virtue if he had not found the Athenians dispersed. Such opportunities, therefore, made these men happy, and their excellent virtue enabled the opportunity to be recognized.<sup>15</sup>

Antonio's opportunity, then, was his brother's desire to study rather than to rule and his virtue, his astuteness, allowed him to recognize the opportunity as one that would allow him to further his own ambitions.

Recognizing this opportunity, Antonio took to learning the daily workings of the office and soon began to build a reputation for himself. As Prospero says, his brother, "having both the key/Of officer and office, set all the hearts i' th' state/To what tune pleased his ear"<sup>16</sup> This description of Antonio's slow usurpation smacks of Machiavelli's teaching that a prince must win the hearts and minds of the people in order to be loved and not hated. Being loved and not hated serves a distinct purpose for Machiavelli, as it seems to for Antonio. For the Machiavellian Prince, being loved and not hated secures his rule and minimizes the likelihood of conspiracies against him. Antonio uses this philosophy not only to avoid conspiracies, but also, interestingly enough, to conspire. As Prospero states, Antonio has "set all hearts i' th' state/To what tune pleased his ear." This ability to

garner support from the people allowed him to seize his brother's power with minimal repercussions. But the people were also fond of Prospero, who had a reputation quite different from that which Shakespeare attributes to Antonio. Prospero says of himself that he had a reputation for his study and his dignity and was thought of fondly by the people of Milan. Therefore, if Antonio was to avoid hatred from his people, he could not do too much injury to Prospero, whom the people also loved. Therefore, Antonio turned to exile his brother rather than kill him. When Miranda asks her father, "Wherefore did they not/That hour destroy us?" Prospero seems aware of his brother's cunning, saying, "Dear, they durst not./So dear the love my people bore me, nor set/A mark so bloody on the business, but/With colors fairer painted their foul ends."<sup>17</sup> By exiling Prospero and Miranda, Antonio acted as a true Machiavellian Prince. He avoided hatred by winning the people's hearts, and kept those hearts by avoiding fratricide; at the same time he also secured his rule by showing his strength and ability to govern while also eliminating the man who was most likely to conspire against his rule in the future—Prospero, the rightful duke.

Brilliantly, Antonio has acted as the conspirator, while avoiding future conspiracy himself. He has avoided conspiracy from the people because, as Machiavelli states, "A prince should take little account of conspiracies if the people show good will to him; but if they are hostile and bear hatred for him, he should fear everything and everyone."<sup>18</sup> And so the people of Milan, who love Antonio, pose no threat, while the man who bears hatred for him is cast to sea, perhaps to die, perhaps only to be stranded on a far-off island. Not

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 6.23.

<sup>16</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.103-104.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 1.2.165-71.

<sup>18</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 19.74.

only has Antonio avoided hatred before he usurped Prospero through winning the hearts and minds of the people and by choosing to exile his brother to whom the people showed such affection, but, furthermore, Antonio has actually avoided hatred in the act of usurping. While it seems incredible, for Machiavelli, Antonio's usurpation would have proven his astuteness and made him more desirable as a ruler. Machiavelli states that "What makes him a prince contemptible is to be held variable, light, effeminate, pusillanimous, irresolute," but what earns a prince a fair reputation is "greatness, spiritedness, gravity, and strength and... [that] his judgments...be irrevocable"<sup>19</sup> Has Antonio not, then, through his usurpation, proven Prospero to be variable, light, effeminate, pusillanimous and irresolute? After all, Prospero willingly gave up his power, if not his title, to pursue study, not action or greater power. Antonio then took the post upon himself and, it seems, proved to be an adept leader. Antonio turned what Prospero thought to be his own virtue, the bettering of his mind, into a vice that lost him his dukedom and the favor of the people. At the same time, Antonio earned the hearts of the people and thereby secured his own rule, avoiding conspiracy. Would Machiavelli, then, not praise Antonio as he praises Severus? Like Severus, Antonio is a man who has created for himself a reputation that transforms his usurping and ambitious nature, considered a vice by traditional standards, into a virtue that allows him to seize and retain power.

But Antonio's reputation, his avoidance of hatred and his redefinition of virtue are not the only Machiavellian means by which Antonio seized power in Milan. As Machiavelli states, a prince ought to use both the people and the great in his rise to power and his retention thereof. While it may seem that Machiavelli recommends that

a prince come to power through the people, a closer reading will find that it is, in fact, more prudent to ascend to power with the help of the great, troublesome as they may be. On the one hand, Machiavelli states that princes who rise to power by the great maintain their authority with more difficulty than princes who ascend through the people because the great necessarily want to oppress the people while the people merely want to avoid oppression. Therefore, it would seem that a prince who rises through the great would be hated by the people for the oppression that would follow his ascent. But Machiavelli also states that it is much easier that the prince choose to ascend through the people, for the people will remain loyal to a prince who they have supported, so long as he does not seek to oppress them. If the prince chooses to side with the great, he will remain obligated to those great men who have helped him seize power. Machiavelli later says,

Therefore, one who becomes prince through the support of the people should keep them friendly to him, which should be easy for him because they ask of him only that they no be oppressed. But one who becomes prince against the people with the support of the great must before everything else seek to gain the people to himself, which should be easy for him when he takes up its protection. And since men who receive good from someone from whom they believed they would receive evil are more obligated to their benefactor, the people immediately wish him well more than if he had been brought to the principality with their support.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 19.72.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 9.40.

Machiavelli goes on in later chapters to tell how a prince can garner praise instead of blame and avoid hatred. He states that princes may rise through either the people or the great, “according to which of these sides has the opportunity for it.”<sup>21</sup> And since it is essential that a prince convert opportunity into action, it would be foolish to deny the support of the great. After all, if the great are the men who can most effectively position a prince to rule, and he can then later earn support from the people that would be increased when compared to their support had they helped him rise to power themselves, then the most prudent decision would be to seize power through the great—but always with an eye to gaining and keeping the support of the people.

Such a decision is the one made by Antonio when he sought to usurp Prospero. Antonio had not one, but two opportunities placed before him. Not only did he see an opportunity in Prospero’s reluctance to govern, but also the opportunity that Alonso, the King of Naples, offered him. While his brother’s avoidance of his duties gave Antonio the necessary opportunity to win the hearts and minds of Milan while at the same time making his brother seem contemptible, Alonso provided the opportunity to physically overthrow Prospero. As Prospero tells the tale, the King of Naples and Antonio plotted to “extirpate me and mine/Out of the dukedom, and confer fair Milan,/With all the honors, on my brother; whereon,/A treacherous army levied, one midnight/Fated to th’ purpose did Antonio open/The gates of Milan, and i’ th’ dead of darkness/The ministers for th’ purpose hurried thence/Me and thy crying self.”<sup>22</sup> Because Antonio was not yet the Duke of Milan, he had no power over the army and therefore had no force by which to exile

Prospero. Such a force was, of course, necessary because Antonio sought to exile rather than kill Prospero. After all, it would take more than one man in order to transport the wronged duke out of the city. And while Alonso offered his services to Antonio, it was for a price. The audience learns that Antonio has been paying a tribute to the King of Naples for the past twelve years. This tribute seems to be a literal and physical representation of the obligation against which Machiavelli warns when speaking of ascension through the great. However, a tribute seems to be the price Antonio is willing to pay in order to seize power. But Antonio, Shakespeare’s astute Machiavellian in *The Tempest*, seems aware of the problems of such an obligation and later seeks to free himself of such a requirement when he convinces Sebastian to take the kingdom of Naples for himself by killing the King. But, even though Antonio remained obligated to him, it was the King of Naples, with his army, that provided an opportunity to properly oust Prospero so that Antonio might become the Duke of Milan not only *de facto*, but in title and power also.

Antonio’s actions before he seized Prospero’s dukedom are just another example of his Machiavellian tendencies. Antonio, it seems, has mastered the art of being what Machiavelli calls a “great pretender,” one who acts badly and against faith when necessary while giving the illusion of keeping faith and appearing “merciful, faithful, humane, honest, and religious”<sup>23</sup> Antonio, in absorbing the duties of duke before officially taking his brother’s seat, seems to have had no problem in betraying the trust Prospero put in him. But because the audience only hears Prospero’s version of events, it is difficult to observe what appearances Antonio gave to the people of Milan concerning mercy, faith,

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 9.39.

<sup>22</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.149-56.

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<sup>23</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 18.70.

humanity, honesty and religion. However, one would assume that Antonio possessed these qualities, at least superficially, or Prospero would not have entrusted his power to his brother and the people would have been far less susceptible to Antonio's efforts to "set all the hearts i' th' state/To what tune pleased his ear"<sup>24</sup>

Antonio also succeeded in appearing to be the proper Duke of Milan. Prospero alludes to this outward show on two occasions. First, Prospero tells Miranda, "now he was/The ivy which had hid my princely trunk/ And sucked my verdure out on 't."<sup>25</sup> This metaphor relates Prospero to the trunk of a tree, and his brother to a creeping vine that hides the tree beneath it. Prospero obviously finds the tree to have some kind of virtue to which he would like to compare himself. Perhaps for Prospero it is a symbol of sturdiness or, more likely, a natural right to rule. Only by nature do trees grow to maturity and stand resolutely in their spots for the remainder of their lives. But Antonio, the parasitic vine, has consumed Prospero's natural role and covered it with another and more beautiful sign of strength—ivy. The ivy, while it appears pleasing to the eye and even noble as it climbs gracefully up the tree has, through its growth, been unfaithful to the trunk which has provided it a home by robbing the trunk of its greatness. Similarly, Antonio appears to Milan to be a better and perhaps even more virtuous duke than Prospero while at the same time dwarfing Prospero's virtues, even turning them into vices that the people will find contemptible.

The other reference Prospero makes concerning his brother's appearance in Milan is fairly straightforward. Prospero merely states that "He was indeed the Duke, out o' th' substitution/And executing th' outward face of royalty/ With all

prerogative."<sup>26</sup> Simply put, Antonio had appeared to be the duke with such ability, that he along with others, as displayed by the support of Alonso and the people, believed the office to be his. As Machiavelli teaches, "Everyone sees how you appear, few touch what you are...So let a prince win and maintain his state: the means will always be judged honorable, and will be praised by everyone."<sup>27</sup> Because Antonio appeared to have the virtues necessary in a ruler, he obtained rule and in maintaining that rule, his lack of faith, contrary though it may be to the appearance he portrayed, became worthy of praise, and he was not considered treacherous. Shakespeare himself seems to admire the character he has created in Antonio for his usurpation and Machiavellian nature. Antonio's name, in fact, means "worthy of praise."<sup>28</sup> And perhaps Prospero, too, has learned a valuable lesson from his usurping brother, for the philosopher becomes distinctly Machiavellian in his manipulation of others on the island, particularly Ariel.

Ariel is perhaps the most interesting character in Shakespeare's final work. A mystical spirit that does Prospero's bidding in and around the island, Ariel is an integral part of his masters' political experiment. At times, it seems that Ariel acts as a voice of conscience, at others, as an instigator of events. But perhaps Ariel's true nature lies in his name. As a name, "Ariel" is unisex, most common for men, but not unheard of for women. The unisex nature of the name, therefore, is ideal for Ariel. He (a pronoun used simply for clarity's sake) is neither male nor female because he is a spirit, rather than human. As such, Ariel ought not to be depicted in terms of this world such as

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<sup>24</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.103-04.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 1.2.104-07.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 1.2.123-25.

<sup>27</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 19.71.

<sup>28</sup> "Antonio," *Behind the Name: The Etymology and History of First Names*; available at <http://www.behindthename.com/name/antonio>; Internet; accessed December 2008.

gender. But what is more interesting about Ariel is the ancient origin of his name. Hebrew for “lion of God,” Ariel is often used as another name for the city of Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup>

When examining the island on which Prospero landed and of which he has made himself master, it is notable that there is no immediately recognizable religion to be found. Brief mentions of prayers and holy things arise. However, they are not substantial and they do not subscribe to any denomination. But a lack of religion seems to be unusual for Shakespeare, whose plays often include Jews, friars, nuns or Christian feast days. Therefore, one must wonder: Where is religion on the island? The answer is found in Ariel. In Ariel, it seems that Prospero has found all the power and magic that religion offers in society. Ariel has the ability to convince men of their goodness or, more often, their wickedness through actions and song, as religion tends to do through men’s practice of it. Religion, too, offers an explanation for those things that seem to break the laws of the natural world. Just as men understand phenomena like the burning bush and the multiplication of loaves and fishes through a religion whose central figure they cannot see, so those on the island turn to the supernatural as explanations for Ariel’s magic. Finally, there is a connection between Ariel as a religious force and his musical nature. This connection stems again, from the idea of order. Just as music moves those souls who desire order and harmony, so does religion move men who wish to recreate the harmony with God that was lost after the Fall. Many attempts to reestablish this harmony will be further discussed, but one of the most prominent examples is that of Israel, a nation that existed as a home for God’s Chosen People so that the covenant between God and Abraham might be

fulfilled. It is not coincidental then that Ariel is named for Jerusalem. Jerusalem is, quite literally, the center for all religion. Christianity, Judaism and the Islamic tradition all hold Jerusalem as an important city that, along with harboring great historical and spiritual significance, can also be a source from which great political power may stem.

There are significant parallels to be drawn between Ariel and the most sacred and powerful thing in Israel—the Ark of the Covenant, God’s earthly home. Both the Ark and Ariel are manifestations of a great and supernatural power that, for good or bad, can be used by rulers for political purposes. In the Old Testament, it seems that the Ark of the Covenant is never discussed unless it is in connection with a ruler. Whether it is Abraham (the original recipient of the Covenant), Moses, Joshua, David or Solomon, the Ark is continually connected to one of Israel’s Patriarchs, just as Ariel is only talked about in conjunction with Sycorax or Prospero, the island’s only known rulers. Joshua, Moses’ successor, instructs the priests to use the Ark to lead him and the Israelites Ark into the Promised Land.<sup>30</sup> In First Samuel, the Israelites use the Ark as a way to guarantee a victory over the Philistines. Later, David uses the Ark to lead the people into Jerusalem to establish it as Israel’s new capitol. But, it was only after he had seen the goodness that the Ark brought to the family of Obed-edom that David felt it was safe to bring the Ark into the city of his own name, in an effort to ensure prosperity there.<sup>31</sup> And so it is natural to wonder; if these biblical rulers used the Ark of the Covenant for political purposes, does Prospero use Ariel in a similar manner? Prospero does in fact use Ariel to promote his experiment both out of necessity and, as

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<sup>29</sup> “Ariel,” *Behind the Name*.

<sup>30</sup> Josh. 3-8 KJV.

<sup>31</sup> 2 Sam. 6 KJV.

it will be later explored, out of the desire for a just ruler.

Given that Ariel is the center for religion on the island, which is further evidenced by his tests of its inhabitants and visitors along with his power over other spirits in the masque, then Prospero's control over Ariel is both prudent and quite Machiavellian. For the Prince, religion may be both an obstacle and, once the obstacle is overcome, a great tool. Machiavelli makes this clear in his Chapters XI "Of Ecclesiastical Principalities" and VII "Of New Principalities That are Acquired by Others' Arms and Fortune." Of ecclesiastical principalities, Machiavelli says, "they are acquired either by virtue or by fortune and are maintained without the one or the other, for they are sustained by orders that have grown old with religion."<sup>32</sup> However, this, like so many of Machiavelli's statements, does not seem to reveal the author's true sentiments concerning the matter. For just a few lines later, Machiavelli gives examples of men, namely Pope Alexander VI and his son, Cesare Borgia (also known as Duke Valentino) who succeed and fail, respectively, at acquiring and maintaining their kingdoms through virtue—that is, virtue in the Machiavellian sense, meaning those qualities that best aid a prince to acquire and keep his rule. It seems then, that while ecclesiastical principalities may be acquired by virtue or fortune, they also must be maintained primarily through virtue.

Here, parallels to the island of *The Tempest*, must be drawn. It seems that the island was, in fact, acquired by fortune. When Miranda asks, "How came we ashore?" Prospero merely answers, "By providence divine."<sup>33</sup> But the inhabitants of the island seem to be acquired by virtue. The acquisition of Ariel, as a spirit and the embodiment of religion, will be further

explored momentarily. But Caliban, the monstrous island native, has indeed been made Prospero's subject through Prospero's own Machiavellian virtue, namely the proper use of cruelty. After all, the monster is often convinced that Prospero will cause him to suffer painful pinches all over his body. But Prospero maintains his complete control over the island, even after the tempest washes more inhabitants ashore by combining temporal and religious power within himself, much like Alexander VI in Machiavelli's example.

Pope Alexander VI is one example Machiavelli uses to illustrate the power of religion in temporal affairs. Machiavelli says that "the temporal forces of the pope" were "held in low esteem in Italy. Then Alexander VI arose; of all the pontiffs there have ever been he showed how far a pope could prevail with money and forces."<sup>34</sup> It seems, though, that money and forces are things most common to a prince and they are often begotten through whatever means the prince has used to obtain his power. Therefore, it is more likely that Machiavelli is pronouncing Alexander to be a prince rather than a pope. While Alexander might have been a pope in name, it seems that this role was secondary to that of a prince who, through his own astuteness, used "Duke Valentino as his instrument and...the invasion of the French as the opportunity,"<sup>35</sup> to squash ambitious factions within Italy. Alexander, then, rather than being a pope with money and forces is instead a prince with the power of religion. Pope Julius continued in Alexander's path, acting as a prince, using the power of religion to conduct the church as a state, garnering praise and success as a temporal power. Machiavelli states that Julius successfully kept the Orsini and Colonna factions in check because "two things restrained them:

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<sup>32</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 11.45.

<sup>33</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.189-90.

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<sup>34</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 11.46.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

one, the greatness of the Church, which frightened them; the other, not having cardinals of their own.”<sup>36</sup> Through this statement, Machiavelli implies that religion can act as a deterrent or as a motivator for political gain, if used correctly. Popes Alexander VI and Julius used religion to aid their temporal ventures, while the conspirators were deterred by its power.

However, the one character in Machiavelli’s tale that failed to use religion properly was always a prince, but never a pope. Duke Valentino, once he and Alexander VI had succeeded in acquiring rule, failed to maintain it because he named Julius pontiff after Alexander’s death. As Machiavelli tells it, “though he could not make a pope to suit himself, he could have kept anyone from being pope.” The duke could not have named pope anyone who feared him or hated him, because fear and hatred create offense. Machiavelli seems to state that Cesare Borgia should have instead named a Spaniard pope due to the obligation that the Spaniards owed him. But it is in Chapter XVII that Machiavelli reminds his reader that chains of obligation are broken for personal gain, “because men are wicked.”<sup>37</sup> Using this logic, Borgia should not have named a pope at all after his father’s death, but rather, he should have taken the power of religion for himself, either abolishing the papacy or claiming the seat as his own.

Prospero successfully avoids the duke’s mistake while at the same time mimicking Alexander’s successes. Prospero began his Machiavellian merger of religion and political power when he landed on the island. When Ariel becomes impatient with doing his master’s bidding, Prospero reminds him of the former inhabitants of the island, Caliban and his mother, the witch

Sycorax. The audience learns that Ariel once served Sycorax, but her bidding was so evil, Ariel would no longer oblige his master, and so Sycorax cursed Ariel “Into a cloven pine, within which rift/ Imprisoned thou didst painfully remain/ A dozen years.” In those dozen years, it is implied that Sycorax has died and “Then was this island/ (Save for the son that [she] did litter here,/ A freckled whelp, hag-born) not honored with/ A human shape.” But then, Prospero reminds Ariel, “It was mine art,/ When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape/ The pine and let thee out.”<sup>38</sup> While the exact nature of Prospero’s art in this particular circumstance is unclear, it might be assumed that it stems from his learning of the liberal arts or the sciences, since later in the play it is clear that Prospero’s mastery comes from his control over Ariel.

Given Ariel’s past, one can observe that Prospero did not make Cesare Borgia’s mistake in failing to wrest religion from the powers under which it existed. Borgia failed to seize the power of religion from the church when the opportunity of Alexander VI’s death arose. Just as religion naturally belongs to God, but is used by the church and then can be used by those within the church or wrested from the church for temporal ends, so Ariel naturally belongs to the island, but was used by Sycorax. It seems that Ariel’s next logical master would be Caliban, Sycorax’s heir, just as Alexander’s heir would be one of the cardinals who Borgia foolishly chose to replace his father as pope. Prospero avoids Borgia’s error, however, by freeing Ariel from the tree for the purpose of his own existence on the island and later political experiment. While Prospero evaded Borgia’s mistake, he also succeeded in merging his own princely status with that of a religious figure, much like Pope Alexander

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid,67.

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<sup>38</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.330-46.

VI was able to do by being a prince with religious authority. Along with claiming religious power for himself, Prospero used that religious power in manipulating various characters throughout the play to bring out their true natures, which then allowed him to regain his dukedom and establish a new political order through the marriage of the virtuous Miranda with Ferdinand, who seems to embody the virtues of temporal rule in the play.

It seems, too, that Prospero has taken Machiavelli into consideration concerning his appearance of a religious figure. In Chapter XVII of *The Prince*, "In What Mode Faith Should be Kept by Princes," Machiavelli states that a prince "should appear all mercy, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion. And nothing is more necessary to appear to have than this last quality. Men in general judge more by their eyes than by their hands because seeing is given to everyone, touching to the few."<sup>39</sup> Prospero deceives the men on the island by what they see and hear, rather than allowing them to recognize the substance of the thing that visits each of them as an instigator or voice of conscience. Never in the play does Ariel appear to anyone but Prospero. In the instances of Ferdinand and Gonzalo, Ariel sings to each the stories that Prospero wants them to believe, i.e., for the former that Alonso is dead, and for the latter that Antonio and Sebastian are conspiring. In the case of Stephano, Caliban and Trinculo, Ariel acts as an instigator, speaking in Trinculo's voice, defending Prospero's reputation. And to Antonio, Sebastian and Alonso, Ariel appears as a Harpy, promising death and damnation. Even to Miranda and Ferdinand, for whom Prospero later shows affection, Ariel calls on Iris, Ceres and Juno for the Masque. In the instances in which Ariel acts as an instigator, Prospero orders Ariel to "Be subject/To no sight but thine

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid,71.

and mine, invisible/ To every eyeball else."<sup>40</sup> By masking Ariel as others or by keeping him invisible, Prospero leads everyone to believe that the mystical happenings on the island are a result of the nature of the island or the master of it. Once Prospero reveals himself as the lord of the isle, it might seem that Prospero is able to control, or at least explain the island's magic, much like the Church offers an explanation for miracles and nature and leads people to believe that officers of the church may have a hand in God's dealings, especially concerning salvation and damnation.

To continue the appearance of religion in order to make those around him believe what they see without touching the reality of his "art," Prospero, quite literally, appears religious. When Prospero wishes others to see his manipulation of nature he dons a cloak. The cloak seems to have no power in and of itself, but appears several times throughout the course of the play. In Act One, Scene Two, Miranda believes that Prospero has created the tempest which has tossed about the ship that she has been watching in the distance. Miranda then pleads with her father, "If by your art, my dearest father, you have/ Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them."<sup>41</sup> Prospero lets his daughter believe that he is directly responsible for the storm and later calms her fears. Before he begins to tell her of their past in Milan, he directs her, "Lend thy hand/ And pluck my magic garment from me," implying that it was, indeed, through his own magic and not that of Ariel that Prospero had just conjured the Tempest.<sup>42</sup> But later the audience discovers that the storm really did occur through Ariel's magic when the spirit says, "I boarded the King's ship; now on the beak./ Now in the waist,

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<sup>40</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.359-61.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 1.2.1-2.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 1.2.28-29.



the deck, in every cabin,/ I flamed amazement.”<sup>43</sup>

It does one well to note that Prospero must remain hidden during most of Ariel’s activities in order for his experiment to play out to his advantage. But Shakespeare robes Prospero in his magic garment once more at the beginning of Act Five. In Act Five, Prospero appears in his cloak to the royal party, his daughter, Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo alike after the curses placed upon them all have been lifted, and Prospero renounces his use of magic. The influence of religion or magic in the party’s landing on the island and the subsequent relationship that blossoms between Ferdinand and Miranda is clearly on the mind of Gonzalo, who says, “Look down, you gods,/ And on this couple drop a blessed crown,/ For it is you that have chalked forth the way/ Which brought us hither.”<sup>44</sup> He goes on to say, “Was Milan thrust from Milan, that his issue/ Should become King of Naples?”<sup>45</sup> The marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda for the sake of a better political rule in Italy and Prospero’s own restoration to the dukedom is of course his plan, but to those who have landed on the isle, it simply seems that there is some sort of mystical presence responsible for their strange experiences.

The notion of such a presence, combined with Prospero’s appearance and the tests each group has been put to, certainly lends credence to the notion that Prospero is lord of the island in every sense, making him appear even more capable of rule. But Prospero’s Machiavellian use of religion is reminiscent of another king who uses religion to show his mastery—Saul. While Saul was in fact the first King of Israel, his rule was flawed and his character as Machiavellian as Prospero’s, if not more

so. The similarities between the two lords begin early in their respective rules. Prospero, because of his nature as a philosopher, is reluctant to rule. He himself says, “The government I cast upon my brother/ And to my state grew stranger, being transported/ And rapt in secret studies.”<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Saul was disinclined to rule. After the people of Israel cried out for a king, God gave the prophet Samuel the task of anointing Saul King of Israel. Samuel did so saying, “the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance.”<sup>47</sup> But when sharing his story with his uncle, Saul failed to mention his anointing: “of the matter of the kingdom...he told him not.”<sup>48</sup> Most notably, Saul literally hid from rule when it was made clear to the people that Saul would be the king over them, ducking into the luggage.<sup>49</sup> While Prospero and Saul initially disregarded their kingships for different reasons—Prospero for the sake of bettering his mind, Saul out of fear—their rejections and ultimate embrace of leadership cause each man to rule in a particularly Machiavellian fashion. Just as Saul had rule thrust upon him, so did Prospero. Saul, a son of the smallest family in the smallest tribe in Israel was anointed without warning. And Prospero was first a hereditary prince and then landed on the island that housed Caliban, a creature who, if not given a king, would certainly declare himself king, would have taken Miranda for himself, and “peopled else/ This isle with Calibans.”<sup>50</sup>

Because temporal rule was thrust upon both Saul and Prospero, they see it in the light of necessity rather than righteousness, in the case of Saul, or philosophy for Prospero. The idea that Prospero could rule

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 1.2.232-34.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 5.1.240-44.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 5.1.246-47.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 1.2.93-94.

<sup>47</sup> 1 Sam. 10:1 KJV.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 10:16

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 10:22

<sup>50</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.420-21.

as a philosopher on the island died with Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda. It was clear to Prospero that Caliban had a nature on which "Nurture can never stick" and so, the ousted duke turned to a Machiavellian use of the religion that he discovered on the island to rule that place and create new modes and orders—first for the isle, then for Italy, and then perhaps for the rest of the world.<sup>51</sup> Saul, too, turns to using religion for the immediate necessities of rule. While Prospero's greatest challenge presents itself in Caliban, Saul faces the Philistines. The Philistines have brought themselves upon Israel, and it is appropriate to make an offering to the Lord, but Samuel, who is permitted to perform such an offering, has not appeared. And so Saul makes the burnt offering instead. Rather than having faith that the Lord would bring Israel a victory and acting in accordance with the law set down by God, Saul acts according to necessity. As he says,

Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmas; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering<sup>52</sup>

This disobedience to the law is echoed in Prospero's manipulation of Ariel. While Saul has broken the law of God by using religion for a motive outside of the glorification of the Lord, Prospero broke a law of nature by enslaving Ariel and using the spirit to manipulate the natural world for political gain. But such measures were

necessary in the immediate sense. After all, Saul emboldened the people and Prospero gained control over Caliban and later those who landed on the island. Just as Alexander VI combined his nature as a prince and a religious figure, and just as Prospero has wrested the island's religious power from its rightful heir, Caliban, so too has Saul combined his role as king with that of prophet, seizing authority from Samuel, in order to maintain his temporal kingdom. But in some ways, Saul and Prospero reach very different ends.

For both men, the manipulation of supreme law means the end of their rule, in one way or another. For Saul, it seems the end is near. After Saul performs the burnt offering, Samuel says, "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."<sup>53</sup> But Saul continues to rule for a period before David, the man after God's own heart, actually takes the throne. When David was anointed, it was without Saul's knowledge; David was brought to Saul as his armor bearer, and the two loved each other as father and son. David grew, slew Goliath, commanded the army and married Saul's daughter, Michal. But when it became clear that David was to succeed Saul, Saul began to see David as a traitor and sought to kill him. But eventually, Saul saw in David what made him worthy to be King of Israel, saying, "Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail." Scripture continues, "So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place."<sup>54</sup>

Shakespeare tells a slightly different tale with many of the same elements. Unlike Saul, it seems that Prospero acknowledges

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<sup>51</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 4.1.212.

<sup>52</sup> 1 Sam. 13:11-12 KJV.

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 13:14.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 26:25.

the worthiness of Ferdinand, the future king, almost immediately when he brings him and the rest of the royal party to the island. At Miranda's wailings over the souls aboard the storm-tossed ship, Prospero says, "I have done nothing but in care of thee,/ Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter."<sup>55</sup> Later, Prospero hints openly to Ariel at his hope for a match between Ferdinand and Miranda saying, "It goes on, I see,/ As my soul prompts it"<sup>56</sup> This recognition of Ferdinand's merit comes from Miranda's own virtue, which has kept him company some twelve years. While Prospero might rule the island as a Machiavellian, there is much to suggest that he understands that such rule, while expedient, is not simply just. After all, he suffered usurpation at the hands of his Machiavellian brother, Antonio. Not only does Prospero recognize Ferdinand's worth, but he willingly frees Ariel, or religion, the tool that has earned him so much in the immediate sense. And just as Saul rules Israel for some time before David succeeds him, so Prospero is restored to his dukedom, only to make way for Miranda and Ferdinand to rule Naples and Milan together. The difference, then, between Saul and Prospero is not that neither get to rule for their entire lives, but that Prospero chooses to forfeit his rule (the second time voluntarily) while Saul's is wrested from him, each for the sake of a more just ruler.

In their ends, each creates a legacy for himself. Saul's legacy lives on through David's magnanimity and respect for the Lord's anointed; as David says, "Saul and [his son] Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions."<sup>57</sup> But Prospero's reputation is crafted in a much

more Machiavellian fashion, especially considering that it is not dependent of the virtues of others. As his brother Antonio had done twelve years earlier, Prospero reinvents virtue and vice. Antonio used his own true vices and portrayed them as virtues in order to build a reputation for himself as a competent ruler, while painting Prospero as "variable, light, effeminate, pusillanimous [and] irresolute"<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Prospero uses his true vice on the isle, the manipulation of nature or religion for political gain, in order to build a reputation as an able head of state. And while he will lose that state, he will gain fame for being a re-founder of Italian politics and the establisher of new modes and orders. For Prospero, the ultimate ends justify both the means and the immediate end of his rule.

Because Prospero's use of religion eventually leads to the forfeiture of his kingdom but also, in a greater sense, to the establishment of new modes and orders, it is appropriate to expand upon Prospero's use of Ariel on the island. As Ariel's tests of those on the island are further explored, note Prospero's keen extirpation of Ariel from nature along with his Machiavellian melding of his princely and religious abilities, and how such manipulation leads to immediate temporal success, the eventual realization that more just rulers must prevail, and the permanent establishment of a new political regime.

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<sup>55</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.19-20.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 1.2.501-02.

<sup>57</sup> 2 Sam 1:23 KJV.

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<sup>58</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 19.72.

## CHAPTER TWO

### On Nature, Culture and the Condition of Man

*"Heavens keep him from these beasts,  
For he is, sure, i' th' island."* 2.1.374-75

Prospero's acute awareness of politics comes, perhaps, from his observations of human nature. After Prospero fails as a philosopher both in Milan and initially on the island, he has time to observe Caliban's behavior and contemplate his own usurpation by Antonio. From the thoughts Prospero formulates during his exile, he develops his experiment, which relies on an understanding of man's nature, in order to build a more just regime. In order for each man to act according to his nature and meet Prospero's expectations, Ariel places the shipwrecked parties on separate beaches. The separation of Ferdinand from his father and the royal party from their men brings out each character's desire for rule. After all, Machiavelli states, "it is a very natural and ordinary thing to desire to acquire."<sup>59</sup> And so, each man desires to acquire and attempts to position himself in the way that might best suit his political ambitions. While the royal party acts out of their own natures, they are also influenced by civil institutions like wealth and, in the form of Ariel, religion. However, it is Trinculo and Stephano, butlers to Antonio and Alonso, who most accurately reflect man's political nature when left to his own devices.

Stephano and Trinculo are, in essence, drunkards. In some respects, their ramblings and ambitions to conquer the spit of land on which they find themselves are comical. But to write them off as Shakespeare's comic relief is to underestimate both the characters and

Shakespeare himself. Rather, Stephano and Trinculo are portrayals of man as he would be without government or social convention. Stranded on a desert island, they live in a state of nature. This notion of exploring men's political natures outside the confines of the state is truly revolutionary. In many ways, Shakespeare began the conversation on a state of nature before the term was coined or before social contract thinkers came to the forefront of political thought.<sup>60</sup> Social contract theory, in essence, states that before forming a contract to establish any sort of governing body, each man is controlled by his own nature and may govern himself entirely, making every man a king. In *The Tempest*, each man desires to be king. One must not include Caliban in this statement, as it seems that his parentage, physical attributes and baseness of soul qualify him as something not quite human. From Antonio to Trinculo, each person on the island has some plan for rule, whether grand or small. Antonio has usurped his brother and urges Sebastian to do the same to Alonso, King of Naples. Gonzalo espouses the virtues of the city he could found. Ferdinand does not shy away from his role as king when he believes his father to be dead, but rather, boasts of it to Miranda. Again and again, one sees the desire for rule.

To bring out each man's thirst for political rule, Prospero orders Ariel to land various parties on various beaches of the island. When reporting back to Prospero on the success of his mission, Ariel says, "as

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid, 3.14.

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<sup>60</sup> While it is unclear exactly when Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*, it was published in the First Folio in 1623, putting its publication date twenty eight years before Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) and sixty six years before Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1689). "John Locke," and "Thomas Hobbes" *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke> and <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes>; Internet; accessed 3 April 2009.

thou bad'st me, /In troops I have dispersed them 'bout the isle."<sup>61</sup> Because Stephano and Trinculo are Antonio and Alonso's hired men, it is necessary that masters and servants be separated; for, if Trinculo and Stephano were travelling with the king and duke, Antonio's desire to further acquire might be tempered in the fact that he has someone over whom he can clearly rule throughout their time on the island. But more importantly, the separation allows Trinculo and Stephano an opportunity for self-government, as would be necessary in a state of nature.

The two find each other after the Tempest, Trinculo hiding under a cape with Caliban, Stephano recently washed ashore. To calm Caliban, Stephano gives him alcohol from the butt of wine he used as a raft. Quickly, Caliban declares Stephano his new master. Under the social contract, one usually forfeits his right to act as his own master in exchange for security. In this case, Caliban knows no rights, and therefore thinks he must continue in his servitude. Yet, for Caliban, to choose his master is a great good. It seems that the monster has always been a servant, first to his mother, who ruled the isle, then to Prospero. And so Caliban is ready to forfeit the freedom he does not know he has in exchange for protection. While Stephano guarantees no protection of rights, it seems that the monster seeks physical protection instead. Because he has never been exposed to alcohol, Caliban thinks it is "not earthly," and that the one who gave it to him must be a god. He asks Stephano, "Hast thou not dropped from heaven?" Stephano answers that he is the Man in the Moon, who has descended upon the isle.<sup>62</sup> Clearly, Caliban has come to fear the spirits that pinch and prod him. And so, with the arrival of this

new and, as Caliban believes, celestial being, the monster seeks protection from one spirit by submitting to another. Because Caliban thinks that Prospero controls the spirits that torment him, he might also believe that this magical newcomer may protect him with spirits of his own.

In this scenario, Caliban represents the challenge of self government. Caliban is the side of human nature that operates on fear and a desire for physical protection over the protection of liberties. He does not understand freedom, nor does he want to. Rather, he is willing to change masters in order to obtain a perceived good. Stephano, then, is the sort of ruler that not only does not temper, but actually encourages this nature. While no explicit social contract thought existed in Shakespeare's time, Machiavelli did speak of the disorderly Romagna after the Orsini and Colonna factions had dissolved. When Cesare Borgia had finally taken over Romagna, Machiavelli states that "he found it had been commanded by impotent lords who had been readier to despoil their subjects than to correct them, and had given their subjects matter for disunion, not for union. Since that province was quite full of robberies, quarrels, and every kind of insolence, he judged it necessary to give it good government."<sup>63</sup> Stephano is such a ruler as Romagna had during its most chaotic days. The qualities of its rulers and subjects seem to parallel those of Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban quite well.

Machiavelli states that the incompetent rulers of Romagna were "readier to despoil their subjects rather than correct them." Does this not seem to apply directly to Stephano's treatment of Caliban? As stated above, Caliban is a manifestation of the uglier side of man's nature. Yet, Stephano does not wish to bring out any

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<sup>61</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.260-61.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 2.2.130-145.

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<sup>63</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 8.29.

good that might lie under the monster's brutish character. Instead, he gives Caliban wine in order that the monster might give in further to the desire to place himself under Stephano in exchange for protection and alcohol. The newly self-proclaimed king of the island treats Caliban in such a way that not only corrupts the monster further, but also causes disunion between himself and Trinculo, much as Romagna's rulers did in their own territory.

Trinculo, who is no better than Stephano in social rank or behavior, is able to see the foolishness in Caliban's willing subservience to his fellow drunkard. Yet when Trinculo criticizes the monster, Stephano defends Caliban over Trinculo. In Act Three, when Caliban calls Trinculo ignoble, Trinculo mocks Caliban for his lie and drunkenness. Stephano responds, "Trinculo, keep a good tongue in your head. If you prove a mutineer, the next tree. The poor monster's my subject, and he shall not suffer indignity."<sup>64</sup> It is clear that Stephano's rule quickly leads to disunity, with Caliban blindly following Stephano, Stephano acting as a great head of state, and Trinculo finding both to be ridiculous, saying, "They say there's but five upon this isle; we are three of them. If th' other two be brained like us, the state totters."<sup>65</sup> Disunity and division are also subtly emphasized through Shakespeare's intentional use of numbers in the play; the spiritual significance of numbers makes many appearances in *The Tempest*, and Shakespeare appears to place men in groups in order to point to their natures. As has been asserted above, Caliban cannot be counted as a man. Excluding the monster, there are, of course, two men in Stephano's party, himself and Trinculo. The number two, in scripture, represents division and enmity. For example, it is on the second day that God separated the heavens from the

earth and the land from the water.<sup>66</sup> Division, then, is inherent in creation and will always occur in a state of nature, as Machiavelli observes and Shakespeare depicts.

Along with disunity and the despoiling of subjects, Stephano's short rule also sees the robberies, quarrels and insolence of which Machiavelli speaks. Robberies necessarily originate from necessity or avarice. There is no suggestion that the men want for anything to sustain their lives, but there is ample evidence pointing to their baseness. Therefore, it can be established that Stephano and his followers are motivated by greed. And so Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban seek to rob Prospero before they murder him in their plot to truly take the isle for themselves. Caliban, who has observed Prospero for twelve years, insists that the men take Prospero's books, believing that they are essential to his rule. He tells Stephano, "Remember/ First to possess his books, for without them/ He's but a sot."<sup>67</sup> Yet Stephano and Trinculo are more concerned with the fine garments that were sent with Prospero from Milan. They spend a portion of Act Four, Scene One, dressing themselves in the robes, saying, "We steal by line and level."<sup>68</sup> Given their greed, it can be observed that Stephano's regime, and, as Machiavelli states, that of Romagna, is without order and therefore neglects and perhaps even encourages a more vile part of men's nature to dominate, leading men to steal each other's property, as would often happen in a state of nature.

Quarrelling, too, appears between Stephano and Trinculo. As Caliban tells the men of his alleged oppression under Prospero, Ariel speaks in Trinculo's voice, calling the monster a liar and openly

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<sup>64</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 3.2.38-41.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 3.2.6-8.

<sup>66</sup> Gen. 6-8 KJV.

<sup>67</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 3.2.100-02.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 4.1.266.

doubting Stephano's ability to usurp him. In this scene, Stephano beats his friend for the accusations laid against him.<sup>69</sup> While Trinculo seems to recover and quickly follows suit concerning the plot to kill Prospero, this scene clearly demonstrates how quickly a state can become violent if men do not willingly forfeit some of their rights to a central power, but instead go about living in a state of nature from which a tyrant, in this case Stephano, can emerge.

Finally, Machiavelli speaks of a great deal of insolence in Romagna. Stephano is clearly the most proud of the three figures most interested in ruling the island. Due to Caliban's willingness, he quickly decides that he ought to be king, a decision that takes a great deal of audacity when it comes from a poor drunken butler. To compliment and fulfill his decision to rule the island, Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban plot to kill Prospero in order to secure the island. Caliban tells Stephano and Trinculo about Prospero's power, saying, "I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, that by his cunning hath cheated me of the island,"<sup>70</sup> Yet the three believe that if they simply wait until he is asleep and kill Prospero, the isle will be theirs, despite their inexperience in rule. Prospero, of course, proves the conspirators wrong by sending Ariel after them in the form of dogs to place them under a spell and return them to their masters who will all face Prospero in the end.

Shakespeare's treatment of Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban, however, does not merely explore a state of nature through Machiavellian terms, but it also continues in the religious themes that are so prevalent in Shakespeare's final examination of human nature. One must examine the biblical roots of man in order to understand

Shakespeare's portrayal of those men who exist in a state of nature and those who operate as a part of the city. But one must begin with Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban, those men of nature. In some ways, Stephano and Trinculo are untouched by society because of their position in it. Lowly butlers, they care only for what is theirs and what is before them. They arrive on the isle full of vices. However, those initial vices are, in many ways, benign, when compared to the vices they exhibit as the story progresses. When both men land upon the isle, there is nothing to suggest complete wickedness, only mildly amusing drunkenness and lechery. While these qualities make for bad citizens, they result from the fall of man, an incident that is paralleled on the island.

Stephano and then Trinculo land on the island, each finding shelter under Caliban's garment from the still-raging storm. Quickly, Stephano gives Caliban the wine that will stop the monster's moans and bring Caliban to him as a subject. Caliban's nature is twofold, but at the same time, uniform. Caliban represents man's worst nature. He is weak and a willing servant to him that is most powerful. But, at the same time, he is quite cunning. While he becomes subservient to those men around him, he also plants evil thoughts in their minds in order to have a certain yet subtle power to overthrow the person who truly rules him. Does such a description not fit the serpent in the Garden of Eden? Trinculo and Stephano land, through no will of their own, on a spit of land that has all the necessities of life and that Gonzalo will later describe as a sort of paradise. However, they are quickly fooled by Caliban concerning Prospero's nature, and the three form a plot to kill him. Caliban, as Shakespeare describes him, is at least part beast, and not quite human. So, too, does the serpent defy qualification, being, "more subtil than any beast of the

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 3.2.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 3.2.46-8.

field.”<sup>71</sup> The serpent is not truly a beast, due to his cunning and ability to speak, and yet, he is not like Adam and Eve. Rather, he embodies the side of human nature he wishes to bring forth—the darker side of man. Caliban, too, is more human than a beast, but in his near-humanness, he embodies the evil in man's soul that he spreads to Trinculo and Stephano.

Caliban's plot, too, seems distinctly like that of the Serpent in the Garden, with a few variations. The serpent says to Adam and Eve of the forbidden tree, “Ye shall not surely die; For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,”<sup>72</sup> Similarly, Caliban suggests that Stephano and Trinculo must, even before killing Prospero, snatch his books—the source of his knowledge. In both circumstances, knowledge is directly equated to power. But it must be remembered that Caliban could not be entirely enlightened through Prospero's philosophy, even though Prospero rules the island on which Caliban lives. Therefore, it can be inferred that Caliban, while under the physical rule of Prospero, has a soul that answers to another power, one which does not demand the sort of understanding Prospero can offer. Similarly, the serpent, which is by nature very similar to Caliban, lives in God's paradise, but it is unclear who it truly serves. Scripture does not reveal the serpent's master. However, many believe, as Shakespeare may have, that the serpent is an instrument of Satan. This understanding would serve to fit the serpent's description in that he was “more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made,” which implies that he is not a beast of the Lord, but rather the creature of some other force, just as Caliban is the son of a witch who did not worship God in the traditional

sense, but a pagan god named Setebos. If this be the case, the ties between the serpent and Caliban grow even stronger.

Satan incited Eve and, through her, Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit in order to know good and evil and therefore be like God and rule over themselves. However, it is notable that while Satan seemed to know the results of eating such fruit, he did not eat it himself. The serpent had no desire to directly rule. Rather, it is plausible that the serpent acted so that Adam and Eve might eat the fruit, know good and evil, and rule themselves, thereby separating themselves from God and inciting fear and disorder in human political life, making room for Satan to rule indirectly. Similarly, Caliban put the thought of usurpation in the minds of Stephano and Trinculo, telling the two that Prospero stole the island from him, then saying that after Prospero is murdered, “Thou shalt be lord of it, and I'll serve thee.”<sup>73</sup> Caliban has no desire to rule himself. Indeed, he is happy to be Stephano's servant. Yet, even before Prospero can be killed, Stephano and Trinculo begin ruling themselves as if there is no Prospero at all, and chaos ensues, making way for further sins (like robbery, disputes and insolence) to appear. This state of chaos, when men have no greater power to rule over them, whether it be God directly or a king, is what has been explored as a state of nature. This state of nature, then, is dependent on man's fall and the belief that he can rule himself, independent of a higher power. Therefore, men must establish cities for the purposes of mutual protection and benefit. However, because the state of nature is dependent on man's fall, so is the city. And while the state of nature may be less than virtuous because it is a place where each man finds himself free to act according only to his self-interest, it is the city that

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<sup>71</sup> Gen. 3:1 KJV.

<sup>72</sup> Gen. 3:4-5 KJV.

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<sup>73</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 3.2.64.



breeds true vice due to the necessary belief that one man can rule another.

Prospero, through his study of the liberal arts, contemplation of his usurpation twelve years earlier, and observation of Caliban, understands the various aspects of human nature that prevail during his experiment. However, Prospero's attentions seem mostly dedicated to the Neapolitans and Milanese on the island rather than to Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban, reaffirming the notion that the city breeds a more vicious sort of conspiracy than the state of nature. The state of nature, by definition, is a state of self-government that more quickly leads to power through force rather than cunning or forethought. Recall the story of Cain and Abel, the first generation of the state of nature. Cain becomes jealous and angry because God prefers Abel's livestock sacrifice over Cain's sacrifice of fruit. And so, "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."<sup>74</sup> Cain is capable of asserting his own dominance through sheer force because, in the state of nature in which God has placed Adam, Eve and their family, each man rules himself. And because there is no human law that demands any forfeit of right of one man to another, force is the simplest way to rule over another. Because Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban are such men of nature that they know no law, Prospero can easily and effectively use force to bring them under his control. Therefore, Prospero need not plan to end the conspiracy in the same well-ordered manner as he puts an end to the royal party's plans.

In fact, Prospero forgets about Stephano and his recently acquired subjects. In the middle of Miranda and Ferdinand's wedding masque, Prospero suddenly says, "I had forgot that foul conspiracy/ Of the beast Caliban and his confederates/ Against my life. The minute of their plot/ Is almost

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<sup>74</sup> Gen. 4:8 KJV.

come."<sup>75</sup> Interestingly enough, this recollection comes as Iris summons "sunburned sicklemen," or farmers (like Cain) to the masque. Farming is not only natural, but part of God's punishment for Adam and Eve's fall. God says to them, "cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee...In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground."<sup>76</sup> It is fitting then, that Prospero recalls the plot of those who represent and live in a sort of state of nature.

And so, Prospero uses the force of Ariel's magic, which he has harnessed, in order to squash Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban's murderous plot. In this scene, Prospero acts more fiercely and violently than he does in the entire play. He calls upon his dogs, creatures of nature, to hunt down the trio so that he and Ariel might bring them under a painful spell. He says, "Go, charge my goblins that they grind their joints/ With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews/ With agèd cramps, and more pinch-spotted make them/ Than pard or cat o' the mountain."<sup>77</sup> Through his understanding of Caliban and those base men who the monster has convinced to conspire with him, Prospero knows that they can easily be brought under his rule through force, as it is the only thing they truly know. Just as they are brought under Prospero's spell by force, so do they return to Italy under the mastery of either Prospero or the royal party whom they served before the tempest placed them in a state of nature.

Prospero must continue to apply his understanding of human nature to the royal party and their various schemes, both old and new, in order to overthrow their

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<sup>75</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 4.1.155-58.

<sup>76</sup> Gen. 3:17-18 KJV.

<sup>77</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 4.1.285-89.

conspiracies and establish a more just regime in Italy. However, the characters of the royal party are, in many ways, more complex than those of Trinculo and Stephano. These characters are informed by the artificial nature of the city. They are not men of nature, but of culture. Again, Shakespeare uses numerology to underscore the characters of those men who are abandoned on a beach together. Altogether, there are six men in the royal party: Alonso, Antonio, Sebastian, Gonzalo, Adrian and Francisco. However, just four of them have significant roles. Adrian and Francisco seem to be odd additions to the party and offer nothing when it comes to furthering Shakespeare's plot. Therefore, it can be argued that their presence merely completes the party so that they may total six. In scripture, six is "the human number." Man was created on the sixth day and is ordered to work only six days of the week. Time, an invention of man, is also measured in multiples of six. Finally, the number six represents those things and people that are without God or in opposition to Him, for example Goliath and the anti-Christ.<sup>78</sup> The royal party fit such a description. They are purely human. Until the final scenes in which Prospero exposes them to a force outside themselves, their dealings revolve around the practices of men, especially when it comes to rule. Most notably, heredity and inheritance play a large role in the men's attempts at survival and conspiracy.

The first piece of evidence that lends to the notion that the royal party act within the artificial constraints of society is found in the very first scene of *The Tempest*. Upon the ship that so strongly parallels the image in Plato's *Republic*, Gonzalo, Antonio and Sebastian all chastise the crew for their impertinence toward them and the king.

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<sup>78</sup> "The Spiritual Significance of Numbers," handout provided by Prof. Chris Burkett, February 2009.

While the storm is raging, the king's men hinder the crew's efforts by asking who is in charge and where they might find the master of the ship. These are men who are clearly accustomed to law and order. However, the boatswain replies that they only aid the storm in tossing and battering the ship and tells them, quite roughly, to move aside. To this, the men take great offense. Sebastian yells to the boatswain, "A pox o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!"<sup>79</sup> Similarly, Gonzalo says that he feels reassured by the man. Clearly, they will not drown, because the boatswain is fated to be hanged for his cheek. Not only does the royal party operate with an understanding of politics as they know it in the city, they also operate with an understanding of protocol. Socially, the royal party ranks much higher than the crew, and, the royal party thinks, that such social status is important in understanding who ought to rule.

While these men might understand social rank as a factor in determining rule, hereditary succession seems to be of little value, at least to Antonio and Sebastian. Antonio's usurpation of his brother has been examined in detail. Yet his scheming nature does not end when he takes Prospero's dukedom. Rather, Antonio convinces Sebastian to usurp his brother Alonso's power as well. For Antonio, the benefit is twofold. Not only will he have an ally in Naples (who he then might seek to overthrow himself), but he might also then stop payment on the tribute he has been paying to Alonso since turning to the king for assistance in supplanting Prospero.

In convincing Sebastian to usurp Alonso, it is clear that Antonio is the true villain of the play. While his Machiavellian scheming against Prospero might have been initially successful and brilliant, conscience plays no factor in his political ambitions.

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<sup>79</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.1.41-42.

Prospero seems to know that his brother has not changed in his twelve years as duke. Therefore, he sets Ariel to perform his first task on the royal party since they landed on the island. The king is distraught over having lost not only his rule, but his son, who he believes to be dead. After a speech from Gonzalo and jesting from Sebastian and Antonio, the party sets up a search for Ferdinand, against Alonso's insistence that his son is dead. After a period of searching, Gonzalo, Alonso, Francisco and Adrian become sleepy, no doubt due to Ariel's power. However, Antonio and Sebastian remain wide awake. Taking the opportunity to converse privately, Antonio convinces Sebastian, through great effort, to kill Alonso and the councilor Gonzalo. After all, there is presumably no inheritor to the throne of Naples. Alonso's daughter has been recently married off and made Queen of Tunis while Antonio and Sebastian think Ferdinand is dead.

While Antonio might act as a Machiavellian prince in usurping Prospero, he acts contrary to the author's teachings concerning his latest scheme. While he rose to power through the great in Italy, on the island, he seeks to overthrow the great. But, since he believes the royal party to be the only inhabitants of the island, Antonio cannot turn to the people. Therefore, he must engage in a conspiracy such as the one he plots with Sebastian. However, Machiavelli points out the flaw in conspiracy in Chapter XIX "Of Avoiding Contempt and Hatred." He says,

And one sees from experience that there have been many conspiracies, but few have had a good end. For whoever conspires cannot be alone, but he cannot find company except from those he believes to be malcontents, and as soon as you disclose your intent [to kill the

prince] to a malcontent, you give him the matter with which to become content, because manifestly he can hope for every advantage from it...I say that on behalf of the conspirator, there is nothing but fear, jealousy and the anticipation of terrifying punishment.<sup>80</sup>

As Shakespeare paints them in their first appearance on the island, Antonio and Sebastian are malcontents indeed. While the king mourns and Gonzalo and his fellow advisors survey their surroundings, Antonio and Sebastian spend their time mocking the men and chastising the king. At one point, Sebastian says, "Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,/That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,/But rather lose her to an African...Milan and Naples have/More widows in them of this business' making/ Than we bring men to comfort them. /The fault's your own."<sup>81</sup> Despite these harsh words, King Alonso seems lost in his own melancholy. Soon after, Ariel visits the party and puts all but Antonio and Sebastian to sleep. While the king finds welcome relief in this sleep, Antonio and Sebastian find opportunity.

This opportunity is, of course, one that Prospero knows his brother and Sebastian will use to their advantage to plot something evil. Just as Antonio used the opportunity of his brother's preoccupation with study to usurp him, so will he use the royal party's sleep to help Sebastian usurp his brother Alonso. This conversion of opportunity into gain is fitting with Antonio's Machiavellian nature, as it has been discussed previously. Antonio continues to apply Machiavellian principles, but by taking part in a conspiracy, he does so in a manner that would not ensure his

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<sup>80</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 19. 73.

<sup>81</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 2.1.131-45.

own rule, as he thinks this usurpation might, but actually serves to weaken it, even if Prospero's scheme had not been put into effect. One must begin, then, with Machiavelli's quote concerning conspirators as malcontents. It has been established that Antonio and Sebastian are indeed malcontents, but would become content with the killing of Alonso. Yet, because conspirators live in fear, one wonders who would actually kill the king if Ariel had not interfered. Sebastian implies that he would kill the king himself, but he is interrupted by Ariel each time he mentions the plot. In the first instance, in Act Two, Scene One, Ariel wakes Gonzalo by song and later, in Act Three, Scene Three, Ariel presents the royal party with a banquet. While these interruptions are, of course, carefully overseen by Prospero, one still might wonder if Sebastian has it in his nature to kill his brother and Gonzalo. Shakespeare suggests that he does not. Rather than acting upon his own desires, Sebastian seems to be carrying out the wishes of Antonio. As it has been discussed above, Sebastian is slow to see Antonio's scheme, even when it is laid plainly before him. Similarly, after their plot has been overthrown once, Sebastian needs Antonio's encouragement to continue the plot. Antonio urges Sebastian saying, "Do not, for one repulse, forgo the purpose/ That you resolved t' effect," to which Sebastian responds, "The next advantage/ Will we take thoroughly." Antonio continues, "Let it be tonight." Finally, Sebastian agrees, "I say tonight," and then quiets his friend, "No more."<sup>82</sup> This dialogue makes it perfectly clear that Antonio is much more willing than Sebastian. And while it is Sebastian who may be somewhat eager to rule, it is Antonio who has the cunning to do what is necessary to secure rule for himself.

After all, this scheme is meant to forward Antonio much more than Sebastian.

While Sebastian may be eager for rule, he is unwise in conspiring with Antonio. As Machiavelli says of conspirators, they "can hope for every advantage from it."<sup>83</sup> But the advantages for Antonio are much greater than those that might befall Sebastian. For Sebastian, he will rule Naples. And while that is no small feat, it is insignificant when compared to what Antonio stands to gain. Antonio will, of course, continue to rule Milan. But with Sebastian as King of Naples, Antonio will no longer be obliged to pay the tribute he paid to Alonso in return for assisting with the usurpation of Prospero. More importantly, Antonio might continue his scheming and attempt to usurp Sebastian. After all, he exiled his own brother and infant niece; would it be so incredible to believe that he would not do the same, or worse, to Sebastian?

There is also the possibility, however, that Sebastian will also become adept at scheming. There is evidence that even the philosophic Prospero learns about Machiavellian politics from Antonio. Certainly Sebastian, who is so easily convinced to usurp his own brother, would also learn about the art of earning and maintaining a kingdom by any means necessary. Just as Alonso set a dangerous precedent by assisting Antonio in his usurpation of Prospero, now Antonio sets a dangerous precedent. For Alonso, the danger up to this point lay in Antonio either attempting to usurp Naples for himself or convincing Sebastian to do so, which has now transpired. But for Antonio, the danger lies in Sebastian attempting to usurp Milan. Again, if he is willing to kill his brother, why should he be unwilling to overthrow Antonio? Antonio's mistake is one that Prospero never makes, and that Machiavelli warns against: Antonio depends on others for furthering his own ambitions. Both precedent and a well-hidden warning against

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 3.3.16-22.

<sup>83</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 19.73.

it appear in the small speech Sebastian makes after being convinced to kill Alonso. To Antonio he says, “Thy case, dear friend,/Shall be my precedent: as thou got’st Milan,/I’ll come by Naples. Draw thy sword. One stroke/Shall free thee from the tribute which thou payest,/And I the King shall love thee.”<sup>84</sup>

The dangers of precedent have been made clear. However, one must also explore the Machiavellian connotations of love and dependence on others. About love, Machiavelli is very clear. In *The Prince* he states, “love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because men are wicked, is broken at every opportunity for their own utility.”<sup>85</sup> Any prince, then, is foolish to rely on the love of either the people or the great to gain or maintain their state, for love is merely imperfect loyalty. Why then would Antonio believe that Sebastian would love and ally with him once he takes the throne? Reliance on loyalty, too, is something Machiavelli speaks against. He says, “the princes who have done great things are those who have taken little account of faith and have known how to get around men’s brains with their astuteness; and in the end they have overcome those who have founded themselves on loyalty.”<sup>86</sup> Antonio certainly takes little account of faith and loyalty in usurping Prospero, his own brother, and Alonso, the king who helped him rise to power. However, he seems to value the love and loyalty that Sebastian feels toward him when plotting Alonso’s murder. This trust is highly incongruous with Antonio’s character. After all, when exploring Prospero’s usurpation, Antonio appears to be a Machiavellian prince through and through. Therefore, one must argue that Antonio does not trust in Sebastian’s love or loyalty, but is

merely using Sebastian to further cement and extend his own rule.

And so it is not a faith in love that proves Antonio’s weakness as a Machiavellian prince, but his dependence on others. Antonio counts on Sebastian’s ambition, which has only been recently tapped by Antonio himself, to kill Alonso and Gonzalo and take the throne, thereby making way for Antonio to combine his powers in Milan and Naples. This reliance on Sebastian to kill is a perfect example of relying on another’s arms, something against which Machiavelli strongly speaks. Of relying on the arms of others he says, “they are almost always harmful, because when they lose you are undone; when they win, you are left their prisoner.”<sup>87</sup> Does this adage not apply perfectly to Antonio and Sebastian? If Sebastian were to fail in his task and be found out by the royal party (as in fact they are, in a roundabout way), then Antonio would lose his dukedom forever, even without Prospero’s interference. But if Sebastian succeeds in killing his brother, he might use his power to rise up against Antonio, as it has been discussed. Machiavelli gives two important examples of men who have either succeeded or failed depending on their use of their own arms as opposed to those of others—Cesare Borgia and Saul.

These men’s successes and failures have also been explored in connection with Prospero’s use of Ariel as a religious force. When speaking of Cesare Borgia, one might simplify matters by merely stating that Prospero succeeds where he failed, whereas Antonio fails where Borgia succeeded. When speaking of the similarities between Shakespeare’s character and Saul, one must remember to approach Saul from a Machiavellian rather than purely biblical standpoint. Of Borgia, Machiavelli tells the

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<sup>84</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 2.1.332-36.

<sup>85</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 17.67.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 18.69.

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 13.54.

tale of the duke coming to the Romagna with auxiliary arms, then turning to mercenaries. Borgia judged them both dangerous, "eliminated them, and turned to his own arms."<sup>88</sup> This use of his own arms, Machiavelli asserts, meant a great boost to Borgia's reputation because it was clear that the duke could achieve greatness without the help of others. Machiavelli's example concerning Saul is more complex. He tells the tale of how David refused Saul's armor when fighting Goliath. On the surface, this seems to be a story about the benefits of using one's own arms. But, it also serves as a cautionary tale. After all, after slaying Goliath, David went on to lead the army and then take Saul's place as king. For Machiavelli, Saul's downfall stems not from his disobedience to God (as it has been examined in light of Prospero), but rather from allowing David to win a crucial battle rather than the king facing the giant himself. Using these examples, it should be concluded that conspiracies such as the one between Antonio and Sebastian fail not only because of the malcontented nature of their participants, but because they necessarily require a dependence on others.

Antonio and Sebastian's conspiracy, however, did not fail immediately; rather, Prospero, through Ariel, interferes on two occasions, the first time by waking the royal party, the second by presenting them with a banquet. It is necessary for Prospero to interfere as he does so that his experiment might succeed. His interference foiled the conspiracy in the short run, but the very nature of the conspiracy and conspirators would have ruined them in the long run. After all, it is Italy and a hope for a just rule there that motivates Prospero. Therefore, he could not allow Antonio and Sebastian to overthrow Alonso. Alonso and Gonzalo need to be made aware of Antonio and Sebastian's natures, which is achieved

through the songs and visions that Ariel provides. If Alonso did not recognize his brother and Antonio for what they truly are—scheming and ambitious men—then Alonso's rule would never be secure, and Alonso's rule must stay in place so that Ferdinand may succeed him. What is more, Sebastian and Antonio would rule as warring tyrants, thereby straying even further from the virtuous rule and good political society that Prospero is attempting to establish.

The danger of Sebastian or Antonio usurping the other is a clear flaw in the two men's plan, and would therefore be a flaw in their rule of Italy. Each would be constantly at war against the other, bringing upheaval to the country. In their preoccupations with the acquisition of the other's power, they would rule unjustly. Of tyrants, Machiavelli says,

Among all men praised, the most praised are those who have been heads of orderers of religions. Next, then, are those who have founded either republics or kingdoms. After them are celebrated those who, placed over armies, have expanded either their kingdom or that of the fatherland. To these literary men are added...On the contrary, men are infamous and detestable who are destroyers of religions, squanderers of kingdoms and republics, and enemies of the virtues, of letters, and of every other art that brings utility and honor to the human race, as are the impious, the violent, the ignorant, the worthless, the idle, the cowardly. And no one will ever be so crazy or so wise, so wicked or so good, who will not praise what is to be praised and blame what is to be blamed, when the choice between the two qualities of men is placed before them. Nonetheless, afterward,

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 13.55.

deceived by a false good and a false glory, almost all let themselves go, either voluntarily or ignorantly into the ranks who deserve more blame than praise; and though, to their perpetual honor, they are able to make a republic or a kingdom, they turn to tyranny.<sup>89</sup>

Nearly all of the qualities Machiavelli attributes to tyrants may also apply to Antonio, Sebastian, the royal party or their servants Stephano and Trinculo. Stephano and Trinculo seem to be represented as “enemies of the virtues, of letters, and of every other art that brings utility and honor to the human race.” After all, their conspiracy looks to make the virtuous Miranda Stephano’s queen and to overthrow Prospero by stealing his books. Then Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian would represent “the impious, the violent, the ignorant, the worthless, the idle, the cowardly.” Not one member of the royal party, with the possible exception of Gonzalo, understands the forces behind the visions and songs presented to them, making them both impious, if Ariel is to represent religion, and ignorant, since none know of Prospero’s existence on the island. Again, all but Gonzalo and the king’s other two aids, Francisco and Adrian, would be considered violent. The nature of the usurpations planned by Antonio, Sebastian, Alonso, Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban all involve murder, or in the case of Prospero’s usurpation, include the use of an army.<sup>90</sup> Aside from perhaps Alonso, are cowardly, planning their assassinations while their victims sleep. The royal party, Stephano and Trinculo must also be called idle. Not one of

them finds useful employment, but rather spends his time scheming at how to overthrow another. All of the above mentioned qualities would then render them useless to the best possible state that Prospero is trying to create. After all, the qualities of a tyrant are put in direct contrast with those of founders and great leaders.

The particular argument that paints Antonio and Sebastian as would-be tyrants comes shortly after this description in Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy*. In Book One, Chapter Ten, the author tells what one would see if he observes the rule of a tyrant. He states, “he will see them atrocious because of wars; so many princes killed with steel, so many civil wars, so many external ones; Italy afflicted and full of new misfortunes, its cities ruined and sacked.” Such is the state in which Italy might find itself if Sebastian and Antonio were allowed to carry out their conspiracy and rule Naples and Milan. The parallels between Machiavelli’s corrupted state and the Italy that Sebastian and Antonio might create continue when Machiavelli says that one will see “calumniators rewarded, slaves corrupted against their master, freedmen against their patron, and those who lacked enemies oppressed by friends.”<sup>91</sup> This chaos is, in essence, what Prospero has created and controlled on the island, but is also, without his further interference on the isle, the state in which politics might continue in Italy. Slanderers like Antonio and Sebastian, who constantly chastise and mock the rest of the royal party, will be rewarded as heads of state by turning on their patrons who, in this instance, happen to be their brothers; slaves like Caliban will turn against their masters, such as Prospero; and laughable, but harmless men will be oppressed by their friends, much like what occurs between Stephano and Trinculo. Taking account of

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<sup>89</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago:199), 1.10.1.

<sup>90</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.152.

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<sup>91</sup> Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 1.10.33.

the sort of chaos that the ship has brought to the island, one can observe that Prospero, a founder and a man of letters, wishes to avoid such tyranny upon his return to Italy.

Given the parallels between Machiavelli's tyrant and the rule Antonio and Sebastian might bring to Milan and Naples, one can understand the political thinking of these conspirators and, through his manipulation of the situation, that of Prospero. The language of dream, sleep and wakefulness permeate the conspirator's initial conversation concerning the assassination of Alonso, perhaps alluding to the reality of the political situation in which Antonio and Sebastian find themselves. It might, as first blush, seem that Antonio and Sebastian understand the political reality of the island and of Naples; but this statement could not be further from the truth. Sebastian and Antonio perceive the situation on the island in the same manner they understand politics generally—in realistic terms. After all, it is not realistic to expect that Ferdinand survived the terrible storm that seemed to swallow him, and it would be even less realistic to think that this small island is the one on which Prospero landed after surviving his dangerous voyage twelve years ago. And while Prospero turns to a similarly realistic point of view, his aim is loftier and dependent on a love of virtue and beauty, two qualities that certainly can come into opposition with the world as it often is. And so it is fitting that, while Sebastian and Antonio may think themselves awake in the political sense, Ariel visits the sleeping Gonzalo, the man who wishes to recreate paradise, in order to show him the truth of the party's situation.

After the royal party lands and the audience has a short introduction to each of the characters, Gonzalo, in his attempts cheer Alonso and convince him that Ferdinand may be alive, goes into a lengthy speech concerning how he would rule if he

were king of the isle. The world he creates for himself and his subjects resembles a sort of paradise, and there are strong ties to the Garden of Eden. Gonzalo admits that his realm would be one of "contraries." Among the things that would be excluded from his paradise would be "traffic...riches, poverty/ And use of service, none; contract succession." This sort of industry and commerce is, of course, also omitted from the Bible's description of Eden. Rather, they are inventions of the city, as are the metal, wine, oil, weapons, and named leaders that Gonzalo would banish from the island. A lack of possessions, wealth and weaponry keeps a paradise from becoming a state of nature in which men are greedy and self interested. Learning or "letters," as Gonzalo says, would also be banned. This smacks distinctly of Adam and Eve's prohibition from eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Just as Adam and Eve might want to share God's wisdom and create their own order and become independent from God, so might learning amongst Gonzalo's subjects encourage the establishment of a corrupt city such as the one from which Gonzalo hails. As Antonio and Sebastian point out, even marriage would not become a construct of Gonzalo's regime. Similarly, Adam and Eve do not consummate their union until after they are banished from the Garden.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps this exclusion of marriage is due to the secondary effects of lust and dependence on a spouse rather than upon God.<sup>93</sup> Such lust and dependence are effects which Prospero attempts to keep out of Ferdinand and Miranda's marriage.

While Prospero wishes to create the best regime possible and not the sort of paradise that Gonzalo describes, his desired system of politics would resemble Gonzalo's Eden much more than the corrupt realm in which Alonso, Antonio and

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<sup>92</sup> Gen. 4:1 KJV.

<sup>93</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 2.1.162-83.



Sebastian operate. Given his political perspective, it becomes clear why Prospero sends Ariel to speak to Gonzalo rather than Antonio and Sebastian in order to stop the conspiracy against Alonso and his councilor. Not only does Prospero wish to end Antonio and Sebastian's scheming so that he might save Italy from their tyranny, but it is important to do so in a manner that will allow Gonzalo and Alonso to see Antonio and Sebastian's true natures while at the same time exposing the entire party to the notion of a higher good. Rather than sending Ariel to Antonio and Sebastian directly to inhibit their ambitions, Ariel, the embodiment of religion on the island, visits Gonzalo, the only character that might understand him. To Gonzalo, Ariel says,

My master through his art foresees  
the danger/That you, his friend, are  
in, and sends me forth—/ For else his  
project dies—to keep them living./  
*While you here do snoring lie, Open-*  
*eyed conspiracy/His time doth take.*  
*If of life you keep a care,/Shake off*  
*slumber and beware./ Awake, awake!*

While the spirit's speech and song are relatively clear, one line is troubling. "For else his project dies—to keep them living." There is no clear antecedent to the word "them." And so, one must wonder, who Prospero is most concerned with keeping alive. The answer, of course, lies in Miranda and Ferdinand. Therefore, Prospero must stop his brother's conspiracy for multiple reasons, not only to protect Italy from the oppression it might suffer under Antonio or Sebastian, but also to ensure that Ferdinand and Miranda rule and create the best possible regime. However, to create subjects that will live under Ferdinand and Miranda in a more just regime, Prospero must expose the royal party to something greater than and outside of themselves in order that they may

understand the authority under which they find themselves and not attempt to overthrow it.

Such exposure to a metaphysical force does not only come to Gonzalo, but also comes to the entire royal party more clearly in Act Three, Scene Three. As the royal party continues its search for Ferdinand, and Antonio and Sebastian discuss their plot for the second time, all hear strange music and see mystical figures that bring forward a banquet. At first, the scene is pleasant, but as Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian approach the table to eat, the food disappears and Ariel appears as a harpy, putting the three schemers under a spell as retribution for their wicked plots. Here, one finally finds Biblical connotations like those found with the other characters on the island. In this instance, the royal party are quite like the Hebrew people who must first be brought out of the city and exposed to God before they can accept a regime based upon His righteousness—Israel.

Similar to Gonzalo's utopian society, and the Hebrews' exodus from Egypt, the royal party must be stripped of societal constructs. They are left on the island with nothing but the garments on their backs. They have neither water nor food. And while food is natural, overindulgence in it is not. Such overindulgence is typical in a prosperous society such as Italy or Egypt and is therefore presented to the royal party only to be taken away. Similarly, God bade that the Hebrews eat only unleavened bread and water provided by Him in their exodus. For the Hebrews, food appeared and disappeared at the will of God, according to their obedience to Him. For example, when some people went out of their tents to gather manna on the Sabbath, no bread rained down as it had for the previous six days, because they had disobeyed the Lord in their intent to gather bread through physical

labor.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, food mysteriously appeared to the royal party, only to be taken away when the most treacherous men, Antonio, Alonso and Sebastian, approached the table. Yet, it is important that the royal party be exposed to such power so that they might leave behind the corrupted politics of the city that has informed their actions thus far. As with the Hebrews, who needed water drawn from a stone to understand that God would provide, if the royal party's own sustenance is dependent on their virtues or vices, then it is plausible that they will be receptive to the notion that the survival of the state is also dependent on the virtuousness of its rulers. This notion then, will make them accept Miranda and Ferdinand as the true rulers of Italy so that it might be the best state possible.

Further parallels to the Hebrews in their exodus come in the text of Ariel's speech to Antonio, Alonso and Sebastian. Ariel announces himself and those spirits that appear with him as "ministers of Fate," whose purpose is to condemn the three men for their plots against Prospero and each other. He tells them of the power he and the other spirits hold, saying, "I and my fellows/Are ministers of Fate. The elements of whom your swords are tempered may as well/Wound the loud winds or with bemocked-at stabs/ Kill the still-closing waters as diminish/One dowl that's my plume." This speech, then portrays Ariel as a force of nature that is somehow even more powerful than nature. Such language, particularly that of "still-closing waters," is reminiscent of God's the parting of the sea.<sup>95</sup> Despite all the advancements of the Egyptians, most notably chariots, a supernatural force, in this case God, presented his foes with a powerful manipulation of the natural world that could not be overcome. In a similar manner, the

supernatural force of the island, Ariel, says that even these cunning men of the city cannot, with their man-made swords, overcome his will, which is to punish the men for their wicked political maneuvers.

Shakespeare's final play is fraught with seeming contradictions. Gonzalo presents his ideas for a paradise while those with whom he travels operate in a city that is the result of men's banishment from such a paradise. Prospero evolves from Platonic Philosopher King to an apparent Machiavellian Prince. So, too, is *The Tempest* a play with many parallels to the Old Testament. Prospero, in many ways, is a Saul-like figure while Caliban represents the serpent in the Garden of Eden. And so, it must be concluded that the explorations of Stephano, Trinculo and the royal party also point to a resolution similar to that of the Old Testament. It is crucial that men's natures be explored, that Prospero understand such natures, and that the royal party are exposed to a force outside themselves so that Prospero can build the best possible regime considering the limitations of human nature. As God did not restore Eden or leave men in the city, so Prospero, in his philosophic nature, cannot let the subjects of Italy be oppressed, nor can he, as a prince who has been usurped, expect man to give up his self-interested ways. Instead, he must build the best possible city, taking into account man's flawed nature—a modern Israel.

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<sup>94</sup> Ex. 16:26 KJV.

<sup>95</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 3.3.78-85.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Miranda, Ferdinand and the More Perfect Regime

*“O, rejoice  
Beyond a common joy, and set it down  
With gold on lasting pillars” 5.1.249*

The purpose served through Prospero’s understanding and manipulation of the royal party and their servants is to create subjects who can be ruled under the new order he wishes to establish. However, subjects who comprehend their inabilities to rule, as the men on the island come to do, are only one half of a better regime. The other half is, of course, capable rulers. The best possible regime, for Prospero, is one in which the inherent wickedness of men can and will be moderated. And so the rulers of such a state must also be moderate in both their sins, and for the sake of maintaining their rule, their virtues.

Prospero has lived with and observed the virtues embodied by his daughter, Miranda, during their twelve years of exile. Because Miranda is the only woman on the island, her character is particularly interesting. To add to her interest is the fact her entire worldview has been informed only by her father and the monster Caliban. But such an exploration is too often overlooked upon one’s first exposure to *The Tempest*. Most would describe Miranda as Prospero’s beautiful daughter, but such a description would be incomplete and, in fact, inaccurate. Not once in the course of the play is Miranda referred to as beautiful. Words such as “admirable,” and even “goddess,” are applied to Prospero’s daughter, but beauty is not included as one of her primary virtues.<sup>96</sup> However, her love of beauty is apparent, and

is amongst the virtues that Prospero believes will make her a just ruler.

While love of beauty might seem to be of little relevance for a ruler, it is actually of great importance if his or her rule is meant to counter the deepest imperfections of man’s character. As it has been established, Stephano and Trinculo, along with the members of the royal party, are prideful individuals. Stephano and Trinculo, along with experiencing the sort of ordinary pride that leads them to believe they can usurp Prospero and rise to the level of king and sorcerer, also experience pride in the biblical sense, meaning their souls are deficient and they attempt to fulfill their neediness for goodness through their own means, in this case self sufficiency and self-rule. Such attempts at perfect self sufficiency are prideful because they necessarily upset God’s divinely established order. Man, as he was created and placed in the Garden, is meant to be reliant on God. But when he becomes reliant on himself alone, he wishes to act as God and is therefore elevating himself beyond his proper station in God’s order. The royal party are even more proud than these men, because they not only attempt to elevate themselves through self sufficiency, but they also attempt to rule over others, which heightens their station while lowering that of their. Rather than accepting their inferiority to a higher power, men try to find completeness, self sufficiency and power over others through temporal rule. But a love of beauty would counteract such pride. While finding relief from neediness in oneself is pride, the admission of incompleteness in oneself is manifested in a love of beauty. To admire beauty is to admire something outside of oneself that is good, which admits that one is fundamentally incomplete, meaning that one understands.

Therefore, what would make Miranda a just ruler would be her ability to

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 3.1.47,1.2.505.

moderate, if not counteract, the pride to which all men fall prey. A similar balance of pride and a love of beauty is found in Israel's righteous king, David. Pride, like all sins, is a result of the fall of Adam and Eve, which stemmed from the desire to make man's power equal to that of God. Because of pride, any sort of post-fall government is perverted. And yet, because of His promise to Noah not to destroy the Earth again by a flood, God and man are confined to perverted government in their attempts to recreate the harmony they shared before the fall of man. This confinement is the purpose of David's rule, in which the ultimate sin of pride is combated by a ruler who loves beauty. There is a similar confinement in *The Tempest*. While there is no talk of harmony with God or promises to patriarchs, there is the implication, through a careful examination of each group of characters, that men are wicked and that such wickedness may not be completely overcome, and that there is a proper order that might be achieved through good government.<sup>97</sup>

In the case of David, pride and a love of beauty occur within himself. For example, after David takes Bathsheba as his own, he first attempts to make Uriah, her husband, sleep with her so that if she has a child, Uriah would think it his. When he cannot convince Uriah to leave the army to do so, David places him on the front lines of battle to be killed.<sup>98</sup> By applying such a necessitous and self-interested sense of justice above that of the Lord's, David displays a great deal of pride in that he elevates himself above his human position in God's order. After all, man is dependent on God for his life, not upon the personal decisions of the king. Yet, when the Lord

punishes David, he sees great beauty in it. Of mercy and repentance, David says, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity ... Create in me a clean heart."<sup>99</sup> David sees ugliness in sin and therefore beauty in the destruction of it; he also, therefore, sees and is more willing to apply the Lord's justice rather than his own self-serving version of justice within the state, because he understands that God's perfect justice will lead to perfect order.

While Shakespeare does not create such a conflicted character within Miranda, one can certainly see how the concept of a love a beauty countering pride could be applied in a state under the duke's daughter. Take, for example, the royal party, who view politics as a vehicle for furthering their own political ambitions. For them, justice is informed by the political necessity of their actions. If it is necessary, it is just. Such a sentiment would not be found in Miranda. For her, like for David, justice is found in what is beautiful. This notion that beauty is tied to justice is an interesting, yet reasonable one if beauty is understood correctly. For David and Miranda alike, great beauty comes from order. A proper appreciation of justice grows from this notion because justice ensures order. What David sees as the most beautiful thing is the creation of Israel because in the creation of Israel, God and man might come closer to the harmony they experienced in the Garden before Adam and Eve upset the divinely established and perfectly reasonable order. Similarly, Miranda will find beauty in order. It will not be in explicit terms of divinity, but it will be based upon virtue, vice and the notion of something good that exists outside of oneself.

For Miranda, virtue and beauty are inherently linked. If the recognition of beauty is the recognition of goodness in something outside of oneself, then

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<sup>97</sup> My Catholic friend, Prof. Burkett, believes the language of wickedness to be too strong. My own Presbyterianism tells me otherwise.

<sup>98</sup> 2 Sam. 11-12 KJV.

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<sup>99</sup> Ps. 51:1,10 KJV.

Miranda's tie between virtue and beauty is natural. Again and again, one sees the young woman's connection between outer and inner beauty. The first instance of this connection comes within Miranda's opening speech. Of the tempest and the havoc it has wreaked on the ship in the distance, Miranda says, "O, I have suffered/ With those that I saw suffer! A brave vessel,/Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her."<sup>100</sup> For Miranda, the outer splendor of the ship, for the word "brave," in Shakespeare's works often refer to an impressive exterior, corresponds with the souls the vessel houses. Such a belief transfers to those with whom she comes in contact, most notably, Ferdinand. She and the prince fall in love instantly, and gradually get to know one another throughout the play. However, initially the only attributes Miranda speaks of are physical. Even as her father accuses Ferdinand of treachery, Miranda is convinced, "There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple./If the ill spirit have so fair a house,/Good things will strive to dwell with 'it.'" It is this notion that Ferdinand is essentially good that leads Miranda to accept his proposal of marriage even while she believes her father still distrusts him. After all, her judgment is based upon her love of beauty, while Prospero's appears to be based upon ordinary politics and the ugly side of human nature.

While Miranda believes that beautiful vessels hold good souls, she also believes that ugly bodies are reflections of bad characters. Take, for example, how she understands Caliban. In Act One, when Prospero tells Miranda that they need to visit Caliban in order to procure firewood, she calls Caliban, "a villain...I do not love to look on."<sup>101</sup> It seems that it was this exposure to ugliness of body and soul that

actually informed Miranda's opinion of beauty. At some point during their lives on the island, Caliban attempted to rape Miranda after she had taken him in and tried to teach him as her father did. For his education, Caliban is ungrateful, and he does not regret his attempted rape, but says, "Would't had been done!/Thou didst prevent me. I had peopled else/ This isle with Calibans."<sup>102</sup> Through Caliban's treatment of her and his generally foul nature, Miranda has observed that the evil within Caliban's soul has manifested itself in outward ugliness. But Caliban's ugliness is not that of an ordinarily unattractive creature. He is hideous and monstrous because he represents not only a bad soul, but that which is worst in man, and that which encourages men to become proud and sinful, as Caliban encourages Stephano and Trinculo. This notion of outward ugliness reflecting something ugly within brings to mind another parallel between Miranda and David. When David hears of the challenge that Goliath is posing to the Israelites, he says, "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" David's outrage toward Goliath manifests itself in a hatred of Goliath's person. For David does not merely allude to Goliath as a Philistine, but as an uncircumcised Philistine, meaning that he lacks the physical sign of God's covenant. Therefore, what makes Goliath most abhorrent to David is that he is, quite literally, a marked enemy of the one true God. For David, the opposite of Goliath's ugliness is the establishment and defense of Israel, in which he finds great beauty. For Miranda, that which appears to be the opposite of Caliban, not utterly ugly, but completely beautiful, must reflect what is best in man.

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<sup>100</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 1.2.370-71.

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 1.2.420-22.

By understanding something beautiful to also be virtuous, Miranda can understand its value in a properly ordered society. Similarly, she can understand that something ugly must be base and therefore of little or no value to mankind. And so when Miranda is presented with the Royal party, she sees great beauty in them because Prospero has properly ordered them. After all, he has introduced them to a metaphysical force, exposed Alonso to Antonio and Sebastian's base natures and regained his dukedom. Finally, they have been driven mad and made to contemplate the usurpations which they carried out and planned. This contemplation forced the men to acknowledge their own wickedness, which, while it may not encourage an immediate love of beauty, would certainly assuage their pride. Once exposed to this well-ordered group of men, then Miranda declares, "O wonder!/How many goodly creatures are there here!/How beauteous mankind is!/O, brave new world/That has such people in it!"<sup>103</sup> Her declaration, then, is a recognition of the best order for a society. Such order will then combat pride and encourage virtue.

While a love of beauty is important in a ruler whose regime is meant to combat the most essential sins of man, such a love of beauty is useless if the regime is not established, maintained and guarded from internal and external enemies alike through warfare. Therefore, the head of state must be learned and capable in the art of war. Such truth is found throughout history, from the Bible to Machiavelli, and therefore must also apply to Shakespeare's Neapolitan prince. In his marriage to Miranda, Ferdinand is a sort of representation of temporal rule. Through Ferdinand's status as heir to Naples, both he and his wife will come to power. And while his throne may be acquired through heredity, the maintenance

of it along with the newly acquired Milan will come through his understanding of warfare, which is such an important part of temporal power. In fact, the name Ferdinand is a Germanic name, partially derived from the words "daring" and "brave," two qualities that must be present in a warrior's spirit.<sup>104</sup>

While *The Tempest* depicts no scenes of warfare, and does not mention any conflict, Ferdinand's nature as a warrior is alluded to on several occasions through descriptions of him and his behavior. The first description of Ferdinand that would fit that of a military leader comes from Francisco, a member of the royal party who it seems can be trusted since he only offers comfort to the king and does not conspire with Antonio and Sebastian. When Alonso is sure that his son was lost in the storm, Francisco says,

Sir, he may live./I saw him beat the  
surges under him/ And ride upon  
their backs. He trod the water/Whose  
enmity he flung aside, and breasted/  
The surge most swoll'n that met him.  
His bold head/ 'Bove the contentious  
waves he kept, and oared/ Himself  
with his good arms in a lusty stroke/  
To th' shore, that o'er his wave-worn  
basis bowed,/As stooping to relieve  
him. I not doubt/He came alive to  
land.

Does this scene not sound like a great battle? To begin, the sea itself is animated in order to create certain images: The water surges, Francisco says, and Ferdinand rode upon the waves, much like one would ride a horse into battle. The water also seems to be the enemy against which Ferdinand is poised. It is personified and called contentious and full of enmity toward the prince, which he overcomes through his strength and spirited-

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 5.1.215-18.

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<sup>104</sup> "Ferdinand," *Behind the Name*..

ness. Even the language of Ferdinand's actions draws to mind a warrior beating back his foe, treading through the field and flinging aside those whom he overpowers.

Such spiritedness is not unique to Ferdinand. Rather, it is typical of most warriors, including Israel's great warrior, David. David proved himself capable as a man of war when he accepted the challenge to defeat Goliath and then did so without Saul's sword or armor. Later, scripture says of David,

and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants...And the women answered one another as they played, and said Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and they saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?<sup>105</sup>

Scripture states that David comes to power in Israel because he is a man after God's own heart, and it is assumed that he will rule more righteously than Saul. However, at this moment, Saul, and later Machiavelli, believe that David won Israel through his success as a warrior. Such success is something that Machiavelli understands, and that Prospero seeks in Ferdinand.

Machiavelli states, "a prince should have no other object, nor any other thought, nor take anything else as his art but that of war ... it is of such virtue that not only does It maintain those who have been born princes, but many times enables men of

private fortune to rise to that rank."<sup>106</sup> He credits the knowledge of war as the skill by which princes acquire and maintain their states. For Prospero's experiment to succeed, that is to say in order to establish the best possible regime in Italy, the exiled duke must not only prove his political ability, as he does through his mastery of Ariel and rule of the island, but he must also supply rulers who will be able to take and keep principalities through force. More importantly, it is one's reputation as a warrior that cements one's rule. As Machiavelli says, "For, among the other causes of evil that being unarmed brings you, it makes you contemptible, which is one of those infamies the prince should be on guard against."<sup>107</sup>

Prospero, through his own experience with his usurping brother Antonio, understands the necessity of keeping a good reputation among the people. After all, Antonio gave himself the reputation as a capable ruler while painting Prospero as "variable, light, effeminate, pusillanimous, [and] irresolute," which Machiavelli argues makes a prince contemptible.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, while Prospero wishes to build the best possible regime, he must also take care to ensure that the rulers of the regime carry a reputation that will secure their place of power. In Ferdinand, Prospero finds one who can build a name for himself based upon his ability to lead the military and thereby protect Naples and Milan. The reputation of the regime would only be bettered, then, by Miranda's compassionate and modest nature. On "In What Mode Faith Should Be Kept by Princes," Machiavelli says that a prince should "appear all mercy, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion." Miranda

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<sup>106</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 14. 58.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid 19.72.

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<sup>105</sup> 1 Sam. 18:5-8 KJV.

certainly appears merciful and humane when Prospero says the wrecked ship, which "touched/The very virtue of compassion" in his daughter.<sup>109</sup> And while Shakespeare does not necessarily provide specific examples of Miranda's honesty and religion, it can be assumed that her general benevolence will endear her to her people. Therefore, if Prospero establishes Ferdinand and Miranda as rulers of Milan and Naples, then he will not only have established a regime that is more just than that of the current rulers, as will be explored further, but he will also ensure that their reign will be secure from conspirators like Antonio and from the hatred of the people.

However, it appears that Prospero did not observe Ferdinand's valiant efforts against the waves, and so he must test the young prince's worth as a warrior who might effectively establish and maintain his rule. After all, when Ariel reports the havoc he wreaked on the ship, the spirit says, "The King's son, Ferdinand,/With hair upstaring—then like reeds, not hair—/Was the first man that leaped; cried 'Hell is empty,/And all the devils are here.'"<sup>110</sup> Now, it is plausible that Ferdinand simply has a strong desire to live. It has been established that he is a spirited youth who battled the sea itself. However, his abandonment of the ship might also signal to Prospero a weakness in the prince. Therefore, he must put Ferdinand to a test. When Prospero first encounters Ferdinand, the young man asserts that he has become King of Naples, which he has believed whole heartedly since hearing Ariel's song, which told of Alonso's sunken body. Then Prospero accuses Ferdinand of lying about his station, of treachery, and of attempting to usurp him as master of the island. For these crimes, Prospero says he intends to imprison Ferdinand. At this notion, Ferdinand draws

his weapon. This quick action convinces Prospero of Ferdinand's warrior spirit. But because Ferdinand's enslavement also serves to minimize the lust between him and Miranda, Prospero continues to put a spell on Ferdinand that weakens his arms and spirits so that he is willingly taken into Prospero's custody where he will perform Caliban's menial task of hauling fire wood.

It has been proven to both Prospero and the audience, therefore, that Ferdinand is a warrior and is therefore useful in Prospero's experiment. However, if Prospero is to create the best possible regime, he must determine not only if Ferdinand will establish and maintain a state, but also how he might govern it. The question of how he might rule is one that, in some ways, can be answered by examining Ferdinand's nature as a product of the city. Just like the members of the royal party from whom he has been separated, Ferdinand is a product of culture. He is both constrained and informed by the artificial structures of society, one such structure being that of warfare. Warfare is the means created by society that allows men to carry out their fundamental desire to make something their own. Machiavelli calls the "desire to acquire," "a very natural and ordinary thing," and it is a skill at which Ferdinand appears adept.<sup>111</sup> His competency at acquisition manifests itself not in an attempt to rule the island, but to take Miranda as his own.

When Ferdinand arrives on the island, he is visited by Ariel who sings two short songs, one of which leads Ferdinand to believe that his father is dead. Yet, when he sees Miranda and Prospero for the first time, all thoughts of his father's death seem to disappear. Quickly he calls Miranda a goddess and asks if she "be maid or no?" and then makes it clear that he, through

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<sup>109</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.35.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 1.2.250-53.

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<sup>111</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 3.14.



Alonso's death, is the King of Naples.<sup>112</sup> While many strange and mysterious things happen on the island, all have an explanation except for what appears to be Ferdinand's fast attachment to a woman he does not know. His attraction, then, is most likely explained as the desire to acquire that is both natural, and fortified through his warrior character.

If Ferdinand understands Miranda as an acquisition, then his speech concerning his father displays his understanding of human nature, as Machiavelli implies that all warrior princes should possess. Machiavelli states that a prince "should learn the nature of sites, and recognize how mountains rise, how valleys open up, how plains lie, and understand the nature of rivers and marshes—and in this invest greatest care...through the knowledge and experience with those sites, one can comprehend with ease every other site that it may be necessary to explore as new."<sup>113</sup> Not only is this advice meant to be practical in surveying land, but it is also a metaphor for how a militant prince should observe human nature. If one explores the natures of men around him, then, because human nature is universal, one will understand the natures of all men and therefore be able to conquer and rule them more capably. In explaining his newly acquired station, Ferdinand appeals to man's general feelings of power and compassion. The prince says, "A single thing, as I am now, that wonders/To hear thee speak of Naples. He does hear me,/And that he does I weep. Myself am Naples,/Who with mine eyes, never since at ebb, beheld/The King my father wracked," to which Miranda replies, "Alack, for mercy!"<sup>114</sup> This speech is the result of a keen observation of those around

him, which he has applied to Miranda in an effort to win her over. If one examines the natures of those with whom Ferdinand spent time before landing on the island, one will see both desire for power and compassion. His father, his uncle Sebastian and Antonio all represent a strong desire for power. Antonio and Alonso worked together to usurp Prospero while Sebastian is conspiring with Antonio to usurp Alonso. And so, as Ferdinand has seen this side of the royal party's nature, he assumes it to apply to all men. Similarly, Ferdinand has experienced Gonzalo and Francisco's compassion. Francisco, it seems, has a sympathetic character, as is seen when he comforts the king who is lamenting Ferdinand's fate. Gonzalo, too consoles the king, but also provided the ousted Prospero with his most prized possessions—his books. Therefore, it is evident why Ferdinand appeals to these two sentiments with Miranda. Miranda quickly becomes enamored with Ferdinand, and Prospero learns that Ferdinand understands and is skilled in the art of conquering. But he impedes Ferdinand with a spell, saying to himself, "I must uneasy make, lest too light winning/Make the prize light." This aside not only reinforces the notion that Miranda, in this instance, is a prize, or something to be acquired, but that Ferdinand has most effectively used his ability to acquire.

While Prospero understands Ferdinand's desire to acquire as something which will aid the establishment and maintenance of the regime that he imagines, such a desire to acquire also translates into lust. Lust in some ways is similar to a love of beauty, but instead of conquering pride, it depends upon it. A love of beauty is the simple recognition of something outside of oneself that is good and thereby acknowledging that one is incomplete. Such an admission of incompleteness reminds man that he is subservient to a higher power

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<sup>112</sup>*The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.511.

<sup>113</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 14.59.

<sup>114</sup>*The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.519-24.

and therefore reinforces the natural order Miranda finds so beautiful. Lust also admits that there is something outside of oneself that is good and that one is therefore incomplete. However, one who lusts cannot live with the acknowledgment of one's own incompleteness and therefore attempts to acquire that thing which is both good and outside of oneself. Such an acquisition is prideful because it assumes that one can become complete through one's own efforts and is thereby self-sufficient and does not need the goodness of a higher power. This assumption naturally elevates one into a higher position in the perfect order, thereby disrupting it. Such a connection between lust and pride is seen in the story of the fall. Recall that Adam and Eve eat the fruit in an attempt to know good and evil, which would elevate them to the level of God and therefore make them independent and self-sufficient. This attempt to be like God is, of course, pride. Later, as God banishes them from the Garden, He tells Eve, "thy desire shall be to thy husband."<sup>115</sup> Because Eve wished to be independent from God and fulfill her own neediness, man will be forever cursed with lust, which will lead him to believe that by simply acquiring something good, they will be made good.

Again, one can see strong parallels between David and Miranda and Ferdinand. Once more, David's relationship with Bathsheba must be examined. Just before David takes Bathsheba as his wife, the Bible makes particular note that David is not at war because Israel is fighting only small wars of maintenance. But his absence from the battlefield means that he cannot witness the thing that he finds truly beautiful, which is the active creation of Israel. And so, because David's sense of beauty is not being fulfilled through doing that which pleases God, he turns to his own means of finding completeness. Instead of merely admiring

Bathsheba on the rooftop, he desires to acquire her and, because he is a skilled warrior versed in the art of acquisition, he does so with ease.<sup>116</sup> In this instance, one can see how David acts proudly. He has relied on his own skills of acquisition to take something that he finds beautiful and search for completeness away from God rather than using such beauty to examine his own incompleteness.

Ferdinand acts in a similar manner in his acquisition of Miranda. Yet both men undergo a change. Samuel comes to David and tells him through a parable that he has acted unjustly. Later, the child David fathered with Bathsheba dies as punishment for David's lust and pride. But, as it has been discussed, David relishes his punishment, because he sees the beauty that comes through the destruction of sin, which tosses him violently into his place in God's divine order. Similarly, Prospero punishes Ferdinand. To Miranda, it appears that Prospero is imprisoning Ferdinand because he wants to usurp Prospero's seat on the island rather than punishing the young man until he can overcome his lust. Prospero must disguise his true motives for punishing Ferdinand. After all, he wants the two to fall in love, and so Prospero must paint Ferdinand as a political enemy rather than a young man with a deep flaw—the same flaw that moved Caliban to the attempted rape of Miranda. It is not in the punishment, but rather in the acceptance of it that one sees parallels to David. While David's punishment was much harsher, Ferdinand, too, sees nobility in his pain so long as it is in the pursuit of something great.

Ferdinand's response, then, is the opposite of Caliban's. Caliban has come to see Prospero as a tyrant who must be overthrown so that his own lust and that of all men can be satisfied. The monster constantly grumbles against Prospero and

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<sup>115</sup> Gen. 3:16 KJV.

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<sup>116</sup> 2 Sam. 11 KJV.

eventually tries to kill him with the aid of Stephano and Trinculo. Yet Ferdinand does not wish to rid himself of the man who punishes him, but rather unite himself with Prospero through Miranda. This willingness to marry Prospero's daughter is an affirmation that Ferdinand has begun to see Miranda as something to be loved, not obtained. Such an evolution is what Prospero strives for when he takes Ferdinand as his prisoner. As Machiavelli says,

For just as those who sketch landscapes place themselves down in the plain to consider the nature of mountains and high places and to consider the nature of low places place themselves high atop mountains, similarly, to know well the nature of peoples one needs to be prince, and to know well the nature of princes one needs to be of the people.

In his ousting, Prospero could come down to the low places to observe the nature of princes, particularly those who usurped him, while being lord over the island allowed him to observe the low nature of men, particularly Caliban. And so, one might argue that these experiences and observations have made Prospero a better prince and are the motivation for his desire to establish the best possible regime. Because Ferdinand is a prince in Italy, Prospero places him in a lowly position on the island so that he might observe the nature of a prince who, in this case, is protecting his kingdom as Prospero expects Ferdinand to do when he returns to Italy and begins his rule. Through his imprisonment, Ferdinand has observed the natures of both prince and people and thereby begins to understand acquisition and lust within himself. While acquisition is a part of war

and therefore rule, it must not be used as a means to solve the problem of human neediness in the form lust.

When the audience is reintroduced to Ferdinand in Act Three, Scene One, his transformation has begun. He says,

There be some sports are painful,  
and their labor/Delight in them sets  
off; some kinds of baseness/Are  
nobly undergone; and most poor  
matters/Point to rich ends. This my  
mean task/ Would be as heavy to me  
as odious, but/The mistress which I  
serve quickens what's dead/And  
makes my labors pleasures.

In this first scene, Ferdinand is not fulfilling his lust. And, for all he knows, he might never acquire Miranda. Yet he has begun to see in her something worthy of admiration and not simply acquisition. Soon, Miranda comes to aid the prince, but he refuses her help and tells her of how he admires her virtue, exclaiming, "Admired Miranda!"<sup>117</sup> Then he continues, "For several virtues/ Have I liked several women, never any/With so full soul but some defect in her/Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed,/ And put it to the foil./But you, O you/So perfect and so peerless, are created/Of every creature's best."<sup>118</sup> In his speech, Ferdinand seems to admit that lust has driven him in the past, but that those days are gone and that in Miranda he has found what his lust for other women could not fulfill. Ferdinand, too is coming to understand beauty in an order based upon virtue. The two quickly agree to marry, despite any consequences from Prospero. That Ferdinand becomes engaged to Miranda while believing Prospero to be both harsh and powerful only

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<sup>117</sup> The name Miranda does, indeed, mean "admired."  
"Miranda," *Behind the Name*.

<sup>118</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 3.1.52-58.

cements the notion that he no longer sees Miranda as an acquisition. As far as Ferdinand knows, there is no incentive for their union outside of Miranda herself. If he is to be kept on the island as a prisoner, she cannot help him obtain property or glory either on the island or in Italy. And so, it can be concluded that, while such gain would not be sacrificed for the sake of acquisition, it would be for love.

Prospero voices his satisfaction with the engagement of Ferdinand and, after sending Ariel to punish the royal party with the vanishing banquet and harpy's song, releases Ferdinand, admitting he has been harsh with the prince, saying, "All thy vexations/Were but my trials of thy love, and thou/Hast strangely stood the test." Such speech admits Prospero's pleasure with the match and motivations behind it. But, knowing Ferdinand's desire to acquire, he warns,

But If thou dost break her virgin-  
know before/ All sanctimonious  
ceremonies may/With full and holy  
rite be ministered,/No sweet  
aspersion shall the heavens let fall/  
To make this contract grow; but  
barren hate,/Sour-eyed disdain, and  
discord shall bestrew/The union of  
your bed with weeds so loathly/That  
you shall hate it both.

Prospero's warning, however, seems unnecessary, as Ferdinand promises that "the strong'st suggestion/Our worser genius can shall never melt/Mine honor into lust,"<sup>119</sup> because he wishes for "quiet days, fair issue, and long life." Prospero initially seems pleased and orders Ariel to bring forth other spirits who will take the forms of Greek and Roman goddesses during the wedding masque.

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 4.1.5-30.

The first goddess to appear is Iris. Iris is the Greek messenger goddess between Zeus and earth and is actually a personification of the rainbow.<sup>120</sup> In the wedding masque, Iris plays two key roles. The first of these roles is her most important in that she keeps Venus away from the ceremony. Venus, the goddess associated with charm, grace and beauty also proved to be lustful in many of the stories that surround her. However, this role will be discussed further in relation to Juno. For now, one may examine Iris' identification as a rainbow and the strong ties to the Old Testament that such an image invokes. After saving only Noah and his family, God marks His covenant to never destroy the earth by a flood again with a rainbow.<sup>121</sup> Therefore, the rainbow is traditionally interpreted as a symbol of new beginnings, just as the flood was the destruction of man's corruption and therefore a new beginning for man. Are these notions of eradicating corruption and beginning a new and better way of life not strikingly similar to Prospero's goal of establishing the best possible regime? The story of Noah also includes God giving Noah permission to eat meat and use the land for sustenance and prosperity, saying, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."<sup>122</sup>

Such allusions to agriculture lead directly to Shakespeare's use of Ceres. Ceres is indeed the Roman goddess of

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<sup>120</sup> Mike Dixon-Kennedy, "Iris," *Encyclopedia of Greco Roman Mythology*; available from <http://ebooks.ohiolink.edu>; Internet; accessed 6 March 2009.

<sup>121</sup> Gen. 9:9-13 KJV.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 8:21-22.

“growing vegetation and agriculture.”<sup>123</sup>  
During the masque, she blesses Miranda and Ferdinand, saying,

*Earth's increase, foison plenty,  
Barns and garners never empty,  
Vines with clust'ring bunches grow-  
ing/Plants with goodly burden bow-  
ing;/Spring come to you at the  
farthest/In the very end of harvest./  
Scarcity and wants shall shun you./  
Ceres' blessing so is on you*<sup>124</sup>

Her blessing resembles God's promise to refrain from cursing the earth so that man may live a better life, despite his imperfect nature. But it seems that Shakespeare also uses Ceres to speak of human fertility and prosperity. After all, Miranda and Ferdinand will return to the city, not to a farm. And while a good harvest is crucial for the success of the city, it is an aspect of society to which no other allusion has been made. Just as God's promise to never curse the ground again is for man's sake, so too would Ceres' blessing bring about good for mankind. Because Prospero means to bring together his daughter and the prince for the sake of the best regime possible, then their offspring, whether literally or figuratively (meaning the state), as blessed by Ceres would be in man's best interest since it is the product of a union meant to minimize the role of human vices in the practice of politics. Just as God undoes this curse on man in recognition that men's hearts are evil, so too would the product of a union blessed by Ceres undo a sort of curse. Because the best possible regime is built upon Prospero's well-informed notion that men are deeply flawed, he seeks to build a state in which such flaws are recognized and combated if not overcome.

The struggle for the state to achieve better government through virtuous and capable rulers is underlined by Juno's presence at the wedding masque. Juno is a Roman goddess who is particularly tied to marriage and the state. She is said to watch over wedding ceremonies, and her connection to politics is natural due to her own marriage to her brother Jupiter, which made her the “the queen of Heaven.”<sup>125</sup> Her presence, and more importantly, her insistence that Venus not be present, reflects Prospero's wish to avoid the political and cultural sins that the royal party commit and those natural sins of Stephano and Trinculo. Iris effectively keeps Venus away, saying, “Of her society/Be not afraid...Mars's hot minion is returned again;/Her waspish-headed son has broke his arrows.”<sup>126</sup> Thanks to Iris' interference, the goddess and the lust she brings will not be a part of the ceremony or the marriage, thereby keeping out the sort of natural sin to which Caliban and Ferdinand fell pray due to the curse placed upon man after the fall. If lust is excluded from Ferdinand and Miranda's marriage, then the state will be one based upon a notion of justice that relies on the beauty of a natural order based on virtue rather than the disorder caused by lust and pride. Therefore, Miranda, who understands justice as that which promotes the beautiful and therefore virtue, will then continue in her understanding while Ferdinand, who will remain skilled in acquisition and war, will be able to administer such justice for the maintenance of the state Prospero is creating. However, the purely political is also excluded from the marriage. In a discussion between Alonso and Sebastian, Sebastian makes it clear that the king's daughter, Claribel was disinclined to marry the African to whom she was attached for

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<sup>123</sup> Dixon-Kennedy, “Ceres.”

<sup>124</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 4.1.123-130.

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<sup>125</sup> Dixon-Kennedy, “Juno.”

<sup>126</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 4.1.100-10.

the sake of political gain. Sebastian says, "the fair soul herself/Weighed between loathness and obedience at/Which end o' th' beam should bow."<sup>127</sup> Prospero will not allow such a necessitous view of justice dominate the union and therefore rule of Miranda and Ferdinand. He himself was the victim of such self-interested politics and has seen the injustice of it. And so, he does not reveal his pleasure at the political benefits of the union to his daughter and son-in-law. Rather, natural lust and cultural necessity are moderated, all under the Queen of Heaven's watchful eye.

The ceremony, however, is quickly disturbed when Prospero remembers the plot against his life. This episode throws into sharp relief the challenges that will face the regime that the exiled duke wishes to build. To Ferdinand who, not so long ago, wished only for "quiet days, fair issue, and long life," Prospero says that they must now put the enchantments of the masque behind them. They cannot relish notions of a nearly perfect union, but must continue in their political pursuits. In what is quite possibly the most beautiful speech in *The Tempest*, Prospero brings Ferdinand out of his revelry, saying,

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air;  
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capped 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 sleep.<sup>128</sup>

Prospero is clearly disturbed by his reminder of man's baser nature, and each of the elements he includes in his description of the "baseless fabric of this vision," represents an important part of his desired regime which will remain baseless until his experiment is completed. In a prosperous regime, philosophy, represented by "cloud-capped towers", temporal rule, signified by "gorgeous palaces", religion in "solemn temples" and even the arts, represented by an allusion to the Globe Theatre, will be secure. This is the quiet and prosperous life that Ferdinand says he desires, but Prospero understands it must be first acquired and then maintained. And so, he sends Ariel to curse and capture Stephano and Trinculo while Ferdinand and Miranda steal away; the next time the audience sees them, they are playing chess—the timeless game of power, war and manipulation.

As Act Five opens, Prospero states, "Now does my project gather to a head."<sup>129</sup> Ariel leaves his master to fetch the royal party, and Prospero does something extraordinary—he relinquishes his powers, that is to say his control of Ariel. In a lengthy and dramatic speech, Prospero says, "I'll break my staff,/Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,/ And deeper than did ever plummet sound/I'll drown my book." By applying the language of the tempest to his own art, he is forfeiting his power to manipulate nature through Ariel, which is the first step in creating a better order. By giving up his most Machiavellian tool, he acknowledges the necessitous view of politics as useful, because it helped him reach his end of marrying Miranda and Ferdinand and of tempering the natural and artificial vices within those who landed upon the island, but he also understands his means to be incompatible with the more perfect regime he desires to establish.

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 2.1.138-39.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 4.1.165-75.

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 5.1.1.

When the royal party are brought to Prospero, they have not quite been released from their trance, and Prospero tortures Sebastian and Antonio further, calling them, as it has been alluded to throughout the play, “unnatural.”<sup>130</sup> Then, as the men begin coming out of their state, Prospero hurries to dress in his royal garments, with the help of Ariel. Again, appearances are crucial. While they have been tormented, at this point it is unclear to Prospero whether they have given up their Machiavellian and artificial ways of the city, and so he must appear to them not only as king of the isle, but also as the Duke of Milan, in order to convey his right and ability to rule. When the party finally reaches a state of comprehension, all are shocked to see Prospero and must be convinced that he is not a vision. It seems their encounter with the metaphysical has changed their natures, for as Prospero addresses each man, they meet him with humility and respect. He even demands his dukedom back from Antonio, a request Antonio must oblige when he hears Prospero say he could quickly tell Alonso of the plot to kill him and thereby “justify you traitors...For you, most wicked sir...I do forgive/Thy rankest fault, all of them, and require/My dukedom of thee, which perforce I know/Thou must restore.”<sup>131</sup> And so it seems that the royal party has, in some ways, accepted the order that Prospero has so quickly established by reclaiming his seat as duke.

Soon, Alonso and Prospero are commiserating the losses of their children. Alonso believes Ferdinand to have perished in the tempest, and Prospero leads the party to believe that he lost Miranda to the storm rather than to Ferdinand. It is then Gonzalo who, perhaps through the wisdom he has

been portrayed to have, or perhaps through his encounter with Ariel, alludes to the true order Prospero wishes to establish, saying, “O heavens, that they were living both in Naples,/The King and Queen there!” And so, understanding that at least part of the royal party will understand and submit to the order he wishes to establish, Prospero takes the men to see Ferdinand and Miranda, so pleasing Alonso that he will be glad to accept the notion of his son and Miranda as inheritors of Naples and Milan. As Alonso rejoices at his reunion with his son and Sebastian wonders at the idea of Ferdinand’s survival, Gonzalo is in awe of the turn of events caused by what he believes to be fortune. In one stanza, the old councilor understands Prospero’s plot almost perfectly—or would, were it not for his belief that such events occurred through fortune rather than Prospero’s Machiavellian virtue. Gonzalo says,

Was Milan thrust from Milan, that  
his issue/Should become kings of  
Naples? O, rejoice/  
Beyond a common joy, and set it down/  
With gold on lasting pillars: in one  
voyage/Did Claribel her husband  
find at Tunis,/And Ferdinand, her  
brother, found a wife/Where he  
himself was lost; Prospero his  
dukedom/In a poor isle; and all of us  
ourselves when no man was his  
own.<sup>132</sup>

Gonzalo, in one breath, has depicted the order that Prospero established. His daughter and son-in-law are to rule, he has regained his dukedom, and the men on the island have come to realize their deeply imperfect natures.

And while the royal party has accepted the newly established order of

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 5.1.89.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 5.1.145-54.

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 5.1.46-54.

Italian politics, Prospero must finally handle those men who represent not corrupt politics, but corrupt souls—Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban. But they easily come to live under Prospero's orders, as he has chased them with the spirits of dogs until Stephano feels he is a living cramp. When Prospero confronts Stephano, he asks, "You'd be king o' the isle, sirrah?" Stephano responds, "I should have been a sore one, then." A clever play on words, Stephano is not merely alluding to his physical condition, but rather his inability to rule. Then, he, Trinculo and Caliban are sent into Prospero's cell in order to make it suitable for the royal party. Due to their brief yet calamitous attempt at self rule and their subsequent punishment for their assassination plot, it seems the men have come to terms with the fact they are not fit to rule themselves or others, and are not seen throughout the rest of the play.

Meanwhile, the Boatswain has been awakened from the slumber that Ariel cast upon him and approaches the royal party and Prospero, notifying them that their vessel is sea-worthy. But before they set sail, the royal party, Prospero, Ferdinand, Miranda, Stephano and Trinculo will eat, converse and spend the night on the island. This gathering is the only time that the eleven main characters are gathered together. Again, Shakespeare turns to numerology. The spiritual significance of the number of eleven lies in the fact that it is simply one short of twelve. The number twelve traditionally represents governmental perfection, making eleven the number of governmental imperfection and incompleteness.<sup>133</sup> But there is a strange beauty in falling short; it signifies that men will never build governmental perfection, but they can strive to build a better government based

upon virtue and justice rather than vice and wickedness.

Interestingly enough, Prospero's plans concerning Miranda and Ferdinand, those upon the island, and his own dukedom are mere inferences that Shakespeare leads the audience to draw. In the end, the Bard does not transport his characters back to Italy. Instead, he chooses to end his final play through Prospero's touching farewell, which many also read as Shakespeare's goodbye to the stage. In his epilogue, Prospero asks the audience to set him free from the island and allow him to return to Italy since he is now devoid of his art, mirroring Shakespeare's desire to be emancipated from a grateful audience whom he believes he can no longer serve. But, as somber as the duke's final speech may be, it is also full of hope. Prospero does not wish to live in the world as it is, nor can he achieve building the world according to what it should be. Instead, he desires to create the world as it can be. And so, standing alone on the stage, his single person represents unity—and most importantly, commencement.<sup>134</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*"Gentle breath of yours my sails  
Must fill, or else my project fails,  
Which was to please" 1.2.42-43*

At its core, *The Tempest* is a political work, and Prospero a political man. In Milan, he was absorbed in his study of philosophy, and that study continued on the island. However, through his experience with Antonio and subsequent encounter with the vile Caliban, who attempted to rape Miranda, Prospero lost faith in philosophy (or at least in the notion that philosophers can rule as kings). After he was usurped,

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<sup>133</sup> "The Spiritual Significance of Numbers," handout provided by Prof. Chris Burkett, February 2009.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.



Prospero, it seems, retreated further into his study, attempting to put philosophy into practice. Yet, Caliban proved incapable of coming out of his cave. And so, after his failed attempt to enlighten Caliban, Prospero discovers that philosophy cannot offer the truth that he seeks. The part of his soul that was so attracted to music, that is to say the part that strove for order as a part of truth, was unfulfilled by his study because it was his study that allowed such chaos. After all, because he studied, his brother usurped him and because he taught rather than ruled Caliban, the monster sought to rape Miranda (which, if successful would produce something that would truly not belong to any natural order). Rather than teaching Prospero the truth concerning the nature of man, philosophy insulated him from it. First, he willingly gave his governing responsibilities to his brother, seemingly without suspecting Antonio's plot. Then, despite Caliban's monstrous nature, Prospero attempts to educate him only to create more hostility within the beast. And so, Prospero turns to seek order and therefore truth through politics and comes to see the good in political rule.

Prospero, however, has a necessitous understanding of politics. This view comes from his observations of politics in Italy, which, as it has been established, are quite Machiavellian. And so Prospero, through his Machiavellian manipulation of religion in the form of Ariel, comes to observe human nature once more. His view of human nature is, no doubt, unfavorable due to the loss of his dukedom to his brother and Caliban's increasing hostility. What the royal party, Stephano, Trinculo and even Ferdinand provide to Prospero is a reaffirmation in the truth he has found through politics. That truth, as exemplified through each of the groups, states that man is at his core self-satisfying, ambitious and deeply flawed. Despite these observations of man's "worsen

genius," Prospero has also seen something redeeming in Gonzalo and Miranda.

That redeeming quality is, of course, compassion, the virtue for which Miranda is most known, and which Gonzalo exemplified during Prospero's last moments in Milan. Compassion is not only an empathy for others who feel pain, but the desire to actively relieve that pain. And so Prospero seeks to create a regime that is as just as possible, combining the practical and necessitous elements of Machiavellian rule with the compassion that has been extended to him, in an effort to alleviate in some small way the sin and human suffering that is a product of man's depravity. Yet, in order to establish such a regime, he must first rule as a Machiavellian prince. In his manipulation of Ariel, and his use of fear and cruelty, Prospero governs the men on the island according to their base natures. But, at the end of the play, Prospero does not act as shrewdly (in a Machiavellian sense) as he might have. He might have killed the men who conspired against him or left them on the island, still under his curse. Instead, seeing how their own natures have led them to unjust actions and therefore caused suffering, he lifts his spell and forgives them. Such forgiveness, then, is an act of compassion because it has, in some small way, relieved the pain of guilt that the men suffered under the spell that was cast.

Miranda, like her father, is compassionate. Yet her compassion is not moved by her knowledge of men's low nature, but by her love of beauty. For her, injustice is the destruction of something beautiful, while justice is the destruction of something ugly. Therefore, in her compassion, she wants to actively save a beautiful thing from pain or destruction. As one looks back on Miranda's actions, this is clearly the case. She did not want her father to wrack the ship because the vessel had,

“no doubt some noble creature in her.”<sup>135</sup> Similarly, she hates to see Ferdinand toil over the fire wood because he is beautiful. One sees, yet again, a parallel to David. David, because he found great beauty in the creation of Israel, would not punish a fellow Israelite, since he believed the Israelites to be a part something beautiful. For example, when David was bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, a man named Uzzah reached out and grabbed the Ark so that it would not fall to the ground. Yet, there was a strict prohibition against touching the Ark, and so God struck down Uzzah. For this punishment, David became angry with God since God killed an Israelite, someone whom David found beautiful. Because of his anger and lack of understanding, David keeps the Ark in the home of another man until he understands that the Ark brings good, not evil. In this instance, David's compassion, that is to say the desire to relieve suffering, and his love of beauty, which did not want to see something beautiful destroyed, actually hindered the most beautiful and just thing, which for David was the proper order that would emerge from the creation of Israel.

Similarly, Miranda believes man to be beautiful because they have been presented to her after Prospero has tempered their pride, and ordered them according to their virtues and vices. And so she will be unwilling to cause them pain or destroy them, even if it is for something more just than she can see. For the real justice, beauty and compassion will come through the establishment of a state that exemplifies a natural order, curtails pride, and therefore minimizes human suffering. Because Miranda's love of beauty leads her to good, it must not be diminished. Yet, because it leads her to believe that man might be better than he is in reality, it must be tempered. Here enters Ferdinand, the Machiavellian

warrior who will administer the justice that Miranda is too gentle to administer herself. Therefore, through Prospero's establishment of a new order, Ferdinand's administration of justice and Miranda's love of beauty and compassionate temperament, a more just regime will be established. In this regime, human suffering will be minimized, but not eliminated. Is this goal not similar to that of Israel? Israel was meant to be the establishment of a governmental system that took into account the nature of man while bringing him closer to recreating the harmony he shared with God in the Garden of Eden. While such harmony may never be reestablished on earth, coming closer to it would certainly alleviate man's pride and neediness, and therefore also alleviate suffering. Just as God's establishment of Israel is a work of compassion, so is Prospero's creation of a new regime.

Prospero's desire to create a more just regime that assuages human suffering seems to run contrary to Machiavelli's self centered teachings throughout *The Prince*. Yet, Prospero will earn the glory that Machiavelli says all princes desire. In *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli states,

And truly, if a prince seeks the glory of the world, he ought to desire to possess a corrupt city—not to spoil it entirely as did Caesar but to reorder it as did Romulus. And truly, the heavens cannot give to men a greater opportunity for glory, nor can men desire any greater.<sup>136</sup>

Prospero will, therefore, acquire glory through his establishment of a more just regime because he has sought to better a corrupt one. Generally, principalities would not meet the goals Prospero is attempting to attain, which would make his success something worthy of glory. But Milan and

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<sup>135</sup> *The Tempest*, Folger, 1.2.7.

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<sup>136</sup> Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 1.10.6.

Naples, as they are portrayed, are particularly corrupt, full of usurpations and assassination plots. And so Prospero will garner even more fame and glory by re-founding such a place. Not only does he envision a more just regime, but he orders the government so that it might be possible, placing Miranda and Ferdinand as joint rulers, enlightening the royal party to their own corruption and causing the low and base Stephano and Trinculo to see that they are not to be trusted with rule. Therefore, Prospero, even though he will eventually, through either choice or death, forfeit his rule, will also be cemented as a great ruler who understood the opportunity that fortune brought him in the form of a ship on his island, and who converted that opportunity not only into the reestablishment of his rule, but the establishment of new and virtuous orders.

In his final work, Shakespeare presents two worlds—one a paradisiacal island, the other a corrupt city. Perhaps this is how Shakespeare and Prospero chose to end their experiments, caught between two worlds and hoping for an alternative more achievable than one, but better than the other. For truly, Prospero and Shakespeare are one in the same. They live their lives observing, manipulating and portraying human nature as they understand it; and they build entire worlds around that understanding. Yet, each comes to leave the world he has built. Prospero leaves the island on which he has created various political dynamics in the hope that in bringing them together, he might build something greater. Similarly, Shakespeare leaves the stage on which he has given life to hundreds of characters who all reflect some essential truth about human nature. Perhaps his hope, too, is that, through his experiment, he has created something beautiful by which men can order their lives, and through

understanding his work, alleviate a small bit of their own suffering.

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## Dedication

This work, in many ways, is a study of the evil that men do; but it is dedicated to those who have done nothing but right by me—the Arnolds—my mother, my father, Bill, Mark, Jim, Jennifer, Pixie, Con, P.D. and Lisa.