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THE "TEMPEST" LEGACY: SHAKESPEARE, BROWNING, AND AUDEN

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The Tempest Legacy: Shakespeare, Browning, and Auden

by

James Eric Fowler

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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ABSTRACT

The Tempest Legacy: Shakespeare, Browning, and Auden

James Eric Fowler

As imaginatively inviting as The Tempest is, it retains significance in a parable-like manner. The import of Prospero's project is not as manifest as might first be thought. What Shakespeare Romantically dramatizes is man's ongoing attempt to conceive himself as a relational existence. Formally, Shakespeare stages the parabolic mystery of medial man. Historically, he supplies basic imaginative terms for subsequent approaches to the mystery. In examining Shakespeare's precedent along with Robert Browning's "Caliban upon Setebos" and W. H. Auden's The Sea and the Mirror, we come to appreciate the vitality and importance of the Tempest legacy.

Shakespearean Romance develops the dialectic potential of pastoral tragicomedy. In The Tempest that potential is realized in concentrated form, as antithetical concepts enter into active exchange across the middle earth of human placement. Poised between the exegetical dialectic of St. Augustine's confessional manner, and the existential dialectic of Soren Kierkegaard's philosophy, the Tempest's vision balances faith and skepticism, concern for authority and acceptance of nescience. "Caliban upon Setebos" is also carefully poised; in the arrested dialectic of its natural
speaker we may glimpse the satirically deflected hesitancies of a poet uncomfortable with contemporary positivist enthusiasms. While Browning throughout the 1860's seems to tend toward an equivocation of his Christian faith in human mediacy, Auden in the early 1940's draws on The Tempest to express his emerging conviction of the necessary in the possible, and the self's relational fulness. Among the three works is intimated a middle way between idolatrous superstition and despairing agnosticism, a ground between angry sky and insensate sea.

A distinguishing feature of Tempest-related works is the cultivation of a contemporary sense of human proportion. The variety of imaginative experience subsumed within this group might be traced between Milton and Eliot, Pope and Pynchon, Coleridge and Beckett. In a broad perspective, the East-West axis traversing the Tempest complex balances the interchanges between Europe and the American New World against those between Europe and the Levantine/classical Old World. A dialectically indrawn coda to Shakespeare's career, The Tempest is an influential precedent for the wedding of formalist and historicist impulses.
DEDICATION

In Loving Memory of
THE REV. KENNETH A. B. HINDS
1910-1984

meus carus pater
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Education is a costly pursuit. Rice University, and the Rector and Board of St. Thomas Episcopal School, have seen fit to invest in my graduate career, for which I express my thanks and the hope that my work may prove a sort of dividend to them.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

But he had plenty of time and the needful singularity to devote himself to the simply human, which concern is strangely enough regarded as singular in human beings.¹

-- Soren Kierkegaard

It takes imaginative equipoise really to read The Tempest. A sense of rare exploration and risk-taking helps too, although some very questionable readings have been conducted in this spirit.² Critics have all too often fallen into the habit of glossing over this play's radical ambiguities, resorting to stark two-tone commentary which speaks less of Shakespeare's devising than of their own shortness of critical balance. To compensate for the resulting shallowness of penetration, new approaches are called for and assayed.³ But the real challenge lies not in the proposal of a fresh, daring, arm's length treatment of this work; rather, the challenge resides in the cultivation of a critical response that is equal, or at least sensitive, to the mature play of Shakespeare's vision. A close reading of The Tempest, a reading from the inside out, is in order.

So the latest manifesto joins the company of its forebears. Ideally, a deft navigation of this work's intriguing contours should follow. Such a controlled sailing must avoid loose impressionism and strict imposition of meaning alike. Fortunately, The Tempest is one of those
unique literary achievements which instruct the receiver in gaining access, if only the individual remain open to its structural powers of suggestion. This is partially due to its remarkable compositional integrity. Further, though, The Tempest invites participation in and extension of its imaginative situation while preserving an aura of interior and ulterior significance not to be appropriated. What this late work seems to offer in its elusive way is a means of disposing oneself to a once familiar world now recognized as unknown yet possibly illustrative.

In this sense it is proper to call The Tempest Shakespeare's mystery play. In trying to crack the mystery, however, past students of its forth-rights and meanders have jumped to allegorical overlays. The running assumption has been that Shakespeare must have had something especially important or personal to say, and chose to convey his message in a fanciful dramatic code. In the process, allegorical interpreters have attributed mythic, symbolic, dogmatic and other imposing intentions to this culminating work. Still, The Tempest is its own best defense, declining to "harden into an ontological dogma" as extended allegory can under the sheer weight of its reification. To insist upon an allegorical Tempest of one tint or another is akin to the Herculean task of trying to force protean Ariel back into the cloven pine. On Prospero's isle, Hercules only labors under the delusion that he has wrestled his challenger into submission.
The critical career of D. G. James is instructive in this respect. In his 1937 study of English Romanticism, *Scepticism and Poetry*, James passes sentence on Shakespeare (and Keats) for having attempted to construct an autonomous mythology capable of conveying his religious intimations, and necessarily failing in the endeavor. In effect, James here reads *The Tempest* as an allegory of the creative imagination's swan song. Thirty years later, however, in *The Dream of Prospero*, James has altered his position somewhat, and no longer assumes that Shakespeare aspired to allegorical or mythic expression:

The expression of the sense of life to which he has now come must be contained within the theatre; it must hold a stage. If only for this reason, what now Shakespeare saw must remain at best half-disclosed, an arcanum as much obscured as revealed, a mystery. He was aware that what now possessed his mind was beyond the power of his art to convey, or of any audience in the world to receive.

In hindsight, the problem with *Scepticism and Poetry* is its monumental approach. With a downward adjustment of conception and terminology, its arguments about aesthetics and religious consciousness prove clear-sighted. For instance, James holds that Shakespeare was attempting the impossible insofar as he desired to realize in his secular art the authority and claim on the imagination of Christian doctrine. But James' definition of dogma seems better suited to a narrative mode that has occasionally been invoked to describe *The Tempest*'s power of reticence -- parable.
A dogma may be regarded as a mode of apprehending what evades expression in abstract form, and which, by its appeal to the imagination, remains the form in which what is claimed as religious truth may be most effectively and compulsively conveyed. A condition of the power of religion which is to be universal is that it be available and effective for all minds, educated and uneducated alike; and the concrete historical form of conveying the religious imagination of the world is for that reason the only one.

Parable serves well as a medium for conveying "what evades expression in abstract form," fulfilling the requirements for imaginatively engaging, concrete historical form. In Scepticism and Poetry James overlooks the parabolic quality of The Tempest, intent on its supposedly weightier aspirations; by the time of The Dream of Prospero he has recognized this quality without identifying it in terms of parable. We turn to Wilson Knight for a sense of the manner in which Shakespeare's supposed later vision may hold a stage:

The resulting work will be nearer faery-lore than realistic drama, though, in so far as it becomes interpenetrated with meaning, it will resemble parable; for parable is, precisely, a stringing out into narrative sequence of some single quality not readily definable; here, the essential magic of Shakespeare's world.

While Knight indicates precision, in practice he also is too ready to invoke mythic stature. "The medium is myth or parable, supposedly, of course, realistic." Knight ranges the scale of representation rather too freely, never quite formulating how the parabolic mediates between mythic and realistic impulses. But he recognizes parable's usefulness
as a narrative vehicle for suggestive indeterminacy.

To clarify the parabolic as a linguistic experience in its own right, let us start by distinguishing parable from allegory. So doing, we may be enabled to differentiate between a parabolic Tempest and its allegorical brethren. A. D. Nuttall has addressed the recurrent desire among Tempest critics to attach one or another allegorical filter to its frame. By way of making a case for these readers' metaphysical intimations, Nuttall offers a flexible definition of allegory:

It seems better, on the whole, to define allegory, modestly and loosely, as a described set of things in narrative sequence standing for a different set of things in temporal or para-temporal sequences; in short, a complex narrative metaphor.

To begin with, even a loose definition of allegory assumes some knowable correspondence between a sequence of signifiers and a sequence of signifieds. The signifiers give concrete expression to otherwise abstract elements in whose interest the first level of signification defers its claim to attention. In reading one thing we are to understand another, so that the interpretive activity becomes a matter of decoding. Consequently, a rift tends to develop between surface meaning and referential significance. Parable, however, implies a greater degree of nescience, so that the mind lingers on the narrative sequence as a somewhat enigmatic metaphor. Where allegory prompts pursuance of some ulterior "set of things in
temporal or para-temporal sequences," parable puzzles the inquiring mind with "some single quality not readily definable" yet informing the subject matter with a certain logic of its own. To wrench an oft-quoted passage from The Winter's Tale out of context, a parabolic world "will have matter to rehearse, though credit be asleep and not an ear open."12

At this point a more specific conception of parable and its relation to an audience is needful. C. H. Dodd has formulated this description with Christ's parable in mind:

At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.13

While parable shares with allegory a common metaphorical method, parabolic utterance challenges its hearers to respond "through a judgment on the imagined situation, and not through the decoding of the various elements of the story."14 That is, parable is a more personally implicating medium: an individual's reaction may well be self-implicating. The receiver participates not as an impersonal delver into mediated significance, but as one arrested and called into the field of parabolic consciousness, where there are no sidelines on which to stand. The challenge extended is that the receiver come to recognize in the nearly anecdotal irony of the parable, its twist on the everyday, an entrance into a once familiar common life that
can no longer be taken for granted.

Dodd maintains that the major premise of Christ's parables is "this sense of the divineness of the natural order." Prospero strives to permeate his island kingdom with such a sense, and it may be that the trace of Antonio in his blood makes the master illusionist his own toughest skeptic. This double-mindedness is ingrained in The Tempest's construction, disallowing the kind of allegorical sleight-of-sign which bestows a 'timeless reality' upon metaphysical felicities. But likewise inadequate is the modern overreaction to allegorical zeal, which has trouble accounting for this play's grandness of dimension and fabular simplicity. The meanings which tend toward an allegorical, specifically Christian, understanding do not disappear when ignored or dismissed. However, I would not call them allegorical meanings, but meanings which are part and parcel of this work's parabolic disposition. The Tempest is not a high instance of poetic dogma, but a special precedent for renewed acts of self-disposal to a world admitting only a succession of approximate readings. Robert Funk's observation about religious parables has some bearing on the influence of The Tempest as a secular analogue to such narrative experience:

They are language events in which the hearer has to choose between worlds. If he elects the parabolic world, he is invited to dispose himself to concrete reality as it is ordered in the parable, and venture, without benefit of landmark, but on the parable's authority, into the future.
Whatever authority The Tempest yields is a product of its imaginative resilience in the face of necessary human perplexity.

Unfortunately, the parabolic approach to Tempest criticism suffers an undeserved mechanistic reputation, being assumed to go hand in hand with reductive allegorical imposition. This is partially the fault of those critics who have indiscriminately spoken of The Tempest in terms of parable, myth, symbol, and allegory, or various combinations of the same. In turn, reviewers of the Myth, Symbol, and Allegory body of criticism have reinforced the misconception through too sweeping a readjustment of critical sights. Howard Felperin, for one, rejects allegorical overlays, and would justify his grouping of parable with allegory by assuming that the Elizabethan audience would not have differentiated between them. In ascribing such a lack of narrative sophistication to Shakespeare's public, Felperin dodges consideration of that quality which makes The Tempest attract yet elude allegorical criticism. Further, The Tempest has a way of rounding on its critics, sentimental and hard-nosed alike. If Shakespeare's dramatic art can be thought of as a mirror held up to reality, the Tempest reflection in particular reveals a series of peering figures in the landscape, each intent on 'finding' his or her sense of the human perspective. The dialectic of discovery and self-corroboration is integral to this work's procedure, and, I would suggest, an aspect of its parabolic implication
of audience. Its canny poise tends to evoke fundamental presuppositions (and, depending on the degree of self-consciousness, anxieties) from each arrested comer. Attentive and inattentive gazers of all shades are reflected in its surface.

So *The Tempest* seems at once to hold forth and hold back. According to Robert Funk, one of the features of parable is that it "betokens a mystery, which it adumbrates in something very like a riddle or picture puzzle."¹⁸ Those seeking access to a well-constructed riddle's cross-currents of meaning prosper in measure with their affinity for paradoxical suspension. *The Tempest* maintains such suspension, and in so doing "both generates and undermines successive interpretations."¹⁹ But what mystery might a secular piece of theater betoken in a parabolic manner, and so effectively as to bequeath itself as an imaginative core for subsequent treatments of the mystery? The riddle with which *The Tempest* occupies itself, conforms itself even, is an old one, perpetually interesting to mankind because its subject and respondent is man. This variable identity in the guise of man is, in Pope's intentionally memorable line, "The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!" In *The Tempest* Shakespeare employs his disciplined imagination in projecting onto a stage his parabolic sense of man suspended between facing depths. The staged mystery comes to suggest an animated picture puzzle or emblematic card.
If Shakespeare situates the imaged aspect of the suspension in the play's spatial dimension, in elemental terms of middle earth between sky and sea, the implicit ideational aspect of the suspension belongs to the play's temporal dimension. There are crossings of course, distances in time and space tending to converge in the imagination. Generally speaking, though, Shakespeare envisages a parabolic middle zone across which paired dialectic terms proliferate. This zone's chief occupant is medial man, although frequent references to animal and spiritual natures on many levels set us conjecturing possible hierarchical systems. Shakespeare did not devise the concept of medial man; rather, he inherited, revised, and transmitted it. As Wilson Knight observes, while "the thought-forms of Renaissance writers are often medieval, their creative art is not."\textsuperscript{20} Basically, Shakespeare forms his secular drama around a problematic idea that had challenged the theocentric medieval imagination as well. Greta Hort has aptly formulated this persistent notion in her examination of \textit{Piers Plowman}:

\begin{quote}
[This is] the paradox that man, if he remains man, ceases to be man; while if he tries to live according to the divine spark which is in him, he will become more than man, though still remaining man.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

The paradox has remained largely intact to the present day, while the source and even presence of the divine spark may have become an open-ended question. In a historical sense, \textit{The Tempest}'s peculiar virtue is its poise between a
received world picture and a fuller exposure to that world's nonconformist nature. Because man's variable sense of identity is so inextricably bound with his sense of place, we find in The Tempest a singular vehicle for conveying man's ongoing attempt to conceive himself as a relational existence. Two avatars of The Tempest in particular demonstrate the continuing importance of the legacy: Browning's "Caliban upon Setebos" and W. H. Auden's The Sea and the Mirror. They share with Shakespeare's precedent an uncommon imaginative and formal prowess. Further, however, these three works reflect upon each other most tellingly, and so provide a good means of exploring the Tempest complex of dialectics and motifs, which I consider central to the Western imagination.

The remainder of this chapter will deal with the interstitial field of thoughtful play in which The Tempest, "Caliban upon Setebos," and The Sea and the Mirror comprise periodic nodes. Consideration of the changing light in which man's mediacy has been viewed will require a short survey of a perdurable concept, the Chain of Being. Drawing back a few steps further, I shall attempt a rough overview of four periods relevant to the Tempest legacy's progress. Using literary careers as guideposts, to the periods of Shakespeare, Browning, and Auden I add that of the English Romantics. I shall then narrow my focus once more for a discussion of the dialectic processes and forms which Shakespeare, Browning, and Auden developed in response to
the demands of their subject matter. At this point I will explain my inclusion of two Western thinkers in particular as philosophical touchstones in the field of play. Finally, upon indicating some other literary works to be drawn into configuration, I shall close with a brief treatment of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a harbinger of *The Tempest*'s imaginative delights.

A common sense of parabolic venturing informs the works in question by Shakespeare, Browning, and Auden. Shakespeare conducts his foreshortened quest in search of a mediate sense of man upon an unlocated island crossing Old World pastoral features with New World allure. Browning's natural in the island thinks he indulges in illicit overreaching, a pleasant occupation, but the key to relatedness does not lie within his grasp. And for Auden, the finish of Shakespeare's show marks the start of a parabolic voyage home.²²

To sustain a working knowledge of human mediacy, a double focus is required. Through dialectic arbitration across an appointed middle ground, contradictory claims reach the only available resolution, which is paradoxical. Insofar as man's earth is itself a walking mediate zone, supernatural and natural urges converge on his person and vie for precedence. The paradoxical understanding a schooled
medieval mind would reach might run as follows: 'As a human creature I should live according to my nature; being made in the image of God, my nature [kynde-ness] dictates that I live according to Truth and not according to myself.' The theocentric mind reflects the double focus heavenward. To entrust oneself to animal impulses is to betray one's true nature. The contrary impulse to spurn one's human limitations, perhaps even mankind, is channeled into a healthy contemptus mundi, fostering patience and charitable fellow-feeling.24

Shakespeare orients his double focus closer toward the human horizon. We feel that Prospero's project involves a strong suggestion of human mediacy. But the landscape which for an afternoon is illustrative of man's place may only be a parabolic romance, a projection of a strong imagination's 'suppose'. Still, we pause, made uncertain by the blur of subjective and objective whether wishful thinking has been indulged, or intimations of actuality have illuminated the ordinary. And because of the visionary regression, we are not able to identify the context in which human mediacy is to be apprehended.25 If the process of understanding whatever there is to understand is 'in the works,' whose work are we to understand by this? Prospero's? Shakespeare's? God's? As Auden's Stage Manager punningly queries the Critics: "O what authority gives/ Existence its surprise?"
Browning's Caliban thinks he knows about authority and its capricious surprises. If in Shakespeare's drama we detect a mature negative capability, Browning offers in turn a satiric portrait of immature positive incapability. As a middling creature, Caliban is a bitter underling and a petty overlord. The double focus on man, or the Caliban in man, is here presented as a parodic negative implicit in Caliban's very positivity about his placement in a loveless universe. To maintain his confused reciprocities between self and world, he must revert to the premise that his own frustrated existence is a map to that world. Isobel Armstrong calls him "a creature attempting to rehearse to itself a rudimentary sense of its own identity and intellect in order to construct a meaning of the world -- 'He looks out o'er yon sea . . . And talks to his own self . . .' -- but constantly invaded by its arbitrary sensory life."26 Browning so models his poem as to adumbrate a world of relatedness and freedom whose dimensions one of Caliban's self-enclosure is not likely to suspect.

Auden's bifocal approach to the variable walker is suggested by the title of the 1941 American edition of *New Year Letter -- The Double Man*. In *The Sea and the Mirror* Auden figures such doubleness as the difficult but necessary rapprochement between Caliban and Ariel, a person's nature and spirit. One of his purposes in writing a Commentary on *The Tempest* is corrective:
As a biological organism Man is a natural creature subject to the necessities of nature; as a being with consciousness and will, he is at the same time a historical person with the freedom of the spirit. The Tempest seems to me a manichean work, not because it shows the relation of Nature to Spirit as one of conflict and hostility, which in fallen man it is, but because it puts the blame for this upon Nature and makes the Spirit innocent.\textsuperscript{27}

Regardless of whether this charge sticks, Auden takes care in his version to work out the tensile synthesis which keeps man sound in flesh and spirit. While Browning's Caliban spins a natural theology off the top of his head, Auden's 'natural' before the curtain conducts a tightrope walk with dialectic integrity for balance. Yet underlying all three works is an authorial consciousness of man's ongoing need to cultivate a contemporary double focus upon his unique middling position, lest his historical development swamp his metaphysics. Richard Johnson suggests that Auden's version would proceed along the following double lines:

Man is both a great I and a small speck; both an evolving animal and a Kierkegaardian Knight of the Infinite; both an observer and a part of the field he observes. Thus defined, his position is truly medial, but dialectically, not statically so.\textsuperscript{28}

I have spoken of the changing light in which human mediacy has been cast. Here I wish to extend the metaphor, guided by the atmospheres of The Tempest and its two successors. 'Atmosphere' tends to connote a hazy approach, but some degree of definition emerges in this case. Being a highly refractive work, The Tempest includes a trace of the
medieval mystery and morality plays in its complexion. The resemblance is largely due to Prospero's ambiguous investiture. He seems to be mounting a mystery play of his own scripting, appearing himself in a double capacity as divinely sanctioned stage manager and latter-day Everyman whose thoughts gravitate toward his own mortality. The atmosphere is controlled, in a hypothetical sense. Prospero's skies are overcast as his project runs its course, probably clearing by late afternoon when the various parties congregate near his cell. The vistas suddenly disclosed during the play are mainly those displayed to the mind's eye, in sleep or distraction. Accordingly, the wonder sparked at large depends upon insinuation and report. Prospero wants to de-emphasize the empirical dictum that seeing is believing, intent on a more inward kind of credence, a kindled sense of personal agency. Yet such credence hangs in the balance between skeptical worldly knowledge and a restless search for a medial frame of reference. The *Tempest* is the work of a mind rehearsing to itself possible points of suspension.

In "Caliban upon Setebos" the forecast is reversed. Clear afternoon skies hang above Caliban's lair as he cogitates on self, world, and demigod at his leisure. Sunbeams weave a net on the sea's surface (ll. 12-13), recalling Shelley's "web of being blindly wove/ By man and beast and earth and air and sea" ("Adonais," 482-83). But for Caliban there is no "sustaining Love" ("Adonais," 481)
to elucidate existence, only the hard fact that "here are we,/ And there is He, and nowhere help at all" (ll. 248-49). For all his resourcefulness, an obscurity clouds his groping attempts to break the deadlock of his oppositional bias. His thoughts teem in response to the teeming environs, yet we grow aware of a mental constriction which bars access to a world of otherness. Caliban's inwardness is blinkered, his outwardness dictated by appetency. Mediacy from such a perspective means no more than being God's ape. Browning satirizes narrowed spiritual horizons in a wide world of freedom, the human error in his time of becoming a "thing of darkness" through positivist presumption. The sudden "curtain o'er the world" (l. 283) which Caliban takes as a god's swift anger bearing down on a low creature's high trespass ironically manifests Caliban's own curtain of self-centered idolatry.

The curtain in front of which Auden's Caliban discourses is man-made. So much man-made obstruction litters the earth that sacramental vision is relegated somewhere the other side of actualized triviality. A post-performance *Tempest* audience may be "wet with sympathy," but once the houselights are up, all the nice visions of human mediacy are recognized as of a kind with the poetic truths which populate Art's alter realm. The audience on whose behalf Caliban lodges an objection against cross-plotting expects its release unalloyed with reconciliatory obligation. Mayhem can only result by letting Ariel loose in the public
realm, where "the candid glare of ... commercial hope by
day, and the soft refulgence of ... erotic nostalgia by
night" substantiate reality's autonomous sphere. The wholly
other life which in Browning's poem is complexly adumbrated
in the closing tempest here is identified at long last with
that Mercy which Shakespeare's Prospero ultimately invokes
as the true liberating force from self-entrapment. Insofar
as the secular realm is variously misconstrued as a self-
evident totality, human mediacy displays itself negatively
as the privation experienced from failing to participate in
pardon's co-inherence. The challenge extended is to realize
in the everyday how the wholly other life is always at hand.

Man's attempt to conceive his status medially involves
him in ways of comprehending the extent of the world's
relatedness, with himself as linchpin. The history of such
a comprehensive scope links the field of medieval
systematization with the field of organic chemistry, as
disparate as their methods may be. While it has changed
with time, the notion of a Chain of Being has endured the
onset of experimental precision gainfully. For present
purposes, its metamorphosing aspects may be viewed in the
background of the Tempest complex's encompassing,
revisionary interests.

To demonstrate Shakespeare's familiarity with this
inherited model for Creation, one can hardly do better than
to cite the anthology piece from *Troilus and Cressida*,
Ulysses' "authentic place" speech:

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order;
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
In noble eminence enthron'd and sphered
Amidst the other; whose med'cinal eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
And posts like the commandment of a king,
Sans check, to good and bad. But when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues and what portents, what mutiny!
What raging of the sea, shaking of earth!
Commotion in the winds! frights, changes, horrors
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixture! O, when degree is shak'd,
Which is the ladder of all high designs,
The enterprise is sick. How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogeny and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degree stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark what discord follows. Each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,
And make a sop of all this solid globe;
Strength should be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son should strike his father dead;
Force should be right, or rather, right and wrong
(Between whose endless jar justice resides)
Should lose their names, and so should justice too!
Then every thing include itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite,
And appetite, an universal wolf
(So doubly seconded with will and power),
Must make perforce an universal prey,
And last eat up himself.

(I.iii.85-124)

Ulysses pulls out all the stops in exhorting Agamemnon to
reassert his authority over the fractious Greeks, especially
the layabout Achilles. His high rhetoric portrays a
universe whose hierarchical arrangement leaves nothing unaccounted for. In *The Tempest*, however, no explicit reference or appeal to a chain of being is made. Rather, Shakespeare intentionally untunes the string of degree to allow for a review of the premises upon which man's self-esteem and sense of authentic place are founded. Anthropocentric reflexes are tested anew, as the human is contemplated in terms ranging from the inanimate to the numinous. By inducing the expectation of an expanded spectrum, Shakespeare has only to mention "marmoset" and "The powers" in passing during the course of an afternoon's controlled daydreaming. The audience supplements the configuring imagination from its fund of knowledge and conjecture; by play's close the charm has been transferred from self-divested magus to theatergoers about town and world. A renewed sense of man's medial situation is ultimately a collective phenomenon.

Since Shakespeare, through Prospero, is conducting this interval of deracination in the safe light of romance, the turbulence and displacement are conditional, with lives safeguarded from the maw of elemental and human appetite. In tragedies such as *King Lear* and *Macbeth* he had already dramatized the vortex of despair consequent upon serious slippage from the assumed middle ground of human observance. Still, while lives are preserved in *The Tempest*, we find in Prospero's revels speech an eschatological vision akin to Ulysses' dire prophecy of calamitous rapacity. Prospero may
be able to deal with human and even elemental preying, but all earthly existence falls prey to Time the Devourer. Time he cannot conjure with; his one moment of slippage as the play's helmsman reveals his own susceptibility to temporal sea-sickness. His inrush of anxiety is that of a spiritual creature fretting the extremes of human significance or insignificance in a sublunary world.

Browning's Caliban is in this respect Prospero's antithesis. He also mainly concerns himself with that segment of Creation beneath the moon, but he assumes knowledge of the how and why of its existence. Using his own uncomfortable middle station as prime reference, he lodges god Setebos in the cold of the moon. From that spot He can survey the better regions beyond him, and lord it over a bauble-world of His own making.

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match, But not the stars; the stars came otherwise; Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that: Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon, And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same. (11. 24-30)

Caliban improvises a cosmogony which reflects his ambivalent self-conception as servile yearner and imitative artificer. He looks up at Prospero, envies the magus' contentment and power, and in turn looks down upon a play world over which he can assume a Prospero-like dominance. Just so, he concludes, Setebos envies "what is quiet and hath happy
life" (l. 145) above Him, and responds by making "this a
bauble-world to ape yon real" (l. 147). "What is quiet"
among the heavens Caliban hypostatizes as the Quiet. Thomas
P. Wolfe observes that "Caliban sees the world as a kind of
sado-masochistic chain of ego defenses, with Quiet over
Setebos, over Prospero, over Caliban, over the ounce he
makes "cower and couch" (l. 158)." More generally, we are
treated to Caliban's version of the Great Chain of Being, a
parodic counter to traditional systematized idealism. Browning
does not intend to deride the notion of a chain of being; rather, his cross-cutting irony applies to all those
whose naturalist enthusiasm leads them into theological
fallacy, whether they be agnostic or bishops of the Church
of England. Given Browning's fascination with casuistry, they may be both at once.

The relation of Browning's poem to contemporary Darwinian
controversy is not readily definable. But Caliban's very
nature as a thinking animal suggests a portrait of blurred
boundaries where once a distinction could be made. Fifty
years previous Coleridge had held that what separates man
from the beasts is not intellect but moral sense. Caliban,
however, lacks this distinguishing commodity, as he
subordinates right and wrong to the criterion of power to
enforce one's will. Ulysses' prognostication comes home to
roost in Caliban's domain: "Force should be right, or
rather, right and wrong . . ./ Should lose their names, and
so should justice too!" Then every thing include itself in
power,/ Power into will, will into appetite . .." One of Caliban's chief confusions stems from his inability to distinguish between willful and instinctual appetency, especially in himself. Only through reductive analogizing and projection can he address this problematic doubleness and integrate self with world.

Auden would likely have considered Caliban's mental finagling a satiric portrait (or, in a loose sense, parable) of man's attempt to ease his anxiety over the problem of finiteness and freedom. Man is anxious and suffers from a divided consciousness because of his straddling position on the chain of being. He errs when trying to relieve that anxiety by seeking refuge from either set of claims on his person -- natural or supernatural -- through the sins of pride or sensuality. But the dialectic tension is not to be ignored or steamrolled. Instead, Man the variable one must strive to maintain a paradoxical composure on a Middle Earth "where to all species except the talkative/ have been allotted the niche and diet that/ become them."35

Existential anxiety over man's place informs the structure and content of The Sea and the Mirror. For Francois Duchene, its success lies in the balanced conveyance (thought/feeling) of the psychological process whereby an existential mid-life crisis is weathered. The work chronicles "the nervous breakdown of faith in the ultimate apotheosis of self."36 A selective glance at each
of the poem's three sections reveals a common concern for a fundamental reorientation of self. Prospero prepares himself for a risky sailing in search of a quickened awareness of his mediacy, hoping "by the time death pounces/ His stumping question, I shall just be getting to know/ The difference between moonshine and daylight." Alonso's letter to Ferdinand forewarns that "The Way of Justice is a tightrope," requiring scrupulous honesty about the self's human limitations and obligations in one who is to cross it. And Caliban updates the perilous trek imagery in terms of rail travel; at the end of the line anyone yearning to undo the human knot of necessity/possibility will be free to reap the terrible consequences.

Greta Hort's words about man ceasing to be such if he only remains man can be translated into an overview of man's self-conception vis-a-vis the chain of being. Sweeping historical generalizations tend to work either or both sides of the ascent/decline duality, and this approach is no exception. Robert Frost has provided level comment on man's lowered self-expectations:

Our worship, humor, conscientiousness
Went long since to the dogs under the table.
And served us right for having instituted
Downward comparisons. As long on earth
As our comparisons were stoutly upward
With gods and angels, we were men at least,
But little lower than the gods and angels.
But once comparisons were yielded downward,
Once we began to see our images
Reflected in the mud and even dust,
'Twas disillusion upon disillusion.
We were lost piecemeal to the animals,
Like people thrown out to delay the wolves.
Or do the wolves walk upright on two legs? Though man may have lost sight of the chain's supernal links, he can claim a closer working knowledge of the material linkage than ever before. And because he recoils from accepting the full conditions of finitude, he applies his knowledge in search of previously unavailable avenues of escape. The mineral, vegetable, and animal subsets of the chain become expendable resources in a project of synthetic upward adjustment. Man's search for place transmutes into a redefining of control. For the current generation Thomas Pynchon seems to be the extender of the clustered motifs and concerns which I identify with the Tempest complex. If in his massive novel Gravity's Rainbow he seems to have assimilated a boggling range of influences, we should recollect the extraordinarily catholic interests of Shakespeare, Browning, and Auden. Further, among the multiple voice tracks of this production we can discern a familiar occupation with the nature and repercussions of human anxiety:

Kekulé dreams the Great Serpent holding its own tail in its mouth, the dreaming Serpent which surrounds the World. But the meanness, the cynicism with which this dream is to be used. The Serpent that announces, "The World is a closed thing, cyclical, resonant, eternally-returning," is to be delivered into a system whose only aim is to violate the Cycle. Taking and not giving back, demanding that "productivity" and "earnings" keep on increasing with time, the System removing from the rest of the World these vast quantities of energy to keep its own tiny desperate fraction showing a profit; and not only most of humanity -- most of the World, animal, vegetable, and mineral, is laid waste in the process. The System may or may not understand that it's only buying time. And that time is an artificial resource to begin with, of no value to anyone or anything but the System, which
sooner or later must crash to its death, when its
drug addiction to energy has become more than the rest of
the World can supply, dragging with it innocent souls
all along the chain of life.38

August Kekulé (1829-1896), "the architect of organic
chemistry," claimed to have seen twisting lengths of atomic
snakes in a daydream: "One of the snakes had seized hold of
his own tail, and the form whirled mockingly before my
eyes."39 Kekulé interpreted the vision as a symbol for the
yet-to-be-modelled benzene ring, C₆H₆, "a basis for new
compounds, new arrangements, so that there would be a field
of aromatic chemistry to ally itself with secular power, and
find new methods of synthesis, so there would be a German
dye industry to become the IG . . ."40 We have come some
distance from Ulysses' vision of appetite making "an
universal prey" and finally consuming itself. But that
vision is relevant insofar as the "universal wolf" can be
taken as a figure analogous to what Pynchon terms "the
System." The looped snake continues to whirl mockingly, so
that we are unable to say what it announces, though our
interpretations determine the directions in which we move.

Kekulé's snake-revery is a special instance of private
vision having widespread ramifications, of personal dream
entering the public realm. It raises the long-standing
mystery of relatedness between subjective capacity and
objective infrastructure.41 For centuries visionary
penetration had been the province of gifted spiritual or
literary seers. But with the stock of public credence
dwindling, the figure cloistered in cell or study faced ever stronger competition from the figure cloistered in laboratory. The progress of the *Tempest* legacy is intertwined with this dialectic in modes of passage from private to public vision. To comprehend the scope of the former, a general sense of the latter proves helpful.

Russell Peck remarks that the medieval poet's work embodies "private myth (a dream, if you wish) which will become a means of entering into the public myth afresh... The reader is invited to become his own plowman in the fair field between private myth and public dream."\(^4^2\) In *The Tempest* the distinction between private and public dream is obscured. The play's ambiance is that of a waking dream, its movement one of disenchantment. We, along with the characters, are to return to the everyday world, but that world should echo the parabolic challenge extended in our public daydream. Prospero packs up the spectacle self-consciously, leaving us drawn between the corrosive hint of "baseless... vision" and the chance to participate anew in an underwritten life. If the old grounds for public myth can no longer be assumed, the awakening need not be into a world without footing.

A pair of books published during the Second World War aid us in obtaining a double focus on the late Elizabethan/Jacobean period as a ripe time for the Janus-
like poise of a *Tempest*: Theodore Spencer's *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* (1942) and E. M. W. Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1943). Spencer argues that Shakespeare forged his dramas, especially the tragedies, out of conflicting notions about the nature of man derived from the conventional wisdom of the time, and the rising tide of skepticism instanced by Copernicus (cosmological overhaul), Machiavelli (cynical pragmatism in the political sphere), and Montaigne (disruption of natural and psychological hierarchies). Such Continental revisionism exacerbated the discrepancy in the Christian view of man's simultaneous dignity and baseness, tipping the scale against man's better nature. Tillyard argues, on the other hand, that educated Elizabethans would not have allowed the suppositions of a Montaigne, Copernicus, or Machiavelli "to disturb the great outlines of their world picture." He includes Shakespeare among fellow writers, such as Spenser, Sidney, Hooker, Jonson, and Raleigh, who held fast to the general outline of the chain of being, with its implications of degree, harmony, and order. Full portraits such as Ulysses' in *Troilus and Cressida* aside, Tillyard acknowledges that "the effect is usually cumulative and depends more on a habit of mind than on a few powerful appeals to the imagination."44

But *The Tempest* eludes the approach of each critic. Spencer proposes the neat thesis that in the tragedies evil underlies the appearance of goodness, while the strata are reversed in the Romances. His point that in the Romances
there is less need for reference to the hierarchy of state or cosmos serves as a lead-in for an all-too-rosy view of The Tempest in particular. Elaborate mental scaffolding can be dispensed with "because the individual human life itself, in its finest manifestations, is enough. At the heart of The Tempest there is an incantation which accepts things as they are, a tone which has forgotten tragedy, an order melted at the edges into a new unity of acceptance and wonder." Having noticed the tension out of which Shakespeare produced his tragedies, Spencer fails to recognize the Romantic analogue to such stress. Tillyard errs in a complementary manner by accepting Prospero's project at face value: "Destiny has this lower world as its instrument. The thunder proclaims Alonso's guilt." What each misses is the quality of self-disposal toward the infrastructural and supernatural (ground and sky) which projects a dialectic middle zone for man's horizon-bound inquiries. Past coherences are not abandoned, but neither are they left intact. Embodying intimations, understanding, and misgivings beyond any assertive grasp, Shakespeare bequeaths a precedent of equipoise to successors and audiences whose fund of knowledge may be greater or less than his, but whose human situation should lead them to acknowledge the common mysteries in which they move.

Robert Funk has observed that "it is the interplay between the effort to create a fund of rational discourse with stable terms, and the deformation of that fund, that
makes human knowledge move -- i.e., gives it a history. 48
With the criteria for pursuing cosmic totality opened to
question, interplay between imagination and empiricism
intensifies, in its more heated moments becoming rivalrous
or outright hostile. Generally, however, in the human
search for a livable knowledge, the image-producing faculty
and more strictly observational techniques offset each other
as means for structuring experience. Each exerts a
corrective influence upon the exclusionary enthusiasms of
the other. So imaginative conceptualization and methodical
scrutiny both serve as establishing and deforming forces in
the process of redefinition. 49

Commenting on the Rationalist attempt to alter the world
picture in accordance with the guidelines of Newtonian
cosmology, Auden quotes the following exemplary passage from
Schiller:

The great Inventor could not permit even error to
remain unutilized in his great design . . . It is a
provision of the supreme wisdom that erring reason
should people even the chaotic land of dreams and
should cultivate even the barren land of contradiction
. . . Life and Liberty to the greatest possible extent
are the glory of the divine creation; nowhere is it
more sublime than where it seems to have departed most
widely from its ideal. 50

We are presented with an updated chain of being, which
includes phantasm and unrealities in the realm of freedom.
Perhaps the emphasis on utility makes God too much the Grand
Engineer. Still, the mechanical economy can be interpreted
as betokening a spiritual economy granting the fullest
degree of autonomy to the particular existents of a relational universe.

The Romantic approach to spiritual economy through imaginative powers draws our attention back to the *Tempest* complex. To substantiate its inklings of such an economy, the Romantic consciousness might resort to an interval of deracination like that already noted in *The Tempest*. The waking dream not being easily dispelled, the ordinary continues to be suspended, hence qualified. A subtle turn may occur once the lapse into supernatural naturalism is past; namely, the familiar terrain of formerly apparent significance adumbrates a mysterious actuality normally unapparent to inquirers priding themselves on their pragmatism. The closed system is cracked open for a strange interval, and even when accustomed affairs resume, the sailing is undertaken as a mysterious enterprise. Henceforth, progress is defined in terms of corporeal participation in the mystery, which at some humanly unknowable remove always at hand resolves the material and the spiritual, the elemental and the ethical. Such observations might just as well apply to *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as to *The Tempest*. The affinity is not surprising given Coleridge's special sensitivity to the Shakespearean imagination. In *The Rime's* motto, taken from Thomas Burnet's *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* (1692), we find an Anglican divine's suggestion of depths, likewise intimated by a staff-and-book-wielding magus:
I readily believe that there are more invisible than visible things in the universe. But who shall describe for us their families, their ranks, relationships, distinguishing features and functions? What do they do? Where do they live? The human mind has always circled about knowledge of these things, but never attained it. I do not doubt, however, that it is sometimes good to contemplate in the mind, as in a picture, the image of a greater and better world; otherwise the intellect, habituated to the petty things of daily life, may too much contract itself, and wholly sink down to trivial thoughts. But meanwhile we must be vigilant for truth and keep proportion, that we may distinguish the certain from the uncertain, day from night.  

Burnet's romantic testimony and Schiller's rationalist theorem are counterparts in an attempt to conceive that economy whereby fantastic, trivializing man is assumed into a realm of freedom yet illustrative of such notions as design and truth. Burnet admonishes us to keep proportion in the meanwhile, that we may tell day from night here on our middle earth. Auden's Prospero hopes he shall just be achieving that feat of distinction "by the time death pounces/ His stumping question."

Browning's Caliban would counter that any such question is a fearful chimera on the threshold of a non-existent afterlife. Being a dogmatic naturalist, Caliban holds that with death comes an end to earthly suffering. In the meanwhile it is enough to be observant of the manifold life forms which populate land, sea, and air, noting their peculiar anatomical virtues and vulnerabilities. Among the numerous specimens, we may guess, proceeds a slightly drooping upright figure with opposable thumbs who has had to
step down from his pedestal and subject himself to the
undiscriminating gaze of scientific detachment. Darwin's
*Origin of Species* (1859) has obviously contributed to
Browning's composition of "Caliban upon Setebos," but the
poem is not about Darwinian theory *per se*. Nor can we infer
from it Browning's attitude toward evolutionary ascent as a
product of natural selection. F. J. Furnivall apparently
supposed Caliban's conjectures an absurdist proof against
Newtonian concepts, prompting a demurral from Browning to
the effect that his "clown" should not be equated with those
whose reason checks their errant first impressions. The
element of *reductio ad absurdum* in the poem is not directed
at any single figure or theory. Instead, Browning situates
this work centrally to be a satiric foil against the many
possible strains of spiritual obscurerment.

In its plexus-like comprehensiveness, "Caliban upon
Setebos" is a showpiece for the volume in which it appears.
As a mark of Browning's distinction among his fellow poets,
W. C. DeVane notes how "the true topics of *Dramatis Personae*
are such live and pressing problems as science, higher
criticism of the Scriptures, recent tendencies in the
religious life of England, spiritualism, social conditions
in the 1860's, and modern love." At this time the
empirical mind-set was making major inroads against orthodox
views of man's medial situation between Creator and
Creation. Darwin's revolutionary approach to natural
history transformed the chain of being into a ladder,
casting man's climb not in terms of moral ascendance but genetic mutation, random at that. The animal kingdom was threatening to engulf humanity within its all-too-natural sphere. Christianity had seemed to posit a great divide between man the soul-bearer and all other creatures, granting him preeminence over fish, fowl, and beast. While seeming to encourage anthropocentric thinking, it also stressed reverence for the wide spectrum of animate and inanimate Creation. That is, man should primarily be concerned with his soul's well-being while recognizing that the created order does not revolve upon his comprehension of salvation's teleology. With man's spiritual dimension bracketed as extraneous or doubtful, however, Nature would have to be confronted as a system-unto-itsel, fully including humanity within its demesne. Even if some sort of theology could be retained, it would take its cues from hard evidence found in Nature, buried in the ground, or, in a broad understanding, buried in the mind.

There is only one allusion in Browning's poem to natural history as a puzzle with pieces to uncover and analyze deductively, but the potential for wrongheadedness is clearly outlined:

'Dug up a newt He may have envied once
And turned to stone, shut up inside a stone.
(ll. 213-14)

Browning impresses the point that extrapolation of natural theology from natural history may well be rife with bias and
involve a counterfeit intellectual leap. Caliban keeps his knowing conjectures to himself, lest Setebos overhear him, but the knowing voices raised in public demand recognition. We address again the movement of vision from private to public realm, here provoking a satiric diagnosis of spiritual primitivism brought on by worldly sophistication. The new man, lacking faith in his spirituality, considers himself a singularly clever manipulator of materials. He takes joy in the stature such innate ability confers, yet is frustrated in his middling role. Incapacitated for entering into the spirit of agency, he is at a loss to explain how he partakes of divinity, or what the use of such mimicry can be. Hope is too streaked by a consensus of disillusionment to afford more than a wistful nostalgia for naive times bygone.

In another context, Auden's Caliban recommends keeping "hopes for the future within moderate, very moderate, limits." The early years of World War II tended, naturally enough, to engender prospects which Caliban's advice may serve to summarize. In the concluding chapter to Shakespeare and the Nature of Man, Theodore Spencer ventures the hope that science and scientifically validated fields of intellectual endeavor may evolve "a conviction of truth like that which the Christian system gave in the sixteenth century -- which will make the higher impulses of the mind seem the right ones to obey." The unstated premise seems to be that those who have surpassed simple credence must
settle for a more ironic conviction. The human situation is really tolerable after all, Truth or no Truth. Perhaps this explains why in approaching Shakespeare's late work, especially The Tempest, Spencer shuffles aside metaphysical connotations to dwell upon incantatory visions of reconciliation and rebirth. He appears to verge on the admission that self-conjuring may be involved to arrive at an acceptance of unsponsored man's sufficiency -- "the individual human life itself, in its finest manifestations, is enough." Driven to the wall, Spencer would probably have resorted to Wallace Stevens' doctrine of necessary fictions. 

E. M. W. Tillyard, like Spencer, draws an analogy between early seventeenth century disruption and that of the Second World War era. Between the two critics we can detect a common attempt to set pressing concerns in a historical context, and so keep proportion. Just as Elizabethans faced a crux in their world view, so modern free-thinkers intent on retaining their humanitarian values must confront the fascist threat. Tillyard offsets Spencer in emphasizing stability and confidence over revision and stress, but the stakes of credence are on his mind: "Our own generation need not begin congratulating itself on its freedom from superstition till it defeats a more dangerous temptation to despair." Though Tillyard seems not to have noticed, The Tempest is instinct with just this tricky business of steering on even keel between superstition and despair.
In closing this admittedly sketchy overview I shall try to refrain from quoting the entire concluding section of Auden's fourth T. S. Eliot Lecture, "Words and the Word." Auden here addresses the artist's insecurity before scientific advances, a phenomenon he believes should be set in its proper historical perspective. Supplementing his comments with Spencer's and Tillyard's retrospective angles, we can trace the fringe of disruption from Copernicus to Newton to Darwin, or from Montaigne to Locke to Freud, or select from any number of such permutations. In each approach we would find that "our forebears were haunted by the fear that scientific discoveries might be made which would abolish all traditional beliefs and wisdom." The quest for humany livable knowledge seems to require periodic pendular motions in outlook so that a dialectic of regulation may be better defined. Auden describes the large features of such a historical dynamic since the late eighteenth century as follows:

Every important discovery created a hullabaloo. The conservatives refused to believe that there could be any truth in them, and the radicals drew theological and philosophical conclusions which the discoveries in themselves did not warrant. Among artists there were two reactions: some tried to become as like scientists as possible and banded together under the slogan Naturalism; others averted their eyes from the phenomenal world altogether as the abode of Satan and tried to create purely aesthetic worlds out of their subjective feelings.

Still others, like Browning, chose neither extreme, conscious of the human mind's flightiness, and the solvency
of time.

For present solace Auden refers to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, which disqualifies final attainment of objective knowledge about things-in-themselves. Just when man might have taken himself as a detached intelligence for processing and mastering nature's store of information, a renewed premonition of mediacy seeps up from the laboratory floor. According to Heisenberg, "When we speak of the picture of nature in the exact science of our age, we do not mean a picture of nature so much as a picture of our relationships with nature." In the terms of what I consider the Tempest legacy's special disposition, Auden's drift is clear. He seeks a refurbished awareness of man's middle ground, "the primary phenomenal world as it is, and always has been, presented to us through our senses." Further, he wonders if in the thickening chronicle of the world with its generations which inherit and interpret it, man might once again find himself day by day at home amidst parabolic surroundings. "There might even be a return, in a more sophisticated form, to a belief in the phenomenal world as a realm of sacred analogies."64

The works in question by Shakespeare, Browning, and Auden are each occupied with the acquirement of livable knowledge, the means by which Nature's anxious creature relates itself to the primary phenomenal world. Each is informed by the stress between historical developments and the cultivation
of an elemental sense of place. Man the collective entity compiles and implements, while the individual must face the fundamental rhythms of mortality under the sun. Although there is reason for speaking of the pictorial qualities of these works, an examination of each surface reveals the restive motion of ideational cross-currents. To gain entrance to The Tempest and its successors in process, it is necessary to exercise one’s dialectic imagination.

The dialectic manner of The Tempest is mainly due to Shakespeare's recourse to pastoral and his singular realization of its possibilities. That is, the genre accommodated full play of his dialectic resilience. Categorical labels do not stick well to Shakespearean Romance, but for exploratory purposes I find 'pastoral tragcomedy' as useful a description as any. It indicates Shakespeare's employment of pastoral following upon a long period of practice writing comedies and tragedies. Of course, pastoral elements are apparent in both earlier modes (e.g., As You Like It and King Lear), but the synthesis of tragic and comic perspectives required the foregrounding of pastoral's dialectic temperament. In his valuable study of Shakespearean pastoral, The Heart's Forest, David Young includes the following remarks on this genre's potential for paradoxical suspension:

To be a credit to art, . . . pastoral had to avoid the limited accomplishments of escape and wish-
fulfillment, and had to face the issues it raised. In its function as an alternative it was to be dialectical, a kind of discourse between reality and the imagination... One can go further than this, however, in describing the use of oppositions in pastoral, and say that there was something fundamentally equivocal in pastoral which, from the start, tended to undermine and invert its familiar antitheses... Pastoral was a form in which you could have something both ways, and thus was potentially comprehensive and resonant.

This is true of The Tempest, in which events do and yet do not happen. Illusions are entertained as actualities, and actualities turn out to have been not so real after all. The play proceeds under the direction of Prospero, whose control is natural yet artificial, seemingly grounded in the scheme of things at large yet basically imaginary ("my present fancies"). Prospero thrives on pastoral ground, necessarily insular and tentative in this case, leaving us to ponder the authority for his aegis.

As for the rampant dialectics, they seem a product of that teasing reciprocity between cagey magus and subtle isle. On account of this sympathetic topography, or blurring of the pathetic fallacy, it is difficult to say just how comprehensive Prospero's project is. We become ever more involved in dialectic supposition, uncertain whether the inducement originates with Prospero or the subtleties of his isle, with Shakespeare or the island world which is the case. Just the same, we can identify the primary aspects of the play's dialectic arrangements. On the elemental level, we are to imagine a middle zone between
the depths of sky and sea. The opening scene flashes before us a panicky conceit of infringement, as the ceiling and floor of man's world-room threaten to squeeze him out of the picture. A corollary dialectic arises out of this welter, bandied about as a darkly humorous hedge against fatalism. A boatswain's appointment with a gallows on shore may portend redemption for the others aboard from the necessity of plunging beneath the surface. Characteristically, Gonzalo proposes this hanging/drowning dialectic in a dim leap toward optimism, and Antonio further twists it into a curse. In its conjunction of the paired terms land/sea and sky/sea, the hanging/drowning duplex coordinates the horizontal and vertical axes of the basic elemental dialectic. On the level of particular things, we are engaged in a corporeal or somatic dialectic of containment/release. Through it human bodies are associated with other vessels such as bottles, hollow trees, and ships. Themes of preservation and loss, temperance and dissolution, confinement and freedom, imbibing and outpouring, are consequently all held in paradoxical suspension. The containment/release duplex has a psychic analogue in the play's dialectic of concentration/distraction. Prospero's central role primarily shapes our experience of this dynamic, although we grow aware of its significance as a working principle for the Romantic consciousness. Since The Tempest is the culminating achievement of a fluidly analogizing mind, the elemental, somatic, and psychic
dialectics blend within a continuous field of vision. And that field in turn gains its exploratory vividness from dialectic process, which is, in Northrop Frye's words, "the instrument of knowledge about the intelligible world."\textsuperscript{66}

Browning's Caliban explains the world to his satisfaction, but we come to notice the tangles into which his chain of deduction deteriorates. His confusions culminate in fuzzy assurances about the relation between Setebos and the Quiet. Browning allows his snug theorizer access to metaphysical purlieus bearing a rough resemblance to Platonic and Christian theological terrain, but shows him to be a fumbler through the field of dialectic play. David Shaw has written cogently of Caliban's shortcoming in this regard:

His mind is incurably idolatrous and keeps moving in concentric circles. Without the synthesis of love that would provide the necessary communication between his thesis, the Quiet, and its antithesis, Setebos, opposition cannot yield to counterpart. His mind's circular, eddying motion arrests his dialectic and prevents Caliban from making any further advance.\textsuperscript{67}

This advance would rehearse the movement from Greek to Christian theology, from the distant relatedness of the classical self-sufficient God and the Platonic Demiurge to the intimate co-inherence of God the Father and God the Son. In his loveless vacuum, however, Caliban cannot conceive how the seeming silence of the overgod in His infinitely removed sphere of heaven may signify His impenetrable mystery rather than a total indifference to created existence. Caliban
lacks any revelation that His dealings with mankind reveal an incredible principle of self-sacrifice, "a love that accepts limitation and that first assumes the evil that it suffers in our stead." Dialectically speaking, Caliban cannot attain to a paradoxical conception of the divinity, and so in its further reaches his meditation fragments into contradictory suppositions. Browning stages a performance of a comic character's stunted dialectic, holds up a satirically faceted glass for public inspection. We make out in the reflective glints an object lesson in containment as self-bounding, with release complexly shadowed forth by the gathering storm. Subject to the warning Auden's Caliban delivers, we may be caught interpreting to our advantage or rapt with our defects in this glass, against all satiric odds. Browning checks such self-centeredness as he can, however, in figuring that "unpredictable misting over of his glass" which remains "outside his control."69

Of the triad in question, Auden's The Sea and the Mirror is the most schematically dialectic member. Its very title conjoins the sea of primordial nature and the mirror of reflective art, immediate circumstance and possible order, Caliban's fleshy domain and Ariel's spiritual reaches.70 Auden addresses the uses and abuses of art vis-a-vis the world at large, setting aesthetics in the context of human mortality, and human mortality in the context of an wholly other life. His own artistry is an exploratory process, a discipline of knowing, yet also a serious play whose
function is to direct consciousness to actualization of possible order. Ideally, the relation between sea and mirror is truly dialectic. Richard Johnson writes that Auden "sees the playful actions of poetry as a means of freeing consciousness of illusions concerning its own creativity and hence allowing consciousness to become truly creative. . . . Auden's image for this last function of art is the mirror."\(^{71}\) In holding the mirror of art up to the world's disorder, the self must be included in the reflective field of view. Effective art should disabuse the wielder, be he inventor or audience, of escapist convictions and complacent self-estimates alike. Considered functionally, Auden's dialectic proceeds according to the mirror logic of reversal. Seeking to convey the exhilarating changes through which this work conducts us, Monroe Spears figures the experience as "an exercise in illusion, in \textit{trompe-l'oeil} reversals in which mirrors turn out to be paintings and paintings are revealed as windows."\(^{72}\) The tripartite structure further enhances the reflective play, metaphorically enriching the motifs of each section. In "Prospero to Ariel" the poetic argument moves along the dialectic rails of enchantment and disenchantment. The results of Prospero's project, arranged in "The Supporting Cast, Sotto Voce," comprise a thematic dialectic of faith and despair.\(^{73}\) Comparing the two sections, we grow paradoxically conscious of the crossings between these related duplexes of conjuring and belief in something other
than the self. Finally, in "Caliban to the Audience," we are bundled onto a rhetorical fast track, where the accustomed dialectic terms of art and life are jointly arraigned before the absolute impendent antithesis of the Wholly Other Life. Among the many switches enacted in this third section, Auden's indebtedness to Kierkegaard's dialectic precedent in *The Sickness unto Death* becomes impressively apparent. *The Sea and the Mirror* is thoroughgoing in its dialectic method, drawing Auden's sense of *The Tempest*, British Romanticism's history, Kierkegaardian thought, and his own ideational habits into active exchange.

Insofar as each of the three works is a dialectic embodiment of related kind, the containment/release and concentration/distraction duplexes pertain to the *poesis* of each. That is, among the triad's affinities we detect a paradigm for the devising of a formal (or somatic) analogue to psychic equipoise. The shared interest that emerges is an occupation with the theater of the mind. Here mind and body function together according to the human frame's double principle of enclosure and disruption.

With regard to the structural premises of *The Tempest*, I find myself largely agreeing with the basic argument of Barbara Mowat's *The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances*. Closer attention will be paid those Romance plays leading up to *The Tempest* in Chapter Two, but here I wish to cite a
passage from Mowat's book which draws *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*,
*The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest* into an identifiable
group:

As tragedy and comedy blend, we take man and his very
real suffering seriously while simultaneously
recognizing the folly of it all -- in the play and in
our lives. Seen from within, and in the present, the
events of our lives are to us significant, sometimes
overwhelming, sometimes terrifying; yet distance them
by time, by a sudden vision of how they appear to
another or how they look in a larger context, and they
seem suddenly trivial, perhaps a bit comic . . . Each
view is in its way true; by juxtaposing the two
incompatible views in the Romances, Shakespeare
validates and invalidates both views and enables us,
if we will, to gain a marvelous double perspective on
life. 74

The juxtaposition is that of pastoral tragicomedy, a strong
double focus genre in Shakespeare's usage. 75 In staging such
an equivocal hybrid, Shakespeare mixes agonistic drama with
the distancing effects of narrative. According to Mowat,
the framing, especially in *The Tempest*, oscillates subtly
between closed form drama and disruption of its rhythms and
patterns of expectation. The resulting closed/open dynamic
blends "life as drama (immediate, active, present) and life
as tale (mediated by the teller, distanced, fixed in past
time)." 76

This dramaturgical dialectic conforms with the dialectics
of body and mind I have noted in *The Tempest*. I would
further suggest that this play's emphasis on the narrative
aspects of life is comprehended in the atmosphere of
parabolic insinuation. The quality of participation in this
ambiance serves as a revealing index of character. For instance, Antonio pours murderous nothings in Sebastian's open ears; Gonzalo, on the other hand, tries to keep Alonso's spirits afloat by cramming his ears full of responsive chatter. In turn, when Prospero has the whole party standing distracted in his charmed circle, he takes the opportunity to commend the faithful counsellor and berate his intransigent brother. The blend of physical closure, psychic distraction, and formal ambivalence indicates the resonance of Shakespeare's arrangements. By this juncture we are also curiously aware of the circle as a centripetal/centrifugal frame which somehow epitomizes the suppleness of human scope being exercised. Man is circumscribed, yet also circumscribing, implicated among serial magnitudes.

A slight shift in approach may better set this matter in perspective. For its spectacle, inclusion of dance and song, mixture of presentational and representational modes, and general dialectic tone of debat, The Tempest has regularly been described as masque-like. In The Transcendental Masque, Angus Fletcher ascribes the dynamic of centripetal and centrifugal containment to his category of the transcendental form, which associates such works as The Tempest and Milton's Comus. By way of defining the poesis of transcendental form, he includes a quote from Ernst Cassirer (Individual and the Cosmos, p. 189) on Giordano Bruno's expression of Renaissance neo-Platonism:
"Man, the Ego, appears to the universe, the world, at once as the enclosing and the enclosed." This is the transcendental form-maker's destiny, to seek shapes at once enclosed and enclosing. He cultivates his mind as, in Ficino's words, "the faculty of containing." 

Specifically, according to my sense of *The Tempest*, the indeterminate correlation between Prospero and Shakespeare makes us simultaneously aware of an enclosed/enclosing consciousness at work. In the theater of the mind, man rehearses his existence as character and author. Perhaps this is the crux of *The Tempest*’s monodramatic impression. Involved in an ongoing process that is literally beyond him, the artist (seconded in this case by his magus stand-in) aspires to project a comprehensive matrix which simulates a circumscription of the human condition while betraying some self-consciousness of its artificiality. Rare achievements in paradoxical framing such as *The Tempest* and Diego Velasquez' painting *Las Meninas* fascinate because they offer such an engaging paradigm for the peculiar sense of intra- and extra-contextuality shaping human perception of temporality.

Browning's "Caliban upon Setebos" displays something of this oscillation in framing, largely due to the resonance between the heading motto and closing tempest. As *The Tempest* is bracketed by storm scene and Prospero's Epilogue, natural disruption and appeal, so in reversal Browning brackets Caliban's musings with semi-extrinsic reproof and natural interruption. Of course the status of each natural
irruption is ambiguous; the shifts in framing make the first storm seem both actual and illusory, while Caliban's reaction to the second leaves us drawn between purely phenomenal and supernatural explanations. The epigraph Browning excerpts from Psalm 50: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself." It hangs over the monologue like the "something quiet o'er His head,/ Out of His reach," which Caliban imagines above his self-apotheosis, Setebos (ll. 132-33). Throughout, as Caliban concentrates on aligning his world picture with his self-image, this unheard voice remains outside the attempt at enclosure. If Prospero's attempted intimation of the world as a Providential realm is bold and self-consciously artificial, Caliban's is brash and ironically contained. But because this containment affords a primary self-consistency, we too are taken by surprise as the stormy curtain is drawn. Browning releases us from Caliban's perspective through a double-take; the storm is not Setebos-sent after all, because there is no Setebos. However, the release is not so simple, since the tempestuous advent is essentially a charged cloud of unknowing. Given the Scriptural association of the Divinity's voice with cloud, we may yet link epigraphic rebuttal with stormy distraction. W. David Shaw links the tempest before which Caliban prostrates himself to the whirlwind from which God rebukes Job, and thinks Browning means to broach the rift between man and God on the way to a correction of perspective.79
This analogy inclines him to transform Setebos' features into Yahweh's. Still, I believe the irony is more cross-cutting. We are caught up in the complex superimposition of self-projection, natural event, literary resonance, and Scriptural heritage, unsure how to reconcile our perceptions of Providential control and freedom. Finally the poem opens out upon a world belying superstition while unsettling snug assurance of subjective sufficiency. The cloud of unknowing is a response to the idolater and agnostic in each of us.80

Equipoise embodied and induced through indeterminate framing also characterizes Auden's closet staging of theater of the mind. Bracketing the three numbered sections of The Sea and the Mirror are a "Preface [The Stage Manager to the Critics]" and "Postscript [Ariel to Caliban. Echo by the Prompter]." The former brings a behind-the-scenes man up front to nudge those of a critical frame of mind into a readmission of their poised, haunted humanity. The Postscript also employs a normally unseen production presence, although Ariel's plea and the Prompter's cuing reach us as disembodied voices from an unenclosed space. The ultimate "I" floats at the end of an ellipsis most tenuously, so that we are unsure whether to receive it as "an augur of integration" or as the echo of a voided identity.81 To the very last we are suspended between the coupled principles of human framing.

The three contained sections themselves operate according
to a flexible interchange of intra- and extra-contextual awareness. This structural process is fairly straightforward in the first part, somewhat more elaborate in the second, and dizzyingly complicated in Caliban's grandstanding finale. "Prospero to Ariel" conveys its combination of closed and open effects through an alternation between three segments of elegiacs and matched songs. A dilation of voice and attention marks the shift into lyric mode, as Auden has Prospero supply an expansive gloss upon the terms of his parting. In these lyrics we are made most conscious of the parallels between self-disabused conjurer and poet. Antonio, however, denies Prospero's self-divestiture upon completion of his project, and in "The Supporting Cast, Sotto Voce" the formal dynamic modulates into the familiar one of encirclement. The manichean split between the two brothers is evidenced in this section's design. Prospero's grouping comprises a harmonious arrangement of characters into a reflective scale centered on Alonso's major chord (excluding Antonio, who as a sour note strikes apart). However, after each character's speech, the final say is Antonio's, and in each case it is antithetical. Thematically and structurally, the circle as centripetal/centrifugal frame figures prominently. Antonio would encircle the other speakers in words of dismissal while keeping himself untouchable within the perimeters of a cosmic zero. He also conceives his rivalry with Prospero in terms of circumscription: "while I stand outside/ Your
circle, the will to charm is still there." Yet in the context of the homeward-bound ship, Miranda can speak of the characters "linked as children in a circle dancing," and we sense that Prospero is intent on further contexts which refute Antonio's O. The resulting interference patterns are like those from pebbles dropped in a still pool. Caliban, having missed the boat, steps downstage to include the audience in the rippling contextual modulation. Acting as a self-appointed moderator, he protests on the audience's behalf Shakespeare's seeming violation of the boundary lines between art and life. If art is not kept contained as a preserve unto itself within life, Ariel will be released to flit at large, causing general havoc. Unperturbed, Caliban the middle man presses on, now speaking for the playwright to the prospective apprentice, now representing himself and Ariel before "the general popular type" and "that other, smaller but doubtless finer group" respectively, hopscotching among contexts of an actively dialectic universe. The apparently contained human scene is turned out as an inexcusably poor performance, and the self as stagey actor is turned out over "the unabiding void," where it has always stood without recognizing the fact. In effect, what Auden does in the closing movement is to amplify Prospero's Epilogue from The Tempest, itself a late expression of Shakespeare's deeply ingrained sense of life's theatricality. The common intent of such double-minded rehearsal is to disabuse each comer of static assumptions
concerning human identity and life's closure. By propelling
the imagination through a field of supple bemusement, a
fundamental reorientation of self may be initiated.

As a means of lending my discussion pliant ideational
framing, I draw upon the work of two thinkers in particular:
St. Augustine and Soren Kierkegaard. Of St. Augustine's
writings, I pay exclusive attention to the Confessions, for
several reasons. First, I am pursuing a lead offered by
Frank Kermode in the Arden edition of The Tempest. Second,
for its psychological acuteness, its illumination of The
Tempest's exegetical background, and its reflection upon the
submerged confessional aspects of Prospero's character (made
explicit in Auden's Prospero), Augustine's spiritual
autobiography is singularly pertinent. Most significantly,
however, The Tempest echoes from its own threshold the
fourth century man's embodied search for "the middle region
of my salvation," with its resonant cluster of consociated
images.

To aid in identifying the existential strain running
through the Tempest group, I have recourse to Soren
Kierkegaard's thought. Three of his works in particular are
cited: Fear and Trembling (1843), Concluding Unscientific
Postscript (1846), and The Sickness Unto Death (1849). The
first is an early, semi-romantic statement of his
fascination with the human capacity for faith. The second,
as its title wryly suggests, provides a recapitulation of his previous work by way of deepening and broadening his philosophy of the self's essential subjectivity. Finally, the third serves as a most distilled rumination on despair of the self's terms of relatedness. It also seems to have exerted an especially strong influence on Auden's thinking. Kierkegaard himself was an admirer of Shakespeare's plays, albeit in German translations. Further, Angus Fletcher notes that a number of Kierkegaard's works are "much concerned with the theatre as the framing scene of personality, personation, discovery, reversal. Here the idea of theatre is to be understood as the primary metaphor for mind." This occupation with the mind's theater links the Danish philosopher with Browning as well as with Shakespeare and Auden. Moreover, these two nineteenth century writers can be seen to have dedicated themselves to a similar championing of subjective passion in an intellectual climate increasingly partial to objective, anthropological approaches to humankind. Kierkegaard's relevance to the Tempest complex in general, however, resides in those affinities granted by a tragi-comic view of human life, an energetically dialectic temperament, and a certain fondness for parable. So it comes as little surprise that Auden's poetic fusion of Sheakespearean and Kierkegaardian influence should have resulted in "a reading of The Tempest as existential parable."
While primarily concerned with the aforementioned works by Shakespeare, Browning, and Auden, I do not intend to restrict my scope to the familial resemblances among them. To fill out the Tempest spectrum, I will incorporate a series of texts which appeared in the long interval between Shakespeare's and Browning's signal contributions. Three of these works I have already had occasion to refer to in passing. My chronological selection consists of John Milton's Comus (1634), John Dryden and William Davenant's The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island (1669), Alexander Pope's An Essay on Man (1733-34), and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (c. 1798). 

Comus, viewed as a didactic, idealistic expression of Tempest concerns in masque form, assists recognition of the Christian neo-Platonism informing these two compositions. It also serves to flesh out each writer's use of Ovidian materials. The Enchanted Island, or The Tempest as Restoration comedy, can prove useful as long as one avoids the temptation of dwelling on its relative demerits. My main purpose will be refractory, to examine departures and insertions in light of Shakespeare's focus, so as to broaden awareness of The Tempest as a structure of choices in a relational field. Pope's Essay on Man is included in this interludial grouping as an early eighteenth century expression of an overview directed toward the placement of man. As a corollary of its inherited yet pithily phrased and modified middle earth perspective, the Essay exhibits
that growing unease over scientific encroachment which distinguishes the Tempest line's contemporary address. In Coleridge's Rime the unease is internalized as the Mariner takes sail from empirical shores toward uncharted spiritual depths. We become aware of a resulting strain as Coleridge tries to accommodate the drift of pure imagination and the bearings of Christian consciousness. My own ranging of the complex's reaches entails yet another excursion, upon close consideration of Browning's and Auden's dramatic poems. Setting T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land and Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow as parameters for the twentieth century's modernist/post-modernist sensibilities, I propose to enlarge upon the emblematic persistence of the Tempest legacy. Italo Calvino's example of a limber imagination at work and play in The Castle of Crossed Destinies provides encouragement and a measure for my performance.

There remains the pleasant task of sampling A Midsummer Night's Dream as a forerunner of The Tempest's imaginative concentration. Basic comparisons are apparent enough. A charmed atmosphere characterizes both plays, though human control and centering differentiates the latter. In each a defamiliarizing place apart is the bounding scene for an expanded entertainment of human limits. The nightwoods outside Athens and Prospero's unlocated isle shelter figures lost to themselves among the labyrinthine passages of reconstitution. Yet in The Tempest the maze-master himself
must resign his advantage as overseer for an acceptance of his own errant humanity.

Whereas the later Romance (1611) witnesses a difficult tragicomic suspension weighing on Prospero's shoulders, in the earlier comedy (1595-96) potentially tragic developments are comically screened. As with The Tempest, though in a lighter vein, threatening energies are defused in deference to those of marital congress and regeneration. In the Dream Shakespeare has written a comedy of cross-purposes, cross- loves, and cross-worlds. The mechanisms of comic deployment call for two pairs of young lovers whose proper alignment can only be achieved after the possible wrong combinations have been rehearsed. The supernaturals themselves, Oberon and Titania, have fallen out as a result of a possessive spat, so their influence is itself subject to the laws of comic complication. That Hermia should finally be coupled with Lysander and Helena with Demetrius speaks less for providential guidance than for the turnabouts of love-in-idleness, the juice of whose flower gives passion eyes for its dear object. Puck, the prankster spirit, serves as spokesman for this play's magical glossing of personal autonomy, its proverbializing of human vicissitude: "Jack shall have Jill; Nought shall go ill" (III.ii.461-62). In such an atmosphere tragedy only reaches the foreground on comedy's terms, so that the sad tale of star-crossed lovers surfaces as "very tragical mirth" (V.i.57) in the bumbling performance of the Pyramus and Thisby legend by Bottom and
company. Then again, in this ridiculous, graciously received production we may detect a comic analogue to Prospero's romantically dilated staging of a merciful dispensation which sustains the human tragicomedy.

The dialectics which are so integral to The Tempest's warp and woof appear sporadically throughout A Midsummer Night's Dream, and with a stronger impression of self-consciousness. Shakespeare seems to waver between dialectic and dualistic vision, comically exploiting his straddling position in the play's thematics. For instance, dreams of human mortality transformed are humorously entertained in Bottom's half-assed change. In Titania's arms he cuts a figure that is absurd and touching in mixed parts. The ass-headed weaver wreathed with a coronet of flowers may be asinine and urbanely dignified at once. Stuck between the shapes of beast and man, Bottom is promised an antithetical release, evoking the Ariel end of the human spectrum: "And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,/ That thou shalt like an aery spirit go" (III.i.160-61). Shakespeare tentatively raises human mortality's mixed prospects of wonder and limit, using comic reflection as a principle of ambivalent irony.

Still, we observe a less patchy weave in the making where Shakespeare's analogizing and dialectic faculties dovetail, muting dualistic framing. When Shakespeare depicts a prone figure, for example, thoughts of sleep, dream, death, and
waking congregate and swirl about it. Humanity stretched out on the ground has a stimulating effect on the playwright's imagination, especially evident in the Romances. Mortality so disposed is vulnerable, hovering between life and death, yet also suggestive of revivifying powers tapped from beyond self-involvement: "And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,/ Steal me a while from mine own company" (III.ii.435-36). 87 Sleeping upon the earth may prove remedial to human earth such as Hermia's or her fellows', but Titania would distinguish herself from lesser vessels subject to finitude and chthonic reclamation: "Tell me how it came this night/ That I sleeping here was found,/ With these mortals on the ground" (IV.i.100-02). Humanity is left charmed on the ground (let sleeping vessels lie), this time to awaken to a shifted order whose obstacles are set aside for easier accession to marriage rites and the work of regeneration. Shakespeare practices the dialectic of loss and renewal, imagining how rehearsal for death may revitalize the available life, and possibly make conceivable the paradox of life-out-of-death.

Just this paradox concludes what is arguably the play's finest passage of dialectic lyricism, Titania's reminiscence of her young squire's votaress mother, II.i.122-37. 88 In this surge of bravura we see evidence of the enticing poetic disposition which would later make the world of The Tempest so pregnant with the charge of relatedness. The effect of such a sudden romantic tableau is arresting, as we are
allowed to share a moment of feminine intimacy which celebrates untold analogies between human mysteries and those of a burgeoning world. The conceit of expectant mother and ships' sails swelled with wind miming each other expands into a paralleling of microsphere and macrosphere traversed by vessels "rich with merchandise." On the mediate strip between sea and land Titania and her votaress have improvised a spot of time that anticipates the "present fancies" of Prospero's mandalic masque. It is the more poignant in that the term of the mother's gestation and life draw to a paradoxical close: "But she, being mortal, of that boy did die."

The play as a whole is not so dynamically poised. A criticism C. L. Barber levels at this work, Titus Andronicus, Romeo and Juliet, and Richard II is that the dichotomy between imagination's realm and the empirical world is too set: "The imaginary and the real are too easy to separate . . . Imagination tends to be merely expressive, an evidence of passion rather than a mode of perception." In A Midsummer Night's Dream, as the title prompts, fancy's sphere is that of the nightwood as opposed to the skeptical environs of Theseus' court. The dialogue between the imaginary and the real is left undeveloped, as if Shakespeare were teasing us into conjecturing a possible synthesis of visionary wonder and clear-sighted common sense. At one extreme, we, along with Bottom, are left speechless before prospects of the bottomless dream.
again, we would also be of Theseus' party, facing the world squarely, capable of transacting daily affairs with discrimination and efficiency. The material for an active interchange between dreamer and pragmatist is present, presaging a figure that can sound depths as Bottom cannot and wields control beyond Theseus' power. In Theseus' speech yoking "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet," Shakespeare permits the skeptical ruler to skim over those penchants which we experience more absorbingly if receptive to the workings of the romantic imagination:

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to aery nothing
A local habitation and a name.

(V. i. 12-17)

Out of such fabrication spring A Midsummer Night's Dream and, even more, The Tempest, the latter bold in the play of make-believe as a disciplined venture of the mature, comprehensive imagination. These two plays call out to each other over a stretch of intervening work casting man in a variety of predominantly comic or tragic shades. The fusion of "Merry and tragical" brings us to the Romance group, as if in response to Theseus' incredulous oxymorons:

That is hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

(V. i. 59-60)
Notes to Chapter One


2 Colin Still's *Shakespeare's Mystery Play* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1921) readily comes to mind. Still reads The Tempest as an allegorical monad, sparing no particularity as he wrenches the play into line with his theory of universal epic: "I have contended, in effect, that there is one epic theme which is immemorial, changeless, and universal -- namely, the story of the upward struggle of the human spirit, individual or collective, out of the darkness of sin and error, into the light of wisdom and truth" (p. 234). His discussion of empirical and ritual initiation is probably more relevant to *The Magic Flute* than Shakespearean Romance. One feels that if Northrop Frye were to lose all sense of proportion, he might produce a work such as this. For a survey of Still's argument as he applies it to The Tempest, see Philip Edwards' retrospective article "Shakespeare's Romances: 1900-1957," *Shakespeare Survey* 11 (1958), p. 7.

3 A fairly recent instance is Frances A. Yates' highly conjectural *Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975). In her chapter on The Tempest she does not bother to cite a single line from the play. Her premise that "Shakespeare's Last Plays reflect in their imagery this Elizabethan revival within the Jacobean age" (p. 5) provides a springboard for some interesting observations on James I's reign, but the connections suggested between court affairs and Shakespearean Romance are not convincing, and Yates can only surmise some esoteric meaning still to be grasped. "Dare one say that this [German Rosicrucian] movement reaches a peak of poetic expression in The Tempest, a Rosicrucian manifesto infused with the spirit of Dee, and using (like Andreai) theatrical parables for esoteric communication?" (p. 130).

Even more recently, Gary Schmidgall in *Shakespeare and the Courtly Aesthetic* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1981) has written a milieu study which seeks to show how The Tempest is a product of the artistic royalism of its time, an extension into drama of the aesthetic epitomized in the masques staged in King James' court. In approaching the play "as a highly politicized literary work" he has not avoided undervaluing "its conceptual totality by thematic simplification" (xxi). I believe he is mistaken in assuming that Shakespeare wrote
The Tempest as a more-or-less orthodox political allegory valorizing the same status quo underpinnings as did the flattering masques set before the King. Despite his qualifying assurances that the play is a masterpiece of ambivalence, Schmidgall's admittedly speculative approach leads him to read The Tempest in discouragingly one-dimensional terms arrayed along the polar axis drawn between Prospero's civilized ascendancy and Caliban's beastly abjectness.

It would be advisable for authors of further Shakespeare milieu studies to exert a stronger formalist rein upon their tangential interests.

4 In the opening chapter of Two Concepts of Allegory: a Study of Shakespeare's The Tempest and the Logic of Allegorical Expression (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), "The Tempest and its Romantic Critics," A. D. Nuttall provides a selective survey of allegorical Tempest criticism. He mainly reviews nineteenth century tendencies, when allegorical readings of historical, sociopolitical, autobiographical, and transcendental hues flourished. In keeping with the times, there was even an Evolutionary Tempest. But as Robert Browning perceived, this ranging work did lend itself nicely to an airing of nineteenth century intellectual and spiritual tempests. Besides, one need not be overindulgent to spot an evolutionary strain in the relation between the recalcitrant thing Caliban and his cultured master.

Nuttall has this to say about the more reserved enthusing in twentieth century allegorical reading (p. 10): "Statements of the form 'Prospero figures our Lord Jesus Christ, and the play is a shadowing of our salvation through His Incarnation' tend to give place to statements of the form 'Ideas of redemption seem to have had an especial importance and validity for Shakespeare at this period'."

5 Nuttall, p. 160.


8 James, Scepticism, p. 253.


10 Knight, p. 74.

11 Nuttall, p. 48. Whereas in summation Nuttall coins the term 'pre-allegorical' (p. 159) to convey his sense of the play's metaphysical suggestiveness, I hope to show that 'parabolic' is the more apropos and illuminating description.


13 C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom (London: Nisbet & Co Ltd., 1936), p. 16. Wilson Knight's conception of parable (see note 9 above) may well have been influenced by Dodd's important contribution to the subject.

14 Dodd, p. 24.

15 Dodd, p. 22.


17 Howard Felperin, Shakespearean Romance (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 250. In a Bibliographical Appendix ("The Fortunes of Romance," 287-316) Felperin offers a helpful outline of the critical and theatrical reception of Shakespearean Romance from the Jacobean period down to the pan-romantic embrace of Northrop Frye's reign, which Felperin derides as too indiscriminate and high-flown. Felperin's own reading of The Tempest, however, would have benefited from a more dilated critical imagination.
18 Funk, p. 145.

19 I lift this phrase from John Dominic Crossan, Cliffs of Fate: Paradox and Polyvalence in the Parables of Jesus (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), p. 23. He refers to Christ's parabling, a sui generis practice of this narrative mode: "Such paradoxicality both generates and undermines successive interpretations and applications just as it both generates and undermines moral imperatives, ecclesiastical structures, and political programs."

20 Knight, p. 35.


23 See Greta Hort, Piers, pp. 80-81. I have conflated several passages.

24 See The Confessions of St. Augustine, trans. John K. Ryan, (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1960), IV.xii., p. 104: "If you find pleasure in bodily things, praise God for them, and direct your love to their maker, lest because of things that please you, you may displease him. If you find pleasure in souls, let them be loved in God. In themselves they are but shifting things; in him they stand firm; else they would pass and perish. In him, therefore, let them be loved, and with you carry up to him as many as you can."

25 See, for instance, Felperin, Shakespearean Romance, p. 278: "But just as the private imaginative visions of Gonzalo, Antonio, and Caliban all fade before Prospero's higher and more comprehensive vision, so too, it is strongly
hinted, Prospero's own vision fades before that of God." Felperin detects the outward spiral without grasping its inherence in the play's dialectic construction.


27 W. H. Auden, "Balaam and His Ass," in The Dyer's Hand (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 130. If one takes the Caliban-Prosporo-Ariel axis as an obvious expression of bias against man's creaturely nature, Auden's criticism holds. However, I think we are meant to feel that Caliban is less dangerous than Antonio, whose sins are of the spirit and more basically antithetical to Prospero's vision of man-in-the-balance. For me, The Tempest is manichean insofar as Antonio is diametrically opposed to his brother, a placement Auden observes in his schematization of the supporting cast. In addition, at play's end, while Prospero acknowledges Caliban as his own (V.275-76), he cannot bring himself to recognize Antonio as his brother (V.130-31).


29 St. Augustine's Confessions include some sharp comments on the 'Caliban' malady which infests men's souls (X.xxxiii., p. 252): "Because they do not wish to be deceived but wish to deceive, they love it [truth] when it shows itself to them, and they hate it when it shows them to themselves . . . . Thus, thus, yea, thus does the human soul, even thus blind and diseased and foul and degraded, desire to lie hidden, but it does not desire that anything lie hidden from itself."

30 While it may be tempting to identify the closing storm here with the one which opens The Tempest, Browning indicates otherwise in a letter to F. J. Furnivall dated April 25, 1884: "... my Caliban indulges his fancies long before even that beginning." Perhaps in remarking a time "long before" he is staking a claim to imaginative sea-room enough. See Letters of Robert Browning Collected by Thomas J. Wise, ed. Thurman L. Hood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), p. 228.

31 Thomas P. Wolfe, "Browning's Comic Magician: Caliban's Psychology and the Reader's," in Studies in Browning and His

32 See Wendell V. Harris, "Browning's Caliban, Plato's Cosmogony, and Bentham on Natural Religion," in Studies in Browning and His Circle 3 (1975), pp. 95-103. For my purposes, Harris' essay serves well to indicate the extent of the Tempest complex's dialectic involvement with long-developing currents in Western thought. Harris mainly contends, p. 96, "that the breadth of the satire results, in fact, from the poem's play around a set of arguments which had lain beyond the great majority of Western theological structures based on reason rather than revelation." The argument for God's necessary goodness he traces back to Plato's Timaeus, which rejects out of hand the possibility of an envious Creator. St. Augustine, St. Aquinas, Pope, Butler, and Paley, among other thinkers, follow suit, finding the world ultimately for the good if man would but perceive properly. Browning's ill at ease thinker begs to differ, however (p. 99): "What Caliban does, then, is apply the same kind of reasoning by analogy as did Butler or Paley (in the inductive portions of their arguments) to a world he has no predisposing reason to feel is more filled with pleasure than pain." Harris concludes by comparing Browning's poem with Jeremy Bentham and George Grote's The Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind (1822). The authors set out to undermine Christianity on the sly by "subjecting natural theology to what they regarded as the true utilitarian tests" (p. 103). Their conclusions have much in common with Caliban's cringing speculations on Setebos, since from Browning's antithetical viewpoint to omit the revelation of God's love is to wander down the path of anthropocentric error and possibly court despair, whether realized or not.


34 I have derived my phrasing here from Herbert Greenberg's Quest for the Necessary, p. 120. In this section he compares Reinhold Niebuhr's perspective on Kierkegaardian thought with Auden's, remarking the affinities between them.


38 Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), p. 412. This passage illustrates how anxiety (or, in Pynchon's usage, paranoia) is not only a major theme, but also a principle for generating the book's narrative.


40 Pynchon, p. 412.

41 See Eduard Farber, "Dreams and Visions in a Century of Chemistry," in *Kekulé Centennial*, p. 136. Referring to Wilhelm Ostwald's experience of a "lightning-like" intuition while struggling with the genesis of energetics, Farber observes: "Though the thought was completely subjective -- 'a life-important part of my being' -- it embraced an objective totality. The apparent paradox recurs in all dreams and visions; it is especially great in the universal generalizations."


44 Tillyard, p. 64.

45 Spencer, p. 195.
46 Tillyard, p. 34.

47 William R. Elton argues in *King Lear and the Gods* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1966) that a late Renaissance crisis of belief is complexly depicted in Shakespeare's "syncretically pagan tragedy." His concluding sentences suggest that he finds in *The Tempest* further reflection of an emergent aporia in contemporary thought. Shakespeare obtained for *King Lear* "the interest of those more troubled and sophisticated auditors who were not to be stilled by pious assurances in the unsteady new world of the later Renaissance. For the latter, *King Lear* carried its own tua res agit tur significance: it made more vivid the image of that horror, the all-dissolving chaos, for those who could not turn aside and stop their beating minds" (p. 338). Regarding the structural pattern of *King Lear*, Elton points out that a harsh finale follows the reconciliatory notes of the fourth act (pp. 238–39); so we should also note that Prospero's revels speech is not an ultimate statement but an anxious surge sustained in a context of Romance equanimity.


49 Michel Foucault provides a good instance of human knowledge's movement "according to the half-perceptual, half-iconographic laws of a qualitative world" in *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard, (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 129–35. He seeks to show in the given case how the establishing, structural force of imagery makes conceptual clarification possible: "No doubt this entire universe of heat and cold, of humidity and dryness, reminded medical thought, about to accede to positivism, of the circumstances of its own origin. But this blazon of images was not simply reminiscence; it was also an undertaking. In order to form the practical experience of mania or melancholia, this gravitation, against a background of images, of qualities attracted to each other by a whole system of sensuous and affective affinities was essential. If mania, if melancholia henceforth assumed the aspects our science knows them by, it is not because in the course of centuries we have learned to 'open our eyes' to real symptoms; it is not because we have purified our perception to the point of transparency; it is because in the experience of madness, these concepts were organized around certain qualitative themes that lent them their unity, gave them significant coherence, made them finally perceptible" (p. 130).
Quoted in *The Enchafed Flood*, p. 54.


See *Letters of Robert Browning*, p. 228.


In a related vein, Christian thought has had to proceed carefully between avowal of man's unique spiritual endowment and visions of the One Life pervading whatever exists. Eastern religious systems such as Hinduism dovetail salvation with the chain of being through a doctrine of reincarnation, thereby easing the discrepancy. The strong East-West axis traversing *The Tempest* receives a twentieth century projection in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1924). Forster considers the comic results of an attempted compromise between Christian and Hindu doctrine in the following passage, pp. 37-38:

"All invitations must proceed from heaven perhaps; perhaps it is futile for men to initiate their own unity, they do but widen the gulfs between them by the attempt. So at all events thought old Mr. Graysford and young Mr. Sorley, the devoted missionaries who lived out beyond the slaughterhouses, always travelled third on the railways, and never came up to the club. In our Father's house are many mansions, they taught, and there alone will the incompatible multitudes of mankind be welcomed and soothed. Not one shall be turned away by the servants on that verandah, be he black or white, not one shall be kept standing who approaches with a loving heart. And why should the divine hospitality cease here? Consider, with all reverence, the monkeys. May there not be a mansion for the monkeys also? Old Mr. Graysford said No, but young Mr. Sorley, who was advanced, said Yes; he saw no reason why monkeys should not have their collateral share of bliss, and he had sympathetic discussions about them with his Hindu friends. And the jackals? Jackals were indeed less to Mr. Sorley's mind, but he admitted that the mercy of God, being infinite, may well embrace all mammals. And the wasps? He became uneasy during the descent to wasps, and was apt to change the conversation. And oranges, cactuses, crystals and mud? and the bacteria inside Mr. Sorley? No, no, this is going too
far. We must exclude someone from our gathering, or we shall be left with nothing."

55 Spencer, pp. 219-20.

56 I stated earlier that The Tempest has a way of rounding on its critics, reflecting their inquiries and insecurities in its looking glass surface. In his high-powered survey After the New Criticism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 241-42, Frank Lentricchia summons the well-known fancy of Ferdinand's transmogrified father as a descriptive metaphor for the conflict between man's romantic and skeptical impulses. Ariel's song is enchanting, but we should not miss the ironic undertone of its lilt. I believe Lentricchia's comment on Stevens has bearing on Spencer's oversight of The Tempest's implicating equipoise: "[And] the ultimate feat these days, as we have seen, is to believe in a 'fiction' which, from the very start, you do not believe in. In Stevens' perilous, schizoid phrasing of the idea: 'The final belief is to believe in a fiction, which you know to be a fiction, there being nothing else, the exquisite truth is to know that it is a fiction and that you believe in it willingly.' So last romanticism comes into existence when it becomes fully realized that the grandiose claim of first romanticism, that the poetic imagination is the most significant thing the world has ever known, crashes on the rocks of skepticism and yet survives. When the much-wished-for-drowning and wondrous sea change do not come, what is left is the desire of the first romantic trapped within the impotent body of despairing, ironic man."

57 Tillyard, pp. 53-54.


59 Ibid., p. 142.

60 Ibid., p. 143.

61 Quoted in "Words and the Word," p. 143.

62 Ibid., p. 144.
63 My diction here may sound pretentious, but I intend through paraphrasing and conflation to evoke the counter-movements of *The Tempest*. An outward spiral of mental effort climaxes in Prospero's revels speech ("the great globe itself, / Yea, all which it inherit"); a counter-motion promises fair sailing back to the local habits of Naples and Milan ("a chronicle of day by day"). Auden's poetry and essays reflect a similar interpenetration of scopes.

64 Auden, "Words and the Word," p. 144.


69 I excerpt these phrases from "Caliban to the Audience," *Selected Poems*, p. 171.


71 Johnson, p. 32.

72 Spears, pp. 218-19.

73 Herbert Greenberg, in *Quest for the Necessary*, p. 130, holds that most of the supporting cast's speeches "bear upon the theme of faith versus despair." I believe that all of them can be so configured.

75 The reader may notice here my twining of Mowat's and David Young's approaches, which are in many ways complementary.

76 Mowat, p. 111.


78 Gary Schmidgall closes Shakespeare and the Courtly Aesthetic with a general comparison of The Tempest and Las Meninas, pp. 263-71. His instincts here point him in the right direction, but he does not pursue initial observances. Later in my treatment of The Tempest I hope to specify an instance of these works' commonality.


80 The relation between idolatrous and agnostic reflex is illustrated in the following passage from David Hume's Natural History of Religion, quoted in Philip Drew's The Poetry of Browning: A Critical Introduction (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1970), p. 152. Hume refers to the common man's inference of God's existence from natural mishaps and other chance occurrence: "These he ascribes to the immediate operation of providence: And such events, as, with good reasoners, are the chief difficulties in admitting a supreme intelligence, are with him the sole arguments for it."

81 I take the phrase in quotes from Herbert Greenberg, Quest for the Necessary, p. 139.

82 See the Arden Tempest, ed. Frank Kermode, note to III.i.1-2, p. 70: "There is sufficient similarity, both here and elsewhere, with certain passages in St. Augustine's Confessions to make it possible that Shakespeare is here alluding to that book."

84 Herbert Greenberg proposes that Auden's major debt to the Kierkegaardian canon is owed *The Sickness unto Death*. See *Quest for the Necessary*, p. 117.

85 Fletcher, p. 224.

86 Greenberg, p. 122.

87 Compare *The Tempest*, II.i.186-91, for its treatment of this matter in a more tragicomic context of relief and duplicity.

88 C. L. Barber writes eloquently and precisely about this speech in Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), pp. 136-37. Such a vivid reading is difficult to follow, and I consider whatever is unique in my treatment a product of its influence. One of the themes Barber touches upon is that of transition from strong friendship among members of the same sex to the priority of the bond uniting husband and wife. Shakespeare resorted to variations on this theme in a number of his plays, perhaps most notably in *The Merchant of Venice*, where Antonio must subordinate his claims on Bassanio's affections to Portia's stronger ties. The seemingly petty conflict between Oberon and Titania over possession of the Indian votaress' boy makes better sense when viewed from this thematic angle. Titania cherishes the boy as a keepsake of her close relation with the boy's mother, while Oberon acts as if Titania were keeping his own child from him. Barber sees the passage of the boy from Titania's bower to Oberon's as occasioning a renewal of "their ritual marriage."

89 Barber, pp. 159-60.

90 Despite his words' self-reflexiveness, they hold true for all rough pates of mother born: "I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Man is but an ass, if he go about t' expound this dream" (IV.i.205-07). Might we not deduce some such admission of incapacity from the apologetic self-deprecation with which Prospero brackets his revels speech?
A reading of *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest* leaves one with a strong impression of kinship and exploratory practice. Following upon the shrill, execrative tone of *Timon of Athens*, this group represents a marked departure from the series of tragedies (interspersed with a few problem comedies) with which Shakespeare had occupied himself since 1600. The throes of tragic absorption give way to mixed feelings of engagement and detachment. Certainty of irreversible loss evaporates before a principle of recovery "smiling/ Extremity out of act" (*Per.* V.i.138-39). Whatever his initial motives, Shakespeare turns to the fabular genre of romance and proceeds to recast its conventions in the image of his interests. Even if we attribute the shift to this playwright's acumen as an experienced man of the theater, it becomes clear that timeliness and popular taste only go so far toward explaining the special character of Shakespearean Romance.

The works of Shakespeare's last period seem to present a particular problem to critics. On the one hand, it is no easy task trying to define the version of Romanticism which is uniquely Shakespearean. In *Scepticism and Poetry*, D.G. James criticizes the last plays under the rubric of British Romanticism, hence reaches conclusions that have only
limited contact with the plays themselves.\textsuperscript{1} Wilson Knight, while more appreciative, also tends to make the last plays fraternize with poetic attitudes of the British Romantic period, hence his ultimate concern in The Crown of Life with the dimension of eternity, the transcendental, childhood's mystical consciousness, and the spirit's reservation from temporal lapse. Then again, other critics have shown varying degrees of reluctance to accept the late works as achievements of a different order from the great tragedies in particular. Writing on the last periods of Shakespeare, Racine, and Ibsen, Kenneth Muir would have us "agree even that the tragic vision of life is more likely to produce great art than the views of life reflected in the plays of the last periods."\textsuperscript{2} Michael Goldman considers the latter two plays of the Romance group on split levels, with superhuman Nature committed to its restorative cycles while "our own nature commits us finally to the tragic pattern."\textsuperscript{3} And with more transparent preference for an emphatic tragic dimension, Clifford Leech concludes that "Only The Winter's Tale faces the realization that repentance is not enough, that 'reunion' is a bogus word, that the only finality (within the world around us) is loss." Only by calling this play's finish "sad as well as solemn" can he retrieve it from the grip of romantic fraudulence.\textsuperscript{4}

Clearly, these plays need to be approached on their own terms, not as career-end pleasure domes or rolling romantic foothills to craggy tragic heights. Assumptions about the
primary tenor of human life must be put to the Romance test. If we believe that existence is basically tragic, and human suffering the expression of some core of dignity otherwise lost in the mundane, we will be prone to value the tragic vision as the most revelatory of man's lot. Familiarity with Shakespeare's later stage, however, alters our frame of reference; we are enticed from the romance of self tragically conceived toward the dispensation of the general life romantically conceived. Tragic inevitability is no longer a foregone conclusion, tragic focus no longer a spotlight on humanity in extremis. Attention wanders, contexts widen, and we are invited to cultivate a double perspective sustained through dialectic flexibility. The individual's "No!" in thunder to a world that slights his existence is dampened to a middle tone of perseverance and patience. Pericles, unlike Lear, does not raise himself to a towering emotion in response to the temporal storminess he suffers: "Could I rage and roar/ As doth the sea she lies in, yet the end/ Must be as 'tis" (III.iii.10-12). Personal suffering assumes its place in the diverse human scene, itself an aspect of a world in process. W. H. Auden comes close to portraying the disposition prevalent in Shakespeare's Romance group in his 1938 poem "Musee des Beaux Arts." Among the Old Masters whom Auden has in mind we might well include a masterful dramatic framer:

About suffering they were never wrong,  
The Old Masters: how well they understood  
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood . . .

Auden goes on to consider Brueghel’s Icarus for its like framing of the "human position." Reading it, the pivotal scene from The Winter’s Tale comes to mind, in which the Clown reports death at sea and on land to his Shepherd father, who counts the day "lucky" for its personal boon of a foundling and gold (III.iii.59ff.). There is matter to rehearse in these last plays, regardless of whether they seem to flout expectations for literary realism. As Northrop Frye avers, "The profoundest kind of literary experience, the kind that we return to after we have, so to speak, seen everything, may be very close to the experience of a child listening to a story, too spellbound to question the narrative logic."\(^5\)

My approach to the three Romances preceding The Tempest does not aim at a thorough handling of their individual texts. Rather, I concern myself with the contours of Shakespeare’s imagination as it takes shape in the Romance variations culminating in The Tempest. Through selective highlighting I hope to reveal the continuities and progressions underlying the specific character of each work. In effect, I constellate the three previous Romances around The Tempest for the purpose of illuminating its distilled composition of romantically ambiguous elements. Basically,
its suggestive power is due in large part to Shakespeare's development of a middle earth focus for his dialectic play. In this approach, Pericles is taken as a play of pristine romantic outline, Cymbeline as an attempt at textured historical romance, a play of trial and error, and The Winter's Tale as a play of growing command, of integration between local circumstance and romantic telos.

Pericles, Prince of Tyre is an overt descendant of Greek and Latin romance, complete with shipwreck, attempted murder, committed and potential incest, separation and reunion of family members, pirates, visions, and other sensational narrative staples. As such it is a seminal instance of Shakespeare's acquaintance with classical and folk materials, and his facility in adapting givens to the play of his own mind. We are even reminded that the particular tale which bears repeating (in this case, Apollonius King of Tyre) has passed through many hands, including those of our Chorus, John Gower. A number of this plays's critics extend its lineage by supposing that Shakespeare revised a previous dramatic version in part or whole. The first two Acts are commonly cited as un-Shakespearian in verse and tone. Did he perform minor touch-up work on these Acts and then completely overhaul the remainder? Should we assume that the surmised original was the work of some lesser talent, or a scrapped enditing of a younger Shakespeare? The possible permutations can accommodate much scholarly conjecture. Certainly with Act
III the play seems to engage those gathered interests which we recognize as Shakespearean. But the cyclic structure of this work should give us pause before we conclude that the first two Acts are of uncertain authorship. Perhaps along with Shakespeare we are to appreciate the old-tale foreignness packing vintage themes which can come alive for us as the story works through its narrative cycles. We experience Acts I and II as if we were viewing a quaint series of emblematic pictures with moralized subtexts (spoken by Gower), which on second glance (Acts III-V) do have some bearing on a world resembling our own, while retaining their basic antiquarian formality.

By normal Shakespearean standards Pericles is a flat figure, yet in his life-story can be found the underpinnings of the last period's running concerns. Pericles' progress is from exposure to deadly sin in Antiochus' court, through stages of virtue rewarded and misfortune suffered (the latter seeming to cancel the former), to a reconstitution in favor and relatedness. Put simply, this work tracks a father and daughter as each steers a course through a tempestuous, or fallen, world with righteousness, patience, and faith for bearings. Gower says of Pericles that "He bears/ A tempest, which his mortal vessel tears,/ And yet he rides it out" (IV.iv.29-31). Marina summarizes her life-ordeal in like terms: "Born in a tempest when my mother died,/ This world to me is a lasting storm,/ Whirring me from my friends" (IV.i.18-20). The self is a vessel
susceptible to the wash of temporal currents, yet perseverant for whatever self-determination it can exert. It leads a dramatic and narrative existence, experiencing and formulating a life-story. In its position of receivership the self complements its own projected readings with those from other narrating voices, having to learn how to discriminate among messages and sources. By play's close we are conscious of those attributes which lead to a family's regained life in one another not just as moral traits, but as personal qualities which align selves with a storybook world.

Pericles' life-endangering venture for the hand of Antiochus' daughter is the stuff of which folk tales are made, and in this romance treatment we find a less displaced version of the perilous marriage suit than in the comically inflected Belmont legacy from *The Merchant of Venice*.

Portia's father has devised the three-casket riddle as a test of character, a screening process whose penalty removes failed suitors from the field of wooing (*Merch.* II.i.38-42). Antiochus, however, saves his daughter for himself, posing hapless suitors a perverse, self-reflexive riddle on whose solution they must stake their heads. The situation is a double bind for the questing prince because even if he hits upon the shameful answer, to announce it is to invite an incestuous monarch's stifling action. Pericles realizes with both feet in that something is rotten in Antioch, and resorts to a prudent periphrasis to make the
King aware that he has discovered the secret better left unspoken. The riddle's solution confers on the youthful protagonist an unwelcome knowledge of arch-sin, a kind of classical original sin. Allusions to the garden of the Hesperides (I.i.21,27-29) reinforce the implicit analogy with the subjection to sin in the garden of Eden. Golden fruit hangs from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and while Pericles is not guilty of plucking it, his attraction to superficial charms introduces him to a world whose hard meanings run far below skin-deep pleasures. In recoiling from this exposure, he plunges into a realm of tempestivity where there seems a doubtful correlation between right conduct and good fortune.

A trusting man, Pericles is taken in by yet another falsely glittering facade, although his acquaintance with loss disposes him to accept this later surface show. Despite his relief years before of a famine at Tharsus, that country's queen, Dionyza, betrays her custodial care of Pericles' daughter in a fit of jealousy. Unknown to Dionyza, however, her plot to have Marina murdered is foiled in the mesh of romantic happenstance. Browbeating her husband, Cleon, into a state of acquiescent silence after the supposed fact, she has an epitaph carved "In glitt'ring golden characters" (IV.iii.44) to make fair show of Marina's untimely death. Though not so reckless as Antiochus' riddle, this epitaph hints in passing at the dirty deed it is designed to cover: "She was of Tyrus the King's
daughter, On whom foul death hath made this slaughter" (IV.iv.36-37). Dionyza's inscribed reading plays on the land/sea dialectic of Pericles' misfortunes, making a conceit of Marina's sea-birth and land-death. Further reversals are in store, however, than the wicked 'stepmother' intends. She would have Pericles believe that Marina's body is buried in a tomb beneath the monument, believing herself that the girl's body has been cast in the sea. Ironically, Pericles will be reunited with his sea-child on the waters, which, like time, deprive and bestow in an unpredictable yet somehow cyclic manner. Beyond the delusive assurance of those who would deceive as well as those who are temporarily deceived, the net strings continue to be drawn, yielding what has been given up for lost.10

Shakespeare accents individual readings of larger circumstance throughout the play, holding up words spoken or written by the characters to the light of romantic verification. Those thinking that they are in control of circumstance are proven arrogantly mistaken. The last say is not theirs, but reserved for those who do not presume to speak in a conclusive, active voice. Pericles' narrative career is instructive in this respect. Having washed ashore at Pentapolis, he enters the lists in rusty armor to "tourney for" the love of King Simonides' daughter, Thaisa. The motto by which he identifies himself spells out his yet resilient demeanor: "In hac spe vivo" (II.ii.44). He lives in hope, bereft of material wherewithal, but retaining
native abilities. His capacity for trust is to be further scoured. Gaining his bride, this time a vessel of inner worth to match his own interiority, Pericles resides at Pentapolis, until news of the incestuous Antioch pair's lightning-strike demise prompts him to set sail for Tyre. He weathers another tempest, losing his queen to a "terrible child-bed" (III.i.56), and having to consign her body delivered of a daughter to the oozy sea-bed. Still, holding on to the outside chance that the coffin might reach shore, he encloses money and a scroll requesting the charitable service of proper burial. His declaration that "I, King Pericles, have lost/ This queen, worth all our mundane cost" (III.ii.70-71) is true by his lights, but premature according to the fulness of time which observes its own periods of gestation. Pericles is to learn that the self in receivership must be disposed beyond its own terms for living, even when certainty is strongest.

The reunion scenes with daughter and wife (V.i. and V.iii.) are scenes of narrative action, as traded life-stories produce emotional and physical responses in the participants. Prolonged sorrow has caused Pericles to withdraw into a stupor-like state of self-containment, and on ship's deck off the coast of Mytilene he occupies a curtained enclosure. Marina, bearing a life-narrative to match his own, breaks through her father's engrossment with past loss.11 She irrupts his dark sphere of concentration by reciting a story which distracts him from its givens,
drawing him out into a newly revealed world whose vitality nearly overwhelms him (V.i.190-94). In stop-and-go counterpointing which anticipates Prospero's tête-à-tête with Miranda (Temp. I.ii), Marina and her father rehearse a partial tale of separation and misapprehended reversals. Striving to meet the paradoxical qualities encountered with a credence that can be formulated, Pericles beckons his dead daughter to approach:

O, come hither,  
Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget;  
Thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tharsus,  
And found at sea again!  

(V.i.194-97)

Shakespeare is not simply staging aesthetically satisfying turnabouts. He is concerned with life's forces of invasion and the self's means of adjusting its premises for knowing and believing. The actor playing Pericles must seek to convey the ecstatic turmoil which negates long-felt experience of loss before a redefined reality unbound by self-certainty. Pericles' exclamation at his further reunion with Thaisa, "No more, you gods! your present kindness/ Makes my past miseries sports," (V.iii.40-41) is the cry of a man reeling from the relativity of personal truth. Marina and Thaisa have been dead to him, regardless of whether they have been alive to themselves. To reorient himself, Pericles must subordinate subjective sufficiency to the signs of a telling beyond individual say-so. In following Diana's theophanic command to recite past
tribulations "to the life" at Ephesus, Pericles rehearses a life-story whose significance surpasses individual ken and expectation. He takes up Marina's story with his own and delivers this extended narrative publicly, disposing himself beyond hope of fair return and receiving what he could not think to wish for. Even the surety of the conclusive deed is rendered conditional at such lengths: "I threw her overboard with these very arms" (V.iii.19). The weathered seafarer must come to accept on faith what he cannot otherwise acknowledge as his own.¹²

Shakespeare figures the tempestuous stretch during which patience is tried as a period of nominal abeyance. Ideally, this play associates naming with revelation. When time comes to full term, the "unborn event" (IV.45) transpires and can be named. Working backwards through the play, we can trace the preliminary movements which prepare the way for this expression of discovery. To start with the play's final scene, there is Thaisa's dramatic naming of Pericles (V.iii.14), an identification which sets the publicly confessed life-story in a new context of family reunion. Previously the containing telos has remained unapparent. Through a process of review and modification, however, the character-tellers have striven toward an enlarged understanding of their individual hardships. Thaisa's query, "Did you not name a tempest,/ A birth, and death?" (V.iii.33-34) witnesses that recognition of personal significance in narrative typicality which aligns involved
and detached viewpoints in a Romantic double perspective. Years before at a Pentapolis banquet she had relayed an unknown knight's name and misfortunes to her father (II.i.86-89); the telling expanded to include a wife and child, Thaisa realizes herself implicated in the stranger's story of loss and recovery. Naming for the central characters is an averment of relatedness over disjunction. Pericles names his sea-daughter Marina to remind himself, as the nurse Lychorida reports, that the infant is "all that is left living of your queen" (III.i.20). Losing her, Pericles loses the last trace of his wife as well. If Pericles is startled to hear a young maiden call herself Marina, he is overjoyed to regain memories of a wife in the living image of a daughter. As Marina asks, "Is it no more to be your daughter than/ To say my mother's name was Thaisa?" (V.i.209-10). As husband and father, Pericles needs corroboration and correction of his life-version, which entails a growing awareness of meanings attached to a name. In his younger days as a wooing Prince, he had been exposed to a vulgar riddle, a naming puzzle whose unspoken answer must have seemed contaminating to a modest mind. Arriving at Pentapolis, he could only admit having left Tyre to look "for adventures in the world" (II.i.83). As a more seasoned man, however, he confesses to have been "frightened from my country" (V.i.3). The fear of Antiochus' power and turpitude has passed with time and experience. Pericles knows the reciprocities of familial love without being
guilty of taking a daughter as a wife. He and his loved ones have endured the long interval of abeyance during which the consolation for injustice and misfortune has remained unproduced. The benison of reversal has been in the works, however; at the close of this play's markedly fabular cycle (Acts I-II), Pericles and Thaisa experience something of that favor in the teeth of adversity which will characterize their later reunion at Ephesus. Simonides acts as the agent of reprieve at this stage:

Therefore hear you, mistress, either frame
Your will to mine -- and you, sir, hear you --
Either be rul'd by me, or I'll make you --
Man and wife.
Nay come, your hands and lips must seal it too;
And being join'd, I'll thus your hopes destroy,
And for further grief -- God give you joy!
(II.v.81-87)

Through structural presage Shakespeare suggests that the setbacks of the righteous are like the obstacles presented by a father's calculated gruffness. Our acquaintance with the three following Romances confirms this point.14

Rehearsal for those opportune moments when proper names can be produced is associated in Shakespeare's play with the notion of appointed containment. Just as moments have their appointed time of ripeness, so, it is implied, should human vessels observe the conditions appointed them. A relation between human observance of time and place is in the making here. The qualities linked in a state of proper disposal principally relate the virtues of patience and temperance.
At play's start Pericles stumbles upon a case of gross intemperance and flaunted impatience, as a daughter's search for a husband has led her abruptly to her father's bed (see I.i.66-67). In The Merchant of Venice the golden casket harbors a death's head; unravelling the riddle's profane meaning, Pericles guesses what corruption the Princess contains, and rejects "this glorious casket stor'd with ill" (I.i.17). His own daughter, Marina, proves herself a vessel of tempered worth during her forced stay at a Mytilene brothel. Making the best of a degrading situation, she arranges to generate revenue for her keepers through honest means. Though bought by Pander and Bawd from the pirates for a thousand pieces (of gold, presumably), Marina refuses to be pegged (the low comic equivalent of naming) a piece of fleshy merchandise. She waits her time in chaste perseverance, exerting a scouring influence on those who approach her expecting a casual compliance to match their own.15

The natural limit of appointed containment is death for the individual, although Shakespeare tends to treat the verge of mortality as a margin of deliverance over loss, at least in the Romances. A new life emerges from Thaisa's body, leaving it apparently lifeless. Pericles commits his coffined gem to the sea, which washes the prized container landward, as it had done with Pericles' armor in the past. The tone of III.ii., the scene of Thaisa's recovery under the "good appliance" (1.86) of Lord Cerimon, heightens the
interplay of faith in vitality and acceptance of human limits. In it Shakespeare comes closest to staging a resurrection, although Cerimon's feat leaves us with a greater impression of skillful resuscitation than of any miraculous act. He is a wonder-working physician, a servant of Aesculapius, who through long study of "secret art" (1.32) has attained to knowledge of the "blest infusions" (1.35) contained in natural forms. His benevolent embodiment of Medean qualities makes him an obvious precursor to Prospero, but he realizes his limits as a healer. Wilson Knight brashly asserts that Cerimon functions "as Christ Himself in the Christian scheme."¹⁶ A second look at this scene points us toward a different conclusion. Practically at the scene's very start Shakespeare has Cerimon tell a servant that his master "will be dead ere you return,/ There's nothing can be minist'red to nature/ That can recover him" (11.7-9). The inversion of New Testament promise witnessing the power of faith working in the flesh is apparent. Christ, the Son of Man and Lord of Life, could tell those who had faith in Him that the deathward back home were already recovered.¹⁷ Shakespeare was very likely conscious of Cerimon's (and later, Prospero's) initial resemblance to Christ as a worker of wondrous signs, and so careful to demarcate the extent of merely human powers. The accent falls finally not upon the isolated marvelous instance of retrieval from death's grip, but upon subjective experience of the quickening and
deadening principles governing existence beyond human control or approval. From this perspective Pericles as well as Thaisa undergoes a near-death experience, submerged in the finality of loss and hopelessness. Restored to life anew, he must disabuse himself of the deep-felt sorrow which in retrospect must seem an illusory spell self-cast. If he cannot fathom the mystery of life-out-of-death, he can participate in the spirit of paradoxical rebirth: "O, come, be buried/ A second time within these arms" (V.iii.43-44).

Shakespeare's decision to name his play Pericles after its romantic protagonist is understandable; why Cymbeline is chosen as the title character for the next Romance is not immediately clear. Several other characters, especially Imogen, occupy the foreground of attention more commandingly. However, it may be that in his role as head of family and state Cymbeline serves as the most prominent figure for this play's assembled interests. In a play full of misunderstanding, hastiness, and self-assertion, King Cymbeline embodies many of the traits in need of correction. He unwittingly presides over a welter of conflict and coincidence. Following upon the cyclical, fabular experience of Pericles, Cymbeline seems a sprawling concoction, almost an indulgence in the complexities of happenstance. In writing semi-historical romance, Shakespeare opts for a mass of variegated material, desiring to produce an effect of realistic diversity in tone and detail. That is, he attempts to simulate the derivation of
romantic wonder from the midst of quotidian turmoil. Insofar as he succeeds, he does so at the expense of dramatic focus and thematic control. As Hallett Smith suggests, "Perhaps nothing is sustained in Cymbeline, but there is plenty of variety of mood and tone and poetic intensity."\textsuperscript{18}

Put simply, in Cymbeline Shakespeare twines a national topic (matter of Britain) with another turn on the romantic separation and reunion of family members. Compared with the tempest-tossed proceedings in Pericles, the action in Cymbeline mainly occurs on home ground. However, the dramatic situation is tempestuous, as the characters find themselves "whirred" from secure relations into a state of confusion and mistrust. In dramatizing a ruling family's disorder eventually set to rights, Shakespeare presents an imaginary righting of British empire vis-à-vis the Roman empire from which it proudly claims sovereign descent.\textsuperscript{19} He also works out the romantic motif of a younger generation's healing influence on the prior generation's rifts. The disruption of Britain's first family is mainly due to Cymbeline's poor judgment and peremptory decisionmaking. Years previous he had banished a faithful lord, Belarius, wrongly accused of treason; Belarius secretly countered by having the King's two young sons kidnapped. Further, in taking a second wife, Cymbeline has installed a scheming woman as Queen. This unnamed Queen serves as the play's wicked stepmother, a dabbler in the chemistry of poisons.
As such she indicates the twin lines of descent from Dionyza to Sycorax and Cerimon to Prospero. The theme of jealousy from Pericles is amplified, with the Queen unscrupulously advancing her son Cloten's interests as Dionyza does her daughter Philoten's. Imogen sees through the Queen's front of solicitude, however, knowing her to be a manipulator of Cymbeline's affections. Imogen's husband Posthumus Leonatus has ostensibly been banished for presuming to marry into the royal family; Imogen recognizes the Queen's ambitions for her son to fill that first place in succession to the throne. Cloten himself is a living example of court-bred arrogance and conceit, a bully with a fool's head on his shoulders. If faced with the choice among three caskets for winning Imogen, he would pick the silver one, thinking himself deserving of the prize. On the national level, the Queen and Cloten press for a rupture in relations between Britain and Rome. While they can generally be counted on to foment dissension, in this case the assertion of independence through refusal to pay tribute gives Shakespeare an opportunity to engage in Anglophile rhetoric (III.i.11-33) of dubious ironic tint. Further, romantic machination calls for division into contraries, so that a dialectic of reversal may be enacted, transforming animosity and rigor into paradoxical clemency.

The theme of jealousy is not simply replayed in Cymbeline, it is enlarged upon. By means of a love wager plot, Shakespeare explores jealousy as a symptom of
impatience and bad faith. As his testimony to Imogen's purity is vehement, so our banished hero's provoked misogyny is severe. Posthumus may have acquired his less admirable traits in his courtly upbringing, where chivalrous pride and stiffnecked honor make a man. When Jachimo produces as his trump the bracelet Posthumus has given Imogen as a token of their binding love, the newlywed responds violently. Philario's comment upon Posthumus' stormy exit is revealing: "Quite besides/ The government of patience! . . ./ Let's follow him, and pervert the present wrath/ He hath against himself" (II.iv.149-52). Posthumus' wrath is a self-affliction, a passionate outburst unrelated to reality but none the less absorbing. In his humiliation he grasps at an ennobling anger, and will not be shaken from it. In a sense he savors the betrayal, and to prevent further confusion of his self-image holds Jachimo to his story of seductive satisfaction:

If you swear you have not done't, you lie,
And I will kill thee if thou dost deny
Thou'st made me cuckold.

(II.iv.144-46)

The self-reflexiveness of some predominant emotion, its possible aggravated disjunction from things as they are, holds Shakespeare's interest throughout the Romances. Pericles suffers a sea-sorrow which isolates him from a world that gives as well as takes. More guiltily, Posthumus throws himself into a jealous rage, and directs that his innocent wife be murdered. The stage is set for a case of
self-seizure that allows Shakespeare to probe the dark hollows of sin: Leontes' "affection." Having dealt at length with such soul-sickness in *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare returns to a somewhat more abstract study of sea-sorrow in *The Tempest*, although Alonso's malady reflects the progress from Pericles' affliction to Leontes'. We come to feel that Shakespeare is leading us deep into the overlapping regions of human faith and faithlessness.

*Cymbeline* presents a virtual panoply of faith and faithlessness in action. Skepticism and belief, duplicity and devotion, confront and intermingle as characters with widely different motives become caught up in the mesh of wills, wiles, and mistake. Shakespeare surveys the ways in which faith may be withheld, reposed, misplaced, kept, and abused. The man in the middle of all this cross-play is Pisanio, servant to Posthumus and faithful attendant to Imogen, who finds he must work by contraries: "Wherein I am false, I am honest; not true, to be true" (IV.iii.42). Striving not to be the dupe of the Queen or Cloten, he puts up a fair front to match their own. That neither he nor Imogen suspects the "cordial" he has obtained from the Queen does seem inconsistent, but it sets up a double reversal similar to that in *Pericles* whereby Dionyzia's deceit is incorporated in the crossings of romantic chance. The Queen trusts that Dr. Cornelius has supplied her with a slow-acting but deadly poison, while in fact his mistrust of her has led him to substitute a drug that induces a temporary
death-like trance. The poison meant for Pisanio is passed to Imogen, but this substance transferred from hand to hand is neither what the Queen nor Pisanio thinks it. Again, when Cloten later bullies Pisanio into revealing that Imogen has departed for the woodlands around Milford Haven, the proof Pisanio produces is the false letter of assignation from Posthumus to Imogen, itself a cover for a murderous directive Pisanio feigns to have carried out. Pisanio cannot stop Cloten from pursuing his own scheme for vengeance, but he trusts that matters may yet work themselves out for the best beyond the reach of personal knowledge and control:

All other doubts, by time let them be clear'd,
Fortune brings in some boats that are not steer'd.
(IV.iii.45-46)

By this point the reader or playgoer should be nearly as bewildered by the tangle of events as is Pisanio. The audience does retain an advantage in viewpoint, but at the close of Act IV it is not at all clear how the bundle of complications will be resolved.

That the play's attention is gradually shifting from Cymbeline's court toward the countryside of southwest Britain should be fairly apparent, however. The scene of battle between the British and Roman armies is within hearing distance of Belarius' cave (IV.iv.1). Shakespeare makes arrangements for a pastoral dialectic between the values of courtly cultivation and those of a natural
upbringing. Belarius lambasts the affectation and treacherous politics of court life; Guiderius and Arviragus, chafing under the tranquilities of country life, long to join combat against the Romans. Presumably, it is only natural that their royal blood should manifest itself in princely forwardness and an immediate affection for their disguised sister, Imogen/Fidele. The summary way in which Guiderius dispatches Cloten is, it must be admitted, refreshingly direct, if somewhat impulsive. Shakespeare seems of two minds on the question of nobility and natural virtue. On the one hand, he views common humaneness as an equalizing force, an expression of each self's natural nobility; on the other, he hesitates to discard the notion of hereditary distinction among men. Guiderius and Arviragus have benefited from an upbringing in which their royal status has been kept from them, but when the time of trial arrives they prove themselves princes among men. Shakespeare explores the nuances of the nature/nurture question with even greater dramatic poise in The Winter's Tale, where a princess thinking herself no more than a lowly shepherdess avers the elemental democracy of men and women beneath the sun.

Ever conscious of how theatrical appurtenances lend themselves to a posing of the relations between what is apparent and what is the case, Shakespeare exploits the uses of clothing as disguise in his play. The shedding of pretense and other instilled faults is likened by Posthumus
to a change of garb: "To shame the guise o' the world, I will begin/ The fashion: less without and more within" (V.i.32-33). Regretting his rash order that Imogen be killed, Posthumus undergoes a turnabout, and exchanges his "Italian weeds" for the cover of a British peasant. His antithetical mood is in keeping with the pastoral climate, and as a man whose natural worth can at last express itself he joins the two Princes and Belarius in valorous soldiery. Imogen also dons a disguise, appearing as a boy whose name designates the faithfulness by which she is trying to live. As with Pisanio, Imogen and Posthumus resort to misleading fronts in order to retain their integrity. Cloten, however, rankling from Imogen's earlier rebuff (II.iii.133-36), dresses himself in an outfit of Posthumus' with the intent of killing the husband and raping the wife. This crass attempt at irony is turned against its perpetrator in the play's overriding mechanics of coincidence. Cloten does lie with Imogen, minus his "clotpole," which Guiderius has severed. A failed instrument of wooing (II.iii.20-26), his head floats to sea, to "tell the fishes he's the Queen's son, Cloten" (IV.ii.153). The Orpheus parody highlights the literary context in which this rough humor is to be taken. In a sense, Cloten's literal-minded stab at impersonation (i.e., clothes make the man) brings out his own worst nature, and he goes mortally afoul of the play's theatrical/ethical code.
Reversal abounds as Imogen awakes from her drugged sleep and mistakes Cloten's headless corpse for that of her husband. If unlikely, the situation is dramatically choice, providing an occasion for poetic comment on joy, ruin, sleep, dream, death, and mortal mystery in general. Imogen first takes what she sees for an emblem: "These flow'rs are like the pleasures of the world;/ This bloody man, the care on't" (IV.ii.296-97). The thought of graves or bodies strewn or decked with flowers appeals to Shakespeare's imagination. Love and vitality mingle with loss and death, blurring the distinction between flowers offered in memory of past existence and those enjoyed in life's season. A live body draped across a dead one also gives rise to poetic speculation. As Trinculo and Caliban make comically strange bed-fellows in The Tempest, misery acquaints Imogen with a strange partner of her own.20 When Caius Lucius, the Roman general, comes upon the pair, he balks at the idea of a live person choosing to sleep upon a corpse:

How? a page?
Or dead, or sleeping on him? But dead rather;
For nature doth abhor to make his bed
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead.
(IV.ii.355-58)

This notion of sleep upon the dead may not be envisioned as literally elsewhere as it is here, but it recurs throughout the Romances as a figure for that psychic plunge which causes characters to be estranged in sorrow and dreamlike loss. Pericles is lost to the world in mourning for Thaisa
and Marina, Leontes performs an extended penance at
Hermione's tomb, and Alonso would join Ferdinand on the
muddy sea bed. Eventually the mists are dispelled,
revealing a more clement reality in which they are to take
their places sensitized to the give-and-take of a common
life. They undergo a second waking, refreshed as they
emerge from a troubled spell which has held them in
spiritual arrest. As Dr. Cornelius says of the compound
Imogen will take:

there is
No danger in what show of death it makes,
More than the locking up the spirits a time,
To be more fresh, reviving.
(I.v.39-42)

When Posthumus wakes from his sleep, he retains a
riddling souvenir of the theophanic pageant carried on round
about him. The blatant recourse to deus ex machina, further
substantiated by the tablet which thwarts the urge to stage
it as a conjectural visionary interlude, marks Shakespeare's
peak exploitation of romantic contrivance as a means of
confirming behind-the-scenes oversight. The studied
mannerism of Jupiter's descent suggests that Shakespeare
thought it best to emphasize authorial manipulation, perhaps
as a forcing of the aesthetic issue surrounding the artist's
attempt to simulate multiplicity and intuit unity at once.21
The de-emphasis of divine intervention in The Winter's Tale
and The Tempest indicates that Shakespeare steadily realized
Romance's potential as a vehicle for dramatizing the
significance of human unknowing as a principle of subjective existence and historical movement. In Cymbeline the matching of romantic device and character response is in adjustment, and when evaluating the former we should not lose sight of the latter. Posthumus has consigned Imogen to the dead in a fit of unwarranted anger, replaying with a difference Pericles' sorrowful commitment of Thaisa to the sea. The prophetic remnant of his dream partially riddles, "When as a lion's whelp shall to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embrac'd by a piece of tender air." (V.iv.138-40). His series of responses shows him backing away from initial dismissal to a more receptive admission of nescience:

'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen
Tongue and brain not; either both or nothing,
Or senseless speaking, or a speaking such
As sense cannot untie.

(V.iv.145-48)

This passage works the same vein of incapacity as Bottom's comic speechlessness before his dream (IV.i.205-16), Macbeth's despair in tragic extremity (V.v.19-28), and Prospero's release of pressure at the mind's floodgates (IV.i.148-58). The conclusion Posthumus reaches is in standing with the reorientation of self Shakespeare practices and refines throughout his Romance period: "Be what it is,/ The action of my life is like it, which/ I'll keep, if but for sympathy" (V.iv.148-50). What Posthumus recognizes is that his life proceeds along lines which do
not follow reason's ground rules, and that it may be more aptly related to him in paradoxical terms. While fatalistic yet, expecting no better than the promise of a summary execution, he keeps the tablet, whereas he forfeited the ring signifying marital faith kept with Imogen.

The exchange between Posthumus and the philosophical Jailer which completes the scene is a good instance of Shakespeare's facility with gallows humor. Posthumus simply readies himself for a welcome end, while the Jailer waxes ironic on death's relief and blindness. Misunderstanding his charge's positiveness, the Jailer jaws about mortal anxiety (V.iv.172-84) in terms that recall Hamlet's soliloquy upon the "undiscover'd country." Shakespeare even seems to make light of the lyric strains in Cymbeline, the Jailer's "fear no more tavern bills" (V.iv.159) echoing Arviragus and Guiderius' song "Fear no more the heat o' th' sun" (IV.ii.258ff.). To die is to be quit of nagging contradictions that converge upon humanity. The peculiar virtue of death by hanging is that it "sums up" all the confusion and imbalance accrued over a lifetime, "of what's past, is, and to come, the discharge" (168-69). Also, the Jailer's association of reeling drunkenness and hanging anticipates some of the free interplay of Tempest elements. Hazy thinking, whether of inestimable loss or golden opportunity, is answered by "the charity of a penny cord," which settles all the fuss of getting on and making sense. Still, hanging is suspect as an easy way out of mortal
perplexity, an invalid lightening of the weight middle man must carry on his burdened but functional legs.

So when Posthumus is led off to appear before the King as a Roman prisoner (playing both sides of the field in his regretful world-weariness), he faces not a sentence of death but his own pardoned guiltiness. The release he obtains is coextensive with the embarrassment he suffers, as he unwittingly strikes his wife, "Fidele," for trespassing upon his dramatic self-abandonment to grief and mortification. Jachimo, wearing the forfeited ring, has confessed his duplicity under question by Imogen; consequently, while Posthumus mainly dwells on his own fault, he needs to be shaken out of that self-reflexive habit which betrayed him in the first place. In extending pardon to Jachimo, Posthumus reveals a newly-gained sense of reciprocity between self and other, expressed by a paradoxical reversal of will: 23

Kneel not to me.
The pow'r that I have on you is to spare you;
The malice towards you, to forgive you. Live,
And deal with others better.

(v.v.417-20)

Posthumus passes on in turn the forgiveness and responsibility conferred by Imogen.

The whole closing movement in Cymbeline proceeds on such a dialectic pivot, as rigor and self-assertion come to speak in tones of pliancy and receivership. Most of the parties
at hand stand in danger of Cymbeline's retribution, but the
King himself finds the pronouncement of strict judgment
checked by the counterforce of public dispensation. A prime
beneficiary of the unraveling story, he cedes his partial
perspective to the collective experience of conversion.
Britain's royal family is reunited in a flurry of
epiphanies, minus the adverse mother-son pair whose
influence is winnowed as their life-stories are closed.
Though victorious, Cymbeline extends the favor visited upon
him and his to the Romans, promising to pay freely the
tribute which could not be exacted. Imogen's liberality to
Posthumus is reciprocated in his graciousness to the Italian
cozener; following his son-in-law's example, the British
patriarch reconciles his realm's sovereignty with its Roman
lineage.

So much at least of the play's larger outline is fairly
discernible. Yet, as E. M. W. Tillyard comments with some
justification, in *Cymbeline* Shakespeare "is unable to adjust
his methods to the new wealth of content; with the result
that his main concern becomes blurred and remote, and the
details become more emphatic than the end it was their
business to forward." Part of the problem lies in
Shakespeare's decision to write romanticized history. The
requirements of his national themes are not always
compatible with his more fundamental interests. As a
result, the coalescence of concerns becomes overly dependent
upon plot manipulations, as if the drama could gain
integrity simply by being knotted together at enough junctures. In *The Tempest* Britain as emerald isle would be replaced by a less parochial insular setting, a place apart from national pride where characters might indulge in visions of a new order less attached to the playwright's patriotic gestures. The transition involves an opening of the pastoral dimension beyond local considerations, an urge Imogen voices from the confines of Cymbeline's palace: "Would I were/ A neat-herd's daughter, and my Leonatus/ Our neighbor shepherd's son!" (I.i.148-50). Shakespeare arranges each of these movements in his next production.

*The Winter's Tale* seems more in line with the pendants of Shakespearean Romance as embodied in *Pericles* than does *Cymbeline*, although certain continuities identify the three works as a series. Polixenes' sudden departure from the poisoned air of Leontes' court repeats with a difference Pericles' flight from Antiochus' court, and to a lesser extent Posthumus' forced departure from Cymbeline's court. Our attention is not allowed to stray far outside the claustrophobic environs of the Sicilian king's palace, however. Pericles' chary remark that "Kings are earth's gods; in vice their law's their will" (I.i.103) is here dramatized in an atmosphere of tyrannical oppression. King Leontes combines the qualities of a threatening father (Cymbeline) and jealous husband (Posthumus), the virulence of whose bad faith could well precipitate widespread tragedy. Although Leontes' vice is a perverse distemper
rather than an incestuous corruption such as Antiochus', his imagination is incestuous insofar as it fornicates with its own inventions and shuns outside interference. As if to magnify the direness of human error over which romantic alleviation countervails, Shakespeare juxtaposes tragic nullity and the restorative powers of a world of difference.

While Pericles recoils from his exposure to moral taint, Leontes shows interest in the jaundiced condition to which he is subject. Shakespeare replays the hard introduction to fallen human nature which opens his first Romance, this time charting not a young hero's submergence in a mixed world's realities but a family man's self-immersion in the darkness of his own depths. The reminiscence of youthful friendship and innocence shared between Leontes and Polixenes paints an Edenic past which as adults they have placed behind them. Leontes finds in his son's features his own purer childhood, not yet subject to the uncontrollable urges such as now consume him. Years later he will find in Florizel the countenance of Polixenes' young manhood, recalling that of a youthful Leontes. Then, however, the long-suffered consequences of his willful embrace of original sin will have fulfilled the preconditions for recovery of what cannot be reasonably expected or deserved.

Not wishing to cover the same ground as in Othello, Shakespeare makes Leontes' jealousy apparently motiveless. As Wilson Knight starkly puts it, "the poet is concerned not
with trivialities, but with evil itself, whose cause remains as dark as theology." The sudden seizure to which he consents and succumbs is well termed by Leontes an "affection" (I.ii.138). It is a turnabout which defies explanation, a disruptive influence which seems to originate from within and without. "Affliction" and "infection" are blended in its syllables. Moreover, in its sense as used by Leontes it is strikingly opposed to the "affection" between himself and Polixenes spoken of by Camillo (I.i.24). Eventually, in the play's penultimate scene, a meaning is synthesized from these opposites to express a positive jealousy: "Thither with all greediness of affection are they gone, and there they intend to sup" (V.ii.102-03). Leontes himself forces the significance of his "affection" by engaging in a fraudulent dialectic between nothing and something, making something out of nothing through a violent jar of logic:

With what's unreal thou co-active art,
And fellow'st nothing. Then 'tis very credent
Thou may'st co-join with something, and thou dost
(And that beyond commission), and I find it
(And that to the infection of my brains
And hard'ning of my brows).

(I.ii.141-46)

In his disturbance he grasps vaguely (144-45: "that . . . it . . . that") at the unlikely, not as an unusually receptive mind entertains possibility, but with a desire to justify his rancorous suspicions. He stokes his jealousy by telling Hermione to welcome Polixenes, assuring himself that
he is giving his wife and friend angling line. His heated imagination proposes in torturing, intimate detail an adulterous, nearly juvenescent romance between them (I.ii.284-92). Leontes is not to be contradicted in his self-sufficient jealousy, and, like Posthumus, would have the truth go hang if it crossed his agonizing, satisfying conception of the wrong done him. Having nourished nothing into an all-absorbing something,28 in all-or-none willfulness he repulses Camillo's defense of the Queen:

Is this nothing?
Why then the world and all that's in't is nothing,
The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia nothing,
My wife is nothing, nor nothing have these nothings,
If this be nothing.
(I.ii.292-96)

The cynical irony of this outburst is contrapuntal to the anxious slippage of Prospero's revels speech. Prospero struggles to project a human context for moral discernment; Leontes casts such consideration to the winds in seeking only to vindicate his offended self. As he proceeds to magnify the offense to include a treasonous plot against his life, it becomes clear that jealousy is the dominant symptom of a cancerous spiritual malady. His nihilistic tantrum comes to exhibit the signs of what Kierkegaard diagnoses as potentiated despair:29

Revolting against the whole of existence, it thinks it has hold of a proof against it, against its goodness. This proof the despairer thinks he himself is, and that is what he wills to be, therefore he wills to be himself, himself with his torment, in order with this torment to protest against the whole of existence.30
Whereas in Greene's Pandosto the King's wife Bellaria appeals to Apollo, in The Winter's Tale Leontes thinks to do so. However, Leontes is so defiant that even an oracle cannot make him abandon his fantasy, that fabricated something which negates contrary witness, no matter how authorized. The revelation of his tyranny and the innocence of all those he has driven out of his life runs counter to his despairing strain of inward-turning "affection."

Hermione has seen that she is a victim of a groundless, perilous passion: "My life stands in the level of your dreams,/ Which I'll lay down" (III.ii.81-82).

Interestingly, once made to feel the consequences of his rashness in the death of Prince Mamillius, his single remaining precious object, Leontes easily pieces together the circumstantial evidence and confesses the true course of events (III.ii.153-72). The Romance interest in the narrative of living surfaces once more, this time as a leading character's slanted version of events gives way before the true reading temporarily blocked through sheer force of will. From defiant despair Leontes collapses into the despair of forsakenness, a guilt-induced parallel to Pericles' withdrawal into a state of spiritual inertia.

Paulina presides over the chastened Leontes in a reversal of the anti-feminist strain running through the first several Acts. Talk of paradisal youth early on has led to pointed hints about "temptations" strewn across manhood's path. Polixenes engages in playful banter (I.ii.76-79), but
Leontes magnifies woman's fault in a fit of misogyny. His all-or-none thinking evokes matching extremes in those who try to rebut him. Antigonus swears that if Hermione be proven other than a paragon of fidelity, he will have his three young daughters gelded (II.i.143-50). The anti-feminist tradition, picturing women either as patient Griseldas or unruly temptresses, lurks in such dialogue. Even as voices are raised in defense of Hermione, the air is thick with male conjectural disgust. Leontes chides Antigonus for being wife-ridden, though he himself betrays insecurity before the sharpness of Paulina's candor. In that his transgression stems from a "weak-hing'd fancy" (II.iii.119) rather than any material motive, his guilt is due not to any external temptation accepted but to the toiling subversions of the self. Shakespeare seems to imply that in taking a hard fall this particular Adam tries to shift the blame onto Eve. In its revolt, the self-bounded existence indicts the lures and corruption of the flesh, which is so handily associated or identified with 'the weaker sex.' Hermione serves as the repository for transferred guilt, and girds herself with the patience of a persecuted heroine: "the action I now go on/ Is for my better grace" (II.i.121-22). In bringing Hermione to trial, Leontes compiles his case against the world, vaunting in subjective say-so while his words flicker with the meaning he holds at bay: "All's true that is mistrusted" (II.i.48).32
Themes of encasement observed in *Pericles* and diffused in *Cymbeline* (for instance, Jachimo in the trunk, II.ii) are collected once again in *The Winter's Tale*. As Thaisa bears Marina on board a storm-tossed ship, Hermione bears Perdita prematurely in prison. Both infants are delivered in close quarters, the first soon exposed to elemental turbulence though in safekeeping, the second released only to be shipped away and abandoned to an inimical fate, yet adopted as the play's tragicomedy becomes more clearly defined in III.iii. In coming for the child, Paulina argues that birth should free from man-imposed strictures as it does from the prison of the womb (II.ii.57-61). For Shakespeare, containment is a fact of life, release an elusive and paradoxical quality inextricably involved with its dialectic opposite. The tension between spirit and body, freedom and confinement, liberty and restraint, with all its crossings, is entered into and analogically diversified as Shakespeare works toward the multivalent suspension of *The Tempest*.

A developing thematic corollary to this principle of encasement is that of willing and unwilling servitude. Shakespeare includes in his Romances a series of retainers who respond variously to the commands and interests of others. The loyal retainer, such as Pisanio or Camillo (and later, Gonzalo), serves the better nature of his superior, and if necessary transfers allegiance when undue demands are placed on him. Pretending to bow before Leontes' charge that he poison Polixenes, Camillo proceeds to turn himself
over to Polixenes and spirit the man away from danger. He dedicates "That [which] lies enclosed in this trunk" to be taken "along impawn'd" in good faith (II.i.435-36). Later he will gamble on the chance that Leontes, Polixenes, Florizel, Perdita, and himself might all best be served by a return to the scene of past betrayal. Then again, a retainer may be an impawned instrument of a different sort. Assuming a role rejected by Camillo, Antigonus allows himself to be placed in a position of accursed loyalty by Leontes, and suffers the consequences. Although his predicament calls for a sympathetic response, he does seem to be weighed in the balance and found wanting. Recounting his shipboard dream of Hermione's shade directing that he leave the lost infant (hence, Perdita) on the coast of Bohemia, Antigonus presumes that he is laying the babe "upon the earth/ Of its right father," Polixenes (III.ii.45-46). Interpreting so, he shows himself not as steadfast in good faith as he could be, and somewhat too resigned to his imposed role: "Weep I cannot,/ But my heart bleeds, and most accru'sd am I" (III.ii.51-52). Like Cleon in Pericles, for want of moral fiber or ethical autonomy he is not his own man first, so an unwilling yet finally acquiescent subordinate to another's manipulative will. In a rough twist of Shakespearean humor, his forfeited vessel is repossessed by Nature in the form of a hungry bear.

Nature's voraciousness is observed on land and at sea in this hinged scene (III.iii.), as the instruments of Leontes'
will are swallowed, and a process of recovery starts to surface from the midst of loss. The consciousness of a turning point is not veiled, but rather displayed, as in the contrapuntal words of the Shepherd to his Clown son: "thou met'st with things dying, I with things new-born" (III.iii.113-14). The exchange between Clown and Shepherd recalls the earthy humaneness of the fishermen in Pericles (II.i.). Sympathy and helplessness come to grips in the Clown's back-and-forth report of sunken ship and devoured gentleman. To the Shepherd's wish that he could have been on hand to lend aid to the distressed nobleman, his son counters, "I would you had been by the ship side, to have help'd her; there your charity would have lack'd footing" (III.iii.109-11). On what footing does charity operate? The implicit query obviously cannot be answered other than through recourse to dramatic supposition. By endowing a master illusionist with a restive moral imagination in The Tempest, Shakespeare embeds such inquiry in the very landscape and seascape. Miranda suffers along with those seafarers she has witnessed being inundated, but the voice of Prospero assures that there has been no loss. Charity has had footing under special hypothetical conditions, despite all appearance to the contrary. In The Winter's Tale the imaginative mood is not yet quite so rarefied, but arrangements for a dramatically inherent dialogue between faith and skepticism are very much in the works.
Following upon the further transition device of Time's speech in IV.i.35 (a reminder of Gower's capacity as Chorus in Pericles), and a scene between Camillo and Polixenes for establishing background, we are ushered into a thawing world by a rogue of festive spirits. Autolycus insinuates himself into the main artery of the play's exfoliating plot, first fleecing the Clown of his money for supplies, then maximizing his take as vendor and cutpurse at the sheep-shearing feast, later still exploiting his middle man position between the rustics and Prince Florizel for additional speculative gain. He is a song man, a welcomer of spring, and in concert with these agreeable qualities, an exuberant shyster. Reenacting the plight of the beaten man by the wayside, he relieves the Good Samaritan Clown of his money purse.36 He delights in his disreputable career, which he recounts to his unsuspecting coney. While no master of disguise, for the gullible Shepherd and Clown he plays several roles, though finally recognizing himself an unwilling instrument of the Fortune he had thought his pliant mistress. A derelict retainer, Autolycus takes advantage of his exchange of garments with the Prince to pose as a courtier before the rustic father and son, and unwittingly directs them to the ship that will carry them away to Sicilia and advancement. The Shepherd's misled judgment, "He was provided to do us good" (IV.iii.829-30), comes true beyond the lights of the deceived and the deceiver. Unlike Camillo, Autolycus resorts to loyalty and
trust in eventuality because he presumes that the skein of
contingence serves him with a no-lose situation. Fortune,
however, enlists his candid roguery in its service. Once in
Sicilia, this jack-of-all-cons is grounded upon foreign
soil, and his kind of truant vitality gives way before a
life-restoring energy truer to the spirit of vernal
resurgence. In the pattern of those characters who presume
too much upon their shifty devices and self-assurance (such
as Dionyza and Cloten in more aggravated forms), Autolycus' unruility is dampened, with the suggestion that he may
return to serve Prince Florizel and wear three-pile more
becomingly, despite his predilection for self-service.
Those who would have Autolycus irrepresible to the end must
downplay the judgmental tendency of the Romances leading
toward the treatment of Stephano and Trinculo in The
Tempest. While Autolycus is certainly more resilient than
this pair, his opportunism is backgrounded by a more
commanding sense of occasion as appointed term. Shakespeare
instills great comic energy in his roguish characters, but
he also reminds us that when licentiousness is given full
tether, such energy tends to wear thin and reveal an uglier
aspect. Basically, behavior according to "What You Will"
does not partake of kind-ness, and when drawn out to an
uninhibited expression the contrast becomes clear.

Autolycus welcomes the end of winter partially because
the hedges are abloom with white sheets good for filching.
He also sings of avian "summer songs for me and my aunts,/
While we lie tumbling in the hay" (IV.iii.11-12). Spring and summer blend into a spell of bounty and flowing juices. The sheep-shearing feast at which he makes a profitable appearance also suggests an early spring to late summer span. This is mainly due to Perdita's cross-seasonal guise, appearing as "no shepherdess, but Flora/ Peering in April's front" (IV.iv.2-3). In her role as queen and hostess of the feast, Perdita accommodates the various age groups of those in attendance with flowers to match their life-seasons. So while she herself enjoys the springtime of young womanhood, in her capacity as Flora she displays a year-round consciousness and, even more, consideration. Michael Goldman observes that the Romance plays "offer us emblems which suggest that a conformity exists between natural process and our deepest intuitions of human kindness. Their heroines are figures in whom nature is interested, and they are seen extending that interest to others."37 Perdita literally extends such interest in a manner that prepares the way for Prospero's masque-like vision of elemental, seasonal, and human congress:

Determining which flowers would befit the age of Polixenes and Camillo (who have come in disguise), Perdita passes over those which are the product of cross-breeding. The consequent art/nature discussion between Polixenes and Perdita is interesting. perhaps less for the ostensible disagreement than for the ironic reversal of positions involved. Polixenes argues for the breeding of gentler and
wilder stock even though he strongly opposes his son's marriage to a captivating shepherdess.

You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentler scion to the wildest stock,
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race.

(IV.iv.92-95)

Perdita, not knowing herself cast forth as a bastard by her father, returns that she will not plant those colorful hybrids "Which some call Nature's bastards" (1.83):

No more than were I painted I would wish
This youth should say 'twere well, and only therefore
Desire to breed by me.

(IV.iv.101-03)

While Perdita argues against artifice, she would have to admit that her marriage to Prince Florizel, at least from the King's viewpoint, is a cross-breeding. Between the lines of debate, however, we perceive a concors discordia that reaches beyond the knowledge of the contestants:

Pol. The art itself is Nature.
Per. So it is.

(IV.iv.97)

Polixenes and Perdita actually argue along the same line as far as her marriage to the Prince is concerned. Despite Polixenes' undisguised charge that Perdita is a "fresh piece/ Of excellent witchcraft" (IV.iv.422-23), Florizel holds that her charm, like her beauty and worth, is naturally noble. Shakespeare follows through the pastoral dialectic of Cymbeline, arranging matters so that he can
validate love's discernment of the self's natural nobility while retaining the proof of hereditary, or royal, nobility. Perdita is a shepherdess who would remind a King that the sun shines alike on palace and cottage (IV.iv.442-46), but also a long-lost Princess in a world of degree and distinction.

Those spring flowers she lacks to grace the youth present Perdita would twine into garlands, and "strew [Florizel] o'er and o'er!" The confusion of love's green world and the intrusive memento mori, enacted in Cymbeline as Imogen mistakes Cloten's headless corpse for Posthumus', here appears a lighthearted rehearsal of interwoven thoughts on love and death:

Flo.  What? like a corse?
Per.  No, like a bank, for love to lie and play on;
      Not like a corse; or if -- not to be buried,
      But quick and in mine arms.  (IV.iv.129-32)

The words of Pericles to a loved one whose burial at sea he had performed, "O, come, be buried/ A second time within these arms," are echoed in the playful tones of a young lover assuming the guise of a vernal genius. Bodies left unburied, wreathed with the trappings of love and death, may prove to have been hastily lost to life; those who wrap themselves in knowingness and the shroud of finality may also prove to have been hastily lost to life.38 Perdita robes herself in "unusual weeds" (IV.iv.1), and disposes herself to uncommon entertainment of Nature's creativity.
Once the feast is disrupted by Polixenes, there still remain approximately four hundred lines of dialogue until scene's close. With characters exiting, reentering, and drawing aside for transparent staging reasons, the wheels of machination tend to grind somewhat audibly. Shakespeare must arrange for the main characters to embark for Sicilia in two ships, the second in pursuit of the first. Yet even in these maneuvers we see the Shakespearean aptitude for thematic exploitation of plot mechanics. Annoyed that Florizel should so stubbornly flout his wishes, Polixenes threatens dire consequences if the snuffed courtship should rekindle. His reaction may seem overly harsh, but Polixenes here fills the role of the gruff father opposing the ideal match proposed by the young lovers, and so provides the impetus for the decisive remove to Sicilia. His threats are those of an angry king, hence unconsidered, to be neutralized by the clarification of amorous devotion. Perdita would modestly resign herself to the rude awakening from a fond dream (11.448-50), but Florizel will not accept the imposed condition as actuality. The land/sea duplex reemerges as a younger generation comes of age and explores for itself the crossings of the actual and the possible. In Florizel's words, "I am put to sea/ With her who here I cannot hold on shore" (11.498-99). The first flight from Leontes' dream of malice is traced in reverse as Perdita and Florizel heed the direction of a retainer who dissimulates with the best interests of all parties in mind. The second
crossing brings redemption to the man whose febrile imaginings gave birth to immediate tragedy, and provides love a chance to prove itself a steadfast if unknowing dream-venture that risks much to arrive at an actuality congruent with such fidelity.

Leontes, who "shuts up himself" (IV.i.19) within the memory of his transgression, will not accept the easy balm offered by his courtiers. He knows that he cannot forgive himself and forget his evil, as Cleon advises, because his offense is beyond self-pardon. So he places himself under Paulina's guidance and passes his time in patient remorse. Paulina abides by the oracular condition that Leontes shall be without heir until his lost child is found, countering all pressure on the King to remarry. While Shakespeare shies away from the kind of resurrectional enactment approached in Pericles, he keeps the suggestion of a virtually unthinkable quickening principle current. That the child abandoned to its death should be recovered is for Paulina "all as monstrous to our human reason/ As my Antigonus to break his grave,/ And come again to me" (V.i.41-43). In this scene she displays that combination of counsellor's and illusionist's qualities which she will use to chief effect when staging a show fit for a love-swept King.

The sudden appearance of Florizel and Perdita marks the unlooked-for return of that cast forth. Shakespeare almost
seems to have arranged a variation on the parable of the sower, compounding it with that of the mustard seed, in that Leontes has recklessly cast his issue on barren ground, where it has yet taken root and sprang forth, to public consternation. That which he rejected as foreign (II.iii.179-83) returns strangely under foreign guise,\(^{39}\) paired now, recalling the daughter and son cut off prematurely by his crime against the good faith requisite to paternity. In taking the young couple into his safety once news of Polixenes' wrathful arrival breaks, Leontes rouses himself from guilty self-occupation and redirects his concern outwards. Like Pericles, he is revived from a spiritual standstill by a daughter who confers life upon her father in turn.

Rather than duplicating the emphasis on a father's reunion with his daughter, however, Shakespeare conducts the event offstage. The telling of it between the three Gentlemen, with Autolycus hovering around the fringes of the group, allows Shakespeare to use romantically expansive language while retaining an ironic edge. The report of Perdita's recognition and the ensuing joyous transport is consciously extravagant, but also consistent with the growing tendency for Shakespeare to mix the tones of Romance wonder and sidelong down-to-earth incredulity. For instance, while a Lord's exclamation, "This was strange chance,/ A narrow lane, an old man, and two boys!" (Cymb. V.iii.52-53) recalls the telltale cadence of Thaisa's "Did
you not name a tempest,/ A birth, and death?" (Per. V.iii. 33-34), from Posthumus' reaction we can gather that the Lord has betrayed a trace of amusement over the storybook quality of the event. Shakespeare has his Gentlemen make much of this quality, but not because they are supposed to be archly detached. Rather, our detachment as audience is played upon through their heightening of romantic testimony. The pre-facing remark to the news that Antigonus has been mauled by a bear practically serves as a motto for the Romance challenge: "Like an old tale still, which will have matter to rehearse, though credit be asleep and not an ear open" (V.ii.61-63).

We should feel by the closing scene that the old winter's tale told by a fireside involves us as characters and authors of a narrative existence. The thawing process of the play implicates us in our approach to life as surely as it does the dramatis personae. Along with Leontes we stand in mad anticipation of a love strong enough to reveal stony realities as first appearances. Along with Paulina we preside over the creative process, inducing an atmosphere of receptiveness in which the astonishing germinates into the wholly natural. Paulina protests that her art is lawful, and Leontes responds for more than himself when he would recognize the magic that awakens dulled senses to second life as a natural doing.
The return of Hermione to Leontes completes the back-to-life movement concretely, under the conjured impression that stone softens into flesh, marble coldness exhales warm breath. As sea and bear mocked sailors and Antigonus, so in the direction of revival Paulina prepares her audience "To see the life as lively mock'd as ever/ Still sleep mock'd death" (V.iii.19-20). In her capacity as impresario of a spectacle intended to awaken faith (1.95), Paulina displays that sense of careful timing and canny showmanship which Prospero possesses in even greater measure. There is no tampering with the chronicity of time, but its offerings as a deep, durative, cyclic element are partaken of. Flesh is not rejuvenated, yet age takes personal joy in the youth of posterity. The permanent loss of Mamillius and Antigonus prefaces the eventual gain of a son-in-law and a new husband.

As Shakespeare develops the discipline of Romance composition, he prescribes a methodology of counterbalance so that hopes and anxieties, credence and skepticism, and whatever other contraries are bound in the human frame receive their due. In the transition from The Winter's Tale to The Tempest, we observe the omission of overt, extrinsic authority for the reckoning of providential ordainment. If Prospero is a superman, he is also a dealer in illusions taxing his powers of suggestion to their limit. By focusing the play on this magus and his insular, afternoon project, Shakespeare subordinates the unfolding of plot to the
structuring of those related perspectives hitherto explored through the complications of romantic happenstance. Consequently, The Tempest internalizes its drama, and we encounter a special work in which the play of imagination far outstrips the play of events.
Notes to Chapter Two

1 Philip Edwards ("Shakespeare's Romances: 1900-1957," p. 10) responds to James' judgment upon the Romances curtly: "When we read that 'in The Tempest Shakespeare made a last and desperate effort to cope with his impossible task,' we may unkindly wonder if the desperate effort and impossible task do not refer to the critic who would reduce the plays to his own orderly scheme."


5 Northrop Frye, The Secular Scripture, p. 51. See also Kenneth Muir, Last Periods, p. 5: "It is the innocence which follows experience, not that which precedes it." Muir acknowledges the maturity of vision involved in the last plays' reorientation, but wonders whether such vision can be embodied in dramatically powerful forms.

6 Wilson Knight has this to say about Shakespeare's use of received narrative (The Crown of Life, p. 34): "There is meaning in Shakespeare's art; but that is not to say that Shakespeare has a meaning in his head and proceeds to express it in his art. His art is more than expression; it is creation, born from a fusion of his own thoughts, dreams and intuitions with a chosen narrative, the choice of which exists in the order of action, not in the order of thinking."

7 One of Hallett Smith's points in Shakespeare's Romances: A Study of Some Ways of the Imagination (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1972) is that oft-told material reached Shakespeare through various sources, and in fusing the elements, Shakespeare strengthened the romantic nature of the story, realizing the original integrity obscured and diffused through repeated handling. In his opening chapter, "The Romance Tradition as it Influenced Shakespeare," pp. 1-20, Smith treats of Greek romance as a source for Elizabethan literature, the circuit
it took through folk lore and collected stories (such as Gesta Romanorum), and Shakespeare's elevation of its topoi.

8 John Crow vents his exasperation with the licensed practice of scholarly guesswork in "Deadly Sins of Criticism, or, Seven Ways to Get Shakespeare Wrong," in Shakespeare Quarterly 9 (1958). At the top of his list is the sin of Overawedness, pp. 301-02: "He [The Bard] does not suffer from the human frailty of being at some times better than at others. His work was so good that it must have been the product of a graduate and a peer of the realm; and this part isn't as good as that part, therefore the inferior part must have been written by Robert Greene or George Peele, or both of them clutching the same pen." The skein of surmise surrounding the composition of Pericles seems to fall under this transgressive heading.


10 The suit of armor which the fishermen haul to shore in their net (II.i.) serves the double purpose of plot advancement and emblematic representation of such unlooked-for retrieval. Northrop Frye remarks of the sea in The Secular Scripture, p. 148, that it "is particularly the image of an unconscious which seems paradoxically to forget everything and yet potentially to remember everything." Pericles is virtually lost to the world at the time Marina stirs his sea-sorrow, and we note that recollection, retrieval to the surface, is a movement common to the play's elemental and psychic theaters, bonding drama and narrative in the human frame.

11 Marina's effect on her father is comparable to that of Ariel's songs on a bereaved Ferdinand. Auden writes of the first song, "Come unto these yellow sands," that it "opens his present to expectation at a moment when he is in danger of closing it to all but recollection." See "Music in Shakespeare," in The Dyer's Hand, p. 525. This is one of many instances which show Pericles to be an overt staging of themes and notions more fully incorporated in the later Romances' landscapes.

12 Certainly Pericles presses for confirmation, and is obliged through the usual Shakespearean devices of
identified ring (V.iii.37-40), telltale knowledge (11.49-55), and promise of further clarification (11.65-68). But insofar as this play occupies itself with the qualities of patience and and faith in extremis, desire for verification fades before less self-centered capacities for involvement in relational wonder. T.S. Eliot seems to be contemplating along similar lines in the following passage from "East Coker":

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
(11.123-26)


13 Shakespeare reinforces this distinction by having Pericles encourage the governor of Mytilene, Lysimachus, in his suit of marriage to Marina. Coming as it does at the end of the first reunion scene (V.i.), the exchange may seem premature, especially given our doubts of Lysimachus' initial intentions toward Marina at Pander and Bawd's brothel. Incest remains a conceivable perversion of familial love in Shakespeare's Romance arrangements, but to root out supposedly submerged forbidden attractions distorts the proportionate nature of his devising.

14 This paternalistic conception of providence receives its most open statement in Cymbeline, during the vision of Jupiter's descent. Reproving the complaints of the Leonati family ghosts, the eagle-borne thunderer proclaims: "Whom best I love, I cross; to make my gift,/ The more delay'd, delighted" (V.iv.101-02). Whether or not Shakespeare is being self-consciously stagey in this controversial section, the subsequent two Romances observe a more humanly oriented expression of providence as possibility. Appeal to Apollo's oracle marks the extent of divine recourse in The Winter's Tale. Otherwise Leontes and Polixenes (like Cymbeline) serve as threatening fathers who themselves are brought around to an appreciation of providential auspices. In The Tempest Prospero plays the part of the adverse father as he turns his island into a theater of providential misfortune.
Instead of theophanies we are presented with a conjured spectacle blurring projection and intimation of analogy.

15 Northrop Frye makes a general observation on romance heroines that is somewhat relevant to Shakespeare's series of pure maidens -- Marina, Imogen, Perdita, and Miranda: "What is symbolized as a virgin is actually a human conviction, however expressed, that there is something at the core of one's infinitely fragile being which is not only immortal but has discovered the secret of invulnerability that eludes the tragic hero." Then again, "The beleaguered virgin may be more than simply a representative of human integrity: she may also exert a certain redemptive quality by her innocence and goodness, or, in other contexts, by her astuteness in management and intrigue." See The Secular Scripture, pp. 86-87.


17 For instance, see the cure of the centurion's servant, Mt. 8: 5-13, or the cure of the nobleman's son, Jn. 4: 46-53.

18 Hallett Smith, Introduction to Cymbeline in The Riverside Shakespeare, p. 1520. As a prime instance of this play's "poetic intensity," particularly as it offers a glimmer of the sustained imaginative level on which The Tempest is conducted, I propose this fancy of Imogen's on a face-off between her husband and the nuisance Cloten:

I would they were in Afric both together,  
Myself by with a needle, that I might prick  
The goer-back.  
(I.i.167-69)

19 The Shakespeare of Cymbeline's authorship is "our supreme national poet" according to Wilson Knight in The Crown of Life, p. 166. The crossing of nationalist and supposedly transcendental themes can lead to Anglophile emphasis, as Knight's glowing account demonstrates. One can practically hear the British scholar smacking his lips in passages such as this: " . . . as the Roman virtue sinks to the level of Iachimo, the heritage of ancient Rome falls on Britain . . . Certainly we are to feel the Roman power as vanishing into the golden skies of a Britain destined to prove worthy of her Roman tutelage" (p. 166).
20 There is some evidence of a curious affinity between Cloten's headless body and the composite oddity which Caliban and Trinculo become under Caliban's gaberdine. Belarius, wary of the royal clout the Queen's son should have behind him, warns Guiderius:

Then on good ground we fear,
If we do fear this body hath a tail
More perilous than the head.

(IV.ii.142-44)

Compare the braggadocio of drunken Stephano as he encounters the strange thing with "a forward and backward voice":

I have not scap'd drowning, to be afeard now of your four legs; for it hath been said, As proper a man as ever went on four legs cannot make him give ground."

(II.ii.60-63)

21 Auden has Caliban pose this issue in the form of a rhetorical question to the Bard on behalf of an audience guarding its dualistic prerogatives: "You yourself, we seem to remember, have spoken of the conjured spectacle as 'a mirror held up to nature,' a phrase misleading in its aphoristic sweep but indicative at least of one aspect of the relation between the real and the imagined, their mutual reversal of value, for isn't the essential artistic strangeness to which your citation of the sinisterly biased image would point just this: that on the far side of the mirror the general will to compose, to form at all costs a felicitous pattern becomes the necessary cause of any particular effort to live or act or love or triumph or vary, instead of being as, in so far as it emerges at all, it is on this side, their accidental effect?" See W. H. Auden: Selected Poems, pp. 155-56.

22 Is it just coincidental that Antonio should tempt Sebastian in similar terms? In prompting him to collaborate in the murder of Alonso and Gonzalo, Antonio pictures "an act/Whereof what's past is prologue: what to come, In yours and my discharge" (II.i.247-49). Of course, there is a more punning intent in the Jailer's line, but an easy, conclusive act is entertained in both cases.

23 Compare in retrospect Simonides' self-reversing benison, Pericles, II.v.81-87.

24 Jachimo's volte-face in Act V does seem out of line with his characterization earlier in the play. Shakespeare
would not raise the difficulty of intransigence and strained pardon until *The Tempest*, in the fraternal rift between Antonio and Prospero.


26 In Robert Greene's *Pandosto*, the romance novel upon which *The Winter's Tale* is generally based, the title figure does feel an incestuous attraction to his daughter, although he is unaware of her identity. Shakespeare mutes this aspect of the character, intent on making Leontes a protagonist whose guilt is spiritually archetypal, and whose release is an occasion of joy in generation's appointed cycles.

27 Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life*, p. 84.

28 Again, Wilson Knight perceives the claim nothingness lays on Shakespeare's imagination. Comparing *The Winter's Tale* and *Macbeth*, he writes, "In both plays we have evil impinging as essential 'nothing,' unreality, a delirium, which yet most violently acts on the real." See *The Crown of Life*, p. 82.

29 In "Ishmael - Don Quixote," the third of three essays comprising *The Enchafed Flood*, Auden examines Melville's Captain Ahab as an outstanding characterization of defiant despair. I think Leontes a front-runner in the category of drama.


32 Contemplating truth and falsity on an absolute scale, St. Augustine writes, "All things are true, in so far as they have being, nor is there any falsity, except when that is thought to be which is not." See *The Confessions* trans. John K. Ryan, VII.xv., p. 174.
33 Before Leontes, Paulina points out how the infant is a copy in small of himself. He has earlier traced his likeness in Prince Mamilius. In the process, Shakespeare touches on a basic biological disparity (I.iii.104-08): a father may suspect the paternity of his children, but a mother (unless she is unfaithful) is subject to no such doubt. The woman contains, the man casts forth.

34 Leonine in Pericles is another character of divided nature who finally condemns himself in failing to choose the righteous course. Dionyza has bribed and sworn him to murder Marina, and while he does not actually commit the crime, his last words show him hardened in resolve (IV.i.100-02). The name of the lion appears in each of the three Romances preceding The Tempest. Tracing its course from Leonine through Posthumus Leonatus to Leontes, we notice how Shakespeare tended to conceive his characters during this period in terms of variable embodiments of associative traits.

35 David Young writes in The Heart's Forest, p. 144, that "Time's speech, as I have tried to suggest, offers the reader or spectator a unique perspective, one which partakes of the artist's attitude toward his materials (a peculiar mixture of engagement and detachment) and of a strong sense of relativity -- the relativity of genres, laws, fashions, and categories."

36 Wilson Knight also sees in this set-up "a clear parody of the parable of the Good Samaritan." See The Crown of Life, p. 101. I would add that it keenly illustrates in parabolic fashion the reservations good Christians harbor when considering the applicability of Christ's teachings to their particular age.


38 I believe Wilson Knight gleams this general Romance perspective on death and subjectivity when commenting upon Paulina's complaint against the poetizing courtier forgetful of Hermione's beauty. He observes, "Death is accordingly less an objective reality than a failure of the subject to keep abreast of life." See The Crown of Life, p. 120.
Florizel tells Leontes that his wife is the daughter of a Libyan lord. In The Tempest the courtly party is returning from the wedding of Alonso's daughter at Tunis. The triangle traceable between Italy, Africa, and a third location such as Bohemia or Prospero's isle adds to the classical overtones of The Winter's Tale and, even more, The Tempest. The epic story looming ever more visibly on the Eastern horizon of the Romances after Pericles is, of course, The Aeneid.
CHAPTER THREE

The Tempest

On its surface The Tempest is an unassuming play, with a certain primitive, storybook quality to it innocent of complex designs or careful nuances of meaning. It can be simply enjoyed as a theatrical tale of magic and discovery. My introduction to the work of Shakespeare was through The Tempest, an agreeable enough meeting for a boy of eleven enchanted with the fantasy worlds of Lewis Carroll and L. Frank Baum. And while Alice's pair of adventures continues to reward repeated delvings (memories of Oz having mainly been preserved in cinematic images of Dorothy's experience), The Tempest in particular remains a work of flexible dimensions for the play of an imagination whose freedom has become a function of its critical balance.

Considering The Tempest in the context of Shakespearean Romance, and the further, scarcely manageable one of his dramatic canon, we find that this work reveals an extraordinary distillation of its writer's mental habits and developed theatrical tendencies. The refinement of pastoral suspension certainly has a lot to do with this dovetailing of the essential and the elemental. While rarefying and even formalizing his presentation of Romance materials, Shakespeare invests The Tempest with an impulse of return to the ordinary and familiar. If he seems to concern himself with the commonplace, he reflects it in a glass which
revitalizes its enticing transparence. The cast of imagination in the later plays, here brought to fine form, should make us feel, along with Wilson Knight, "something beyond platitude in so ordinary a phrase as 'Twixt sky and ground' (Cymb. V.v.146)." Even conceit points beyond itself as figurative exaggeration to a specially arrayed consciousness orchestrating its fancies and intuitions in response to the challenge of a possibly parabolic world. That he deals in the possible Shakespeare keeps before himself and us throughout The Tempest. Following Bonamy Dobrée, A. D. Nuttall describes this play as "more shimmering, less full-bloodedly confident in its paradisal intuitions than its immediate predecessors."  

We might do well to think of The Tempest as a problem Romance, somewhat in the way we take Measure for Measure as a problem comedy. Each seems to reserve doubts about the authority and validity of its ducal impresario's direction. Prospero differs from Vincentio, however, in betraying a greater self-consciousness of manipulatory guidance and personal limits. In each play the comic or romantic conventions are under strain, as if Shakespeare were acknowledging through his protagonists the artifice involved in presenting staged, characterized experience as a kind of descriptive metaphor for extensive human experience.  

Robert Uphaus distinguishes between those characters who would manufacture a Romance, such as Cleopatra, and those who experience it as an intervention, yet he tends to fudge
Prospero's role as stage manager and illusionist. The mage himself works under the pressure of a divided consciousness, wanting to believe in the power of his own suggestion while having to stave off innate resistance to the possibly ungrounded demands of his providential vision. Noting the resemblance between the Duke of Milan and his Viennese predecessor, Auden remarks that "the victory of Justice which he brings about seems rather a duty than a source of joy to himself." A sense of pro forma enactment pervades The Tempest, leading us to question the range of human response assumed within the typical features of such Romantic concentration.

The formalism of this work is of a piece with its structural reserve. I believe that to appreciate the dynamics of its construction, it becomes necessary to cycle through the play, suspending judgment as to just what is being undertaken. Therefore, my approach first involves a reading of the play as a Romance narrative, a succession of scenes whose outcome is in standing with the dramaturgical tendencies traced in the previous chapter. Then, upon reexamining the first scene as a separate tableau that is yet intrinsic to what follows, I take a more sinuous route through the play. My guiding interest follows the semi-overt inquiry after man's authentic place variously conducted by the characters, and, further, among and beyond them. I shall attempt to indicate how the chronicity of the various strands merging at the close is assumed into the
synchronicity of the work as a whole. The Tempest is a prismatic composition, refractive in its treatment of image and idea. To glimpse its spectrum of relevance, a complementary critical response is of use.

In comparing The Winter's Tale and The Tempest, Linda Bamber suggests an apt figure for the structural sophistication of the latter work:

The Tempest is like a great mandala in which loss and renewal, creation and destruction are all taking place at once.

What follows is in need of adjustment, however:

The Winter's Tale, by contrast, seems to fit the pattern of the Judeo-Christian myth; we lose paradise and then, after an unimaginably long wait and against the odds, we regain it.6

Both plays are informed by Judeo-Christian influence; The Tempest simply displays a more synchronic consciousness of the pattern. We might compare its technique to that of triptych painters, who display past, present, and future at a glance, evoking the interchanges between linear separation and spatial universality. For instance, while paradisal conditions in The Winter's Tale are generally associated with the bygone innocence of youth, in The Tempest paradise is entertained at once as a lost good and a good yet to be discovered, a condition whose distance relates temporal and spatial depths. As A. D. Nuttall comments upon the Renaissance spirit of anticipation, "no conflict was
recognized between Paradise as a lost primal state of felicity and Paradise as a place somewhere out in the unknown Atlantic seas.\textsuperscript{7} Exploiting pastoral economy to an unprecedented degree, Shakespeare composes a dialectically indrawn coda to his career around which multiplying significances may group themselves and enter into playful yet controlled exchange.

Let us initiate our growing acquaintance with this work by making a tour of its scenes from start to finish, mindful of the continuities and developments already observed in the three preceding plays. Such a primary reading of Romance arrangements will allow a survey of those elements to be related more fundamentally on successive inspections. The play opens on a scene of turmoil, elemental and human. In its brief compass, Shakespeare encapsulates the themes of containment and disruption elaborated previously through the tempestuous proceedings of Romantic mishap. And while this scene of imminent inundation is natural, or phenomenal, enough ("Enter Mariners wet"), its staging is more choreographed than the on-board storm scene in \textit{Pericles} (III.i.). The confrontation between the King's party and the Boatswain gives rise to a trading of barbed comments honed in an atmosphere of reversal. "Out of the confusion of wills and voices we discern a pervasive undertone which qualifies the divisive energies brought to bear on men and ship."
Shakespeare pairs this spectacle of tumult with a protatic scene (I.i.i.) long on narration. As in \textit{The Winter's Tale}, loss at sea has been described from land. Miranda has witnessed a shipwreck which she suspects a result of her father's Art, and while a devoted daughter, her empathic response shows that she is psychically and emotionally at sea.\textsuperscript{8} Prospero calms her turbulence with the repeated assurance that "no harm" has been done, despite the best evidence sight has to offer. We have been close enough to the last-minute desperation aboard ship to make out the sights and sounds of personal strife and forsaken selves; Miranda has heard human cries from a distance, seen the vessel sink. There may well have been a tempest conjured by Prospero, but the efficacy of his Art lies less in its powers of command than in its powers of individual suggestion. He is a master of perspectives and atmosphere, testing subjective reflexes under special conditions of potent insinuation. In his microcosm, eyesight is secondary to hearing, since vision tends to be biased toward firsthand verification, whereas the listening self can be receptive to matter beyond its experience yet personally implicating. "The direful spectacle of the wrack" (I.ii.26) is an effective pretext for the fuller imparting to follow.

Laying down the mantle of his capacity as magus (we may recall Perdita appearing and behaving as a goddess of flowers), Prospero commences to probe Miranda's memory for traces of an early life-story revealing herself and him in
their former identities. This review (and the subsequent ones with Ariel and Caliban) is conducted for the audience's benefit as well, although at this period Shakespeare employs dramatic narrative not only as a convenient device but as a significant human action. The physical aspects of the teller-listener relation are emphasized in the Romances, and here brought into full play. In *Pericles*, Marina distracts her father from a determined life-story; conversely, Prospero acquaints his daughter with a scarcely retained past which can be possessed long after the fact. Harry Berger writes that "to evoke the proper moral feelings in Miranda, he presents the past as a didactic romance, a parable of good and evil brothers." The desired effect is produced, as Miranda takes the story to heart: "I, not rememb'ring how I cried out then,/ Will cry it o'er again" (I.ii.133-34). The tale of exile into a hard world which Prospero relives (making for involuted, spliced narration) echoes the dramatized subjection of other Romance characters to probationary regions. Extirpated from the security of his Milanese library, Prospero has had to recognize the need for vigilance, and consider his place in the commerce of the general life. The recollection of past offense and error is an act of gathering for present application, a matching of personal readiness and circumstantial ripeness.

The successive interviews with Ariel and Caliban are also occasions for rehearsal, and we come to notice a pattern in Prospero's self-presentation. With Miranda he has been the
loving, firm parent, occupied with undisclosed plans for her future. Ariel serves as his fleet psychic attendant and spirit of projection, whose will must be conformable with his own until the project is complete. The harshness with which Prospero reminds Ariel of his past enslavement is partially calculated, allowing the burdened patriarch to contrast his rule of the island with that of the infernal stepmother, or wicked witch, Sycorax. Having reconfirmed his authoritative reading of the island's history, he is prepared to confront Caliban, who as the hereditary or natural sovereign demoted to slave advances a contrary reading of events. That Caliban might view his dispossession as Prospero does his own ouster from the dukedom of Milan is implied in the parallel plotting. The analogy holds no weight for Prospero, who as the twice-wronged man equates Caliban's treacherous ingratitude with that of Antonio. Having been washed to this particular island on providential currents, he reclaimed it from the sway of black magic and brute ignorance. Caliban he took into his custodial care, and in lodging the native "In mine own cell" treated him like an adopted son.\(^{11}\) The consequent attempted rape of Miranda transformed the adoptive arrangements into an abrasive master-servant relation.\(^{12}\) Caliban embodies for Prospero the persistence of the bestial underside of man, which must be suppressed in the interests of human kind-ness and civil order.
By this point we are also somewhat aware of a comparative and analogizing quality drawing the characters into shifting relations. Ariel has been freed from a twelve years' imprisonment in a "cloven pine," while Caliban, who once had the run of the island, is penned in a "hard rock." On Prospero's command for Caliban to come into the open, "Come, thou tortoise! when?" (I.ii.318), Ariel flits back on stage as a water-nymph, and departs before his opposite number dawdles into view. That Prospero has a special attendant spirit is apparently a secret he keeps to himself, tending to mystify the ubiquity of his influence. Ariel and Caliban each knows the environs thoroughly in his own way. As a compliant elemental sprite, Ariel has penetrated "the veins o' th' earth," treaded "the ooze/ Of the salt deep;" he speaks of "an odd angle of the isle," "the deep nook," the castaways dispersed in parties about the isle, the rest of the fleet dispersed on the waters. He takes joy in omnipresence, as his detailed report of the staged tempest reveals. A natural creature with appetites, Caliban on the other hand treasures his awareness for its survival value, the edge gained by knowing "all the qualities o' th' isle,/ The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile" (I.ii.339-40). When on good terms with Prospero, he shared this knowledge, and in return was introduced to "Water with berries in it," relations between earthly conditions and heavenly bodies, and, most significantly, language. In becoming self-aware, Caliban has been wrested into a world
with codes for expression and conduct, and lost the freedom of primal unrestraint. Prospero has been a careful "schoolmaster" to Miranda, and she in turn has taught Caliban "each hour/ One thing or other." While Caliban's mental horizons have been expanded, his daily existence is diminished. We sense a ranging among possible contexts throughout this scene, as if dramatic clearance for a reconstitution of degree had been effected in the break-up of the old order enacted in the shipwreck tableau. The status of humanity becomes a conjectural variable depending upon the terms of its placement. A man's Art might make him more powerful than a once-feared god (I.ii.374-76).

Romantically wide-eyed, Miranda first takes Ferdinand for a spirit. Happily for her, the distracted, handsome castaway is physical enough to become her mate. As for the material composition of man, Ariel sings to Ferdinand that his father is now a rare maritime artifact on the seabed. Conditioned to expect the wondrous, Ferdinand reciprocates Miranda's captivation, suspecting her a goddess, hoping her humanly attainable. Shakespeare mixes romantic mooning, candid sexual interest, and elevated speculation in this meeting, so that Ferdinand's denial of subterfuge to Prospero, "No, as I am a man" (I.ii.459), carries hypothetical import beyond its obvious claim. Exhibiting stage sternness, the opposed father threatens to treat the young prince like a second Caliban, restricting his diet to unpalatable, natural fare (I.ii.463-67). Prospero even tells his distressed
daughter that "To th' most of men this is a Caliban,/ And they to him are angels" (I.ii.483-84). Unlike both Ariel and Caliban, however, this noble spirit in "so fair a house" will endure close confinement, "Might I but through my prison once a day/ Behold this maid" (I.ii.493-94). The sentiment is duly heroic; it also extends the interpenetrating thought on restraint and freedom, locality and omnipresence, voluntary and involuntary servitude, and corporeal/spiritual doubleness which arranges the characters as bearers of reflective features in an uncommonly integrative ambiance. Consequentally, our attention tends to be drawn toward the oscillating mystery of the human frame.

In "Another part of the Island" (II.i.), King Alonso and company survey their situation as men cast up by a rough sea onto strange ground. The tone of this scene is set by the garrulous good will of Gonzalo and the snide humor of Sebastian and Antonio. While parts of its quibbling dialogue may seem obscure and desultory, on the whole Shakespeare displays that fine-tuned ear for the nuances of character interaction which distinguishes Coriolanus in particular. The blend of ennui, captiousness, glib conceit, diversion, and much incidental moodiness is distinctive of Shakespeare as a master of modulation, as he treats his picked themes across an admirable range of individual expression.

While much of the talk in this scene may initially appear
idle and dramatically lax, we find on closer consideration resonances with both scenes of the first Act. As Prospero has rehearsed the past with Miranda, Ariel, and Caliban, the courtly party reviews the events occasioning their abandonment on an isle whose basic features they cannot even agree upon. Gonzalo remarks that despite immersion in seawater, their garments are "as fresh as when we put them on first in Afric, at the marriage of the King's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis" (II.i.66-68). Characteristically, Sebastian traces the current misfortune back to his brother's decision to wed Claribel beneath her European station to an African. That is, the dislocation effected by the tempest is a natural follow-up to the disruption of degree enacted on a political level. More comprehensively, however, the Mediterranean triangulation (Italy-Tunis-island) deepens the perspective of this particular abortive voyage, especially casting in rear projection the struggles and eventual success of the Trojan exile Aeneas.\(^\text{14}\) Shakespeare makes the comparison explicit through a geographical blunder on Gonzalo's part, as he identifies Tunis with ancient Carthage. Joan Hartwig suggests "it is possible that Gonzalo's identification of Tunis and Carthage should be understood as a conscious metaphor on his part rather than as a literal identification. Throughout the scene he attempts to create for Alonso some sense that their futures are being directed by divine plan."\(^\text{15}\) Yet it seems more likely that in his
solicitude for Alonso's comfort, Gonzalo has been hasty, and cannot recover under the gibing of Sebastian and Antonio. Being put on the defensive, he simply sticks to his position. The irony would lie in his being literally mistaken though metaphorically borne out by afternoon's close, a vindication he relishes in his benison speech (V.i.205-13). Cynical literalists such as Sebastian and Antonio do not prosper on this isle of paradoxical comprehension. Alonso, laid to an encrusted rest in Ariel's song, would stop his ears against the optimistic prating of his counsellor, and deliver himself to the certitude of a dead-ended life. He gives up Ferdinand to the fishes, and sinks his hopes to submarine depths.

For diversion, yet also prompted by the opportune atmosphere, Gonzalo launches into his proposal for a commonwealth in which degree would not be observed. As expected, Sebastian and Antonio are quick to point out his self-contradictions and make the vision appear ridiculous. Of course, not qualifying as "innocent people," and soon to attempt "treason" and "felony," these two lords have no place in such a scheme. The extent of deculturation Gonzalo advances is extreme, summoning that Eden of the West which worldly Europeans might have equated with the unbridgeable distance of prelapsarian origins. Nature as Gonzalo ideally conceives it, producing its abundant goods "without sweat or endeavor" of cultivation, implies as well the New World savage uncontaminated by contact with decadent, cultivated
races. That Shakespeare lifted a number of phrases in Gonzalo's speech from Montaigne's essay "Of the Caniballes" is commonly recognized. Here I only wish to point out that the local cannibal, Caliban, views Nature from a perspective somewhat akin to that of Gonzalo, although their respective notions of acceptable behavior in such a toil-free state are incongruent. The proposal of a simply natural community rings as a happy improbability in this play's even-handed approach to human nature, but as long as the string of degree is untuned, this conjectural new Golden Age can be aired as a persistent, pure expression of the humanly conceivable.

Once Ariel has lulled Alonso, Gonzalo, and the two attendant lords to sleep with "solemn music," reprieve from observance of normal limits takes on a darker cast. The sarcastic humor of Antonio sheds its thin skin of civility, revealing a reckless disregard for the worth of other lives. In counterpoint to his brother, Antonio advances a conscienceless reading of timeliness, personal initiative, the use of memory, strong suggestion, and the conjunction of dualities in human earth. Derek Traversi writes that in his cynical smugness Antonio is "intellectually convinced of the senseless nature of the fluctuations of fortune." A solipsistic opportunist, he urges Sebastian to exploit the chance offering of circumstance, and realize the self-advancement reserved for those who do not preoccupy themselves with scruples. Once dispatched, Alonso and
Gonzalo can be erased from memory. That their sleeping forms should resemble those of dead men is an ambivalence minimizing the formality of a mortally bedding puncture to each. As for Adrian and Francisco, "They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk" (II.i.283). However, Antonio's precedent of thriving villainy is superseded by Prospero's lessoned vigilance and observance of temporal cycle. Bearing a song to counter the effects of his earlier soporific music, Ariel serves as a guardian angel to save sleeping bodies from death.\textsuperscript{17} The familiar Romantic alternation between sleep and waking is rehearsed as the open ear receives what the closed eye cannot, and sudden resurgence to waking life checks the sleepwalking inhumanity of "Open-ey'd conspiracy" (II.i.296).

In yet "Another part of the Island" (II.ii.), a chafing wood bearer spies a beached jester and takes him for one of his master's punishing spirits. He lies flat on the ground to escape notice. The jester, wary of a cloudburst on land after the tumult at sea, seeks cover also, and comes upon this strange hybrid of man and fish. If he were in England, he could make his fortune displaying this find for the holiday fools. Shakespeare has just closed a scene in which two unnatural men divert attention from their own rapacity by pretending to guard against a herd of lions. In comic reflection, the double meaning of "any beast there makes a man" (II.ii.31-32) attaches itself to opportunism and the bestial affinities in man arousing curiosity about kinship
with strange specimens. Shakespeare hits closer to home in
tinoculo’s following observation: "when they will not give a
doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see
a dead Indian" (32-34). Man would rather ogle the exotic
find than relieve his neighbor, rather speculate idly about
the reaches of the human spectrum than address its
exigencies firsthand on common ground.18

Reconsidering, Trinculo decides that the creature "is no
fish, but an islander, that hath lately suffered by a
thunderbolt" (36-37). The thing becomes even rarer as
Trinculo crawls under its gaberdine, and Stephano the
drunken butler weaves on the scene. There is a comic
levelling at work here, as man and atavistic curiosity cover
as one thing upon the ground. It is "a most delicate
monster" (91), compounded of two anxious creatures, divisive
in its language and in need of liquid relief. Shakespeare
presents us with a grand parodic image for the suspension of
degree on the isle, as exploited by those who favor quick
gratification of their mundane desires.19 The Caliban-
Stephano-Trinculo subplot in general rounds out the range of
response to the opportuneness of this "high-day," reflecting
the trivial and earthy side of human expectations. Both
courtship and courtly party plots are underscored by its
bottom line. Stephano and Trinculo express in their bodily-
oriented way the strangeness of reacquaintance with another
assumed dead. In low echo of the Miranda-Ferdinand meeting,
Caliban takes the unremarkable Italians as more than human,
especially the one who "bears celestial liquor" (118). Trinculo, displaying condescending amusement at this servile creature's adulation, reckons that "when's god's asleep, he'll rob his bottle" (151). The "perfidious" nature of a man as truly dangerous as Antonio is reduced to a lesser denominator by such analogizing; while Alonso sleeps, the subordinate Duke thirsty for primacy would rob him of his bottled life. Flattered by Caliban's foot-licking, Stephano places himself in the charge of his guidance. The dialectic of concessions enacted between Ferdinand and Miranda is here skewed, as brave drunkard and servant exchange delusion for delusion, intent on something for nothing. Stephano, like Sebastian, fancies himself King at the suggestion of one who has personal reasons for enlisting a collaborator in regicide. Miming self-disposal to one another, each party shifts for himself. The scene closes with the rabble in high spirits, Caliban carousing his way to a freer indenture, Stephano planning his reign of misrule, and Trinculo intoxicated with self-assuaging ridicule.

The return to the young lovers in III.i. furthers our sense of the ideality invested in their congress. For Prospero, their coming together is a "Fair encounter/ Of two most rare affections." As a sexual union, the match is more than personally propitious: "Heavens rain grace/ On that which breeds between 'em" (III.i.74-76). In the bond between Miranda and Ferdinand lie hopes for a dialectic reintegration with the life-enhancing principles of a
moralized world. That the moralization may be a fond fancy of a sheltering father is certainly acknowledged. Prospero's dialectic idealism culminates in the betrothal masque for the young couple, a spectacle as delicate as it is delightful. First, however, the lovers must approach one another upon a middle ground of pastoral exchange. While the relation between Perdita and Florizel is more blooded and vibrant, that between Miranda and Ferdinand gains significance through its formal integration within the Tempest plexus. Ferdinand submits himself to the impossible, dream-like task of moving and piling "Some thousands of these logs" (10). Along with Prospero, he must discharge much business before sunset (22). But for Miranda he will be a "patient log-man," through willing service attaining his heart's freedom. Miranda in turn emboldens herself so far as to change the emphasis of her relatedness; from naming herself her father's daughter (36), she brings herself to the point of transferral where she ventures a new calling: "I am your wife if you will marry me" (83). The terms of reciprocated release through self-disposal to the beloved other are sanctioned by Prospero, who now turns to "perform/ Much business appertaining" (95-96). That business will bear the mark of a castigating aegis making its power felt through an elemental censure of intemperance. What separates The Tempest from its three Romance predecessors is the humanly hypothetical tone of the proceedings, and the limited nature of the satisfaction
achieved.

We rejoin Caliban and his cohorts as they drunkenly parade their dissolute tendencies. The sack has gone down their gullets and up to their heads. Trinculo may have swum ashore "like a duck" (II.ii.129), and Stephano may boast that "the sea cannot drown me" (III.ii.12), but in their inebriation they are inundated on dry ground, and cannot get their land legs. Drink makes them pugnacious, especially Trinculo, who resents that a "debosh'd fish" should attempt to nudge him out of his second place in the makeshift hierarchy. The question of degree is reduced to a matter of physical humor, as talk of standing, tottering, kneeling, and lying attaches itself to statesmanship and the speakers' drunken clumsiness. Caliban presents his suit before King Stephano, only to be contravened by Ariel, who gives the lie to his reading of the island's history. There is an accent on bodily existence, matched with a complementary awareness of non-bodily dimensions. Stephano beats Trinculo, supposing him the one who gives the lie; Caliban suggests that Stephano kill Prospero by pounding "a nail into his head," or battering his skull with a log, or piercing him with a stake, or slitting his throat. Yet at the same time Shakespeare conducts a spiritual countermovement which progresses from the trivialities of liquored animation to Caliban's penetrating reminiscence of skyey yearning. As with the play in general, antithetical conditions and tendencies are set in a spin, rendering the characters'
humanity paradoxical, reversible, and self-contradictory. Hearing the correct tune to the catch "Flout 'em and cout 'em" played by Ariel, Stephano tries to outbrave the uncanny presence. Found out in his blustering mortality, he proves himself a quick-change butler: "He that dies pays all debts: I defy thee. Mercy upon us!" (III.iii.129-30). The rupture of seemingly closed contexts, and a supple confusion of human reality among alternating states of consciousness, inform this play thematically and structurally, from the opening scene onwards. Explaining to Stephano that there is no cause for alarm, Caliban recounts his experience of the "Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not" (134). In the process, we are engaged by a series of alternations between waking, sleep, and dream that sets us to imagining a concentric existence in which enclosure and release are essentially related. For the present moment, though, the three conspirators are taken with the liveliness of the catch, and pursue the song-trail toward their comeuppance in a miniature, mediterranean sea.

The courtly party has found the island a maze, through which it has wandered while Prospero orchestrates the converging strands of his project. Following an interim during which the characters have revealed their basic qualities, elasticity of opportunity shades into a providential trial period. Yet while Prospero appears "on the top (invisible)" as an agent of Destiny, his power is essentially that of suggestion, which takes or not according
to the nature of personal inwardness. At the beginning of
the scene Alonso is ready to "put off" his hope as a
delusive garb, and the preying lords wait their time for a
second strike. By scene's close Alonso has been made to
feel his guilt, yet he responds less in contrition than in
despair over the consequences of his trespass. Antonio and
Sebastian take the attempt to induce twinges of conscience
as an external affront, to be repulsed with blows. Gonzalo,
more sensitive to moral implications, misinterprets the
actions of the three in a reading which Prospero would like
to validate: "their great guilt, \( \backslash l \)ike poison given to work
a great time after, \( \backslash l \) Now 'gins to bite the spirits"
(III.iii.104-06). The dramatic interest of the scene comes
to lie in the discrepancy between the attempt to instill
currency of suggestion as a subjective moral principle, and
the individual resistance to such an attempt.\(^\text{21}\)

The trap of conscience is set as a dinner table, to which
King Alonso and entourage are invited by "several strange
Shapes." Confronted by this "living drollery," Sebastian
jumps to credit the existence of unicorns and a phoenix.
Antonio follows suit, in what might seem an uncharacteristic
avowal of credence. Yet each merely expresses a willingness
to believe the fantastic reports of travellers based on what
he has seen with his own eyes. Rather than growing in good
faith, they dwell upon the verity of immediate impression,
and so experience no meaningful change of perception
regarding their place in a world of unknowing. Gonzalo too
expresses a wondrous belief in reported oddities (43-49), although he mentions strange races of men, and relates the newness he experiences to his knowledge of human behavior. The "islanders" may be "of monstrous shape, yet, note, / Their manners are more gentle, kind, than of/ Our human generation you shall find/ Many, nay, almost any" (31-34). This response speaks well of his own gentleness, and of his receptivity, which if somewhat naive is yet commendable. He does not dwell on the phenomenon as an external curiosity, but finds a reflective exemplum for the gauging of human being. One feels that he would relieve a lame beggar before laying out money to see a dead Indian. So also he is not ready to believe Ferdinand drowned, whereas Sebastian and Antonio base their hopes on hope forsaken, the sureness of mortal loss. Their appetites are intact; "we have stomachs," as Sebastian puts it simply. Alonso may have no stomach for what life yet holds in store, but he too will partake of the proffered banquet.22

Enter Ariel as Harpy, an angel of vengeance who makes the meal vanish and turns the table on the men whose appetites have been their law. Following the close instructions of Prospero, he arraigns the immoral castaways before a convened world of perdition. What we might call Prospero's public dream of elemental instrumentality is here entertained most forcibly. The sea which twelve years previous had roared against his cries, and into which he dropped tears "full salt" (I.ii.149,155), is now envisioned
as a deep analogous to those psychic depths which retain
memory of unredressed grievance: "you three/ From Milan did
supplant good Prospero:/ Expos'd unto the sea, which hath
requit it,/ Him and his innocent child" (III.iii.69-72).
For his part in the intrigue, Alonso has been bereft of a
son, or so Prospero would have the plunging father believe.
Made hyperconscious of his human trespass and the enormity
of retribution that could be brought to bear by an exacting
natural law, Alonso pledges to seek Ferdinand "deeper than
e'er plummet sounded,/ And with him there lie muddied"
(101-02). None of the three banquet guests takes the
suggestion of contrite recovery, however (79-82). For
Alonso that possibility later develops when the principle of
loving interest prompts him to offer himself as a
replacement for his son on the seabed. Sebastian and
Antonio are yet impervious to any attempt at conscience-
raising, so while Prospero may claim from above that "My
high charms work," his success consists of the ambiguous
advantage of having his enemies "all knit up/ In their
distractions" (88,89-90). It is as if concurrent with the
close of the third Act, Prospero feels the need within his
own well-timed production to stage a climactic scene, even
though the turning point may be as much formal as effective.

The sense of formality permeating the play and its
characters appears to work at once to its advantage and
disadvantage. From a structural and thematic viewpoint, The
Tempest is Shakespeare's most integrated work. The price
paid for such distillation seems to include the typecasting of supporting characters. Miranda and, more regularly, Ferdinand are cited as products of a flattening ideal portraiture. Wilson Knight thinks "they are whittled down to these virtues (humility, innocence, faith, purity) with slight further realization, and in comparison with earlier equivalents must be accounted pale." While the young couple is presented in conformity with Prospero's rarefied conception of human propriety, we might remark as well the difficulty with which this heightened vision is sustained. For instance, Prospero feels he must keep reminding Ferdinand not to "give dalliance/ Too much the rein" (IV.i.51-52), because he realizes his future son-in-law was not reared on an island reserved as a spot of continence. Ferdinand is hardly a Caliban among men, but as a young male his "worser genius" (27) is liable to be normally active. Still, for the time being the belief is current that natural behavior for humanity entails an ascendance toward rather than an assumption of human kind-ness. As a hyperbolic gesture in celebration of this currency, Prospero presents the betrothed couple with "Some vanity of mine Art" (41). This betrothal masque figures as a projection in the optative mood, shared with those who are receptive to a beatific conjunction between human being and its locale. That it should be dismissed so abruptly accentuates the fragility and artificiality of the visionary pitch.
The betrothal masque serves as an interlude not unlike the sheep-shearing festival in *The Winter's Tale*, and expresses a similar joy in the plenitude of an earthly existence. Bounty is envisioned as benison, enriching those conjoined lives led in observance of time and place. Prospero produces the spirit-show in mythic dress, allowing Ariel to stage manage the proceedings. While Juno makes an appearance as patron goddess of marriage (Pronuba), the central dialogue is conducted between Iris and Ceres. Pointing up the elemental dialectic, Wilson Knight observes that "Each associates the other with her own qualities, driving home the interdependence of sky and earth with, on the human plane, purity and fertility." We remain aware throughout that the configuring imagination enacted is that of Prospero, who would stand somewhat apart from his spectacle, deflecting its subjectivity. Several features of the masque suggest a telltale abstraction of Prospero's island-story. Iris assures Ceres that Venus and her naughty son Cupid will not be present, their plan to work "Some wanton charm upon this man and maid" (95) foiled by the continence of the lovers. The watchful father himself has cleansed the isle of its depraved, bewitched past and suppressed the low nature of its current dark descendant. By keeping the Sycorax-Caliban bloodline under control, the fatherly guardian (transposed into Juno) optimizes anticipation of a "prosperous" union, honored in its issue (104-05). A couplet of Ceres' extends that anticipation to
the envisioning of a seasonal span like that intimated in
the sheep-shearing festival thawing The Winter's Tale:
"Spring come to you at the farthest/ In the very end of
harvest!" (114–15). In The Tempest the period of exile
spent by Miranda and Prospero on the isle, and the previous
long confinement suffered by Ariel, in both cases a dozen
years, may figure as the seemingly endless winter bygone.
Entering into the spirit of the moment, Ferdinand opines
that a father such as Prospero "Makes this place Paradise"
(124). If Prospero, like Gonzalo, takes the opportunity to
daydream in public, he must also guard against the desire to
withdraw into a fabricated world, reduced to manageable
proportions. Neither library nor insular microcosm can be
secured as a sanctuary from the claims of a fuller, more
troublesome life. Toward the close of the dance between
nymphs and sicklemen, "Prospero starts suddenly," distracted
from his pleasing revery by the remembrance of treachery
afoot. Caliban and cohorts in themselves should not disturb
Prospero so violently; in the following revels speech we
detect the extent of his disequilibrium.

Jarred by the inbreaking knowledge that life is basically
intractable, wrongdoing a deep persistence, Prospero loses
his balance and expands his frame of reference beyond the
will to retain human perspective. His conviction of
ephemerality spirals outward to include man‐raised monuments
to the perdurable, the work of generations, "the great globe
itself." The wash of time makes physical existence a dream,
"and our little life/ Is rounded with a sleep." Just below the surface of this speech we sense a lapse into debilitating relativity, as Time sweeps along the good with the bad, voiding all difference, and bringing the best-intentioned project to nought. As an illusionist, a weaver of suggestion, Prospero is sensitive to the romantic status of faithful venture, its defiance of apparent realities in pursuit of paradoxical relatedness to such stays as Justice and Mercy. Ultimately he must struggle with the opposed possibilities that all human behavior is role playing, that good is no more surely founded than evil, that Existence is a fluke of nothingness, and, in short, that Antonio is a model citizen of the universe. Whatever the flood of anxieties prompting the revels speech, Prospero excuses himself for dilating so drastically, as if he had buckled under pressures heretofore managed with equanimity.

The remainder of the Act is spent on the quashing of the inept conspiracy against Prospero's life. Acting on his own initiative, yet in correspondence with his master's imaginative climate, Ariel has led the rabble by the ear through "Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss, and thorns," and "left them/ I' th' filthy-mantled pool beyond your cell,/ There dancing up to th' chins" (IV.i.180,181-83). The psychic discomfiture which the courtly party undergoes is inflicted as a physical penalty on the drunken crew. Flesh is pricked in lieu of spirit, which is wine-soaked in their case; a bodily dunking
complements the drowned psyches of those confined in the lime-grove, also neighboring Prospero's cell. The trap laid for the conspirators indicates that Prospero judges them petty thieves at heart rather than ingrained wrongdoers. And while he condemns Caliban as a "born devil," a lost cause, his denunciation shows traces of the lapse into irritable distraction marking the revels speech. The echo of his own request for forbearance (158-60) in the charge that with age Caliban decays in body and mind (191-92) points to the relatedness between master and thing of darkness with which Prospero must come to terms. Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo enter stinking wet, having survived their ordeal at sea with only the "infinite loss" (210) of their bottles. In a low rhyme with the theme of providential misfortune, Caliban urges his disconsolate King to "Be patient, for the prize I'll bring thee to/Shall hoodwink this mischance" (205-06). As a counsellor advocating murderous stealth (Gonzalo shading into Antonio), he is overruled by the lure of flashy apparel fit for an ersatz King. Prompted by Trinculo, Stephano takes the bait, while Caliban hisses warning and disgust. The butler and jester are diverted upon a physical and verbal tangent as they make wordplay of their thievery, instituting a meritocracy of knavish wit. Their distraction from the project of regicide is a comic reduction of the conditions under which Prospero manages his project, and in Caliban's "we shall lose our time" (247) the anxiety of failure is
expressed on a subversive level. Once again breaking open a scene of closure, in this case a steadily deteriorating attempt at closeness, Prospero sics his spirit-hounds on the three trespassers. Or as Auden has his magus analyze the pinch therapy, they are "soundly hunted/ By their own devils into their human selves."

Like the fourth Act, the fifth Act consists of a single, moderate-sized scene. It gains conclusive weight from a series of high-toned speeches (mainly delivered by Prospero) which space out the relatively few gathering actions to be expedited.28 Except for Gonzalo's "lasting pillars" recapitulation, the rhetorical limelight is primarily taken up by the descending magus. Attention is called to his "rarer action" speech, his divestiture speech, his address to the "spell-stopp'd" Italians, his discursive lead-in to the discovery of Ferdinand and Miranda, and his multiple promises of a fuller account to be delivered at "pick'd leisure." The pattern we come to discern is one of discrepancy or stress between Prospero's desire to realize the maximum effect of his potent Art, and the growing qualification of achievement attached to his decision to reassume the status of an ordinary man.

Near the beginning of the Act, Ariel reports to Prospero that his charm "so strongly works" the courtly party, "That if you now beheld them, your affections/ Would become tender" (V.i.17,18-19). The exchange continues:
Pros. Dost thou think so, spirit?
Ari. Mine would, sir, were I human.
Pros. And mine shall.
(V.i.19-20)

As a spirit of unattached delight, closer to a state of elemental unimpededness than humankind, Ariel is separate from Prospero. Yet we are regularly enough given the impression that Ariel cleaves to his master's thoughts to consider this attendant spirit a manifestation of Prospero's psyche as well. Such doubleness makes this exchange critically ambiguous. On the one hand, Ariel's suggestion of kind-ness bridges the elemental and the ethical, seeming to underwrite fellow-feeling as an essential expression of human being. Or in the back-and-forth between man and familiar is an unrehearsed prompting to mollification simulated? Prospero has known the time was coming when he would have to restore his enemies to themselves, having done his best to induce a moral sense in them. His moment of choice is problematic in that a sort of ventriloquism marks its deciding factor. That is, a pardon appears to be called for in the script, yet Prospero needs a prompt sufficiently extrinsic to make the decision to forgive "surely not a foregone conclusion." The impression that Prospero is grasping after grounds for pardon is strengthened by the discrepancy between Ariel's report that the transgressors "abide all three distracted" (12) and Prospero's assumption that they are "penitent" (28). The highly wronged man must maneuver to satisfy himself that his "rarer action" is more
than a pro forma enactment of the human kindness he would authorize as natural and redemptive. Douglas Peterson identifies Prospero as a "participant in an emblematic action in which Shakespeare celebrates for a final time the love which all men share as their final legacy."30 Yet to subsume Prospero so is to underplay the pressure brought to bear on him as he strives to substantiate the currency of his moral supposition and carry its precepts over into daily existence as one person among others. Several critics have found Prospero's forgiveness of his enemies ("the rarer action is/ In virtue than in vengeance") more Senecan in spirit than Christian;31 I would suggest that the Senecan streak reflects the difficulty Prospero experiences in practicing what he intuits, especially when faced with an unrepentant opposite like Antonio.

The double concern for chief effect and self-disenchantment is given formal expression in the divestiture soliloquy preceding the encirclement of the courtly party. Upon seeming to convene his elven ministers "of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves" (33), Prospero works around to his main interest, a listing of impressive feats as local earth-shaker and bolt-hurler. He has served as the Neptune and Jove of his island tale, replacing those behind-the-scene deities gradually less visible throughout the Romances. With Prospero the question of control is posed up front as a human attempt to intuit middle earth as a particularly providential zone. Because the staging of the
inquiry is basically an act of the imagination, the overman must renounce his impersonation of Providence, lest he forget the conditional nature of his self-enhancement. In the same line he prides himself upon "my so potent Art," he abjures "this rough magic" (50). The temptation to self-aggrandizement and to an egocentric reading of the world as realm of Destiny is strong in a man of Prospero's lineage, considering his descent from protagonists who as Romance heroes (Pericles) shade into those who take offense at a world requiring good faith of them (Posthumus Leonatus, Leontes). To his credit, Prospero proves to be girding himself for those measured steps back into a riskier, less focused domain, where good faith is a rough venture in want of harbored protection. The dramatic build-up of the invocation and reprisal of powers transmutes into a decrescent "airy charm" for solemn music by which to release his psychically immersed captives. In a manner somewhat comparable to the dialectic courtship between Ferdinand and Miranda, Prospero resigns his high standing as übermensch to approach the surfacing Italians on a middle ground of hopefully renewed significance.

First, however, he exploits his advantage to rehearse a one-sided moral characterization. Prospero is likely aware that once Sebastian and Antonio in particular are able to respond, the scene of judgment and remission will hardly be so unalloyed. A prominent feature of this address which falls on deaf ears (though a subliminal effect may be
inferred) is its analogizing of human and elemental process. The coming of the men to their senses is likened by Prospero to a dawning (65-68) and an incoming tide (79-82). The initial instance of immersion and washing to shore has become a rhythmic recurrence, as variously interpreted by the castaways and their host. Prompting Sebastian to murder, Antonio has advanced a conscienceless interpretation of events, drawing on much the same sea-imagery as his brother. Now that Antonio is arrested, the insular master of elements-as-metaphor rebukes him for expelling "remorse and nature," for being "unnatural" (76,79). Refusing to recognize his place in a world of relatedness, Antonio merely plunders the natural realm for self-serving illustrations. With Gonzalo, however, Prospero can naturally empathize: "Mine eyes, ev'n sociable to the show of thine,/ Fall fellowly drops" (63-64). That water wells from the eyes is significant given this play's extensive psycho-elemental parallelism. We recollect Prospero dropping salty tears into the sea, Miranda crying for travail out of memory, Ferdinand weeping alongside the turbulent waters. On the isle conceivable correspondences between the individual as world-unto-him/herself and a natural world in process are given general circulation. So Ariel reports that Gonzalo's "tears run down his beard, like winter's drops/ From eaves of reeds" (V.i.16-17). Interest is not restricted to metaphysical conceit, however; Prospero seeks to warrant an indwelling principle which at its depths
joins separate selves in a communion of being.

On the middle ground of bodily existence, though, where we remain for the duration of our lives, the dialectics of depth and containment are to be rehearsed in keeping with that between necessity and possibility bound in the human frame. As the royal party emerges from its deep distraction, Prospero bids Ariel release the sleeping Master and Boatswain contained "under the hatches," and later has him drive in the conspirators, not yet dried out from their boozy high and chin-deep soaking. Bodied persons encounter other bodied persons, and their responses run the gamut from condescension to awe, from shrugging indifference to exultation. Antonio remains unimpressed and cynically aloof. Sebastian, while still turning to Antonio for reinforcement, is probably not as unfazed, having been singled out for his attempt to obscure himself in a collaborative guilt. With the King of Naples Prospero can be said to have fair success. Perhaps wishing he were a strange thing on the seabed, Alonso resigns his claim to Milan, and asks pardon for his wrong. At this reach he occupies a place similar to that in which Leontes bides his time, end-stopped by the consequences of past offense (WT, V.i.). The sin of the father has been visited upon the son, "and patience/ Says it is past her cure" (140-41). When Prospero commiserates by saying that he has lost a daughter (to a son-in-law, that is), he casts a suggestion to be taken "as a cat laps milk," in Antonio's earlier phrasing.
Daughters and sons are to marry in their time of ripeness, while a father's "every third thought shall be my grave" (312). Stirred from his spiritual impasse, Alonso makes a rueful imaginative leap which suffices as a gesture of recovery out of depair and as an unwitting consent to self-divestiture: "O heavens, that they were living both in Naples,/ The King and Queen there! that they were, I wish/ Myself were muddled in that oozy bed/ Where my son lies" (149-52). The tendered exchange is not necessary though, and Prospero can offer better than Alonso imagines possible. Playing the impresario of wonders, he reveals Ferdinand and Miranda at a game of chess. There is an element of mock theophany in this revelation, as if the figures making moves behind the veil could only step forward as human actors onto a human scene. And while the light of sunset may move Miranda to see in the congregated figures the basis for a "brave new world," her father declines to warrant any golden narrative of human glory: "'Tis new to thee" (183,184). As dialectician of mediacy, Prospero can cultivate wonder commensurate with the credence of Miranda and match the dry skepticism of Antonio.

In the reconstitution of the old, ruptured order into a new, open-ended order, one note repeatedly struck is the call to relatedness among selves. Most prominently there is the Romance revival through family ties, as fathers and children receive "second life" (195) of one another. The gilded benediction is pronounced by Gonzalo, although such
monumental readings tend to be undercut by the double edged nature of the Romance form. The earnest counsellor is not the only one who speaks of finding self "When no man was his own" (212). Tripping over his meaning, Stephano exhorts his routed companions, "Every man shift for all the rest, and let no man take care for himself; for all is but fortune" (256-57). An extra ironic spin is put on the last word, as it vacillates between fortune as blind happenstance (what Antonio takes it for) and Fortune as providential indirection (Prospero's conception). Dover Wilson writes of this veritas in vino that "If The Tempest has any moral, the words of tipsy Stephano express it."35 Whatever is expressed, we mark that the tempestuous dispersal at sea is inverted on land as this buffeted, pickled crew rejoins the assembled parties. Stephano and Trinculo are reclaimed by Alonso, and slighted by Sebastian, who would cover his own inward pinches. Prospero, for his part, receives his prodigal 'son': "this thing of darkness I/ Acknowledge mine" (275-76). Begrudgingly, he acknowledges the dark underside of his own person, and, I think, the Nature which Caliban is at home in, a more earthy and immediate realm than Prospero has cared to confront. The project nearly complete, he prepares for the release of Ariel to a state of playful uninhibitedness off limits to himself, his own reentry into the newly sealed ship, and, implicitly, the reinstatement of Caliban as grubbing master of a disenchanted island. In this triple restoration Prospero reconciles himself to the
waning of personal powers, the society of mixed natures, and
the nonconformity of a wide world of difference.

Even upon the withdrawal of the *dramatis personae* into
Prospero's cell, and the skimming exit of Ariel, the show is
not quite finished. Stripped of his spell-weaving powers,
Prospero steps downstage to deliver an Epilogue. He speaks
in a twilight context, partially in character as Duke of
Milan, partially out of character as an actor whose project
"was to please" (13). If he solicits applause after a
standard practice, he does so in terms which open the play
outward. Fittingly, this Epilogue comprised of ten modest
couplets is instinct with the complex conditions upon which
theatrical make-believe operates, especially in the
Romances. On the one hand we require conventional
observance of dramatic pretense, while on the other we are
expected to recognize the artifice of stagecraft. Further,
once the production is brought to its close, the audience's
act of distancing serves as the means by which the dissolved
focus may be carried over into the larger theater of daily
affairs. Prospero the character/actor desires applause as
proof of audience satisfaction, but he also sees invested in
the audience the potency of the spell: "Let me not . . .
dwell/ In this bare island by your spell" (5,7-8). It is
difficult at the end of a captivating piece of theater to
dissipate the creative illusion and return to regular
doings, the more sporadic interest of daily life. By
clapping hands together, a start is made. In the *Tempest*
scheme, "Gentle breath of yours my sails/ Must fill" (11-12), to waft the ship away from an afternoon-long insular enchantment. Characters return to Naples and Milan, theatergoers to London shops, Washington offices, Houston apartments. Art once more opens out upon the life it seeks to sound through the privilege of the arrayed and mounted imaginative inquiry. And, possibly, the inquiry may be extended and redefined in the lives of those taken with the challenge of the disposition. To modify a line from Auden, the art of formerly immediate existence is "modified in the guts of the living."\textsuperscript{36}

But we still have to account for the weighty modulation of the last six lines, ending upon an echo of the Lord's Prayer that overlays aesthetic, ethical, and religious connotations. Prospero sues for release from faults, and invokes ultimate prayerful recourse to "Mercy itself" (18). As an actor facing his judges downstage, he asks for "indulgence" in their critical appraisal. Yet it is difficult to square the penultimate line, "As you from crimes would pardon'd be," with a consistently aesthetic angle. Part of Prospero's case for release is that he has "pardon'd the deceiver"(7), presumably Antonio. In turn he stands in need of pardon, as do the individuals who have considered themselves interested spectators. Within the play, his forgiveness of Antonio in particular has been grudging, practically amounting to a superior dismissal. Out of this context, however, situated \textit{in extremis}, he
defines himself in terms of destitution, and reminds his judging peers of their like needful mediacy.

Such rippling significance over twenty short lines is a product of the multiplex framing which makes The Tempest seem curiously monodramatic and polydramatic at once. Insofar as Prospero is a master perspectivist, we may tend to suspect that the multiplication of meaning originates from his lone beating mind. D. G. James has tentatively proposed that the impression we receive is of a dream of Prospero's, who has not left Milan, but projects his preoccupations and anxieties in oneiric fluidity. Then again, the Tempest framing is more involved than the dream adventures of Alice or Dorothy, and entices us into a ranging puzzlement among possible dimensions of significance beyond and yet including the magus, his island audience, the playwright, his playhouse audience, their island realm, and the generations which inherit the island earth/global theater (or phoenix Globe Theater, in small). The meaning of The Tempest is relative, but not indiscriminately so. To appreciate the resonance of its matter, and account for such features as the dilated Epilogue plea, we need to consider the play as a dynamic structure. This approach entails uncertainty as to just how encompassing the project claimed by Prospero is. It also calls for a critical response on a fundamental, even simple, level of perception. The sophistication of imaginative play traced, however, should prove to be eminently Shakespearean.
The sophisticated play is that of pastoral dialectic, incorporated in the *Tempest* topology. Searching for a way to represent the relative undisclosure or self-containment of this work, we may notice that an emblem is offered in the opening scene. The indrawn qualities of *The Tempest* could well be objectified in the ship which is thought to be split open, but later is reported "tight and yare and bravely rigg'd" (V.i.224). As readers and viewers, while we seem privy to the project in progress, its divulgence may be less assumable than first thought. Backtracking to the scene of upheaval then, we no longer take details and conceits for granted, but attend them for clues as to the relation between form and meaning in this dramatic structure. Doing so, we recognize how very seminal this brief scene is, as it virtually presents the play's dialectic strategies in a nutshell.

The crew aboard a storm-tossed ship struggles to keep it from splitting open or capsizing. Room in which to keep the vessel afloat is critically scarce. A Boatswain defies the low ceiling of storm clouds to "Blow till thou burst thy wind, if room enough!" (I.i.7-8). Miranda later depicts the compression even more direly: "The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch, / But that the sea, mounting to th' welkin's cheek, / Dashes the fire out" (I.ii.3-5). In addition to the peril of being crushed between low sky and high seas, those on board face a rock-and-hard-place alternative between land and sea. The Shipmaster orders his
Boatswain, "speak to th' mariners: fall to 't, yarely, or we run ourselves aground" (3-4). On the open seas, however, they risk inundation too far from shore to allow even a strong swimmer a fighting chance for survival. (Hardy Stephano is a self-exception, boasting a distance of thirty-five leagues swum, "off and on"). Out of such dialectic double binds Shakespeare would conceive avenues of release which offer a paradoxical resolution of the seeming impossibility of terms posed man.37

The tempest of elements engenders an analogous disorder on board, as degree among men is untuned before the indifference of "these roarers" (16). As middle man of the crew, the Boatswain, like the ship he strives to keep intact, is pressed from several directions. He mediates between the Master and the mariners, having to discern whistled commands above the roar of waters. When the royal party comes up on deck to ensure that the line of command is taut, the harried Boatswain loses his patience. Their presence is intrusive, and as members of a land-based authority they are out of their element. On their behalf Gonzalo takes the part of a mediator, but is rebuffed by his maritime counterpart.38 As counsellor to the King he might "command these elements to silence" (20-21); failing that, he can retire to his cabin and prepare for "the mischance of the hour" (25-26). In a dark twist of humor, Gonzalo turns the land/sea dichotomy back upon the Boatswain:
I have great comfort from this fellow: methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows. Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging: make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth little advantage. If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable. (28-33)

The hold on authority, respect of persons, and even existence is scant. Landed men drown, and seamen hang. In terms of human medial "room enough," one need only lose footing to be dangling in the air or submerged under water. Gonzalo's hope for a way out of imminent loss may seem just a bracing bit of gallows humor, but it also indicates the dialectic of reversal enveloping the human figure in this play. The Boatswain has declared there is none on board he loves more than himself. Countering this sentiment, Gonzalo stakes the communal welfare on the Boatswain's sea-survival. Thanks to the Romance dispensation, he need not hang consequently as surety, but he is subject to Gonzalo's gloating on firm ground (V.i.216-20). For good dialectic measure, and as an index of the speaker's demeanor, the speculative fate of the Boatswain is given a further twist. Focusing his resentment and frustration, Antonio exacerbates the retort, and heaps it on the insubordinate seaman as a curse: "would thou mightst lie drowning/ The washing of ten tides!" (56-57). That is, Antonio would see him hanged on shore and left for the water to wash over. The line of command has gone slack, all aboard are at the end of their rope, and the sea gapes wide to swallow the ship with its cargo.
Out of the staged confusion of wills and motions there also emerges a special awareness of mouths and ears. Competing with the surge-blowing storm, the Shipmaster blows his whistle, the Boatswain shouts commands, the royal passengers "cry within." A mouth may be used for venting curses (the Boatswain is upbraided as a "bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!"), communicating with others, speaking to oneself, praying, imbibing warm spirits or cold sea water:

Mariners.  All lost, to prayers, to prayers! all lost!
Boats.  What, must our mouths be cold?
    *    *    *
Ant.  We are merely cheated of our lives by drunkards:
      This wide-chapp'd rascal,—

(51-52, 55-56)

Bodies are conceived as vessels with portals, each sheltering a self which receives and emits. With inundation imminent, the separate human vessels retire below deck to pray, perhaps to drink a parting round, and take their leave of contained existence.

Along with a crowd of twentieth century Tempest critics, I am inclined to believe that Shakespeare drew upon certain pieces of travel literature when composing his fable of the new and the old. I merely intend to suggest here a few possible resonances between the opening scene and excerpts from two of the Bermuda Pamphlets, Sylvester Journadin's A Discovery of the Bermudas, and William Strachey's True Reportory of the Wracke. Shakespeare need not have had
either account at hand, for whatever appropriation of material there may have been answers to the pattern of his Romantic configuring, not to any wholesale borrowing. For instance, while parallels between Shakespeare's storm scene and the chronicled tempest weathered by the Sea-Adventure are readily drawn, the interest of the transmission lies in the structural resonance details gain in the process. Recounting the forsakenness of the men aboard the Sea-Adventure, Jourdain writes that "some of them having some good and comfortable waters in the ship, fetcht them, and drunke the one to the other, taking their last leave one of the other, untill their more joyfull and happy meeting, in a more blessed world."  

Shakespeare implies that "prayers" (51) could be taken as a euphemism like "comfortable waters" (Ste. "Here's my comfort.", II.ii.46,56), contrasting the waters which make mouths cold. Men facing their demise may share their last precious moments imbibing spirits for personal comfort and as a communal act, and outpouring spirits in prayer and anticipation of a fuller, more beatific union. We find in Strachey's report an expected mention of prayers which "might well be in the hearts and lips, but drowned in the outcries of the Officers,"  

and consider its possible inversion in the mouth of the Boatswain: "A plague upon this howling! they are louder than the weather or our office" (35-37). Shakespeare makes over typical details to fit his structural specifications, drawing on his considerable powers of retention as he shapes
common matter of personal interest into dramatically fresh images and constructs. Notice the dualities of concern (inner-outer, below-above) in the following passage from Strachey:

In the beginning of the storme we had received likewise a mighty leake. And the Ship in every joynt almost, having spued out her Okam, before we were aware . . . was growne five foote suddenly deepe with water above her ballast, and we almost drowned within, whilst we sat looking when to perish from above.42

In the swirl of Shakespeare's dialectic, peril from without and above (in this case, hanging on land) is played off peril from within and below (drowning beneath deck) in Gonzalo's nearly bawdy gameness:

I'll warrant him for drowning, though the ship were no stronger than a nutshell, and as leaky as an unstanch'd wench.

(46-48)

When source-tracing for perspectives or particulars, however, it is advisable to keep in mind the interactions between Shakespeare's long-developing imaginative propensities and the influence of his background reading. Formalist and historicist impulses reach an accomplished level of adjustment in The Tempest, and critical readings should reflect this achieved doubleness.

Although only the hubbub on deck is represented, in considering the whole impression of the ship-scene we grow aware of levels, compartments, and the significance of containment. Joan Hartwig puts the matter succinctly: "The
first scene, played on a symbolic stage which emphasizes the world's hierarchical structure by its different playing levels, suggests that the storm is not only a natural event, but also a symbol of a dislocated world order."43

Envisioning a production of The Tempest at the Globe ship of theater, Ronald Watkins draws this picture:

The opening scene of The Tempest shows how the whole multiple stage of Platform and Tiring-House can be made to seem like a ship tossing on a stormy sea -- with the Master on his bridge on the Tarras, and perhaps the Ship-Boy [] on the high and giddy mast in the Musicians' gallery, the Boats' vain bidding the gentry keep below as they struggle up through the trap-door from the ship's hold in Hell, the Stage-Posts serving for masts, the Stage-Rails as the taffrail and "A tempestuous noise of Thunder and Lightning heard" from the Huts above the Heavens.44

While this scene displays admirable dramatic integrity, its thoroughness is due to an oscillation which characterizes the dramaturgy of the whole play, namely, a method of framing which emphasizes containment as a relative, fragile concern for enclosure. In order to convey a sense of the ship as a whole structure, its susceptibility to splitting is rehearsed. Just so, the layout of the vessel is most vividly drawn outside of the opening scene's struggle for self-containment, in Ariel's report of ubiquitous intrusion:

I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flam'd amazement: sometimes I'd divide,
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards and boresprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join.

(I.ii.196-201)
Ariel has performed Prospero's bidding "To every article" (195). The insular project which the magus orchestrates is itself detailed, structured, requiring concentration, yet Prospero is too conscious of containment as an exclusionary, ultimately insufficient achievement not to rehearse the irruption of closed contexts. From the illusory splitting which opens the play to the deft interpenetration of contexts at its close, human placement is entertained elementally, corporeally, and psycho-spiritually among a host of dialectically conjured dimensions.

Elemental consideration of mankind eventually leads to a question such as, "What is natural behavior for a human?" Washing Italian nobles ashore upon an isle which intimates Western open-endedness while contained within Mediterranean perimeters, Shakespeare tempers visions of unspoilt races and fresh starts with knowledge of humanity's old stock. Gonzalo serves as the cultured European harboring a romantic primitivism, Antonio as the type of civilized corruption Gonzalo would like to leave behind. In place of a noble savage Shakespeare substitutes Caliban, who is a more complex, gifted figure than Prospero is willing to recognize, yet also an embodiment of the unsavory urges recommending human animality over human kindness.

Part of Gonzalo's reason for envisioning his simple commonwealth (II.i.143-52,155-60) is to "minister occasion" to the ungentlemanly pair of lords, as he later reflects
upon the strange "islanders" as "more gentle, kind" (III.iii.32) than the generation of his peers, too commonly typified by the likes of Antonio and Sebastian. Still, he gives voice to a romantic perspective upon the nature/culture question which suits his disposition. As a man who has had to compromise his ideals in serving a less than upright King,45 and keep company with scoffing cynics, Gonzalo is prone to overestimate the purity of uncultivated places and persons. His commonwealth speech owes many phrasings to an essay by Montaigne, who seems to drop his ever-skeptical guard somewhat to delineate the wide gap between cannibals in a pristine state of nature and Europeans in a cultured state of decadence. The following passage, while not a direct source, presents the gist of the intellectually romantic argument:

They are even savage, as we call those fruits wilde, which nature of her selfe, and of her ordinarie progresse hath produced: whereas indeed, they are those which our selves have altered by our artificiall devices, and diverted from their common order, we should rather term savage. In those are the true and most profitable vertues, and naturall properties most lively and vigorous, which in these we have bastardized, applying them to the pleasure of our corrupted taste.46

While Shakespeare sees both sides of the nature/culture face-off, and gives his cannibal some claim to natural properties, his evenhanded play disallows the kind of sentimental primitivism Montaigne espouses in this essay. The French essayist imagined his natural commonwealth perfect because existent (whereas Plato could only conceive
of such an order and give it poetic being). The British poetic dramatist in turn suggests that the New World experience would not likely bear out any one-sided golden appraisals. In the meeting between East and West, the humanity of each side would ensure that a full range of commendable and despicable behavior (complicated by misunderstanding) would be reciprocated beyond simple division.

An elemental islander, Caliban fits the description of a "natural," though not as Gonzalo would define that elusive term. As often remarked, the elements with which he is identified, earth and water, set him off against his opposite number's airy, fiery qualities. The son of a mother "who with age and envy/ Was grown into a hoop" (I.i.258-59), Caliban is mainly occupied with earthy appetites, surging drives. He does feel a primitive, nearly childlike awe for what is above and beyond him, but does not perceive a subjective, indwelling capacity for bridging the distance between the supernal and the earthbound self. Further, he equates hierarchy of being with the power to enforce will. The first man to have come ashore made much of him, only to subjugate him for failing to live up to a heightened standard of natural behavior. When men of the second water arrive twelve years later, a more indulgent natural order is anticipated. The man in the moon is free at last, and bears celestial fire water to an underling weary of forcible restraint. A section from Strachey's
account of the tempestuous dissensions on land which
threatened to ruin the Bermudan castaways' colony suggests
the moral overtones that tend to accompany such elemental
imagery:

Some dangerous and secret discontents nourished
amongst us, had like to have bin the parents of bloody
issues and mischieves, they began first in the Sea-
men, who in time had fastened unto them (by false
baits) many of our land-men likewise. 47

The baiting in The Tempest subplot works both ways, as the
natural and his civilized counterparts aggravate one
another's unruly, Sea-man qualities. All three behave as if
they were taking advantage of shore leave, besotted with
misty visions of a new land order while lacking the
grounding necessary to establish any civil system. They
never get their land legs; according to Trinculo, Caliban
has legs like a man (together they have four), but along
with his cohorts he waxes "reeling ripe" and traipses chin-
deep into brackish water. Always half at sea, the
conspirators are parodic tresspassers upon more cultivated
regions of human possibility.

The plot to kill Prospero while he naps (the magus is
more alert than his adversaries) clearly repeats in comic
diminution the lordly attempt to murder Alonso and Gonzalo
in their sleep. Heeding the strong terms of Antonio's
suggestion, we come to understand why Prospero so
insistently repudiates him. Antonio is a dark mirror
reversal of his brother, tapping the same world of images to
bolster a polar interpretation of ripe human action. Once all except himself and Sebastian have gone under, he reveals his talent for amoral landscaping. Claribel does not enter the picture of sudden succession he conjures, dwelling as she does

Ten leagues beyond man's life; she that from Naples Can have no note, unless the sun were post, --
The man i' th' moon's too slow, -- till new-born chins
Be rough and razorable; she that from whom
We all were sea-swallow'd, though some cast again,
And that by destiny, to perform an act
Whereof what's past is prologue; what to come,
In yours and my discharge.

(II.i.242-49)

He formulates a closed context whose every element, including the sleeping bodies of the intended victims, recommends that the only natural thing to do is rise to the occasion. And the occasion calls for a momentary deed effecting the virtually imperceptible transition from sleep to death. In a thinly jocose exchange just minutes beforehand, Gonzalo has reckoned that he is "nothing" to the laughing lords (172-74). Snide humor takes a turn for serious disregard of life as Antonio speeds sleeping human earth back to elemental non-existence. Gonzalo is "this lord of weak remembrance, this,/ Who shall be of as little memory/ When he is earth'd" (227-29). By steps Antonio reduces quick flesh to cold earth, his "sleepy language" for Sebastian's open ears a sinister counter to the song of "sea change" with which Ariel leads Ferdinand into his future:
Say, this were death
That now hath seiz'd them; why, they were no worse
Than now they are.

Here lies your brother,
No better than the earth he lies upon,
If he were that which now he's like, that's dead.
(255-57, 275-77)

A man who depends upon artful leading into temptation,
Sebastian raises the subjective phantom of conscience for
Antonio to dispel as a bogeyman. The treachery practiced
upon his brother has apparently not introduced Antonio to
any twinging spirit in his corporeal house:

Ay, sir; where lies that? if 'twere a kibe,
'Twould put me to my slipper; but I feel not
This deity in my bosom.
(271-73)

The most explicit phrasing of a supernatural principle
raised in the self ("This deity in my bosom") which
corresponds to the supernatural naturalism Prospero would
warrant at large is delivered by the one man who thoroughly
rejects any such suggestion. This reticence of meaning by
design permeates The Tempest. Shakespeare does not make
assertions in this play; he does, however, exercise
imagination, intuition, and understanding by means of
structured contraries, pressures, and silences, the features
of intertwined dialectics in process.

Following through the pattern of elemental depiction, we
find in this scene of attempted murder a consciousness of
bodily existence somehow already emblematized in the play's opening turmoil. That is, if the corporeal vessel, like a wooden vessel at sea, should be split, its freight will be imperilled. Emphasis upon the status of each person as a human vessel is one of the basic characteristics of Shakespearean Romance, but the accent is structurally intensified in The Tempest. In contemplating the threat to Alonso and Gonzalo, the drunken boats that Caliban and companions become, and the parabolic reserve of the Tempest project, I keep returning to a Scriptural parable dealing with thoroughness of regeneration:

No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on to an old cloak, because the patch pulls away from the cloak and the tear gets worse. Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; if they do, the skins burst, the wine runs out, and the skins are lost. No; they put new wine into fresh skins and both are preserved.48

The avoidance of putting new wine into old wineskins, or bottles (Jacobean translation), seems to have a special significance in Shakespeare's imagination. And this significance derives from classical literature as much as it does from the New Testament. One of the few obvious sources upon which Shakespeare drew in writing The Tempest is Ovid's Metamorphoses, Book Seven. I refer, of course, to the modelling of Prospero's valedictory invocation (V.ii.33-50) upon Medea's self-empowering one, as found in the original Latin and Arthur Golding's 1567 translation. The high magic Medea prepares for, an act of rejuvenation, is unlawful according to Shakespeare's Romance standards. Desiring to
please her husband Jason by returning her father-in-law Aeson to youthful vigor, Medea concocts a potion which in a dark rite she pours into his mouth and slit throat, having drained all the old blood out. It seems possible that the figure of Medea wielding a knife over the sleeping form of Aeson is transposed in *The Tempest* into that of Antonio, preparing "with this obedient steel, three inches of it," to lay Alonso "to bed for ever" (II.i.278-79). If the unnatural Medean recourse, here a murder conspiracy, should be enacted, the blood will run out, and the vessel be lost. But the principle of regeneration which proscribes any shedding of age (so Hermione is restored to Leontes after sixteen wrinkling years) yet allows a lost father to find second life in the promising espousal of a son or daughter. Each generation has its time in turn, barring the unfortunate exception wherein a parent outlives a child cut off in youth, and would if possible forgo remaining years in order that the child might reach the age of second family life. Yet as Shakespeare came to experience, and dramatized in *The Winter's Tale*, a lost son of one age might be found in the son-in-law of a later age. That in a double movement Alonso and Gonzalo are exposed to and recovered from death instances *The Tempest*'s peculiarly mandalic wedding of subjection to and redemption from a world of temporal loss.

Between the brace of wakeful, lordly vessels a murderous understanding is reached, defined by the "sleepy language" which passes from the mouth of one to the ears of the other.
Antonio engages in a verbal pas de deux of tell-me-my-own-mind with Sebastian: "If you but knew how you the purpose cherish/ While thus you mock it!" (II.i.219-20). Murderous language also passes among the islander, the butler, and the jester, but it is language fueled by intoxicating spirits. For Caliban, a prime virtue of language is its abusive potential, enabling him to turn it against his master and mistress:

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

(I.ii.365-67)

Miranda claims to have taught Caliban to "know thine own meaning" (358), thereby leading him into fuller self-consciousness. From Caliban's rankling viewpoint, he has been removed from a preserve of elemental satisfaction and wordless feeling to be subjected to a foreign system exacting punishment, labor, and confinement. Yet if Caliban curses from inside the prison house of language, he displays a sensual affinity for the shape and sound of words -- the novelty of "utensils" and untold richness of "nonpareil" (III.ii.94,98) are palpable on his tongue. The meeting with Stephano introduces him to a new language spoken fluently among those desirous of quick release: "Open your mouth; here is that which will give language to you, cat" (II.ii.84-85). The butler-god teaches a new gospel ("Here, kiss the book.") imbibed with fast-acting results. Being a quick learner ("Well drawn, monster, in good sooth!"),
Caliban is soon converted by the sack, and places himself at the service of its keeper. "Thought is free" (III.ii.121) on tongues drowned and loosed with drink, as the old vessels filled with a heady new wine spill their innards. Ariel, the unbottled spirit, flits onto the scene, and foments dissension in the ranks by tossing plain confutation into their midst, confounding the imposters with a refrain of "Thou liest." Trinculo receives a beating on account of this ventriloquistic nay-saying, and is admonished to keep a good tongue in his head (110). Liquor talks, and when heated spirits erupt, body language is resorted to. The imbalance played out subsumes inebriation within the more dialectically fundamental fault of incontinence. Seeking a shortcut to release that bypasses the need for patient service and timely observance of vesselship, selves out of kilter attempt to forsake the terms of containment. Moral content in The Tempest is integrated within the crossing of elemental conditions distinguishing the human frame as a knot of special interest.

The obvious model of continence in the play is Miranda, with Ferdinand learning its value under her charming influence and her father's watchful eye. She is a chaste vessel prone to think well of other vessels, hence her surmise that the broken ship "had, no doubt, some noble creature in her" (I.ii.7). Her disposition owes much to the "careful" tutoring provided by Prospero, and the currency of suggestion between father and daughter is like that between
magus and familiar spirit. Examining the syntactic
envelopment of the following passage, we notice how
containment is equated with preservation on the human level:

No, not so much perditation as an hair
Betid to any creature in the vessel
Which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink.
(I.ii.30–32)

The effect of such a phrasing is to identify "creature" and
"vessel" through twin reference of the common relative
pronoun, "which." An individuation of sensory faculties
(hearing, sight) is stressed, and when taken together with
the strong awareness of the ship as a container for human
cargo (in turn enclosing life-freight) of which not a hair
is lost, a cephalic orientation is felt to be immanent in
the dramatic narrative.51 A director staging this scene
would do well to emphasize the axis between Prospero's mouth
and Miranda's ears. A good deal of the tale he relates has
to do with a brother he can scarcely acknowledge his own, to
which the high-minded daughter responds as a receptacle of
promise: "Good wombs have borne bad sons" (119). In an
apparent loose end, Ferdinand speaks of "the Duke of Milan/
And his brave son" (440–41); contextually it could be a
glancing reminder that the reversal of qualities from
generation to generation may work both ways. When Prospero
makes the going rough for Ferdinand, Miranda pledges her
faith in the gallant form sprung from the cracked ship:
"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't" (460-62). Ferdinand attains further release by voluntarily binding himself as a "patient log-man" and continent suitor. Meanwhile Caliban throws his logs aside (although one may come in handy for battering Prospero's skull) and pictures a match between Beauty and the Butler. A confluence of Romance thought on the body as container and the pursuit of freedom within the bounds of human kind-ness threads its way through the island play. Bodies plumb the intersections of confinement and release, associated through a common element widely present in this work. The Tempest might handily be approached as a tale of vessels, vassals, and wood.

Wood is an ideal material for Shakespeare's purposes, being such a versatile element. It is easily converted to any number of uses, some beneficial, some oppressive. It may keep things afloat, containing and preserving them, or serve to imprison what is enclosed. Because labor is involved in its conversion, wooden work can be punitive as well as necessary. A point that would not be lost on Shakespeare, wood comprises much of a theater's construction (the rapid consequences of which would be experienced at a fateful performance of Henry VIII). Basically, in The Tempest Shakespeare realizes the beauty of a material which can give such concrete yet diverse expression to his clutch of themes. Let us now circulate typically through the play, sampling the ins and outs of its wooden craftsmanship.
The playing area is first to be imagined as its sea-going counterpart, a structure of levels, passages, and compartments, a floating world of man-made distinctions. It is a fragile construct, whose freight of meaning cannot be secured from the flood of forces bearing in on all sides. Hope for the ship's "fraughting souls" is so slim as to be almost a joking matter, a proposal for a more assuring use of wood and rope on shore. Twelve years previous, a duke was ousted from the close security of a palace library and a surrounding city, to be exposed in a "rotten carcass of a butt" (I.ii.146) to a larger realm which made human feeling and knowledge seem as nothing before its elemental starkness. Washing ashore on an island ripe for reclamation, he girded himself in a recondite Art of control, and wielding a staff exerted mind over matter. One of his early acts was to release a tortured spirit from a cloven pine (which Harry Berger, Jr., has conditionally called "the tree of fallen human nature"). 54 Brooking no impatience for complete release, Prospero stills Ariel with a wooden threat (I.ii.294-96). For refusing to rein in his animal appetites and conduct himself continently, the other presence flanking Prospero has been thoroughly repressed. 55 When Caliban crosses paths with his brave new acquaintances, he is engaged in his chief menial chore: gathering firewood. Fittingly, the drunken butler has floated ashore on a butt of sack, 56 duly sequestered in "a rock by th' sea-side" (II.ii.134-35). The bottle he bears is made of bark, from
which he pours a spirit of unrestraint. For the gullible mooncalf he will be the man out of the moon, his term for gathering firewood on Sunday spent. Visions of a bacchanalian indenture dancing in his head, Caliban sings of a duty-free future (II.ii.178,180-85). When the bottle is emptied, Stephano will "furnish it anon with new contents" (II.ii.142-43) from the fountainhead of high life. Elsewhere, two ambitious lords plot to puncture a pair of sleeping vessels whose contents cannot be replenished. Yet if a vigilant overseer has some success, vessels will be preserved in a new spirit of human investiture. Embodying it, a Prince bears "wooden slavery" (III.i.62) for love's sake. His father takes a first step toward a newly relational existence in glimpsing a self-disposal (vassalship) beyond despair. Somewhat less consciously, a butler whose dear bottle is drowned exhorts concern for others first, like a boatswain of landed mediacy. Knowing that his project has had mixed results, fallen human nature being suggestible but free to refuse the claims of kindness, Prospero arranges for a common reentry into the sealed ship. Outside the context of his magic control ("this bare island"), he assumes the part of a vassal ("release me from my bands") whose freedom is dependent upon the interrelating action of pardon. A double movement of closure and rupture marks the final moments of a dramatic composition modelling the terms of its structural integrity.
Within the play, rupturing force is signified elementally as lightning, that sudden contact between sky and surface which splits wooden containment. Displaying glimmers of a supernatural aura, Miranda "would the lightning had/ Burnt up those logs" Ferdinand must pile (III.i.16-17). For those in a ship, a bolt from heaven delivers a perilous release, whereas for a spirit pent in a tree such a strike occasions a welcome discharge. Lightning is that natural yet supernatural rifting force which breaks open closed contexts. Those it strikes, out of a storm cloud or out of the blue, might well be killed.\(^5\) Trinculo decides that Caliban is prostrate because he "hath lately suffered by a thunderbolt" (II.ii.37). Or perhaps lightning effects an instantaneous jolt into an expanded frame of mind, separating the stricken from those who continue to labor under narrow assumptions.\(^5\) Such a conceit of violent epiphany is quite as inviting as it is far-fetched. And while Shakespeare does not subject any character in this play to a direct hit, he does make ample use of lightning as a sudden strike against confidence in closure. Prospero is prime bolt-wielder, and takes delight in the raw power at his disposal: "to the dread rattling thunder/ Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak/ With his own bolt" (V.i.44-46). His scripted project calls for impressive flashes, but not simply to satisfy his recreative impulses. Reporting his performance as a tempestuous spirit, Ariel describes how he "flam'd amazement" throughout the ship,
darting faster than "Jove's lightnings" (I.ii.198,201). Ferdinand has jumped overboard like one struck, "With hair up-staring" (213). All except the mariners abandon ship to take their chances outside the nutshell of accustomed passages. In place of the familiar circuits of recognition and complacency, Prospero's island presents a labyrinth of disorientation, opening onto scenes of subjective castigation. The guilty parties are drawn out into public expression of their appetites and presumption, their unreserve due to the shared misconception that privacy is guaranteed on the desolate isle. Suddenly closure is disrupted, as when Ariel appears amidst "Thunder and lightning" to throw the "men of sin" back upon their discovered guilt. Ideally, the lightning figures as an elemental stab at consciences, an attempt to educe something of the embarrassment and unpreparedness slack mortality could feel before divine penetration. 60

Because he is only human, Prospero cannot resist having Ariel taunt the dinner guests in their discomfiture. The magus has anticipated that their initial response will more likely be one of defensiveness than chagrin. Mark the terms of Ariel's rebuff: "I have made you mad;/ And even with such-like valour men hang and drown/ Their proper selves" (III.i.58-60). Intemperance drives men out of their proper, human level of observance into the environs of self-destruction. The medial focus of the opening scene is applied to that willfulness in humanity which leads it to
revolt against the tension of its status. Hanging and
drowning present a double bind which seems to admit of no
resolution, unless the impossibility of terms is entered
into with patience and good faith. Although his
entertainment of hope wrested from the deadlock of
hopelessness is on the surface offhandedly thin, Gonzalo's
turning of the hanging/drowning duplex bespeaks a trust in
paradoxical recovery that is borne out on Prospero's isle.
According to the synchronous vision of this Romance,
humanity is as good as lost and reprieved through the
impenetrable involvement of that forsakenness. A character
like Alonso who forfeits hope because it requires too great
a degree of self-disposal beyond the sure enclosure of
despair will decline to credit the crossings of paradoxical
eventuality: "he is drowned/ Whom thus we stray to find; and
the sea mocks/ Our frustrate search on land" (III.iii.8-10).
In the comic subplot the reversals rung on hanging and
drowning are associated with the kind of intemperance that
occupies itself with drunkenness, whoring, and other
pastimes of a drifting life. For letting drink make him
inordinate, Trinculo is warned, "keep a good tongue in your
head: if you prove a mutineer, -- the next tree!"
(III.ii.33-34). Prospero's admonishment to Ariel
(I.ii.294-96) is given a comic turn in this threat of a
tree-fate. Stephano does not stand on steady land legs
himself. Still, in his carousing he gives voice to the
crossplay of fatal steps which hems in humanity and just
might allow some living space. His first "scurvy tune to sing at a man's funeral" is that of a beached salt: "I shall no more to sea, to sea,/ Here shall I die ashore, --"
(II.ii.45,43-44). His second song parodies Gonzalo's earlier claim for retrieval in a confounding of perils. Caustic Kate rejects the advances of sailors with the cry to "Go hang!"; the shanty closes with a mutual dismissal: "Then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!" (52,55). All this volleying between matched destinies has a riddling aura to it, as if equilibrium were the implausible quality to be derived from the alternatives provided.61

On an elemental vertical axis, equilibrium calls for a principle of buoyance to match that of gravity. An indication of how Prospero's sea-sorrow has affected his island dream of a moral universe can be found in the story of past abandonment he tells Miranda:

O, a cherubin
Thou wast that did preserve me. Thou didst smile,
Infused with a fortitude from heaven,
When I have deck'd the sea with drops full salt,
Under my burthen groan'd; which rais'd in me
An undergoing stomach, to bear up
Against what should ensue.

(I.ii.152-58)

The raising of an undergoing power in the self to bear up against pressing anxieties and hardships is central to Prospero's devising. He warrants against actual drowning, and spreads a variable suggestion of buoyance directed toward the personal characteristics of the castaways. This
suggestion naturally avails itself of the sea, but also of garments, wooden objects, conscience, spiritual stamina in general, and ultimately Mercy. Ferdinand seems to have reached shore by exerting himself, beating the surges under him, but in Francisco's phrasing more than heroic determination is conveyed. We surmise an underbearing principle, whose effect only is describable, transferred in Francisco's account to a matched pathetic fallacy more readily depicted: "To th' shore, that o'er his wave-worn basis bowed,/ As stooping to relieve him" (II.i.116-17). Alonso is disinclined to believe in powers of uplift, nursing a guilty death wish that is potentiated by the judgment Ariel pronounces. The plunging King disregards the conditions for recovery, and fixes instead upon the "deep and dreadful organ-pipe" that "did bass my trespass" (III.iii.98-99). Only by sinking deeper than plummet can fathom or any sound reach will he finally attain the zero state of rest. When Prospero catalyzes the transformation of Alonso's despair into a gesture of selfless resurgence, buoyance is reasserted over (or under) dead-weight certitude of loss. Elsewhere, Stephano and his partners in wine buoy themselves with artificially induced high spirits. As with Francisco's report of brave swimming, through the transparent exaggeration of Stephano's claim and the mildly ridiculous simile drawn by Trinculo we detect an underbearing dispensation at work. Since they insist upon claiming such uplifting power for their own, and drink
themselves into a state of overweening revolt, they are treated to a chin-deep dunking in a foul pool. Disgraced but alive to tell the tale, their "infinite loss" extends no further than the loss of their bottles, a parodic echo of Alonso's disconsolation. King Stephano may have to plumb depths, but only in a spirit of retrieval: "I will fetch off my bottle, though I be o'er ears for my labour" (IV.i.213-14).

The lesson is not quite complete at this point. There remains the further self-affliction resulting from an act of thievery signifying the imposture of their designs. The setting and springing of the clothes trap comprises one of The Tempest's open stagings of thematic play (the banquet scene, III.iii., being another). Through this device images of vesture and buoyance mingle in act and thought. The critical disagreement over whether we should take the "line" on which the trumpery is hung as a clothesline or a lime tree is consequential if for no other reason than that it draws our attention to this bit of elusive play. Whether we prefer one reading or the other, the point is that Shakespearean drama especially is a dynamic of sound and sight whose verbal multivalence enhances the visual aspect through rapid association. This scene most likely could be staged profitably using either interpretation. If we consider the thieving habits of Autolycus as a precedent ("The white sheet bleaching on the hedge"), the lime tree option recommends itself. That a tree should be used for
hanging clothes upon certainly squares with the metaphoric patterns already observed. Then again, we might prefer the clothesline for its closer visual analogue to the drift of Stephano and Trinculo's punning, and the reverberations such a line would allow if this scene were staged attentively. I would have Trinculo and Stephano facing the audience from behind the line, which would be level with their chins. (If using a lime tree prop, I would have a lateral branch at neck level). They have only recently extracted themselves from an uncomfortably high water level, but have yet to comprehend the character-scouring ups and downs of the island. Their play on "line" is roguishly quick-witted, glancing over the equatorial line and that of ruled performance. What they miss is the larger context of non-frivolous play in which they are caught out of line, neglectful of the intermediacy befitting human conduct. Their errancy is showing, indicated by a line which suggests that they only hang and drown their proper selves in bedizening their intemperance.

This thievery reflects upon Antonio's more successful imposture, a decision "To have no screen between this part he play'd/ And him he play'd it for" (I.ii.107-08). Dressing the part of the Duke of Milan, Antonio has written the de jure Duke out of the script.

Seb. I remember
Ant. You did supplant your brother Prospero. True:
    And look how well my garments sit upon me;
Much feater than before: my brother's servants
Were then my fellows; now they are my men.

(II.i.265-69)

The clothing imagery is carried through as Antonio compares a conscience to a sore on a heel, which requires a change of footwear at most: a conscience is only troublesome if allowed to develop. That a conscience should serve as a buoyant principle of embodied godliness is matter for cynical amusement. Any positive association of buoyance and vesture remains foreign to his way of thinking.

Gonzalo, being more responsive to Prospero's parabolic arrangements, notices that their garments have come through a sea-soaking "rather new-dyed than stained with salt water" (II.i.61-62). Ariel has seen to it that there is "On their sustaining garments not a blemish,/ But fresher than before" (I.ii.217-19). For Gonzalo's humane provision of "Rich garments, linens, stuffs and necessaries" (I.ii.164) twelve years previous, Prospero returns the favor in kind, dropping hints of a new life put on like fresh wedding garments. The association of vesture and wood objectified in the trumpery scene is found partially submerged in Prospero's story of two brothers, with Antonio figured as "The ivy which had hid my princely trunk,/ And suck'd my verdure out on't" (I.ii.85-87). Elsewhere, Ferdinand swears to his father-in-law that pure affection blankets whatever libidinous urges he feels (IV.i.55-56). The dialectic and analogistic interrelation of motifs in The Tempest can be traced
persuasively but uncertainly to Prospero's person, as if the brooding magus in the background or offstage ("hard at study") were responsible for the terms upon which the whole play proceeds. His island dream is fluidly comprehensive, but he himself is too conscious of its artificial enclosure and his own mortality to seek lasting refuge in it. Thus, the conjured perfection of the betrothal masque ruptures into the anxious gyre of the revels speech.

On "this green land," a circle most likely, spirits impersonating the goddesses of earth, sky, and the bow spanning these levels (a mild counterpart to lightning) summon other spirits playing the parts of water nymphs and sicklemen, called from "crisp channels" and "furrow". This celebration of a "contract of true love" idealizes the temperate middle region of human cultivation. In order the better to relate this apex of moral landscaping to the reneging clean sweep which follows it and to place both within a structural perspective, I here intend to cast a rear projection before which Shakespeare's Romance text can be described. I draw upon Augustinian Biblical exegesis for the relevance of its metaphoric testimony to the parabolic existentialism of Shakespeare's secular drama. In Book XIII of the Confessions we find a tropological application of the Creation story which offers what we might think of as a Judeo-Christian evolutionary account of the human ascent to kind-ness. Augustine strives to plumb the reflective depths of Old and New Testament wisdom through a dialectic crossing
of elemental terms.

In the era before Christ, turbulent humanity required the production of signs and wonders, its faithlessness in need of awe-inducing grounds for belief:

If Adam had not fallen away from you, from his reins there would not have flowed that salt sea water, the human race, so deeply active, so swelling in storms, and so restlessly flowing. Then there would have been no need for your dispensers to work corporeally and sensibly amid many waters, and thus produce mystical deeds and words. For now the creeping things and the flying animals seem to me to be such. Men subject to corporeal rites, and instructed and initiated by such signs, would not make further progress unless the soul began to live spiritually upon another plane. 63

Out of this higher plane, the faithful earth of Christian community, living souls are brought forth. Augustine sustains the dialectic by drawing upon Christ's emblematic identification as the Fish. Christian fidelity can dispense with signs and wonders:

Of these the earth now has no need, although it feeds upon the Fish, raised out of the deep and put upon that table which you have prepared in the sight of believers. He was taken out of the deep to the end that he might nourish the dry land. 64

The soul which has attained this spiritual level is firmly grounded in life-giving faith, not subject to the temporal world which washes the aimless to their extinction.

The living soul takes its beginning from the earth, for it profits no one except those faithful to keep continent from the love of this world, so that their soul may live to you, for it was dead while it lived in pleasures, in pleasures that bring death, O Lord. 65
Further reinforcing the idea of preservation in Christ over against dissolution in the flux of temporality, Augustine enlists another elemental sign of the Word. The soul is drawn up from the deep of unlikeness to gain kind-ness in the living waters which spring from the land, joining in the fellowship of middle earth dwellers whose true place is at the source of life.

Your Word, O God, is the fountain of eternal life, and it does not pass away. Therefore, this departure of the soul is restrained by your Word, when it is said to us, "Do not be conformed to this world," so that the earth may bring forth in the fountain of life a living soul, a soul continent in your Word through the evangelists, by imitating the imitators of your Christ. For this is to be "according to its kind," since a man is emulated by his friend. He says, "Be you as I am, because I also am as you."66

In the betrothal masque an ethico-elemental dialectic or dance also situates mankind on fertile ground. Shakespeare of course does not posit Scriptural priority, but the play does consider the authority of bound wisdom, whether in the book Prospero mainly consults, or the "book" Stephano and his companions reverently kiss. And reminiscence of the New Testament is frequent in this play, which seems to respond to Christ's parabling of the Kingdom of God with counter-parabling of the Kingdom of Tempestivity. Whatever understanding may be had from a book is committed back to the world it chronicles, which is itself a tale unfolding. Augustine would add that while the world shall come to an end, the authority which Scripture reveals, that of the Word, abides. Shakespeare stops just short of Christian
testimony, though we may well feel some extra-textual pressure due to his dramaturgically mixed mode of closure and rupture, leading us to adopt a frame of mind which thrives on the interchanges between the mortally knowable and faithfully conjectural.

Augustine's eschatological vision is more a profession of credence than that of Prospero in the revels speech:

For the skin will be folded up, and the grass over which it was stretched shall with its glory pass away, but your Word endures forever. Now it appears to us under the dark figure of the clouds and in the mirror of the heavens, not as it is. For even as to ourselves, although we are the well-beloved of your Son, "it has not yet appeared what we shall be." 57

Northrop Frye would judge my differentiation less emphatic than it should be, dealing as he does in self-contained literary systems:

The Tempest is not an allegory, or a religious drama: If it were, Prospero's great "revels" speech would say, not merely that all earthly things will vanish, but that an eternal world will take their place. In a religious context, Prospero's renunciation of magic would represent the resigning of his will to a divine will, one that can do what the Boatswain says Gonzalo cannot do, command the elements to silence and work the peace of the present. 68

As I have argued at some length, the meaning of The Tempest is structurally connotative, not literally denotative. Taken at face value, the revels speech is a dour capitulation to the transience Prospero has striven to make humanly meaningful. Read within the shifting contexts Shakespeare cannily generates in this work, the revels
speech becomes charged with unknowing. I believe D. G. James is led to pose the right sort of questions:

If what encompasses our lives is the darkness of sleep, is this 'sleep' a name, a euphemism, for extinction; or is our life a 'dream' from which we shall awake to behold a world of reality incomparably more wonderful than it has entered the heart of man to imagine? 69

Shakespeare in his secular drama and Augustine in his spiritual confession share an in-between sense of meaning, an equipoise which delvers into the logocentric core of Western consciousness seem so inevitably to assume. Quoting from Jacques Derrida's essay "Differance," Frank Lentricchia muses on such ultimate recourse to interim significance. His comments seem to apply alike to the working principles of Shakespearean Romance and Augustinian exegetical confession:

Thus in the classical semiology, the sign is both "secondary and provisional: it is second in order after an original and lost presence. . . . It is provisional with respect to this final and missing presence." The comfort of classical thought is to believe that the "possible" is ontologically secure as center, that the "possible" sits outside the system of differences, that the possible is only presently impossible. 70

For Augustine of course the interim is the trial period between the First and Second Coming of the Word. In Shakespearean Romance, culminating in the synchronous concentration of The Tempest, the Word is deferred as the name of presence whose invocation would short circuit the dialectic process of simulating the conditions under which
faith arises and operates in a world of indifference. Faith in this view is itself a crossing of belief and unbelief, a capacity for commitment to mysteries, a living-into-life lacking surety of ground. As such it is a romantic endeavor, perhaps the romantic endeavor. Yet its sites of challenge are most regularly common, daily ones, whose peril lies in their potential for tedium. Testing the limits of an aesthetic form within which he has gained extraordinary proficiency, Shakespeare stages the existential project of a Romance hero who realizes that control and faith are eventually incongruous. As Michael Goldman observes, the final exit "constitutes an entrance" into Prospero's cell, a concluding movement of aesthetic self-enclosure; then again, the "master of a full poor cell" (I.ii.20) enacts a kenotic movement which breaks open contexts of control and comprehension in an appeal to the sole presence of "Mercy itself". For the meanwhile of tempestivity, with its uncertain association of stormy passage, temporal flux, season, ripeness, temperance, and natural ding an sich (beyond human landscaping), significance must be repeatedly rehearsed within the given element of nescience.

Regarding the apparent agnosticism of Shakespeare's work, Kierkegaard writes:

Shakespeare himself seems to have shrunk back from the genuinely religious collisions. Perhaps these can only be expressed in the language of the gods. And this language no man can speak; for, as a Greek (Plutarch) already has said so beautifully, "From men man learns to speak, from the gods to keep silent."
What is left unsaid, however, may be structurally intimated. One of the basic discrepancies in *The Tempest* is spiritually, even religiously, oriented. Within the context of his role as the wronged Duke of Milan, the quality of the pardon Prospero dispenses is strained. He forgives from a position of advantage, and mixes his pardon with disdain in Antonio's case. It is not easy to forgive an impenitent who thrives on misplaced trust. As a man in this situation Prospero is subject to the skepticism which questions the feasibility of wholehearted pardon. Outside of particular circumstance, though, Prospero as frail Everyman clings to the unconditional Mercy which frees all faults, including, we may assume, that of begrudging participation in the Christian scheme of forgiveness. Shakespeare pushes his theme of pardon even further in *Henry VIII*, and while its practice is more explicitly Christian, it is not free from strain either. In the latter scenes of the play (e.g. that in which Henry reconciles Cranmer and the Archbishop of Canterbury), Christian forgiveness is invoked to unrealistic effect, as if Shakespeare had become self-conscious of its use as a plot device, within the context of Henry's court fair cover for political craft. Earlier, however, the Duke of Buckingham, and then Queen Katherine, forgive their enemies in a spirit of release Prospero cannot equal. They forgive as people nearly hounded out of life, to whom the world's ways are transparent; more so than Prospero, they can pardon freely, without stint on the verge of death.
I believe that a good deal of the dialectic interplay oriented about the parabolic mediacy of human earth can be conveyed in a production of The Tempest. Resilient framing may go far to impart the dramaturgical blend of closure and openness which constitutes the play's structural dialectic. David Young proposes a suggestive stage design for The Tempest in arguing for the practical considerations of noticing this play's affinities with Italian commedia dell'arte:

Suppose that on the stage itself there is a small stage area, suggestive of a makeshift stage set up by a troupe of players. This "inner" area should give a pronounced "play-within-a-play" feeling to the action of The Tempest. It would also give emphasis to the confinement-freedom dichotomy, as Prospero, Ariel, and perhaps Miranda would be free to move in or out of it, while the shipwrecked characters and Caliban would never move out of it (with the exception of Ferdinand when he is freed and made audience to his betrothal masque) and would show no awareness that it was a confined area. The artificiality of this inner stage could be emphasized by the use of painted backcloths, as well as by our sense that the surrounding area was a kind of unconcealed backstage.

If The Tempest were staged as theater-in-the-round, much use could be made of circular compass as a fluid framing principle. Spotlights with adjustable apertures would allow for moment-to-moment flexibility, and facilitate the theatrical starkness for which The Tempest calls. Circles of attention or self-enclosure, widening into distraction or disclosure, would properly highlight the play's hybrid nature as a strongly narrative drama. By judiciously regulating the spectacle of the production, what is to be
seen, so as to indicate the rippling field of play
accessible in the complex design of this work's linguistic
suggestion, a director might realize something of the
parabolic implication of audience which serves to
distinguish The Tempest as a chef d'oeuvre.

Rather than speak conclusively about this work in too
large, too abstract a way, I prefer to probe its intriguing
structure once again, leading to an analogy that may widen
the context in which the artistry of The Tempest can be
appreciated. I concern myself with memory and reflective
capacity on the way to a summary consideration of the
special artistic achievement which strikes us at once as
being a completed masterpiece and yet a work still very much
in process. Juxtaposing a pair of passages on memory, we
note that Miranda remembers no female face except her own
(III.i.49-50), but does retain some mental image of female
attendants (I.ii.46-47). We are led to infer that Miranda
recalls the image of her child's face in a mirror,
accompanied in the reflected background by female attendants
whose features would not have been impressed so firmly in
her mind. Her childish attention would have been focused on
herself, with peripheral awareness of the female attendants
unrecalled until Prospero challenges her to delve into
memory, prompting her with reference to "any other house or
person" (I.ii.42). If this inference is justified,
Shakespeare has provided with some subtlety an apt metaphor
for the workings of memory and the sounding of its
reflective ("dark backward and abysm") depths, the bringing of almost-lost impressions to the surface.

Reflection and the vividness of a child's face bring to mind another culminating achievement, Las Meninas (1656), by the Spanish painter Diego Velasquez. The small figure of a Princess occupies the middle foreground radiantly, flanked by ladies-in-waiting (hence the title) and other various courtly persons, including Velasquez himself, who has stepped back from his canvas to examine a work in progress. The high-ceilinged studio which houses the scene is painted in its cavernous dimensionality, but closure is not complete. In a lighted doorway at the back of the room stands an onlooker, poised on stairs which lead up to a cross-corridor. Additional light filters into the studio through tall portals on the right. Most evocatively, the King and Queen are visible in a mirror reflection on the back wall; they witness the scene from its periphery, presumably occupying a viewing space which gives them the same perspective as we the audience of the finished painting have. While properly outside the scene, they are yet framed in its background, even more so than the man on the stairs. We notice that the painting is filled with frames, and can easily imagine that the mirror frame is yet another picture frame, a synecdoche for the reflective ambiguities of the whole.

The mirror is now no longer so apparent, but implied as
that surface which reflects the scene we experience as the painted surface. Hypothetically, the canvas from which Velasquez has stepped back is that of Las Meninas itself, to compare it with the mirror image which allows him to include himself in the picture. Yet the perspective is not that of a mirror reversal as long as the sense of an exterior viewing position is maintained. However Velasquez went about modelling and composing his subject matter, the finished product suggests a portrait of a painter at work on a canvas which progresses toward the complete image the painter conceives as his own audience. That is, the artist is at once absorbed within the process of his artistry, contained within its frame, and outside its bounds as the author of its comprehensive matrix. Aesthetically and existentially, he is circumscribed and a circumscriber.

An analogous sense of intra- and extra-contextuality shapes our experience of The Tempest, due to the indeterminate correlation between the author of an insular project and the author of the text that is mounted as a theatrical project. As suggested previously, in the theater of the mind perspectives on existence are rehearsed by assuming a double capacity as character and author. Particularly in The Tempest is the urge to comprehend and authorize balanced by the consciousness of a world in process which destabilizes all human efforts to encompass it. Hence aesthetic closure is intensified and undermined, completeness draws us back into process, and a storybook
world- unto-itself is passed on for further recollecting:

That shall be by and by: I remember the story.

(III.ii.145)
Notes to Chapter Three


2 A. D. Nuttall, Two Concepts of Allegory, p. 156.

3 In his Introduction to the Pelican Tempest (New York: Penguin Books, 1959; paperback reprint, 1970), p. 19, Northrop Frye raises this problematic but fruitful issue with which experienced playwrights are liable to be occupied: "Dramatists from Euripides to Pirandello have been fascinated by the paradox of reality and illusion in drama: the play is an illusion like the dream, and yet a focus of reality more intense than life affords."

4 Robert W. Uphaus, Beyond Tragedy: Structure & Experience in Shakespeare's Romances (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1981). Having said that Uphaus fudges the ambiguity of Prospero's appointment, I must admit that he grazes the matter in passing, pp. 109-110: "But paradoxically in order to give occasion for a full assimilation of the experience of romance he must perform the most daring -- in that it involves the most risk -- action of the play: the public dissolution of his art into a 'chronicle of day by day'."


7 Nuttall, p. 138.

8 See D. G. James, The Dream of Prospero, p. 34: "He [Prospero] has destroyed the ship and its company by his Art, and kept his child divided between her anguish for suffering, her love and reverence for him, and her incomprehension of his cruelty and power."

10 See St. Augustine's *Confessions*, trans. John K. Ryan, VII.xii., p. 173: "No more did I long for better things, because I thought of all things, and with a sounder judgment I held that the higher things are indeed better than the lower, but that all things together are better than the higher things alone." Throughout Shakespeare, from *Love's Labor's Lost* to *The Tempest*, the single pursuit of higher things is eventually rejected in favor of a fuller acceptance of the human scale.

11 I have given my wording colonial overtones because the New World awareness of *The Tempest* so readily affords a basis for point and counterpoint on this topic of cultural settlement/encroachment. The Ariel-Prospere-Caliban axis lends itself to variable emblematic applications, depending upon historical and ethnic perspective. For instance, Caliban's subjugation might strike some as a political allegory on disadvantaged natives and exploitative colonizers, whether the natives be American Indians and the colonizers white Europeans, or easily awed Vietnamese and overwhelming Yanks. Referring to the French ethnologist and psychologist Otare Mannoni's study of colonial society in Madagascar, Prospero and Caliban, Frances Fitzgerald extends the Tempest analogy to depict the American presence in Vietnam (*Fire in the Lake* [New York: Vintage Books, 1972], pp. 396-97):

On the one hand there is Prospero, the European, who, unable to get along in his own society (his brother, he says, has betrayed him), has invented a world that he with his "magical powers" can dominate. In Caliban, the "bestial" nature of the island, he sees everything he detests in himself -- including a desire for incestual relations with his daughter Miranda. On the other hand there is Caliban himself, the native who hates his master not because Prospero dominates him but because he treats him so badly. As Mannoni points out, Caliban remembers a time when his master loved him and treated him kindly. He looks forward not to independence, but to finding a new and better master. This temporal sequence is in fact a representation of his own ambivalence towards authority: on the one hand he desires it, on the other hand he feels it will harm him. (The temporal succession is also curiously representative of the Vietnamese view of life, where it is hoped that the "golden age" of childhood will return once again in old age.) Ariel, the third character in the drama, combines features of both of the others. An important figure in colonial society, he is the houseboy, the intermediary between the colonial and the native Calibans. He desires independence, but he cannot take it for himself, for in exchange for his master's
"magical powers," he has relinquished his independence of spirit and bound himself in servitude. (Prospero keeps insisting on the debt Ariel owes him for having "saved" him from the curse of Caliban's mother. Prospero is here the missionary who "saves" his houseboys from the "darkness," "misery," and "paganism" of native life -- but who will not let his houseboys go.)

As The Tempest indicates, the relationship between colonial and native must eventually end, for while there is some superficial correspondence, the attitudes of both colonial and native are based on false, and finally contradictory, assumptions.

While Fitzgerald's reading of and extrapolation from The Tempest is clearly slanted, she does include many of the charges brought against Prospero by the self-styled unbedazzled critics of this play.

Then again, if Prospero is set aside as a third party to a useful dichotomy, the Ariel-Caliban pairing offers its services as a handy political conceit. In Are We Good Neighbors?: Three Decades of Inter-American Relations 1930-1960 (University of Florida Press, 1959; New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1972), pp. 2-4, Donald Marquand Dozer reviews the history of this conceit from the Latin American viewpoint. Jose Enrique Rodo, a Uruguayan, first proposed in his book Ariel (1900), that the United States, for all its good points, is spiritually Caliban-like, lacking the inherited European anima at work in Latin American culture. Dozer goes on to quote from Jesus Sempurn's 1918 essay "El Norte y el Sur": [Yankees are] "rough and obtuse Calibans, swollen by brutal appetites, the enemies of all idealisms, furiously enamored of the dollar, insatiable guipers of whiskey and sausages -- swift, overwhelming, fierce, clownish." Of course, the pendulum of opinion has swung between the extremes of thinking the U.S. a beastly menace or a super-national guardian genius for the hemisphere.

12 Leslie Fiedler closes The Stranger in Shakespeare with a chapter on The Tempest, which he reads as a psychobiographical allegory. He basically argues that in the series of plays from Pericles to The Tempest (p. 215: "all of them reworkings, with shifting emphases and varying experiments in structure, of the Apollonius myth"), Shakespeare's imagination reoriented itself from Eastern myth to Western chronicle, signifying a mental journey from past into future in which the archetypal identification of incest with riddle was translated into that of
rape/miscegenation with the maze (here Fiedler raises the Dedalian myth). Caliban serves as the "debosh'd" humanoid, or man of Ind, who threatens to ruin the puritanical father's hopes for sexual redemption in the marriage, with all due observance, of his nubile daughter to the acceptable other. Taken psychosexually, Caliban is actually the projection of the father's lustful underside, figured as the offspring of the supposedly vanquished slattern female principle. And Miranda? -- the darling epicene object of paternal love retaining sexual innocence in a mythic marriage of rare affections.

Fiedler accounts for that side of the European imagination which envisioned the New World savage as an inferior stock of humanity still wet behind the gills. After all, Caliban does crawl out from under a rock at his entrance. But what of the other impulse, to civilize and baptize these primitive strangers, accepting them as brothers in Adam and Christ? Fiedler thinks the Epilogue "an oddly orthodox ending to a play otherwise more pagan than Christian" (p. 253). Might we not just as well maintain that in The Tempest Shakespeare obliquely considers the fascination and imposition of the Christian religion? Prospero treats Caliban with human kindness until Caliban betrays the trust, and is consequently thrust from the household into a servile position. Geoffrey Bullough writes that this subjugation "agrees with 'the law made by Ferdinado, only against Canibals; That all which would not bee Christians, should bee bondslaves.'" [See Bullough, ed., Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare 8 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 257. Bullough includes this note: "Ferdinand V of Castile (1452-1516). The quotation is from Donne's 'Ignatius His Conclave (1610) in Poetry and Prose, ed. J. Hayward, 1932, p. 393.'"] The potential for imperialistic rationalization of Christian duties would not have been lost on a mind as equitable as Shakespeare's. This is not to say that The Tempest is about Christian colonization, only that in its unique fabular manner it seems to take into account the dialectics of motive and act characterizing the commerce of "civilizing" and native peoples.

13 David Young remarks this integrative action in The Heart's Forest, p. 170: "We are in the presence of paradox here, and there is no need to impose allegorical meanings on the play to discover that it suggests, finally, that confinement and freedom, mastery and servitude, are not so much unalterable opposites as they are mutually complementary, aspects of the same thing."

14 J. M. Nosworthy makes much of The Aeneid as a unifying
influence upon this play in "The Narrative Sources of The Tempest," in Review of English Studies 24 (1948), pp. 281-94. He argues that Shakespeare primarily drew upon Virgil's epic for his storm scene and the meeting of Ferdinand and Miranda, in addition to Ariel's appearance as a harpy in III.iii., the ship's safety in a deep nook of the island, and further scattered phrasings. While I do not find Nosworthy's juxtaposition of passages very convincing, I do agree that Shakespeare has Aeneas' trek in mind as an epic background, lending his own work a Mediterranean mythic aura. To my thinking, the fall of Troy and the flight of Aeneas with Anchises on his back is strongly suggested in Prospero's account of his own extirpation:

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.  
(I.ii.128-32)


17 Coleridge writes that the notion of murder "was suggested [to Antonio and Sebastian] by the magical sleep cast on Alonso and Gonzalo" (Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism, II, p. 178.) He falls just short of saying that Prospero, knowing how his brother will most likely respond, and win over Sebastian, includes a foiled murder plot in his provision. Does Prospero entrap Antonio and Sebastian to gain leverage over them, exerted in the fifth Act when he demands the return of his dukedom and assures them he could "justify you traitors"? The appeal of this question depends of course upon the ambiguity of Prospero's control as master of suggestion on the isle.

18 "What pleasure is there in looking at a mangled corpse that causes you to shudder? Yet if one lies somewhere or other, men rush there to be made sad and to turn pale. . . . Because of this morbid curiosity, monstrous sights are exhibited in the show places. Because of it, men proceed to search out the secrets of nature, things beyond our end, to know which profits us nothing, and of which men desire nothing but the knowing. Such curiosity is also the motive
when things are investigated by magic arts and with the same purpose of perverted science. Because of this, GC 1 is tempted in religion itself, when signs and wonders are demanded of him, and are desired not for some wholesome purpose but only for the experience of them." See The Confessions of St. Augustine, trans. John K. Ryan, XX.xlv., p. 265.

This passage matches the range of what might be called the confessional impulse in The Tempest. The tension between what properly pertains to subjectivity and the ongoing human endeavor for knowledge as a good in itself (what Kierkegaard would label "the world-historical") informs the doubleness of this play and its central figure, who raises himself to the full height of his "potent Art" only to abjure his "rough magic". As a descendant of the neo-Platonic necromancers of whom St. Augustine disapproves, Prospero could stand convicted of the theurgist's will to wield supernatural control. At least early in the play he still speaks of "volumes that/ I prize above my dukedom" (I.i.167-68). Yet his self-set task also involves a disenchantment, a re-engagement with common humanity, which ultimately draws him out of his role as magus, and places him, as Harry Berger observes in "The Miraculous Harp," p. 259, upon "the bare platform surrounded on three sides by Englishmen -- most of whom, we may imagine, might correspond to Trinculo's holiday fools."

19 Gary Schmidgall remarks in Shakespeare and the Courtly Aesthetic, p. 172, that "When Stephano first discovers Caliban he has four legs and two heads; the resulting conspiracy is that of a 'many-headed monster'." Shakespeare seems to have been taken with the Elizabethan conceit of the rabble as a many-headed beast, and to have crossed it with his mental picture of such a crowd as a tempestuous force. So we note the Boatswain's two-pronged rejoinder to Gonzalo that as a counsellor he might try making the elements subside and "work the peace of the presence" (I.i.22). For further metaphorical bundling along these lines, see Henry VIII, V.iii., where a typical, pressed middle man must disperse an unruly mob.

20 Hallett Smith remarks Shakespeare's variable appropriation of pastoral dialectic in Shakespeare's Romances, pp. 96-97: "Pandosto did indeed affect the writing of The Tempest as well as The Winter's Tale. As Walter Davis remarks, 'we can see human purposes operating effectively in the beautiful dialectical process (repeated by Ferdinand and Miranda in The Tempest III.i.) by which Dorastus descends from his pride of place, Fawnia gives up a little of humility's security, and they both reach the
middle ground of content where each is the other's servant." Quoted from Idea and Act in Elizabethan Fiction (Princeton, 1969), p. 169.

21 I would note in passing that John Fowles' *The Magus* concerns itself with a like instillment of moral subjectivity, although the point of view in this novel is oriented so as to keep Conchis, the master of illusion, enshrouded in ambiguity. In *The Tempest*, more of Prospero's anxious humanity is on show.

22 The physical and spiritual connotations of appetite, eating, and supping together grow prevalent in the later Romances. In *The Winter's Tale*, the reunited parties head for Paulina's house to see the lifelike statue of Hermione, "and there they intend to sup" (V.ii.103). Transported with joy over the vivification of his wife, Leontes would acknowledge the wonder-working "an art/ Lawful as eating" (V.iii.110-11). It seems possible that in *The Tempest* III.iii. Shakespeare is staging his version of the parable of the wedding feast, Mt. 22:11-14. Whereas the spiritually deficient guest in the parable lacks a wedding garment, the "three men of sin" attending Prospero's banquet are clad in fresh wedding garments, though likewise spiritually unkempt. Such inversion of circumstance is characteristic of Shakespeare's imaginative ways. Of course, the disrupted or judgmental banquet can be found as well in the tragedies of *Macbeth* and *Timon of Athens*. But in *The Tempest* the event is more fully taken up within the tapestry of motifs.

23 Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life*, p. 220. A. D. Nuttall judges Ferdinand to be lacking in interest, though indulged by Shakespeare as one of his "pup heroes" (Two Concepts of Allegory, p. 143). I believe it was Bonamy Dobree who found the Prince a "perfectly ordinary young man."

24 Knight, p. 245.

25 Questioned by Ferdinand, Prospero acknowledges that the actors are "Spirits, which by mine Art/ I have from their confines call'd to enact/ My present fancies" (IV.i.120-22). During this respite from chary concentration Prospero allows the affianced pair to be somewhat privy to the character of his public dreaming. In general, however, he deflects attention from himself, so as to diffuse and objectify his imagining. Wanting Ferdinand to be enraptured
at first sight of Miranda, he stands back and has the Prince surmise that the ethereal music attends her as goddess of the island. Again, when the time comes to assemble the various parties and step forward as the rightful Duke of Milan, Prospero grazes his lordship of the isle, instead maximizing the wonder and promising clarification in due course.

26 In The Sea and the Mirror, Caliban, speaking for an audience with an invested interest in dichotomies between art and life, argues that the Caliban character is actually a distorted image of Cupid on the wrong side of art's mirror. By extension, in the public realm Caliban's mother is "certainly no witch" but "our great white Queen of Love herself." See Selected Poems, p. 157.

27 I realize I make Prospero appear quite the Kierkegaardian hero, but as a commanding subject engulfed in tempestivity he also strikes me as an existentialist coming to terms with his common humanity. This passage from Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript (p. 188) seems to have some bearing on Prospero's position: "But there can be no stronger expression for inwardness than when the retreat out of existence . . . is impossible; and when, with truth confronting the individual as a paradox, gripped in the anguish and pain of sin, facing the tremendous risk of the objective insecurity, the individual believes." Auden would probably append that Prospero is not tightly enough gripped by the certitude of his own trespass. The magus does dwell upon himself as one much sinned against, but we still have to account for the Epilogue plea out of character.


30 Peterson, p.243.

Howard Felperin (Shakesperean Romance, p. 277) phrases the abjuration Prospero brings himself to somewhat more bluntly: "But it is also to renounce once and for all that untransmuted residue of self-dramatization and self-aggrandizement inherent in any effort to recreate the world after one's own desires and in one's own image."

David William thinks Sebastian no more redeemed than Antonio: "Nor is Antonio's power over him broken at the end. 'What things are these, my Lord Antonio?,' with its blustering flippancy, expressive of the man's discomfiture but also of his impenitence, tells us that Antonio is not the only younger brother who Shakespeare leaves unredeemed." See "The Tempest on the Stage," in Jacobean Theater: Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 1, ed. J. R. Brown and Bernard Harris, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960), pp. 154-55. Yet insofar as Sebastian is abashed by Prospero's possession of the upper hand and the discovery of the supposedly drowned Prince, he can be said to feel the self-embarrassment that is a condition of regeneracy.

For a discussion of wifely absence as "both a gift and a deprivation to the world of the play," see Linda Bamber, Comic Women, Tragic Men, pp. 169-91. According to my sense of The Tempest, Bamber seems on the right track in sentences such as this: "If sexuality is no longer the central metaphor for the relationship between ourselves and the world outside us, what we lose in emotional intensity we gain in control" (p. 180).


From "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," Selected Poems, p. 81.

In Sylvester Jourdain's A Discovery of the Bermudas, 1610, one of the Bermuda Pamphlets generally supposed to have had some influence on the writing of The Tempest, it is reported that the tempest-tossed Sea-Adventures approached "within half an English mile" of shore. The hapless ship was neither broken upon the rocks nor swept back out to sea, "but more fortunately in so great a misfortune, fell in
between two rockes, where shee was fast lodged and locked, for further budging." (Quoted in the Arden Tempest, p. 141). Shakespeare plots a Romantically privileged avenue of release for his seafarers, but the happy fate of the Sea-Adventure is consonant with his imagined crossing of paired threats.

38 Joan Hartwig also remarks this medial emphasis in Shakespeare's Tragicomic Vision, p. 141.

39 See the Arden Tempest, I.i.57-8.

40 Quoted in the Arden Tempest, p. 141.

41 Ibid., p. 135.

42 Ibid., p. 136.

43 Hartwig, p. 139.


45 In Gonzalo the two lines of Romance retainers, loyal and subservient, seem to merge. Appointed master of the design against Prospero, the Neapolitan took part in a wrongful usurpation, but "out of his charity" provided the banished father and daughter with "Rich garments, linens, stuffs, and necessaries," Which since have steaded much" (I.ii.163-64). So while his beneficence is initially overborne (compare Antigonus and Leonine), he yet strives to make good on his difficult position and remain loyal to his lord's better nature (like Camillo and Pisanio). On the island he is subject to Prospero's spells as a retainer suffering his inability to offer aid, as in a dream sharing yet personally immune from prosecution.


47 Quoted in Geoffrey Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare 8, p. 287.
48 Mt.9:16-17. I cite The Jerusalem Bible, more concerned with the qualities of parabolic narrative than precise wording. Shakespeare may commonly have read from a Geneva Bible, although it is interesting to note that the year in which he composed The Tempest, 1611, also saw the publication of the King James translation of the Bible.

49 I would have Caliban enunciate each word as if he were still uncertain of the capacity with which he has been endowed. His native tongue may be babbling, but he has acquired a linguistic proficiency verging on the lyrical.


51 Over the course of his career, Shakespeare must have been taken with the theater of the mind, its great storage and quick-change capacity. Drama is enacted "in here" as much as "out there" for both playwright and audience, publicly mediated by the bodies of the actors. Samuel Beckett projects this cephalic orientation in Endgame, the set of which is commonly likened to the inside of a skull. Reminiscence of The Tempest in Endgame is subtle to overt, from the son-servant role played by Clov to Hamm's pronouncement that "Our revels now are ended." Roy Walker (Twentieth Century, Dec. 1958) has dubbed Hamm a "toppled Prospero."

52 Never one to stay within customary channels of thought, Shakespeare here reverses his usual suspicion of attractive appearance. Miranda's perhaps naive protest of faith also seems to invert the gospel anecdote of the return of the unclean spirit (Mt. 12:43-45; Lk. 11:24-26). The object lesson of unregeneracy is loaded on Caliban's shoulders. See I.i.353-64; IV.i.188-92.

53 Plastics serve Thomas Pynchon's up-to-date concerns in a comparable manner.

55 David William accounts for Prospero's strict treatment of Ariel and Caliban as follows: "I find it difficult to think of either of them apart from Prospero, and believe that they only make full imaginative sense if apprehended as externalized aspects of Prospero -- the one of his spiritual, the other of his sensual appetencies. The conditions of earthly existence do not permit either of these appetencies to over-reach themselves, or gratify themselves at the expense of one another, without some injury to the total organism of the self; in this way, the violence of some of Prospero's encounters with both his servants may find its aptest dramatic manifestation in terms of some such symbol of tension." See "The Tempest on the Stage," p. 156. While I agree that Ariel and Caliban largely shadow Prospero, I believe Shakespeare also includes evidence on which to base a claim that they are not reducible to paired abstractions in a psychodrama.

56 William Strachey reports that to lighten the Sea-Adventure's load, "we . . . staved many a Butt of Beere, Hogsheads of Oyle, Syder, Wine, and Vinegar." See the Arden Tempest, p. 137.

57 See The Riverside Shakespeare, Temp. II.ii.141n., p. 1623.

58 Herman Melville fires the following anecdotal flash in "Bartleby, the Scrivener": "I was thunderstruck. For an instant I stood like the man who, pipe in mouth, was killed one cloudless afternoon long ago in Virginia, by summer lightning: at his own warm open window he was killed, and remained leaning out there upon the dreamy afternoon, till some one touched him, when he fell."

59 For a suitably outlandish development of this fancy, see the section in Gravity's Rainbow (pp. 663-65) about the Polish undertaker striving to join the secret ranks of the lightning-struck.

60 Soren Kierkegaard has a few words to contribute along these lines in The Sickness unto Death, p. 255: "A man seated in a glass case is not put to such embarrassment as is a man in his transparency before God. This is the factor of conscience."

61 Speaking of riddles, here is one Shakespeare would appreciate: "In this popular puzzle, a man has committed a
crime punishable by death. He is to make a statement. If the statement is true, he is to be drowned; if the statement is false, he is to be hanged. What statement should he make to confound his executioners?" Taken from Raymond Smullyan, What Is the Name of This Book? — The Riddle of Dracula and Other Logical Puzzles (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1978), p. 219. Incidentally, the fifth chapter of this book presents a variety of conundrums modelled upon Portia's caskets. And the answer to the riddle? "Tomorrow I will be hanged."

62 See the Arden Tempest, IV.i.236n., 239n., p. 109.


64 Ibid., XIII.xxi., p. 353.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid., p. 354.

67 Ibid., XIII.xv., pp. 346-47.

68 Northrop Frye, Introduction to the Pelican Tempest, p. 17.

69 D. G. James, The Dream of Prospero, p. 137. James rightly proceeds to relate the revels speech to Caliban's dream, p. 139.

70 Frank Lentricchia, After the New Criticism, p. 170.

71 Michael Goldman, Shakespeare and the Energies of Drama, p. 147.

72 Soren Kierkegaard, The Sickness unto Death, p. 258.

73 David Young, The Heart's Forest, p. 200.
CHAPTER FOUR
Interlude

Rather than leap over the two hundred and fifty years separating Shakespeare's *Tempest* and Browning's "Caliban upon Setebos," I shall span the interval with a modest survey of four works which seem to demonstrate that the concerns and formulations condensed in *The Tempest* have been periodically and variously reviewed. In the process I hope to enlarge appreciation of the reticulated thought informing *The Tempest*, both as a discrete work and as a precedent for gauging subsequent imaginative inquiries after the relational spectrum of humanity. For their obvious adaptation of Shakespeare's play for the Restoration stage, I first consider Dryden and Davenant's *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island*. This remake is useful in negatively defining the feints and shadows of the original. I shall then backtrack to examine *Comus* for its reminiscence of *The Tempest* within the terms of an idealistic masque. The quality of moral emphasis in Milton's composition helps to illuminate the broad significance of chasteness in Shakespeare's Romance. A full century later than Milton's sweep of neo-Platonic into Christian thought we come upon a comparable melding of Western orthodoxies in Pope's *An Essay on Man*. For the sake of brevity I will but glance at its conception of human synthesis "on this isthmus of a middle state." My fourth sample, Coleridge's *The Rime of the
Ancient Mariner, is selected as a Romantic fable of a man who suffers the consequences of not vitally comprehending that middle state synthesis. He comes to a hard knowledge of his humanity as a focus of tension in a realm of appalling powers and dimensions. While I have obviously chosen these works to convey an impression of continuity, I am perhaps more interested in the variety of imaginative expressions which this complex I call the Tempest legacy takes.

The collaboration between John Dryden and William Davenant in updating Shakespeare's Tempest was probably not an equal one. Apart from suggesting the inclusion of a crude young man of royal descent like Hippolito, and filling out the comic subplot of unruly seamen on land, Davenant apparently served mainly in a supervisory capacity. The resulting product has long been maligned by its critics, although occasionally a voice is raised in its defense: "What should be apparent is that the revised Tempest is not merely a botched version of Shakespeare's play, but a Tempest reshaped to suit a view of man's relation to the universe compatible with the age, with its theater, and with the views of Dryden and Davenant." This is a generous revaluation, one which I choose to sidestep, as handily as it might support my claim that The Tempest lends itself to imaginatively accomplished reworkings.

Instead of bucking up The Enchanted Island with a
critical apology, it seems a better course to take note of its deviations and reflect upon the series of theatrical choices made respectively by Shakespeare and his adapters. In the revised version the Virgilian background is cut, as the Italians return not from an African marriage but from a Crusade against the Moors in Portugal. Ovidian echo is also obscured, diminishing the classical overtones with which Shakespeare imbues his Mediterranean tale. Sebastian is dispensed with because Antonio is penitent, and the authors double other aspects of the plot, dropping the cycle of treachery. Another economising measure is the substitution of Stephano and Trincalo for the Master and Boatswain, although they are given accompanying subordinates in Mustachio and Ventoso. In general the revisions are those of comic doubling: Miranda is given a sister, Dorinda; Ferdinand competes with a rough youth, Hippolito, supplanted as an infant by Antonio and secretly raised by Prospero; Caliban is matched with a debauched sibling, Sycorax. The pairings for Miranda and Caliban serve to lessen the traces of kinship between them; most noticeably, Miranda's scornful "print of goodness" speech is given to Prospero. In addition, Dryden may have felt that the Tempest courtship was too romantically perfunctory, in need of more serious obstruction and the threat of tragic outcome. The complications devised are more crude than not, calling for a miraculous recovery the likes of which Shakespeare became leery of enacting after the resuscitation of Thaisa in
Pericles. Ariel comes to Prospero's rescue in recovering Hippolito from death, just when the crabbed, defeated magus is ready to commit himself to vengeance, virtuous control having proved insufficient.

There is much to criticize in this rehandling, but in the midst of awkwardness patches of interest may be found. For example, the opening scene of shipwreck is drawn out, laboring under extraneous naval jargon and fluster. It closes on a reminiscent note, however, as Ship-master Stephano sounds a general alarm: "She strikes, she strikes! All shift for themselves" (I.i.114). His veritas in vino from The Tempest (V.i.256-58) is here inverted and moved to the shipwreck scene, reinforcing our sense of the land/sea dialectic which informs the original and makes Stephano an unconscious counter to the individualist attitude of the middle man Boatswain. The crossing of elemental terms is partially carried over in The Enchanted Island. Here is Stephano again: "A Mariner had e'en as good be a Fish as a Man, but for the comfort we get ashore: O for any old dry Wench now I am wet" (II.iii.39-41). Dryden and Davenant may also have been somewhat sensitive to Shakespeare's vessel/vassal/wood motif. The runlet of brandy which replaces the butt of sack is stashed not in a rock (Caliban's close quarters), but "I' th' hollow of an old Tree" (Ariel's prison). However, since the wide-ranging play of Shakespeare's dialectics remains largely untapped, conceits and inventions in the revised Tempest do not aspire
to a concerted expressiveness. The comic subplot becomes an extended satire on groundless claims to governing authority, as the disputatious seamen go hungry in their rival kingdoms. A broad conception of cannibalism as unbridled appetite loosely characterizes the bawdiness and to-do of these sections.

The "men of sin" plot strand is diluted by having Alonzo and Antonio regret their past treachery from the start. They connect the recent wreck with the personal wrongs done Prospero and Hippolito, recognizing a providential hand at work: Ant. "Indeed we first broke truce with Heav'n" (II.i.21). Hence almost the whole of II.i. as it appears in The Tempest is omitted, possibly because the collaborators considered its melange of moods and verbal stresses too eccentric to be staged effectively. Instead, a spectacle of Sins is set before the Italians, confirming guilt that is already felt. There is no need to conjure a sense of worldly justice from thin air, as Prospero attempts with the trap of conscience disguised as a banquet (Temp. III.iii.). In this revision the banquet (III.ii.) is a gift following the displaced confinement and forgiveness exchange between Ariel and Prospero (shifted from V.i. to III.i.). At the close of III.ii. we lose track of the King's company until IV.iii., seven scenes later; the royal party is left to wander about in the meanders of The Enchanted Island's jumbled reconstruction. When the time for reclamation arrives, Shakespeare's decision to have his Antonio remain
silent before Prospero's highhanded pardon may be voiced by
the remorseful Antonio of the later version: "Though
penitence forc'd by necessity can scarce/ Seem real . . . ."
(V.ii.146-47). Tension is redistributed in this treatment,
as the opposition between the two brothers is muted in favor
of stress from another source, the doubled courtship plot.
Yet this transferral seems to bespeak a possibility
lingering on the fringes of the original.

The rivalry between Ferdinand and Hippolito over
Prospero's daughters depends on the blunt naivete of the
natural young man long sequestered by the magus. Hippolito
will have all women for himself, unless Ferdinand can defend
his claim for one in particular. Sexual naivete in general
is played up for much more than it is worth, coating many
passages in a film of winking prurience. In itself, the
lethal blow Ferdinand delivers Hippolito in a contest of
arms is a wrinkle to be ironed out magically. Then again,
Prospero's vengeful response does strike a chord that is
closely passed over in Shakespeare's Romance. The failure
of Prospero's project is held in abeyance in The Tempest,
but the general scheme of recovery seems most endangered by
Antonio in II.i. Depending on how we interpret the
provision of Prospero, Antonio's suggestion that the
sleeping forms of Alonso and Gonzalo are as good as dead
could figure as a narrowly diverted threat. We might well
imagine this passage from the latter Tempest as a phantom
cry from a failed Prospero:
all my designs are ruin'd
And unravell'd by this blow.
No pleasure now is left me but Revenge.
(IV.iii.36-38)

Shakespeare's Prospero stages an impersonation of a merciful Providence which he himself strives to believe in while preparing to resign his conjured vision before the mystery it seeks to evoke. Failing and losing faith are two sides of the same coin; he would be losing out to the provocative incredulity of his brother. The bitter offense taken by Prospero in The Enchanted Island recalls the Romance lineage of offended selves from whom the protagonist of The Tempest is partially descended.

By opposing his magician to the vision of human mediacy being forwarded in A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, Milton avoids the existential anxiety that besets any self-conscious project of moral conjuring. Comus the dark enchanter is an offense to that virtuous penetration authenticated by the very nature of the form in which Milton casts his themes. Whereas the betrothal masque in The Tempest represents a vision of strained refinement, in Comus like visionary development is felt to be normatively transcendental. For purposes of didactic forcefulness, ideality is made to triumph over slim resistance in the way of skepticism and worldly wisdom. Yet in examining the prime moral certainties of this Masque we find not only a
schema corresponding to the more idealistic features of The Tempest, but also strategies of reversal whereby unsettling anxieties are deflected.

In Comus Milton imagines a dark forest presided over by an enchanter who would debase humanity to the level of sensual absorption. Offspring of Bacchus and Circe, Comus is "Much like his Father, but his Mother more" (57). The Medean aspects of Shakespeare's magician are answered by the transformative powers of Milton's Circean figure. Where Prospero is intent on an upward spiritual adjustment tinged with overtones of rejuvenation, Comus offers unsuspecting wayfarers a liquor which changes them into "som brutish form" forgetful of human distinction ("so perfit is their misery/ Not once perceive their foul disfigurement"). As king of the men-beasts, Comus is the kind of master Caliban would want to serve. The Miranda of this piece is a lost Lady who shares with Shakespearean Romance heroines a sturdy moral character and sharp tongue when provoked. She is provided with two brothers who can prove themselves in coming to her rescue (these three parts written to be played by the Earl of Bridgewater's children). The Attendant Spirit is like an Ariel dissociated from the control of theurgy, free to guide virtuous mortals along the twisting path of trials toward their attainment of ethico-elemental heights. The essential convergence of human virtuosity and elemental apotheosis is made explicit in A Masque, whereas in The Tempest any such suggestion remains tempered by the
background laugh of Antonio.

The basic thematic similarities between these two works are the product of a common dualistic imaginative orientation. But while Shakespeare engages in active dialectic interchange, Milton tends to slant his play toward metaphysical givens. For instance, the confinement/release duplex in Comus is morally defined from a commanding viewpoint. The Attendant Spirit originates from

Above the smoak and stirr of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and with low-thoughted care
Confin'd, and pester'd in this pin-fold here,
Strive to keep up a frail, and feaverish being
Unmindfull of the crown that Vertue gives
After this mortal change, to her true Servants
Amongst the enthron'd gods on Sainted seats. 3

(5-11)

On an individual basis, the earthly self may embody a spirit of celestial transparence or guilty occlusion. The light/dark duality is internalized and associated with the choice between deserved freedom and confinement. As the Elder Brother postulates:

He that has light within his own cleer brest
May sit i' th center, and enjoy bright day,
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day Sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

(380-84)

Milton would like to lend imagistic cogency to the idea that goodness steers its way through a deceptive world by its own lights. Hence the luminous Lady wanders "In the blind mazes of this tangl'd wood" (181), yet is constant to herself,
"attended/ By a strong siding champion Conscience" (211-12). Comus, disguised as a Shepherd, recognizes that "Sure something holy lodges in that brest" (246), and exploits the Lady's trusting nature and love for her brothers to lure her to his Palace. There she is confined in an enchanted chair, but sits secure at the center of her impervious freedom.

The power which the Lady holds in reserve is that of chastity, though we are to understand more than sexual abstinence by this term. Chastity in its larger sense is an imaginative, loving steadfastness to the source and destination of spiritual purity. The Elder Brother figures it a defense against the powers of darkness and a means by which the mortal body may be transfigured into the image of the soul's immortal essence (453-63).\textsuperscript{4} Human dualism places the individual in a medial position, where he or she must determine the inflection to be given such goods as release and joy. Rosemond Tuve observes that the concept of chastity provides "a way of imagining the problem of man's freedom, within nature of which he is a part."\textsuperscript{5} The Attendant Spirit points out a "path to Heav'n" which to the eyes of Comus can only appear the straight, rocky way of "lean Abstinence"; to the enchanter's denigration of chasteness the Lady can only respond that its excellence is simply beyond his ability to conceive:

\begin{quote}
Thou hast nor Eare, nor Soul to apprehend 
The sublime notion, and high mystery 
That must be utter'd to unfold the sage 
And serious doctrine of Virginity,
\end{quote}
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness then this thy present lot.
(784-89)

The scene of temptation is staged on a common middle
ground where holiness and hedonism clash over the proper use
of earthly goods. According to Robert Adams, Comus is
"Sensual Indulgence with some overtones of priapic
fertility, black wizardry, and pagan sophistry." Like
Antonio, he argues with beguiling charm, and tempts the Lady
through fraudulent appeal to gratitude and nature, charging
her with pride and penuriousness. She would spirit herself
through life, "Scorning the unexempt condition/ By which all
mortal frailty must subsist" (685-86). Milton gives Comus
lines calculated to prey upon the Lady's conscience; in her
rebuttal we find the banner of "spare Temperance" being
hoisted on all fronts, including the social. If "Natures
full blessings would be well dispens'\t/ In unsuperfluous
even proportion, . . . then the giver would be better
thank't,/ His praise due paid" (772-73, 775-76).

In its more ample formulations, temperance here has much
the same positive comprehensiveness as it does in The
Tempest. Sabrina, the virgin goddess of the river who
unglues the Lady from the chair, corresponds to the vision
of temperate release presented in the Tempest betrothal
masque. She counteracts Comus' earthy resins with virtuous
solvency:
Next this marble venom'd seat
Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.

(916-18)

The dance between river nymphs and sicklemen at the close of
the betrothal masque is matched at the close of the Ludlow
Castle Masque by a "victorious dance/ O're sensual Folly,
and Intemperance" (975). While Prospero's conjured vision
opens out upon a larger view of insecurity and flux, the
turning-out of the Ludlow Masque is meant to be felt a
movement of metaphoric reinforcement. The triumphant Lady
and her brothers are presented to and 'recognized' by their
parents, who themselves serve in a double capacity as
audience and Lord and Lady of the Castle. The Spirit then
depens the perspective in an Epilogue which races to the
"green earths end," not as Prospero's revels speech does,
but as an exhilarating invitation for humanity to realize
its spiritual potential.

The dogmatic insistence of certain sections in Comus
recalls the strong effort by Prospero to counter the lures
of temporal abandonment with a conviction of providential
control. Elder Brother preaches to his sibling that the
world is an instrumental realm, with nothing left to "that
power/ Which erring men call Chance" (587-88). If goodness
is assailed, its initial misfortune is converted to ultimate
benefit (591-92). In due time the great separation will be
brought to pass (593-97). The possibility that this whole
scheme is a grand illusion is admitted only for the further
end of absolutist confirmation:

if this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rott'ness,
And earths base built on stubble.
(597-99)

These lines seem to invert the destabilizing drift of
Prospero's revels speech, or, if taken ironically, to
reflect the human impulse to throw the world out with the
undermined world view. Another response to the dissolvent
chain reaction of the revels speech may be worked into the
Lady's warning that she not be provoked so far as to unleash
the power which virginity commands:

the uncontrouled worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
That dumb things would be mov'd to sympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures rear'd so high,
Were shatter'd into heaps o're thy false head.
(793-99)

The bleaching of transience is here concentrated in the
active force of kindled sacredness, defining time sub specie
aeternitatis.

Magic structures topple before the true exaltation of
personal virtue, the means of ascendant existence. This
moral is brought home in the Spirit's Epilogue. Following
an upsweep into the allegorical levels of a classical heaven
(977-1011), the Spirit repeats the movement as a brisk
gesture of invitation:
But now my task is smoothly don,
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earths end,
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the Moon.
Mortals that would follow me,
Love vertue, she alone is free,
She can teach ye how to clime
Higher then the Spheary chime.

(1012-21)

C. L. Barber remarks that in Comus Milton "presents the possibility of destructive release, and meets it by another sort of release, the release of imagination carried by rhythm out and up to other objects of love." The Tempest concludes with an appeal for the release indulgence bestows, as Prospero invokes recourse to the high Mercy which frees all fault. In the body of Comus Milton is mainly intent on illustrating the vigor which goodness can summon against the assault of evil. If virtue seems to outbalance grace, that is because, as Robert Adams puts it, "the properly Miltonic mortal actively climbs toward grace, he does not passively wait to receive it." In the closing couplet of the masque some concession to frailty is made:

Or if Vertue feeble were
Heav'n itself would stoop to her.

(1022-23)

A similar image appears in The Tempest as Francisco tries to assure Alonso that Ferdinand has reached shore, "that o'er his wave-worn basis bowed,/ As stooping to relieve him"
(II.i.116-17). The subtleties of Prospero's domain lead us to develop a double vision, so that personal exertion and
grace become a compounded mystery. Milton is more assertive in his Masque, upholding faith, patience, and truth as qualities that call for encouraging postulation in the face of doubt and adversity. In this sense A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle serves as an appropriate link between the parabolic investiture of The Tempest and the eighteenth century abstraction of An Essay on Man.

Maynard Mack has noted that Pope's Essay "obviously shares the general urgency of modern literature, much accelerated during the seventeenth century, to internalize and translate toward higher levels of abstraction matters that in an earlier age supplied the unglossed objective content of tale, romance, myth, and mystery." In Tempest terms, a drama of immersion and projection takes on the lineaments of an argument composed in a public spirit of admonition. Pope conducts a rhetorical project with an outgoing zest not unlike that with which Auden's Caliban delivers his public address. Humanity is to be reminded of a thing or two concerning its nature and destiny. The thought in this Essay is widely derivative, bringing together much that is common and persistent in Western consciousness. Then again, there are sections which could have been attacked on grounds of heterodoxy, cutting as they do through differences which political and religious partisans hold dear (for instance, III.303-10). In general,
however, Pope expresses received notions in maxim-like couplets whose poetic vigor lends extra appeal to the integrity of his argument.

The content of An Essay on Man shows how into the eighteenth century the chain of being was still invoked as a principle of order-through-gradation. Man's place is to recognize his place; he is superior to all beasts in that their behavior is instinctual and so ordained. Man alone may rise or fall depending upon his free submission to or rebellion against an order which sets him in a special equivocal space:

Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest,
In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast;
In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer,
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
Chaos of Thought and Passion, all confus'd;
Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of Truth, in endless Error hurl'd:
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!
(II.3-18)

As this passage amply demonstrates, Pope maintains tension between conflicting perspectives upon humanity. A world view stressing the concors discordia of things is reflected in a poetic style amenable to the rhythmic balance of antinomies. By extension, the Eternal Art (Providence) orders the turmoil of temporal affairs according to its
inscrutable wisdom. In his partialness man judges the world a realm infested with suffering and wrong; he lacks the omniscience necessary to perceive the rightness of all that is. This rightness prevails through the welter of individual sins and misfortune that is to be expected in a free world. The chain is taut in its justness, and man would do well to participate more becomingly as its middle link.

Each person in this view embodies a mixed predisposition to virtue and vice, the former intimately associated with the latter:

Thus Nature gives us (let it check our pride)  
The virtue nearest to our vice ally'd;  
Reason the byass turns to good from ill.  
(II.195-97)

Considering the character of Prospero, we see how as a man warranting trust in Providence he is also a potentially offended man. His words and acts are pervaded with evidence of ruling dualities. The imagery usually drawn on first for illustrating such dualism is that of light and darkness. For purposes of contrast Milton polarizes the paired qualities, as in the Elder Brother's distinction between the virtuous and sinful soul (Comus, 380-84). Pope addresses, the majority of persons who are neither illustrious nor blackhearted, and so emphasizes the blend of tones in a moral character: "This light and darkness in our chaos
join'd,/ What shall divide? The God within the mind"
(II.203-04).

While Pope assents that man is endowed with a divine spark, he has no intention of singing praises to the unbounded ambitions of the human intellect. The God within the mind leads man to self-knowledge, not to a confusion of human and divine status:

But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,
The strong connections, nice dependencies,
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Look'd thro'? or can a part contain the whole?
Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?
Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou find,
Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind!
(I.29-36)

The jab of the last couplet anticipates the satiric frame within which Browning's Caliban formulates his natural theology. Pope reproves egocentric pursuit of knowledge for its grounding in pride and basic self-ignorance. Man as a microcosm may have a God-given capacity for encompassing mentally what is otherwise beyond him, but such probing activity can prove inconducive to the attitude of humility befitting a properly human sense of identity. For this reason Pope exhibits an ambivalence toward Science which relates him to artists and writers otherwise disparate in their philosophies and sensibilities. He distrusts scientific acquisition for its own sake as a misguided search for an objectively elevated self-definition. Taking Newton as an example, Pope grants that the achievement is
admirable, but wonders what such knowledge profits
subjectively unless grounded in a modest self-awareness
(II.31-52). As a man of letters he joins company with other
writers who have eyed the progress of Science with
apprehension and hesitant esteem, jealous of perceived
encroachment upon or dissection of the mysteries literary
vision has sought to preserve.

The proper outreach of mankind which Pope eventually
unfolds recalls the receding imaginative sightlines of the
Epilogue to Milton's Masque. The phrasing of certain
sections in the Fourth Epistle is close in spirit to the
pastoral moralism of the Masque: "What nothing earthly
gives, or can destroy,/ The soul's calm sun-shine, and the
heart-felt joy,/ Is Virtue's prize" (IV.167-69). Over
against the authentic felicity of virtue the counterfeit of
well-being is exposed "in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd and
great" (IV.287). That those leading a cushioned life or,
worse yet, enjoying ill-gotten gains, might be truly happy
is a possibility which Pope cannot reconcile with his
perception of earthly Justice. According to his belief in
the mutuality of existence, self-interest left unextended
affords only a potential good. Those who would achieve
spiritual release must commit themselves to the larger
design in which they figure in a small but radiating way:

Self-love thus push'd to social, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbor's blessing thine.
Is this too little for the boundless heart?
Extend it, let thy enemies have part:
Grasp the whole worlds of Reason, Life, and Sense,
In one close system of Benevolence:
Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
And height of Bliss but height of Charity.
(IV.353-60)

As the Attendant Spirit in Comus bids us to avail ourselves
of blissful spaciousness through Virtue, Pope envisages a
similar accession to the expansive inclusiveness of Charity.

I have glanced at An Essay on Man for the relevance of
its arguments to the continuities and developments I choose
to trace as evidence of The Tempest's transmission. It
could be said that what the Essay gains in rhetorical
leverage it loses in imaginative engagement. Pope may not
quite be systematic in his approach, but he does speak with
the self-possession of an advocate confident that his
perhaps initially skeptical audience will come around to see
the integrity and authoritativeness of his case. He speaks
within tradition-hallowed walls which may be supported by
the very need for an established precinct of the veritable
within which resonant lines may carry with the unmistakeable
ring of truth. What we miss is a sense of confrontation
with the unsettling world whose particular variety makes
thoughtful typicality responsive in its self-consciousness.
For the sake of poise, imagination must venture out-of-doors
again, and recommit its abstractions to the elements. Some
such impulse seems to inform The Rime of the Ancient
Mariner.
The fate with which the "men of sin" are threatened in
*The Tempest* resembles the Life-in-Death to which the Mariner
is actually subject:

Ling'ring perdition -- worse than any death
Can be at once -- shall step by step attend
You and your ways; whose wraths to guard you from, --
-- is nothing but heart-sorrow
And a clear life ensuing.

(III.xxxi.77-79, 81-82)

But *The Rime* is not just a fanciful metaphor for the
likelihood of a personal Providence active in the natural
world. Like *The Tempest*, it is a work about the difficulty
of belief within an elemental realm whose inhuman vastness
shakes faith in anything beyond the bare reality of solitude
and estrangement. The difference between these two Romance
pieces mainly lies in the greater divisiveness of the *Rime's*
structure, as Coleridge tries to reconcile a more pronounced
observance of Christian meaning with the free play of a
loosed imagination.

The Greek tragedians occupied themselves with heroic men
such as Oedipus whose lives could be both cursed and
blessed. Christianity expanded the paradox to include all
persons subsequent to Christ's coming. Each man is
condemned in Adam and raised in Christ simultaneously.
Coleridge probably desired to translate abstract Christian
doctrine into an imaginatively concrete fable. Internal
evidence suggests that Coleridge was addressing his strange
tale to a contemporary audience which might have subscribed
to Christian belief without comprehending it as something radical and vital. So the Ancient Mariner collars a young man headed to a wedding, and disabuses him of the comfort and familiarity of his religious observance.

In the Rime's scheme, the movement of disorientation is traced by the path of the Mariner's ship. Crossing the line (here we should recollect the play on line in The Tempest, from rope to equator), the vessel is driven off course through a counter-zone whose furthest reaches seem to harbor no life. In this ultimate climate the immediacy of frozen massiveness is overwhelming. The prerogatives and special dialectic intimations afforded human life in the temperate zones are here voided. Thus the albatross is hailed as an agent of retrieval from complete loss to the insensate:

As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

This unlooked-for presence serves as a hovering omen that release from the glacial maze is warranted beyond probability. Its aerial motions seem like a charm woven over the closed context:

And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit.

Just why the Mariner subsequently kills the "pious bird" (gloss to closing stanza of Part I) is not explained. It seems likely, however, that Coleridge is presenting much the same affliction as Leontes suffers in The Winter's Tale.
Whatever caprice or ingratitude is expressed in the shooting is deep-rooted in human nature. And the guilt is shared by the rest of the crew, who acquiesce in the offense through superstitious rationalization. The analogies between this initially downplayed transgression and the Christian concept of original sin are fairly apparent. While basically Adamic in nature, the Mariner's fault betrays a negligent disregard for the revelatory life-example of the second Adam. The albatross seems to have been sent to deliver the mariners from an ontic freeze-out. It is callously killed, and the men on board turn to occupy themselves with regular duties. The Mariner has shot the bird with a cross-bow; when the consequences are felt, "Instead of the cross, the Albatross/About my neck was hung." Though he would call himself a Christian and wear a cross to signify his incorporation in its paradoxes, the Mariner has apparently failed to realize the personal guilt (original sin) which makes him a party to the murder of life's servant-lord. So instead of a cross signifying the culmination of an offense which he has not truly comprehended, the "living" proof of that offense is hung about the Mariner's neck.

Coleridge invents a fantastic mirror-realm within which orthodox tenets such as the Fall and Redemption, grace and penance, may be explored with fictive license. The Rime plays out a fundamental abeyance and reconstitution of the spiritual element in man, the subjection of landed credence to the scouring effects of spiritual sea-sickness. "Alone
on a wide wide sea," the Mariner experiences the vastation
of the sole self, its despair at not being able to die, its
nausea before the shared vitality of repulsive life-forms.
Not until the Mariner views the water-snakes by moonlight,
imaginatively, with opened eyes, does the "spring of love"
flow inexplicably to restore his relatedness with self,
world, and divinity. In the doldrums at the line he has
suffered physical and spiritual dehydration. To cry that a
ship approaches (carrying Death for all aboard except
himself), he has had to suck his own blood. Coleridge does
not make explicit the full extent of the Mariner's spiritual
drought, but teeters between despair of an unbridgeable sky-
sea separation and despair of there even being a God:10

    I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
    But or ever a prayer had gusht,
    A wicked whisper came, and made
    My heart as dry as dust.

Nevertheless, the closing stanzas of Part IV suggest a
mystical bond between the heart's fountainhead of love and
the grace which recovers humanity from its desertion.
Mankind lives up to its nature by filling a unique medial
position in a circuit of love.

    So far I have emphasized The Rime's religious overtones,
thereby scanting its Romantic inventiveness. The wandering
Mariner tells a tale of regional daemons, sudden mass death,
bodies reanimated by angelic spirits, unearthly winds,
instant dementia. How well are these concerns integrated?
In general, Coleridge's creative allegiances seem drawn between a Christian framework and the less referential demands of his imaginative projection. In his classic essay on *The Rime*, Robert Penn Warren has argued for its intentness on coherence, compiling quotes from Coleridge and Wordsworth as evidence for

the idea that the truth is implicit in the creative act as such, that the moral concern and the aesthetic concern are aspects of the same activity, the creative activity, and that this activity is expressive of the whole mind. Now my argument is that *The Ancient Mariner* is, first, written out of this general belief, and second, written about this general belief.11

Coleridge himself was aware that he had not quite succeeded in unifying his moral and aesthetic concerns:

The only or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of pure imagination.12

The interrelation of orthodox allusion and phantasmal proceedings suggests the revelation of a world's normally undiffracted spectrum of being to a man who has crossed the line of shielded religious consciousness. The Mariner is swamped by the enormity of his exposure, and considers the domestic opportunity of church worship a wondrous preservation of human equilibrium. He is blown from place to place by Pentecostal-like winds ("I have strange power of speech") to make his weird confession to selected strangers. The obtrusive moral sentiment which Coleridge concedes may be epitomized by the Mariner's parting lesson:
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

When formulated as a precept such wisdom is liable to sound like the simple pieties taught children. Possibly the Mariner concludes so to anchor his tempestuous thoughts and feelings. Both *The Tempest* and *The Rime* close on a preceptive note, as if there were need to hold fast to some basic moral principle, since all personal faculties fail man when diminished in his stark mortality. These two works also share an emphasis upon the influence (almost literally understood as a flowing-in) of narrative. At the beginning of the poem the Wedding-Guest belongs to a world of customary acquaintance, only to be wrenched from its narrow realism by the overbearing claims of the Mariner's narrative upon his person. In *Comus* and *An Essay on Man* the prospect of widened horizons is morally founded, hence inspiring; in *The Rime* the glimpsed far reaches of moral reconception are imagined a source of profound disturbance. The attempt to conceive how the depths of moral existence might correspond to the depths of the phenomenal realm in which humanity is placed can prove uplifting or demoralizing. Both possibilities are sustained in *The Tempest*, and weighted according to differing standards in *Comus*, *An Essay on Man*, and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Sixty years later than Coleridge's morally strained exercise of pure imagination, Robert Browning has Caliban devise in soliloquy the apparent response to all this moralistic fuss.
Notes to Chapter Four


2 Novak, p. 342.

3 In these lines we may hear an echo of the Gospel admonitions to subordinate earthly worries to more crucial spiritual concerns, Mt. 6:25-34; Lk. 12:22-32.

4 A. S. P. Woodhouse characterizes the Elder Brother's philosophizing on the body's illumination through chaste perseverance as neo-Platonic by way of Spenser. See "The Argument of Milton's Comus," in A Maske at Ludlow: Essays on Milton's Comus, ed. John S. Diekhoff, (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1968), p. 29. Milton does not trumpet Christian meaning in Comus, but his materials and form do argue for an ideational process of Christianization. As Rosemond Tuve points out ("Image, Form, and Theme in A Mask," Essays, ed. Diekhoff, p. 144), by Milton's time the Circe myth had already undergone a fairly thorough Christianization. Metamorphosis is central to the thought structure of this work, following Ovid's precedent while working toward a Christian classicism. Put simply, either the body comes to assume the radiance of spiritual chasteness, or the soul chains itself to a degenerate vessel and loses its divine resemblance. The fate of evil as the Elder Brother pictures it is Dantesque:

But evil on it self shall back recoyl,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last
Gather'd like scum, and settl'd to it self
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed, and self-consum'd.
(593-97)

Juxtaposing this passage with lines 453-63, we derive a metamorphic scale with humanity situated at a probationary medium. The goal of holy transformation is assumption into the company of the blessed (faithful is implied), while the fate of degradation is continual consumptive instability, infernal metamorphosis.

5 Rosemond Tuve, "Image, Form, and Theme in A Mask," in Essays on Milton's Comus, p. 149.
6 Robert M. Adams, "Reading Comus," in Essays on Milton's Comus, p. 82.

7 C. L. Barber, "The Masque as a Masque," in Essays on Milton's Comus, p. 204. Barber makes an interesting comparison on the basis of figurative progress, p. 197: "In the way it advances through other symbols toward the Christian, the masque is, surprisingly, not unlike The Waste Land. The circumstances are vastly different; but both poets are concerned to move through 'secular' materials to mystery and spiritual discovery." I wonder as well whether we might see a purgatorial analogue to the progress of the epilogue in the kenotic stages of Eliot's "Ash-Wednesday." Ascending the third stair, the climber passes a slotted window opening onto a charming pastoral scene, but must continue onward. In a similar manner the Attendant Spirit imaginatively transports us to "the broad fields of the sky," where "eternal Summer dwells," only to direct our sights further, "farr above in spangled sheen"; finally we are exhorted to love virtue, which can teach us to climb "Higher then the Spheary chime." Eliot's is a more consciously negative way than the spirited ascent of the masque, but the differing sense of occasion and form does not impede the basic similarity of towardness. As Hugh Kenner reflects, "The function of the journey detailed in Ash-Wednesday is to arrive at a knowledge of the modes and possibilities of temporal redemption sufficient to prevent our being deluded by a counterfeit of the negative way." See The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot, pp. 274-75.


10 Near the close of the poem, the Mariner again recalls his utter estrangement in ambivalent terms:

So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

The meaning of this statement depends upon whether "there" is parsed as an adverb or expletive.


CHAPTER FIVE

"Caliban upon Setebos"

Criticism of "Caliban upon Setebos" has tended to dispute whether and to what degree the poem is satiric in intent and effect. In a paper presented to the Browning Society, J. Cotter Morrison argues that Caliban's monologue satirizes "much which passes for orthodox opinion" among "enlightened" nineteenth century men and women.¹ Those who reason the nature of God minutely after their own self-image and prejudices are reflected in the grotesque portrait of a casual theologian. While W. C. DeVane basically takes a similar approach fifty years later, he is careful to qualify Browning's disapproval of humanly oriented conceptions of divinity:

Being Browning, he made the poem a timely satire upon all those people who, having no revelation of God save that afforded by reason, insist upon creating Him in their own human image without admitting the limitations of their conception. But one must be careful in ascribing satire of such anthropomorphism to Browning, since he saw the human need for such thinking.²

Following through this observation in an influential article of 1938, C. R. Tracy proceeds to shorten the ironic distance between Caliban and Browning. Setebos and the Quiet "represent a dual notion of divinities similar to Browning's,"³ although Caliban has yet to straighten out the relation between them, being a creature at a humanly unadvanced stage of evolutionary development. Thirty years
after Tracy's pivotal argument, Barbara Melchiori maintains that through Caliban the Darwinian-conscious poet shows "the thought processes by which a concept of God could, or would, come into being." Her reading involves a psychosexual dig for buried meaning which throws up fragments of suggestion never quite pieced together convincingly. John Howard also prefers to read the poem not as a satire, but as a character study of a subhuman mind striving to comprehend the concept of God to the best of its limited abilities. While disinclined to consider "Caliban upon Setebos" a religious satire, Thomas P. Wolfe hesitates to overlook the psychological irony of Browning's depiction: "If there is an object satirized, surely it is anyone given to interpreting the world to answer the needs of the will." His psychoanalytic reading of Caliban's character is generally incisive and attentive to the poem's particulars.

Continuing to situate critics according to their position on the poem's satiric status, we might plot Michael Timko the other side of Wolfe from Howard. In a 1965 article he takes a hard line in response to those who claim that the poem is only partially or not at all satiric. Pointing to the subtitle, Timko insists that "Caliban upon Setebos" is a definite satire on natural theology, especially as propounded by orthodox churchmen such as Bishop Joseph Butler and Archdeacon William Paley. Caliban is not a primitive or subhuman, but a rationalist thinker, a creature of the times. Expanding the context to include a whole line
of Western world views "based on reason rather than revelation," Wendell V. Harris judges the monologue a satire of considerable breadth.  

So far I have traced a rough arc of opinion regarding "Caliban upon Setebos" as a product of satiric intent. But there is also the further consideration whether a discrepancy exists between what Browning purposes and what he achieves. Recognizing the poem's satiric irony, F. E. L. Priestley proceeds to claim that its "imaginative gusto" outstrips the primary intent. Then again, the notion that a primary irony is meant to control Caliban's burgeoning thoughts may be mistaken. Philip Drew cites this monologue as an instance of the difficulty involved in Browning studies, and concludes that the difficulty in this case is due to the complexity of the subject. If the poem is a satire, then "it is a rather advanced kind of satire," perhaps too subtle and scattershot for its own good:

The criticism of "Caliban" that seems to me to carry most weight is that the poet's targets are widely dispersed, too widely in fact for the complete success of the poem. We learn unmistakably that the relation of Caliban to Setebos, that of a vicious dog to an arbitrary master, is wrong, but the positive side of the satire, which would indicate the right relationship, is insufficiently defined. 

The positive side of the satire may lie in its implicating effect, as we the readers are challenged to review our own self-centered cartography and theology. The poem reveals to us a side of ourselves which has not been
left behind in the cool slush of a sheltering cave, though we tell ourselves that we really do know better than to engage in Caliban-like fallacies when contemplating the universe round about us. I consider this work a satire as many-handed as Caliban supposes Setebos, subjecting no single attitude or credence to ironic ridicule. Browning himself is included in the eddies of nescience. To understand how this is so, it is helpful to consider "Caliban upon Setebos" with reference to certain religious dramatic monologues appearing in Men and Women (1855) and Dramatis Personae (1864). In "Caliban" Browning composes a satiric composite whose exaggerated features reflect his own religious ambivalences and the not easily definable spectrum of idolatry and agnosticism. In one sense the poem is an avoidance of Browning's dilemma as a believer, in another a means whereby he can indirectly explore the fundamental terms of that dilemma.

More apparently, through Caliban Browning shows in caricature the state to which natural theology can deteriorate "In the Island" as egocentric frame of reference. In the island is a cave, within which sprawls a disgruntled but temporarily relieved minion. The Tempest Caliban complains that he is penned in a hard rock, but as noted about containment's doubleness, it can work to one's advantage. Here Caliban welcomes the chance to speak his mind, as if the season and time of day were propitious for a sheltered project of determining identity and place. The
vivid prefacing picture suggests a creature immersed in the natural life of its habitat, who yet resorts to language as a capacity comparable to the blossoming activity of that organic luxuriance (1.23). Recalling the cephalic orientation of The Tempest, we might think of Caliban's cave as an exoskull, beyond which extends a world somewhat accessible but not subject to the mind's grasp. It proceeds about its business, a source of surprise, enticement, and consternation to the naturally possessive human intellect.

And while above his head a pompion plant,
Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard.
(7-9)

Caliban reveals enough about his own nature in the preface to cast his world view in a suspicious light. His posture in the cave -- sprawled on his stomach, chin propped on fists, feet kicking in slush -- is that of childlike ease. He enjoys his leisure the more because it is illicit. He shirks domestic tasks assigned by Prospero and Miranda, and further assumes that to air his thoughts touching Setebos is to vex the peevish god unbeknown. Out of a somatic and psychic self-occupation Caliban proposes to explain the world and its god's nature.

Setebos is relegated to "the cold o' the moon," an uncomfortable vantage point from which He can survey his handiwork, as Caliban looks out on the world from his rocky lair. Traditionally the moon is a place of confinement; in
The Tempest Stephano is its sprung man bearing moon-shine in a bottle. Caliban here makes his own mash (11.68-72). While he enjoys the climatic advantage of warm day and cool slush, Caliban is identified with his god's projected situation beyond the parallels he draws. That is, when he speaks about his god, he is displacing self-observations too critical or basic for him to confront directly. For instance, Caliban snatches at things within his reach, whether a fruit (1.11) or two flies basking "on the pompion-bell above" (1.259). What comes within reach he can consume, kill, or act upon as his mood dictates. Such is the good of power. Supposing that Setebos in his middle sphere of the moon is powerful yet dissatisfied, Caliban conjectures "There may be something quiet o'er His head, / Out of His reach" (11.132-33). This quietness over the head applies to Caliban himself, whose grabbiness does not allow him to contemplate divinity with any sustained sensitivity to the higher order of being and will involved. Yet Its material good "Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard" (1.9).

Regarding the created world, Caliban insists that Setebos, not the Quiet, is its author (11.169-71). Being incomplete as a demigod, Setebos has made everything beneath the stars in imitation of a higher, unattainable reality (1.147). Caliban actually speaks to his own middling condition as slave of Prospero and imitator of the magus' lordship. His self-conception is that of a frustrated
underling who yet imagines himself a kind of god to the lower life forms. As his behavior is capricious and incomprehensible to the creatures whose lives he can affect, so the ways of Setebos must be ascribable to a like combination of envy and compensatory sport. A stunted higher being whose lack of self-sufficiency gives rise to creative activity, Setebos is a parody of the Judeo-Christian concept of the Creator. Again, Caliban projects a mixed self-conception in his improvised natural theology, just as he plays out that split valuation in his own bauble-world. In playing Prospero he has incapacitated a sea beast and penned it in a rock. He calls it Caliban, "A bitter heart that bides its time and bites" (1.167). To account for the particular strengths or capabilities of each creature in its kind, Caliban surmises that Setebos has willed to

   Make what Himself would fain, in a manner, be --
   Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,
   Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,
   Things He admires and mocks too -- that is it.
   (11.62-65)

Since he cannot imagine a benevolent impulse as the efficient cause of existence, Caliban has to assume mixed motives on the part of a god taking after himself. Basically, he comprehends Creation not as a divine gratuity, but as an outlet for the trammelled energies of an awkwardly lodged middling god.
The act of conferring life is a matter of recreative solace as far as Caliban is concerned. He puts the case that when lying drunk in the grass he wishes he could be a bird; failing that, he would fashion a live one out of clay. Actually, he would model a Caliban with wings, showy plume, and stinger. His creations would be playthings, lacking being-onto-themselves. As Setebos is an apotheosized Caliban, so his animated clay bird would be "lessoned he was mine" (1.94). J. Cotter Morrison makes a revealing comment about Caliban's notion of the hierarchy of being and his general psychic stratification:

Dreadful, he invents a God, an Almighty Frankenstein, which, unlike the "live bird out of clay" he wished to make, to be his abject slave, becomes his fierce master, and soaring away from him into the cold of the Moon, terrorises his life and every thought. 11

The winged "mankin" would be an emissary for Caliban's grounded will, used to perform malicious deeds beyond its master's personal reach.

Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns
Of grigs high up that make the merry din,
Saucy through their veined wings, and mind me not.

(82-84)

Caliban begrudges life beyond his control, especially if it is content, because the extensive not-I negates his perspective and makes him feel mocked. "So He:"

Setebos
The many-handed as a cuttlefish,
Who, making Himself feared through what He does,
Looks up, first, and perceives He cannot soar
To what is quiet and hath happy life;  
Next looks down here, and out of very spite  
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real.  
(141-47)

What is "high up" enjoys autonomy and exemption from  
Caliban's "down here," whether grasshoppers on a rock-top or  
the Quiet with "stars the outposts of its couch" (1.138).  
As Caliban is made ill at ease by the "merry din" of  
grasshoppers that mind him not, he imagines Setebos  
discomfited by "something quiet o'er His head" whose self-  
sufficient reticence overshadows the demigod's restless  
self-assertion.

On suffering, Caliban takes the line that it is a  
corollary of his rough god's prerogative to exercise power  
at will. Caliban maims or assists as he pleases, so the  
Caliban above the sky must operate likewise on a much larger  
scale. In passing, Caliban mentions the injuries he has  
inflicted or would inflict upon grasshoppers, his clay  
creature, crabs, a jay, sea-beast, sloth, flies, and so on.  
Perhaps Browning anticipates possible abusive interpretation  
of natural selection as a means of excusing disregard for  
other lives. Personal cruelty or indifference is referred  
to the blameless design of the whole; only for Caliban, that  
design is determined not by impersonal principles but by a  
divinity modelled after himself. One of the most persistent  
philosophic and theological questions, why suffering is  
allowed by a benevolent God, is easily answered if the deity  
is perceived to be something less than all-good. In a way
the question seems to invite alteration. Instead of pointing out the discrepancy between the partial human perspective on suffering and evil, and the surpassing goodness of God's complete provision, as Pope had done in his Essay on Man, Browning makes an obviously ironic downward adjustment of the second term. Consequently, the important consideration for all vulnerable creatures becomes avoidance rather than acceptance of suffering, a life-and-death game of nimble appeasement:

All need not die, for of the things o' the isle Some flee afar, some dive, some run up trees; Those at His mercy -- why, they please Him most When . . . when . . . well, never try the same way twice! (219-22)

While Caliban is a careful observer of Nature as a food chain, a risky realm of survival, he imposes a superstructure upon it which reinforces his confused self-estimation as a willful animal. All is not vexing and harsh in Caliban's world. "When all goes right, in this safe summertime" (1.189), he falls to making things "for work's sole sake" (1.198). The construction he details (11.192-96) seems to satisfy a primitive supernatural urge; if not quite a temple or monument, it does qualify as an assemblage signifying potent magic. Yet because it is of marginal use, Caliban thinks it dispensable, as the sublunar world must be to Setebos. The god in the moon exercises "much craft,/

By no means for the love of what is worked" (11.186-87).

Then again, in citing an example of his own handicraft,
Caliban has briefly addressed the notion of instrumentality. An inherent feature of the portrait, that what Caliban touches upon is more telling than he suspects, may be followed through in lines 112-26. Working from the premise that Setebos envies His creations for being able to "do more/ Than He who made them" (11.113-14), Caliban concludes antithetically "That they, unless through Him, do naught at all,/ And must submit" (11.115-16). The apodosis of this conditional thought bears a resemblance to the Christian tenet that God has created all things for Himself, although in the case of man free will makes submission a matter of choice. Because Caliban equates will with the power to enforce will, he is unable to conceive instrumentality in terms of the bestowal of life as a liberal endowment. If the "pipe of pithless elder-joint" were to boast that its craft is superior to that of its maker, Caliban would smash it with his foot. "So He." In The Tempest the breath of superior will, Destiny, "hath to instrument this lower world/ And what is in't" (III.iii.54-55), or so Prospero would lead us to believe. Actually, he realizes that Justice and Freedom extend intertwined far beyond his insular purview. Due to an oppositional bias, however, Caliban cannot break out of the circles of his stunted dialectic to venture a paradoxical comprehension of a loving, just Creator who sustains free existence according to kind on all levels of animation and intelligence. This world about its business might seem free to the point of
meaninglessness, an eventuality Caliban precludes by assuming a teleology of envy and caprice.

Browning does not define what Philip Drew calls "the positive side of the satire, which would indicate the right" God-relationship, although the epigraph from Psalm 50 does set us to considering Yahweh, revealed as God the Father in the companion Testament. We might consult another poser of the question, "What then is my God?", for a Judeo-Christian paradoxical acknowledgment of transcendent, immanent Being:

Most high, most good, most mighty, most almighty; most merciful and most just; most hidden and most present; most beautiful and most strong; stable and incomprehensible; unchangeable, yet changing all things; never new, and never old, yet renewing all things; leading proud men into senility, although they know it not; ever active, and ever at rest; gathering in, yet needing nothing; supporting, fulfilling, and protecting things; creating, nourishing, and perfecting them; searching them out, although nothing is lacking in you.  

Augustine's sense of God-relationship involves a basic double awareness of God as fundamentally close to the humanity He has shaped in His own image, and as fundamentally distinguished from all that is "merely clay" (to use Caliban's words). Intimations of likeness do not obscure the rigorously rehearsed confession that an essential ontologic difference obtains between the Creator and what He calls into being. Caliban catches glimmers of some such difference when contemplating the Quiet, but keeps reverting to premises of oppugnance and frustration so as to keep on safe, self-defined ground. For instance, it occurs
to him that a connection might hold between place and identity:

There may be something quiet o'er His head,
Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief,
Since both derive from weakness in some way.
I joy because the quails come; would not joy
Could I bring quails here when I have a mind:
This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.
(132-37)

That a relation might be possible with a higher entity whose will is not grounded in ontological limits Caliban can scarcely begin to conceive. He realizes that his relative weakness affords him peculiar satisfactions and discontents, those that come with being placed in a position of recipiency. And while he can almost imagine that an ultimate, self-sufficient level of being would entail a rather different order of feeling and volition, he cannot seem to expunge that streak of willfulness which darkens even his more intuitive moments as a natural theologian. The Quiet "may look up, work up -- the worse for those/ It works on" (11.140-41). Falling short of the insight that higher being could involve a refinement of will, Caliban slips back down into the terms of projected disquietude.15

The crux of Caliban's arrested dialectic is perhaps most apparent in those sections where he tries to relate the Quiet to Setebos. Refusing to believe that the world and its denizens could have been created in something other than a spirit of compensatory imitation, Caliban obviously reflects his own bad situation with Prospero. On the bigger
scale of Setebos and the Quiet, he imagines opposed
scenarios which might signify a high-day of release or some
clue to the secret of power. His first thoughts on the
subject assume a contentious universe:

    -- the something over Setebos
    That made Him, or He, may be, found and fought,
    Worsted, drove off and did to nothing, perchance.
    (129-31)

So Caliban would like to rid himself of Prospero, but for
the meanwhile can only grudgingly perform his tasks, and ape
the magus as he supposes Setebos apes "yon real" of the
Quiet's up-there with the "bauble-world" of down-here.
Caliban's universe is aesthetically stratified, tending to
make "real" an index for the scale of power. Drawn between
dreams of subversion and enforcement of that power
structure, he cannot decide upon an escape clause to make
life somewhat more bearable in such a determined system:

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
    And we shall have to live in fear of Him
So long as He lives, keeps His strength: no change,
    If He have done His best, make no new world
To please Him more, so leave off watching this --
    If He surprise not even the Quiet's self
Some strange day -- or, suppose, grow into it
    As grubs grow butterflies: else, here are we,
And there is He, and nowhere help at all.
    (241-49)

Then again, only time may tell:

    Hoping the while, since evils sometimes mend,
    Warts rub away and sores are cured with slime,
That some strange day, will either the Quiet catch
    And conquer Setebos, or likelier He
Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die.
    (279-83)
Wanting quiet himself, yet also a creature driven by the appetencies of his embittered middleness, Caliban pits his pair of divinities and through them tries unsuccessfully to grapple his way to a state of accord.

I believe that what I have said so far can be effectively reviewed in terms of Kierkegaardian categories, filtered somewhat through the mediation of W. H. Auden. In "Presenting Kierkegaard," his introduction to a personal selection of the philosopher's writings, Auden approaches Kierkegaard's well-known categories historically,

by considering the Aesthetic and the Ethical when each was a religion, and then comparing them with the Christian faith in order to see the difference, first, between two rival and incompatible Natural Religions and, secondly, between them and a Revealed Religion in which neither is destroyed or ignored, but the Aesthetic is dethroned and the Ethical fulfilled.

Now Caliban's religion is aesthetic insofar as his either/or of existence is that of strength/weakness, or fortunate/unfortunate. Also, his Setebos is a projection of the passions which rule himself. Auden holds that in an aesthetic religion, the gods (Greek, for instance) "are not in their passion;" rather, they are simply "images of passions." Caliban may suppose that his god suffers as he does, but what he expresses awe and profane mockery for is the apotheosized image of his own unstable nature. The refrain of "So He" points up this projection. In its less self-centered stretches Caliban's natural theology seems to aspire toward a higher reality approximating the ethical,
though his gleanings of the Quiet's realm are muddled by the innateness of his aesthetic bias, as he refers rarer speculations back to his earth-hugging premises. Reviewing Auden's argument on the first two categories, George Bahlke writes:

While the aesthetic religion has as its gods the passions, which, depending upon their nature, man alternately seeks and flees from, the ethical religion substitutes the pure ideas of Plato or the first cause of Aristotle. In this view of Greek philosophy man and God are "coeternal," but God is not a Creator; He is only the cause of any order the world may have, and He himself does not act, for He is self-sufficient: "Rather it is matter which, wishing to escape from the innate disorder of its temporal flux, 'falls in love' with God and imitates his unchangeableness in such ways as it can."19

Caliban's Quiet is also self-sufficient, and if a Creator, only of the heavens, not of anything sublunary. Setebos intervenes as a sort of dissatisfied Demiurge who makes "These good things to match those as hips do grapes." While Caliban imagines a rudimentary sort of ethical good beyond Setebos (11.144-48), he "never spends much thought nor care that way" (1.139) because down-to-earth concerns are more pressing. The escape from temporal flux, and from Setebos' capricious sway, ultimately involves nullity of some kind, the only Quiet which Caliban considers personally attainable. Floundering in pursuit of some higher knowledge of what makes for a happy life (a crude, ethical either/or), he reverts to an aesthetic 'gnosticism': "You must not know His ways, and play Him off,/ Sure of the issue" (11.224-25). In a Kierkegaardian light, this poem's satiric
recapitulation of classical or pagan stages of religious history is dramatized in Caliban's backsliding effort to arrive at a knowledge of relatedness with God without the benefit of revelation.

However, the breadth of Browning's satire extends as well to what Auden would identify as revealed religion, Judaism and Christianity. Browning allows his extemporizing theologian to wander unwittingly through satiric forth-rights and meanders, which here bear a distorted resemblance to strains of Greek philosophy, there to the Judaic notion of Yahweh, elsewhere to a Christian figure for paradise. Park Honan speaks of this work's "inverse symbolism in situation," by means of which Browning hints at the unproduced positive for which Caliban's unrelieved negative calls. For instance, Caliban does not accept his mother's opinion that there is an afterlife in which Setebos plagues enemies and feasts friends (ll.251-52). Unable to imagine a God-relation which is irrevocable and dependent upon the free will of the created self, Caliban sees no sense in the extension of earthly fortune or misfortune beyond death. Any such conception as the Feast of the Presence appears reduced in this aesthetic view to the prospect of a god forever hosting those he always inexplicably favored. Of course, Browning may be satirizing certain elements in Judeo-Christian thought which are prone to abusive interpretation, or cater to spiritual primitivism. The ironies of this poem are multi-directional. Toward the
close of the monologue, Browning has Caliban envisage what seems like a parodically twisted sketch of the fall from grace and expulsion into a world of death. The following lines appear to comprise a vague Old Testament pastiche:

If He caught me here, 
O'erheard this speech, and asked "What chucklest at?" 
'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger off, 
Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best, 
Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree, 
Or push my tame beast for the orc to taste: 
While myself lit a fire, and made a song 
And sung it, "What I hate, be consecrate 
To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate 
For Thee; what see for envy in poor me?"
(269-78)

If found out by his jealous God, Browning's chuckling Adam would swear off apples, offer up blood sacrifice, and in a rite of appeasement present a hypocritical psalm. The inverse of Caliban's song is properly outside the body of the monologue, suspended over it like something quiet yet lowering over the head. The I AM of Genesis and the Psalms speaks in His unheard, perfect Otherness: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself." Caliban's idolatry has its answer in a fierce summer storm, perhaps raised by Prospero, perhaps akin to the epigraph rejoinder, perhaps just a natural occurrence. That the cloud of unknowing is charged with paradoxical significance is due to Browning's mastery of ironic reverberation in this piece. The wrath of God is reputed to be tempestuous, but spiritual dryness when drenched may appear too much like soggy superstition. Finally, Browning himself is implicated by
the intensity of this work's nescient poise, as he establishes a vacuum for the inrush of Christian meaning without ever having to affirm or so much as indicate its kerygma. "Caliban upon Setebos" consequently conveys the impression of a work whose achieved ambiguities of import are the product of its author's deflected ambivalences of thought and belief.

Composed sometime in the early 1860's, "Caliban" is situated in a pivotal period of Browning's career. It looks back to such religious dramatic monologues as "Saul," "Karshish," and "Cleon," in which a personal, loving God (more specifically, an incarnated God) is conceived of or increduiously reported in the course of a spiritual confession. It looks forward to such works as the "Epilogue" of Dramatis Personae, in which the comfort and sureness of a God among mankind is relegated to past days of spiritual dependence. In "Caliban upon Setebos" the proper relation between anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic thought about God is left enticingly cloudy. The poem admits of antithetical interpretations.

On the one hand, we may feel, as David Shaw has it, that this poem "is born of Browning's own doubt, and that it has brought his own agnosticism back into the economy of fear and trembling and divine salvation." In this case, Christian meaning may be felt to impinge upon Caliban's spiritual deadlock. His inability to straighten out the
relation between the god conceived in his own image and the quiet, transcendent Being points beyond unaided reason to a revelatory synthesis. Browning does not object to anthropomorphic approaches to deity, but feels the need for some check upon the modelling of God after self. Christian belief takes Christ as a model demigod, so its anthropomorphism happens to coincide with its commitment to revelation. The Son is worshiped together with the person of the Father, allowing for a balance of anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic conception. Caliban lacks the necessary revelation of care to integrate his pair of divinities and turn his adversarial bias into a more than natural comprehension of Creation's relatedness. So in this sense Browning composes his portrait of naturalist distortion in such a way as to make a Christian corrective seem the tacitly prescribed antidote.

Then again, Browning was also known to equivocate a good deal on the reality of the Incarnation. Trying to preserve the essential truth of Christianity against Higher Criticism of the gospels and anthropological advances upon religious consciousness, Browning increasingly comes to underplay the significance of the historicality of Christian revelation, to the point that its factuality is no longer crucial to its relevance as spiritual truth. But in nearly divorcing the objective surety of the Christian report from the subjective conviction of that report's worth as a supreme revelatory narrative, the poet must through sheer insistence or lyrical
rhetoric overcome the view that the Christian vision is a beautiful and perhaps necessary fabrication, and no more than such. In the "Epilogue" to Dramatis Personae, Browning would through the succession of his three speakers give the impression that public revelation of God's love belongs to a less mature spiritual age in the ascent of mankind. For the Third Speaker, the character-forming world itself becomes all the proof that is needed of a personal divinity tirelessly shaping human ends amidst a continual wash of circumstance:

That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,  
Or decomposes but to recompose,    
Become my universe that feels and knows.  
(99-101)

It is a telling contrast that the flood of worldly concerns which Christ pictured as fundamentally threatening to faith's steadfastness, Browning relishes for its powers of individuation. Over the course of the decade he tends to drift toward a nominal Christianity, so that by 1869 he can write in no certain terms to a female friend:

That love could only reveal itself to the human heart by some supreme act of human tenderness and devotion; the fact, or fancy, of Christ's cross and passion could alone supply such a revelation. 22

Browning appears to have wanted his Christianity both ways ("fact, or fancy"), and to have allowed his agnosticism and Victorian stress on individualism to determine the tenor of his religious persuasion. Christianity, however, has a
built-in resistance to such qualification of its kerygma, a polarizing strain in matters of faith which makes the man Christ also the Lord of Life, to be worshiped so or rejected. In Kierkegaardian parlance, Christ is the offense. "A Death in the Desert" is especially relevant to this matter of religious hedging, both as an instance of Browning's facility in the strategies of the dramatic monologue, and as a sort of companion piece to "Caliban upon Setebos". I choose to make but a brief comment on this work; capable, extensive analyses are available elsewhere. That Browning is well aware of Christian insistence upon the authentic divinity of Christ can be seen in the addendum attributed to Pamphylax, lines 666-87. Yet the body of the poem's argument is not quite orthodox Christian thought. Rather, Browning has the evangelist St. John, one who knew Christ, argue for faith in terms of progressive approximation to truth. As John proceeds to anticipate objections to the good news of Christ's identity, his deathbed testimony takes on the character of Browning's personal gospel of spiritual evolution. It becomes difficult to say whether the signals this poem emits are mainly those of averment or reservation, reaffirmation or revision. Commenting on this monologue and "Caliban upon Setebos," Philip Drew notes that "Reading them one has a continual feeling that the answer Browning wants to arrive at is a Christian answer, but that anti-Christian arguments are exerting a strong intellectual and imaginative
appeal.\textsuperscript{24}

But in "Caliban upon Setebos" Browning neither has to resort to what William O. Raymond has called the poet's emotional gnosticism,\textsuperscript{25} nor to the kind of structural casuistry which marks "A Death in the Desert." The agnosticism of Browning's poem is a step beyond that of The Tempest, both of which are works with a strong sense of metaphysical shadowing. In limiting his scope to Caliban's purview and leaving the positive side of the satire clouded with intimation, Browning must settle for a complexly negative kind of success, reflecting contemporary forces of disaffection in the public and private realms of the spirit. We leave Browning's natural theologian cowering before a gathered storm; perhaps it is not so surprising that yet another Caliban should step forward to drive home "the ungarnished offended gap" which we may find all too aesthetically interesting.
Notes to Chapter Five


7 Michael Timko, "Browning upon Butler; or, Natural Theology in the English Isle," *Criticism* 7 (1965).

8 Wendell V. Harris, "Browning's Caliban, Plato's Cosmogony, and Bentham on Natural Religion," *Studies in Browning and His Circle* 3 (1975), p. 96.


11 Drew, p. 154.

12 For a close consideration of the poem's first sixteen lines, see Isobel Armstrong, "Browning and the Grotesque Style," in *The Major Victorian Poets: Reconsiderations*, ed.

13 Morrison, p. 497.

14 St. Augustine, Confessions, I.iv., p. 45.

15 I think Browning's use of a garden fountain image in the earlier poem "Cleon" chimes with Caliban's "pithless elder-joint" and his further conjectures on the estates of god and self. The restive Greek philosopher of the former monologue writes his patron that in his garden a "Naiad sends the water-spurt/ Thin from her tube" (11.252-53). Human enjoyment of life's vast reserves is likewise thin, "Past power to widen or exchange" (1.258). Caliban envies whatever enjoys a fuller, happier life, and assumes the whim of Setebos determines such matters. Cleon cannot accept that a god would be so petty:

And so a man can use but a man's joy
While he sees God's. Is it, for Zeus to boast
"See man, how happy I live, and despair --
That I may still be happier -- for thy use!"
If this were so, we could not thank our Lord,
As hearts beat on to doing: 'tis not so --
Malice it is not. Is it carelessness?
Still, no. If care -- where is the sign, I ask --
And get no answer.

(261-69)

In providing his own answers, Caliban assumes a rather negative universe, but one which is consequently ripe for conversion, pending the introduction of a supreme factor of love. In "Cleon" Browning could indicate the kerygma which is rejected as alien and childish to the Greek intellect; what is missing or felt wanting in "Caliban upon Setebos" remains pressingly unspecified.

16 Parts of the following quotes from The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard also appear in George W. Bahlke's The Later Auden: From New Year Letter to About the House (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), pp. 30-32. Excerpted passages have a way of forming new attachments as well as directing attention back to their source.

18 Auden, p. 9.

19 Bahlke, p. 32. The quoted sentence is from Auden's "Presenting Kierkegaard," p. 11.


22 This comment to Mrs. Sutherland Orr is quoted by William O. Raymond in The Infinite Moment and Other Essays in Robert Browning (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 39.

23 See, for example, Philip Drew, The Poetry of Browning: A Critical Introduction (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1970), pp. 212-22. This section conveys the gist of Drew's argument (p. 220): "He was never particularly concerned to protect the outworks of Christian dogma or Christian evidences against the Higher Critics, and his insistence on discovering the essential kerygma of the Gospels brought him dangerously near to the position of an 'anthropological' critic like Feuerbach. In "A Death in the Desert" it is clear how little room he had left himself for manoeuvre."


25 Raymond, p. 37.
CHAPTER SIX

The Sea and the Mirror

The Sea and the Mirror is a New World poem, not in that Auden extends the East-West consciousness of The Tempest in his creative commentary on it, but in that the work itself is a product of a mid-life resettlement, from England to America, from faith in liberal humanism to Christian faith. It is a poem of reorientation and conversion, of self-contradiction striving toward paradoxical recovery. Further, of the three works which I consider the core of the Tempest legacy, it is the most schematic and nearly allegorical piece. But we are not to press for correspondence between incidental detail and a close framework of ulterior meaning. As Herbert Greenberg observes, the method of The Sea and the Mirror is that of a loose allegory, "a reading of The Tempest as existential parable."¹ In the midst of a questing career, Auden turns to Shakespeare's problem Romance to explore and convey his newly developing Christian existential perspective upon art and life.

The existential tenor of this Tempest commentary owes much to Kierkegaardian thought, especially as found in The Sickness unto Death, which Auden considered a psychological analysis capable of being read poetically by intellectual agnostics.² The Kierkegaardian categories of aesthetic, ethical, and religious modes of existence underlie the
poem's metaphor of life as journey. More pronouncedly, Auden draws on the Danish philosopher's dialectic formulations of what it means to exist in despair or faith. Dividing the cast of Tempest characters among three analogous sections, Auden conducts a tripartite meditation on the uses and misuses of Art, the spiritual dispositions of the relational self, and the public realm as scene of resistance to the immanent obligation of divine appointment. Like The Sickness unto Death, The Sea and the Mirror can be read on an agnostic level, but to do so is to ignore the full thrust of Auden's Kierkegaardian-influenced thought on the self's thoroughness as a relational entity.

Constructing his poetic commentary upon a series of dualities, Auden avails himself of the Ariel-Prosperto-Caliban axis to represent the separations and needful interchanges which determine the condition of the divided or reconciled self. The following passages from "Balaam and His Ass" indicate Auden's sense of the volitional ego's wavering between the attractions of complete autonomy and complete dependence, loosely illustrated by Prospero's intermediacy between Ariel and Caliban:

Because of its double role the volitional ego has two wishes which, since the Fall, instead of being dialectically related, have become contradictory opposites. On the one hand it wishes to be free of all demands made upon it by the self or the conscience or the outer world . . . On the other hand, the same ego wishes to be important, to find its existence meaningful, to have a telos, and this telos it can only find in something or someone outside itself.
In his fallen state, he oscillates between a wish for absolute autonomy, to be as God, and a wish for an idol who will take over the whole responsibility for his existence, to be an irresponsible slave.

In his arrangement of *Tempest* figures, Auden shifts some of the burden of guilt from Caliban as the personification of the fleshly aspects of humanity, feeling that Nature is made a scapegoat for the sins of the Spirit in Shakespeare's Romance. His method in *The Sea and the Mirror* is to seek a dialectic balance between paired concepts such as flesh and spirit, Nature and Art, necessity or immediacy and possibility, self and other. This concern gives rise to a process of reflection, variously understood as imaginative receptivity, a reversal of perspective or value, a limited figure for the enigmatic co-inherence of the temporal and eternal. Reflection in the first of these senses is primarily an aesthetic activity. If art's mirror is used as a plain looking glass which allows the viewer to counter subjective delusions and guarded blind spots, then its employment is justifiable. Yet art may become a magic mirror absorbing interest and devotion instead of disabusing its wielder of false self-esteem and directing attention beyond egocentric satisfaction. The poem's epigraph, a passage from Emily Bronte, expresses this reservation about the propriety of a literary vocation:

And am I wrong to worship where
Faith cannot doubt nor Hope despair
Since my own soul can grant my prayer?
Speak, God of Visions, plead for me
And tell why I have chosen thee.
Aestheticism as religion may offer a specious fulfillment insofar as self-reflexiveness characterizes its practice. Its closed circuit is a poor substitute for the more anxious, undecidable sphere of existence where faith is authentic because a matter of continuously uncertain renewal. Yet life may be assayed through art, to a degree which daily existence does not usually allow. Auden explores this aesthetic dilemma with regard to the analogy between artistic (artificial) closure and that existential urge to closure which seeks to minimize religious anxiety. According to his dialectic resolution, the role of artistic vision should be to reflect critically, not just imitatively, the desire for escape from the anxieties inherent in human middleness.

By having the Stage Manager address the Critics in a Preface, Auden weighs the candid contrivance of Art against its candid exposure of apparently knowing approaches to Life. The first stanza analogizes the spectacles of circus and theater, especially Romance theater. In both life seems charmed, "As if there were no death." Yet despite the nonchalance of the tightrope walkers, "The aged catch their breath" because the unavoidable interest of life resides in the momentary possibility of its loss. While superficially beguiling, the death-defying act is also revealing, its disregard for mortality evoking that "hope of falling down" which makes life valuable and real. The clown who doubles his meaning is a Shakespearean clown, cutting across
boundaries to wound unexempt onlookers. A full range of response to staged performance includes delight in unreality, as when children laugh while the "lovely/ Lady is sawn in half." In the following stanza the spectacle at large is raised. Science would explain away the mysteries of existence, reduce its impalpable qualities to likely, observable terms, and so have us respond with the same knowing indulgence brought to the magic of the theater or big top. Yet such sureness does not answer: "Our wonder, our terror remains." Art can do justice to the peculiarly human struggle to uphold the meaning and value of its existence. It recognizes the wonder and terror, substantiates the unempirical reality of "the Flesh and the Devil." Just the same, Art is no buffer between those who attend the human drama sensitively and "The lion's mouth" which awaits them in their own lives. Aesthetic insight does not confer strength of will. Expanding on this aesthetic foreboding in the fourth stanza, the Stage Manager encompasses the realm of daily existence with an implicating rhetorical question:

Well, who in his own backyard
Has not opened his heart to the smiling
Secret he cannot quote?

Prospero's revels speech provides the precedent of contextual dilation, as indicated by the allusion to the Bard's sober reflection "That this world of fact we love/ Is unsubstantial stuff." There is also something of Hamlet's
"undiscover'd country" soliloquy in these closing lines. In effect, this Preface traces the movement of the poem in small, as the domain of Art reflects upon the aesthetic closure of secular existence, intimating a "ripeness" which is eventually identified with a Wholly Other Life immanent in the reconceived "here and now" of the present life.

The first of the poem's three main sections, "Prospero to Ariel," is a keynote confession. Auden's Prospero, while modelled upon Shakespeare's magus, is not as guarded and self-righteous as his original. In "Balaam and His Ass" Auden discusses his negative response to Prospero as offended protagonist:

One must admire Prospero because of his talents and his strength; one cannot possibly like him ... One might excuse him if he included himself in his critical skepticism but he never does; it never occurs to him that he too might have erred and be in need of pardon.

I would say rather that Prospero represses knowledge of his error, hence is defensive about his version of events. Shakespeare intends us to be aware of his magus' fallible humanity. In The Sea and the Mirror Auden brings that suppressed self-knowledge to the surface, altering Prospero to meet his own conditions for likableness. The situation, release of a spiritual confidant, explains the openness with which Prospero reviews his past. In this context Ariel is regarded fondly but objectively by his retiring master. The service which the inhuman, unanxious spirit offers depends
upon the strengths and weaknesses of his retainer. Properly employed, he is a spirit of penetrating reflection; improperly employed, he expedites a delusive sense of privileged distance from the human condition. The analogy with the Art of literary vision is clear, although Auden figures the use and misuse of imagination in general. Examining his career of conjuring in hindsight, Auden's Prospero admits to a penchant for the wrong sort of relation with Ariel.

The problem with a long-cultivated spirit of fascination is that it can make one feel exempt from the flat terms of mortality. In freeing Ariel, Prospero regains his own freedom as a mere man:

I am glad I have freed you,
So at last I can really believe I shall die.
For under your influence death is inconceivable.

Prospero is stripping himself of worldly impedimenta, possessiveness in power, honor, love, and imagination, because he knows that a cost is involved in trying to retain a hold on temporal things:

Whereas man overvalues everything
Yet, when he learns the price is pegged to his valuation,
Complains bitterly he is being ruined which, of course, he is.

Twelve years previous he had been compelled to forsake the good of Milan that he might realize his "gift/ In dealing with shadows." Now in turn he renounces his claim to psychic mastery that he might embrace his failing humanness
and search more inwardly for what properly pertains to the self's longevity. His retirement is an admission that a person has only the most tenuous of connections with the life of the world, despite strong illusion and consensus of opinion to the contrary:

So kings find it odd they should have a million subjects
Yet share in the thoughts of none

Prospero recollects to confess, claiming that he resorted to enchantment out of dissatisfaction with a world neither operating in accord with his desires, nor affirming his unique existence. As a child he practiced the magic of the imaginary to "blot for ever/ The gross insult of being a mere one among many." On his island he may have collaborated with Ariel to impress upon others their volitional errancies ("most desires end up in stinking ponds"), but even that project has not been free from the assertiveness of his own ego. Auden emphasizes the part of Prospero which is aware of the need for self-divestiture. If the clamoring ego can be quieted, made undemanding, then Ariel may offer his echo and mirror:

To ask for nothing, and at once from your calm eyes,
With their lucid proof of apprehension and disorder,
All we are not stares back at what we are.

Put psychologically, reflection is a frankly percipient activity, an unveiling of pretense and a means of recognizing what the self is in terms of what it is not, yet should be. The extent of this obligation marks the progress
of *The Sea and the Mirror*. At this stage Ariel figures aesthetic candor, the detached consideration of whatever comes within view, whether it be dissembling or furtive or unseemly. The concluding lines of Prospero's first block of elegiacs comprise a typically Audenesque analytic allegory, in this case of reflective veracity.

For metrical relief Auden alternates his elegiac sections with lyric glosses which parallel the reluctant but measured advance of Prospero's valediction. The first of these expands upon the theme of reflection as enlightenment and dispossession. Ariel's mirror may reveal "Nature as/ In truth she is for ever," free of human investment and shame. Or in Ariel's company a hard personal truth may be admitted, such as that a loved one is unfaithful. A whole populace may find the levelling spirit of service when confronted with a threat which it is tempted to downplay. In all three instances an eye-opening glance at the truth is deemed sufficient, because human nature is better off not fully knowing that which it cannot assimilate healthily or effectively. The dilation of this lyric incorporates autobiographical elements, Auden's distress over Chester Kallman's infidelity, his concern about the menace of Nazism. As Caliban later remarks in the audience's stead, Prospero fills the bill as a "personified type of the creative."

The self-disenchanting magus releases Ariel to work his
charms for others who may harbor self-conceits clouding awareness of common humanity. Fancy can have a corrupting effect on an individual attracted to vanity's mirror. Distraction from the reality of one's limited nature grows more complete; Ariel plays Pied Piper, leading the subject toward the picked mirage on the horizon. In retrospect Prospero can see that his very drive for privileged removal has betrayed his susceptibility to the human traits he desired to avoid. Although he intended to remain free from the entanglements of unbalanced feeling, in the process of circumscribing his world he has found himself hating Antonio and asking Caliban for his love. Auden mitigates Prospero's rejection of his brother in having him confess "That both were in the wrong, and neither need be sorry." With regard to Caliban he is even more self-critical:

We did it, Ariel, between us; you found on me a wish For absolute devotion; result -- his wreck That sprawls in the weeds and will not be repaired.

The image of a sprawling figure recalls Browning's Caliban, while the general impression conveyed is of a non-functional piece of machinery. Prospero's word choice suggests a recognition that he may have treated Caliban less than humanely, as an instrument needing only a master mechanic's hand. Whereas the original magus must step partially out of character to admit his need for pardon, Prospero here is made to confess that his aloofness has deprived him of that alleviation. Having dispensed forgiveness with a superior
liberality, he has neglected to participate with the other characters in its human exchange: "To all, then, but me, their pardons." Auden makes Prospero hesitant to claim any personal success in the outcome of his project; almost incidentally, some gains have been realized: "stale Trinculo receives,/ Gratis, a whole fresh repertoire of stories, and/ Our younger generation its independent joy." The Prospero whom Auden fleshes out is the ironic man of effects who responds dryly to Miranda's "brave new world" enthusiasm, "'Tis new to thee."

The second lyric constitutes a call for a song for old-times' sake. In its three stanzas Auden characterizes the escapist and compensatory uses of imagination, moral consideration being appended on second thought. The drift of its statement seems to be that imagination is primarily a faculty of play, which may yet be reined in to address the exigencies of the actual. Fancy would prefer its field day in "green remote Cockaigne" undisturbed by the everyday constrictions which give rise to its flight. But while short stays may be therapeutic, extended absences from the actual rob a person of life-potential. Likewise, imagination can assuage entrapment among the grinding wheels of the status quo, envisaging inverted orders where "witty angels.../Come only to the beasts." Again, the release gained may be reinvigorating or simply evasive. The reminder to "Wind up, though, on a moral note" suggests self-consciousness of the need for imagination (the literary
kind especially) to justify its excursions. Yet in the closing two lines there appears to be a winking acknowledgment that Ariel, left to go his ways, is unconcerned with morals, being an essentially carefree spirit. How imagination is employed, in surpassing self-occupation, in daydreaming, in coping, in venting frustration, in shaping moral character, depends on the direction of the volitional ego; but while Ariel serves Prospero, he also evokes possibly undetected desires.

The long partnership between conjurer and attendant spirit has induced in Prospero an illusory sense of separation from existence. Actuality has been experienced as a dreamlike "tremendous journey" whose interest is that of fictive dimensions. To break the habit of imaginary distancing is to face up to the decline of the self and the journey toward death that must be taken "Alone and on foot." Divested of his desire to be special, Prospero hopes that he can learn to sound his common mortality in silence. The Kierkegaardian tenor of Prospero's retiring thoughts indicates an infinite movement of resignation, in which "silence is . . . the mutual understanding between the Deity and the individual."9 Having been absorbed in a self-authored existence of provisional interests, Prospero anticipates the difference of the anxious, elementary countermovement to comfortable, temporal sightseeing:

I never suspected the way of truth
Was a way of silence where affectionate chat
Is but a robber's ambush and even good music
In shocking taste; and you, of course, never told me.

As he releases Ariel to return to his element, Prospero seeks his own element of mortal suspension. According to Herbert Greenberg, "Auden indicates that in its ultimate significance the element Prospero must face is the 'Absurd'; the sea is the apparent meaninglessness of existence upon which the voyage of faith must be risked." In the parting call for Ariel's lyric accompaniment, perhaps suggested by Prospero's final charge of "calm seas, auspicious gales" in The Tempest (V.i.314), Auden expresses the reluctance and trepidation with which his aesthetic Everyman commits himself to "The silent passage/ Into discomfort." Ariel is assumed back into the elements, as the journey of imagination transmutes into the trek of faith. A brilliant, light song "Of separation," (such as "Where the bee sucks, there suck I"), "Of bodies and death," (such as "Full fadom five thy father lies") might be desirable, but lyricism trails off as an individual confronts the singular, unmediated fact of mortality.

Auden does not have Prospero give himself much credit for the ethical aspect of his conjuring. There are several reasons for this critical severity. First, Auden is redressing what he takes to be insufferable self-righteousness on Prospero's part in The Tempest. Second, this post-performance Prospero is a confessional figure, tending to dwell on his weaknesses and shortcomings.
Generally speaking, "Prospero to Ariel" is aesthetically oriented; whatever ethical achievement Prospero has realized with his project is formally indicated in the launched containment of the following section.

"The Supporting Cast, Sotto Voce" opposes Antonio's echo of denial to the mirrored arrangement of the other characters' monologues. His dissenting voice is heard first and last, taunting Prospero over the inescapable adversarial bond between them, contradicting one by one the recently assisted visions of the other *dramatis personae*. In order to convey some of the interrelations of this grouping, I shall first consider Antonio's separatist monologue, then examine the others in their reflective placement, culminating in the dialectic centerpiece of Alonso's letter to Ferdinand. The encompassing theme pursued will be that of modes and degrees of relatedness.

Antonio's monologue in terza rima captures the cynical amusement of the *Tempest* original. He sees through his brother's arrangements, and characterizes the resulting order with knowing condescension:

Yes, Brother Prospero, your grouping could

Not be more effective: given a few
Incomplete objects and a nice warm day,
What a lot a little music can do.

Dotted about the deck they doze or play,
Your loyal subjects all, grateful enough
To know their place and believe what you say.
Borrowing a phrase from the Preface, we might say that Prospero's "genius for taking pains" is transparent to Antonio in his standoffishness. Our reading of Prospero's confession will partially determine our response to Antonio. If we believe that Auden intends us to read "Prospero to Ariel" somewhat ironically, then we will be inclined to credit Antonio's claim that his manichean opposition to Prospero belies his brother's movement of resignation: "while I stand outside/ Your circle, the will to charm is still there." In The Tempest Prospero does savor his recantation of the will to charm. When he speaks of breaking and burying his staff, and drowning his book, the gestural undertone of the intent is structurally persistent. Could Prospero be conjuring himself? This suspicion, suitably enough, is given voice by Antonio: "Break your wand in half,/ The fragments will join; burn your books or lose/ Them in the sea, they will soon reappear,/ Not even damaged." However, the Prospero whom Auden conceives is existentially resolved, his farewell to Ariel persuasive in its self-critical candor. Antonio, on the other hand, preens himself on his withheld oneness. He refuses to believe that his brother could progress beyond the concern for influence over other human natures, especially one as antagonistic as his own. That Prospero might be embarked on a spiritual journey which leaves him behind to gloat on the shore of self-absorption Antonio will not concede. Ironically, in mocking Prospero's earthly captivity, Antonio
may be speaking of his own loss as a defiant man with a rage for nullity:

Never have time to curl up at the centre
Time turns on when completely reconciled,
Never become and therefore never enter
The green occluded pasture as a child.

The imagery in this closing stanza is nearly Eliotic (Four Quartets), the device of having Antonio figure what for Prospero goes unspoken a follow-up to his dismissive characterization of conscience in The Tempest (II.i.271-73). Antonio embodies a will to solipsistic gnosticism, surrounding himself in an aura of hermetic mystery. He makes a cult of the self: compare his refrain declaration, "I am I, Antonio,/ By choice myself alone," with his brother's confession of needful humanity, "Now, Ariel, I am that I am, your late and lonely master." As in The Tempest, Antonio is a dark mirror image of Prospero, reflecting the dangerous implications of his desire for self-seclusion.

The grouping from which Antonio sets himself apart is bounded by the outer monologues of Ferdinand and Miranda. By formally separating the lovers so, Auden stresses the personal solitude out of which relatedness is achieved. Ferdinand may be engaging in physical love as far as his honor permits, anticipating the full consummation that marriage will authorize. Antonio's "One bed is empty, Prospero" is probably meant to be taken as a characteristically cynical assumption that "Hot Ferdinand"
has bedded Miranda prematurely. Whatever the circumstances, Ferdinand clearly voices Auden's belief that physical love, Eros, is properly defined in the more embracing context of Agape, the bond between the temporal and eternal realms. Physical intimacy between man and woman, preferably man and wife (and, to Auden's thinking, between man and man also), gives love definition in the world of the flesh, yet such closeness itself exists in mutual relation with "another tenderness" not of this world. We notice to begin with that Ferdinand's sonnet trades in metaphysical conceit. His speech is highly reflexive, the poetry of a young lover enjoying the couplings language allows: "Inherit me, my cause, as I would cause you now/ With mine your sudden joy." For all his delight in contact Ferdinand is no mere sensualist, but in love with Miranda as a "warm secret," his "Dear Other at all times," with whom he shares in the sacred mystery of conjunction. He recognizes that through their love they are involved in the further blessings conferred between a world of place and time and one whose goodness requires no situation. The tenderness of lovers is an approach to that secret of otherness which gives full meaning to such possibilites as affection and devotion.

Ferdinand's monologue may be primarily paired with that of Miranda, but the design of the grouping reveals kaleidoscopic analogies. For instance, the closing line of Ferdinand's sonnet, "The Right Required Time, The Real Right Place, O Light," chimes with a passage from Sebastian's
monologue:

all this dearness is no lover's dream
Just Now is what it might be every day,
Right Here is absolute and needs no crown.

We may grant that the glow of such conviction is the result
of a recent spiritual fanning, and difficult to sustain, but
the credence echoed between the monologues is strong. The
here and now, so often evoked as a realistic alternative to
wishful belief in an ulterior realm investing the world at
hand with meaning, is real only insofar as "The lie of
Nothing" which secularism slips toward is categorically
rejected. Sebastian does not share Ferdinand's romantic
approach to the paradox of otherness, but in the failure of
his willful solipsism he has found a key to the measure of
life's actuality.

If we take Miranda to be the "silly lovesick little
goose" Prospero labels her in his dry humor, then her
villanelle will seem the product of an immature mind still
steeped in fairy tale images. Then again, her apparent
naivete in the ways of the world may bespeak an archetypal
consciousness which she preserves in her innocence.
Commenting on *For the Time Being*, Monroe Spears notes how
"the logic of fairy tales represents spiritual truth";¹² I
believe that Miranda's is the right voice for such simple
witness. In the first stanza the notion that the
conjunction of different entities helps to realize each is
clear:
My Dear One is mine as mirrors are lonely,
As the poor and sad are real to the good king,
And the high green hill sits always by the sea.

Mirrors are lonely because they require other things to reflect; they are what they do. A good king may be identified through his response to the poor and sad, whose destitution is apparent to his reflective eminence. And the high green hill seems "always" to require the sea, or so the story goes (children can be very insistent about observance of such proprieties in oft-told tales). The scraps of fairy tale lore which Miranda cites in the following three stanzas have personal significance for her, but acquire paradigmatic force in the context of the villanelle's alternating scheme. Possibly, the Black Man, the Witch, and the Ancient are emblems for Caliban, Sycorax, and Prospero. Auden may be indicating the deep background of The Tempest in folk and fairy lore. In the fifth stanza Miranda makes a seemingly naturalistic reference to Ferdinand (her Prince Charming), who has kissed her awake into a day bathed in sunshine. Reading between the lines of this childishly graceful monologue, we might hold that it speaks for the power of love to awaken sole selves to an illuminated co-inherence, first in the here and now of the "changing garden," again in the absolute presence of the unchanging garden. Antonio, "The Only One, Creation's O," will have none of it, "Dances for Death alone."

The comic figures of butler and jester flank the lovers,
forming a pair whose body/mind contradictions hinder them from attaining selfhood defined by otherness. Stephano would find in his belly the "Dear Other" Ferdinand has gained in Miranda. But he is not sure whether he should address his receptacle as bride, daughter, mother, or nanny. It serves in various capacities, swelling to fulness, compensating for disappointments, pooh-poohing immaterial desires. Still, his unslaked appetite indicates to him that as a compound of mind and matter he is in a disjunct state:

Where mind meets matter, both should woo;
Together let us learn that game
The high play better than the blue;
A lost thing looks for a lost name.

In relying upon bodily consolations for psychic or spiritual cravings, Stephano drowns his sorrows instead of coming to terms with them. He realizes that he is working at cross-purposes with himself as he shuffles "Between the bottle and the 'loo'." Lacking integration, he weaves and blunders along in a search for refreshment: "Exchanging cravings we pursue/ Alternately a single aim." Antonio calls the divided butler "Inert," an epithet Stephano would likely not deny. However, even though he is unsure how to act on the knowledge gained "From humble pie and swallowed pride," he is aware of "The need for pardon." Within the rift between the psychic and bodily 'I', Stephano puzzles over the source of pardon and the genesis of identity.

The insecurity which Trinculo displays in The Tempest,
most apparent in his jealousy of Caliban, is rendered by Auden as full-blown angst. David William suggests that, "With the possible exception of Malvolio, Trinculo is the most neurotic of Shakespeare's comic characters. His stage-life is a progress from fear to fear, beginning with the weather."\(^{13}\) William's reading may well have been colored by Auden's depiction of the clown. In his placement according to design Trinculo gives voice to the Adamic existential extreme ironically precipitated by the accrual of self-consciousness, the isolating strain of *Cogito ergo sum*. Hyperconscious of the separation between mental hinterlands and the public world, Auden's comic is an unwilling source of amusement for more practical men of limited consciousness. He is caught up in the non-operational aspect of language, wanting a ground, subject to tremors:

A terror shakes my tree,
A flock of words fly out,
Whereat a laughter shakes
The busy and devout.

If he cuts a ridiculous figure, it is because he cannot reconcile the stratospheric activity in his head with "the solid world" so far below. Unequipped to transform his sense of the absurd into a self-actualizing journey, he proceeds through life as a solitary, abstract curiosity, a walking quandary whose solution is death:

Wild images, come down
Out of your freezing sky,
That I, like shorter men,
May get my joke and die.
In pairing Gonzalo and Sebastian as the next brace of characters Auden adjusts our conception of each. Their distinguishing features, those of an honest, solicitous councillor and an unprincipled, ambitious second, are referred to a medium of recognized fault. In Gonzalo's case, Auden expands upon a suggested character defect that may be illustrated in the following Tempest passage:

Alon. Prithee, no more: thou dost talk nothing to me.
Con. I do well believe your highness; and did it to minister occasion to these gentlemen, who are of such sensible and nimble lungs that they always use to laugh at nothing.

(II.i.166-70)

Like Prospero, in retrospect Gonzalo takes a critical look at his righteousness. He has been a man whose self-consideration deadened his grasp of the truth. Rather than being an open channel for what he perceived, he obstructed its free flow, "made the song sound ridiculous and wrong." Even though he was mainly in the right, he feels estranged from what he was right about. Basically, Auden evokes traces of a Kierkegaardian speculative philosopher in Gonzalo's character. On the island he did not trust "the Absurd" strongly enough to surpass the kind of "self-reflection" which is intent on personal appearance. Failing to deliver himself fully to the truth professed, he froze "Vision into an idea,/ Irony into a joke,/ Till I stood convicted of/ Doubt and insufficient love." In dramatic terms, he played to his audience as "an honest old Councillor" (Tempest listing) when the occasion required of
him more faith and openness than he could summon. But in his perceived failure lies the quickening of his humanity, the rekindling of his "subjective passion" as an existing being, whose impedient 'I' may be more fully disposed to the benign Otherness which posits and identifies selves:

Even rusting flesh can be
A simple locus now, a bell
The Already There can lay
Hands on if at any time
It should feel inclined to say
To the lonely -- 'Here I am',
To the anxious -- 'All is well'.

Sebastian also perceives his failure as a restorative experience, although in his case personal fault has had to be impressed upon him from without. The Tempest original is surprised in his guilt, and probably assisted to a somewhat less inactive conscience. I think that Auden makes explicit in his placement of Sebastian whatever prompts readers of The Tempest to assume that he falls somewhere between the rueful response of Alonso and the intransigence of Antonio. Auden's Sebastian may be "wicked still," but he has been jolted out of a conscienceless state and taught a reality principle in the mercy of failure. While Prospero renounces the imaginative spell which has kept him in exile from the reality of his existence, and Trinculo floats in nebulous regions recollecting childhood access to a solid world, Sebastian breathes a sigh of relief over his rough awakening from a pernicious dream. Auden follows Shakespeare's precedent in using the theme of waking as a versatile index
of existential relativity. The conspiratorial exchange between Sebastian and Antonio in The Tempest (II.i.), with its special play on sleep, waking, death, water, and earth, is smartly analogized in the form of a sestina. Complicity with Antonio is internalized as Sebastian represents his psychological maneuvers in preparing himself to kill Alonso. The dream of fratricide which he came close to indulging was "Securely vicious," but evaporated when exposed to the light of discovery. Like Prospero, he traces his error back to the make-believe of childhood, which grew dangerous, unplayful, as the will became corrupt and sought to enforce its imaginings. As Herbert Greenberg puts it, Sebastian "is one for whom the solipsism of childhood has become the nihilism of the conscienceless." In persuading himself that his brother's reality was marginal, and the physicality of his sword a proof upon such tenuousness, he engaged in a sly self-deceit. Malicious solipsism requires proof of other existence whenever that existence hinders or contradicts its sovereignty, but it is transparently selective in its skepticism. Such deviousness is practiced without guilt until the proof of otherness upon the "infected" self shocks it back into a relational context:

O blessed be bleak Exposure on whose sword, Caught unawares, we prick ourselves alive! Shake Failure's bruising fist! Who else would crown Abominable error with a proof?

What Sebastian finds blessed in Exposure is analogous to the blessing Ferdinand invokes "As world is offered world." In
each case the self is realized by what Gonzalo calls the Already There, and so guarded from its susceptibility to incestuous collapse.

To make a match for the Master and Boatswain, Auden casts the bit players Adrian and Francisco as a comic twosome. Antonio's response in theatrical tropes leads us to imagine that the two courtiers deliver their lines as if participating in a court entertainment. The couplet they are given is frivolous yet hooked: "Good little sunbeams must learn to fly,/ But it's madly ungay when the goldfish die." Even the lightheaded must face the sobering facts of existence. This couplet has a pointed humor similar to that of the familiar Cymbeline couplet upon which it appears to be modelled: "Golden lads and girls all must,/ As chimney-sweepers, come to dust" (IV.i.262-63).

Adrian and Francisco's opposite numbers, the Master and Boatswain, share a monologue based on one of Stephano's "scurvy" tunes from The Tempest. They are comrades in melancholy bravado, "Nostalgic sailors" according to Antonio. The closest they have come to domestic content is a turn in the sack with Margery or Marion or Meg: "And two by two like cat and mouse/ The homeless played at keeping house." In avoiding the "cage" of a woman's grounding love, they leave themselves free to come and go at will. But they are numbered among the lonely and aimless, and in allowing themselves a wide compass for movement are bound by their
restlessness. Theirs is a chantey philosophy; they would
shrug off the loss, hang it all, but the lack of connection
is deeply felt, and time is running out: "Tears are round,
the sea is deep:/ Roll them overboard and sleep."

As the reflective centerpiece of the section, Alonso's
monologue is a model of dialectic balance. Pursuing the
divisions and interchanges of a sea/desert duplex with the
Way of Justice as a synthetic temperate course, Auden has
the retiring King of Naples offer his son a mirror for
magistrates. To reign well in "The sunburnt superficial
kingdom" a ruler needs to behave regally and
conscientiously, yet also be aware of the vast elemental
stretches which severely qualify "civil pattern and
importance." Basically, man does well to know his place.
"A prince's ornate mirror" is not the recommended instrument
of reflection. Rather, Alonso advises Ferdinand to consult
his darkness, his fears, lest he succumb to destructive
temptations which have been carelessly indulged. Though the
duality of sea and desert is initially topographic, in the
third and fourth stanzas the opposing landscapes evoked are
those of an existential cautionary tale. Alonso presents
the nightmare alternatives facing a ruler (understood as a
royal Everyman) who has abandoned himself to the lure of
bodily or mental indulgence:

--- the sea in which
A tyrant sinks entangled in rich
Robes while a mistress turns a white back
Upon his splutter, or the desert
Where an emperor stands in his shirt
While his diary is read by sneering
Beggars, and far off he notices
A lean horror flapping and hopping
Toward him with inhuman swiftness.

On the one hand the liquidity of carnal satisfaction is revealed as a drowning element, while on the other the aridity of mental abstraction catches the royal scribbler unprepared for the shock of his mortality. The princely self needs to beware the attractive extremes offered flesh and mind in maladjustment. Flesh may be satisfied with dissolution bordering on oblivion, while mind is tempted to shunt bodily restraints so as to bask in nearly blank lucidity. Anyone in a position of power who overlooks such aberrations in himself or in the populace, concentrating instead on the civil amenities in their seeming naturalness, may be taken unaware by a quake of the body politic:

Remember when
Your climate seems a permanent home
For marvellous creatures and great men,
What grieves and convulsions startled Rome,
Ecbatana, Babylon.

In the seventh stanza Alonso envisages a dialectic castigation of unruly flesh and mind, citing his own experiences on Prospero's island. Should Ferdinand need such correction in turn, Alonso advises him to "Believe your pain." Subjective passion may be renewed and bolstered by failure, rawness of feeling, and embarrassment, aspects of exposure. According to Alonso's moral landscaping, the "scorching rocks" should be praised for desiccating lust
(sea-sin), the "bitter treatment of the tide" thanked for
dissolving pride (desert-sin), so that the whirlwind (desert
storm) may arrange the will and the deluge (tempest)
"release it to find/ The spring in the desert, the fruitful/
Island in the sea, where flesh and mind/ Are delivered from
mistrust." The self may be recomposed so that its
destructive dichotomies come to serve as life-enhancing
means of integration. Alonso writes as a spiritually
rejuvenated man "now ready to welcome/ Death." Auden
suggests in his situation a common denominator with that of
Leontes, who also receives more than he could reasonably
expect:

    rejoicing in a new love,
    A new peace, having heard the solemn
    Music strike and seen the statue move
    To forgive our illusion.

Our illusion is due to submergence in the relative meanings
of change and loss, which we may take as proof against the
currency of truth. Alonso witnesses the power of a
redeeming absolute to make its implausible necessity felt in
the language of temporal possibility.

This dynamic whereby opposition gives way before
paradoxical transaction serves as the modus operandi of the
third section, "Caliban to the Audience." Initially
functioning as an echo of the audience's view that Art and
Life are rightly autonomous domains, Caliban turns the
mirror of critical reflection upon the existential premises
underlying such an attitude. From a willing state of aesthetic and ethical segregation he conducts his captive audience to an awareness of the obligatory immanence of a Wholly Other Life in the fractured secular realm.

In the first stage of his address Caliban plays the part of the "very echo, the begged question" about whom the audience wishes to speak to the unavailable playwright. The assumed objection of the audience might be summarized as follows: Is it not self-defeating to throw a giddily Romantic party to which one as brutally anti-romantic as Caliban can gain access? This problematic presence of Caliban is something of a straw man, although its exaggeration allows Auden to work his dialectic reversals between the two sides of the stage curtain. What should be recognized is that through Caliban Auden exposes the general public's suspect values with a light-handed irony.

In Jamesian prose Auden unreels an extended metaphor for the spacious accommodations of dramatic artistry, reflecting on British self-congratulation in the process. "Our native Muse" arranges dramatic get-togethers "unapproached and unattempted by Grecian aunt or Gallic sister," mixing high and low with dazzling results. But even though "what the strait-laced Unities might possibly think, or sad sour Probability possibly say" does not faze her, the Muse is not so reckless as to abandon herself to an anything-goes attitude. Incoherence is not to be countenanced, nor "the
bohemian standardless abyss" leaped into. For the culturally tolerant but orderly audience, the pleasure of dramatic derring-do lies in the "breathtaking triumphant turn" at the edge. The Muse at her most enticing and winning, it is implied, hosts an afternoon or evening in Romance mode:

Is there, could there be, any miraculous suspension of the wearily historic, the dingily geographic, the dully drearily sensible beyond her faith, her charm, her love, to command?

So Auden leads into the "unpardonable treachery" of the playwright in permitting Caliban to violate the perfection of the arrangements.

He is the lone offspring of the Muse's "Awful Enemy," the unmentionable witch "who with age and envy/ Was grown into a hoop" (Temp. I.ii.258-59). This image of a downward-bending force may have supplied Auden with a cue for his depiction of Caliban's influence. Personifying existence at its most intractable and inescapable, Caliban is a corrosive presence rudely bringing the high-flown and rare down to earth (as Browning's envious natural would):

She foresaw what He would do to the conversation, lying in wait for its vision of private love or public justice to warm to an Egyptian brilliance and then with some fishlike odour or bruit insolite snatching the visionaries back tongue-tied and blushing to the here and now.

In terms of hyperbolic metaphor Auden expresses his sense that in The Tempest Shakespeare simultaneously tests the
limits of Romance and admits the natural skepticism which
questions the relevance of Romantic insight to the mundane
here and now. Presumably, the audience is made
uncomfortable by such a hybrid approach because it wishes to
preserve the purity of artistic devising.

But the preservation desired is decidedly separatist in
motive, as the audience, according to George Bahlke,
"expresses its conviction that it is alienated from art and,
furthermore, its feeling of comfort in its alienation." In
speaking for the audience to the absent playwright about the
expected "old high strangeness" of staged life, Caliban
speaks to the audience's self-protective bracketing of that
life as an aesthetically pleasing neverland. The theatrical
world should be a place apart, a readily convertible neutral
space where time is flexible, the moral law intact, the
inner life easily manifested, and every instance of disorder
"perfectly tidiable." The gist of these requirements seems
to be contained in the phrase "freedom without anxiety." On
this side of the curtain freedom entails anxiety.
Individuals are free to do as they please to other
individuals, and perhaps escape punishment. Earthquakes and
hurricanes and droughts are free to cause havoc. Man is
susceptible to the peculiar freedoms of disease, beasts,
fire, gravity, lethal substances, and his own will. So it
may be refreshing at intervals to look in upon a world where
freedom is not quite so rampant. Yet the strict distinction
between the in-there and the out-here primarily reflects an
invested interest in maintaining barriers.

Just as the general public likes its Art kept at a distance, so it values lines of demarcation within the perimeters of Life. In the theatrical neutral space the "whole uninhibited circle" is the field of play, whereas in the larger acting area identity depends on exclusion and contrast: "For without these prohibitive frontiers we should never know who we were or what we wanted." Segregation on several levels is instanced. Suburbs have their rivers and railroad tracks, colleges their lawns and corridors "dividing the tender who value from the tough who measure." The attested "public whole" is cast in terms of ironically artificial or illusory lighting: "We and They are united in the candid glare of the same commercial hope by day, and the soft refulgence of the same erotic nostalgia by night." Caliban edges toward confessional divulgence veiled in the language of public complaint. Without the means of shutting out, hence of defining through opposition and isolation, "the Whole would have no importance and its Day and Night no interest." In making Caliban a spokesman for the audience Auden shrewdly arraigns humanity for its commitment to an aesthetic mode of existence. It determines importance according to the aesthetic criterion of interest, and considers Time an inexplicable process distinguishing the fortunate from the unfortunate.

From where the audience sits, the significance of
dramatic spectacle as a mirroring device appears to reside in its indication of an ulterior "reversal of value":

On the far side of the mirror the general will to compose, to form at all costs a felicitous pattern becomes the necessary cause of any particular effort to live or act or love or triumph or vary, instead of being as, in so far as it emerges at all, it is on this side, their accidental effect.

This passage is actually delivered as a pointed question, although once again the import boomerangs. In considering "the general will to compose . . . a felicitous pattern" on the "real" side of the curtain a matter of "accidental" origins, the audience betrays its desire to avoid any obligatory grounds for the realization of possible orders. Conversely, to remain aesthetically satisfying, staged life requires that the will to compose not grow publicly self-conscious of its manipulations, that Ariel keep concealed. To bring Ariel and Caliban together is to revel in discord, as the oil of poetic magic clashes with the vinegar of naturalistic obduracy. The audience values Ariel in-there for his very implausibility as a poeticizing influence, while Caliban is valued out-here in his real identity as the beneficial influence of socially reinforcing love. Giving his dialectic screw one final turn in this section, Auden has his represented audience voice the apprehension that the playwright, "not content with inveigling Caliban into Ariel's kingdom," has "let loose Ariel in Caliban's." The spirit of poetic arrangements would be a plain nuisance in the workaday world, "breaking down our picket fences in the
name of fraternity, seducing our wives in the name of romance, and robbing us of our sacred pecuniary deposits in the name of justice." At this juncture, having exposed errant public attitudes of his own formulation, Auden has Caliban turn to address the artist as a young man.17

Here Auden resorts to a fairly straightforward allegorical application of the Ariel-Prospero-Caliban triad. The emergent writer has chosen "the conjurer's profession," releasing his creative imagination, and growing estranged from his creatureliness. We notice that the sketched progress is laced with Tempest phrases pertaining to the relations between familiar, master, and thing of darkness. While the dramatic or poetic conjurer enjoys Ariel's services for an extended productive period, the creative familiarity is eventually discovered to be less inherent than at first supposed. The reflective moment of truth arrives when the artistic achiever, long caught up in his fictive magic, comes eye to eye not with his "all-forgiving because all-understanding good nature," but with his "gibbering fist-clenched" self in the flesh. Like Prospero, the disillusioned master must acknowledge as his own "the dark thing you could never abide to be with."

The themes of this passage have been raised in the poem's preceding sections. In leading a life of imaginative activity, the artist runs the risk of distancing himself from what he perceives, of making a creative exercise out of
a journey in which he is vitally involved. Prospero and Gonzalo confess this error from their particular retrospects. Caliban argues that by one means or another the flesh needed to arrive at "that very same truth which you were meanwhile admiring from your distant comfortable veranda but would never point out to me." The condition of the body/mind complex as a locus of identity signifies the degree to which the subject realizes the special nature of his or her humanity. Alonso envisages a dialectic reconstitution in which "flesh and mind/ Are delivered from mistrust." In more prodding terms Caliban reminds the potentially distracted writer that the self should be a passionate site of "mutual concern" between mind and flesh. Otherwise, the artist may reproduce in his own existence the general public's attitude that art and life are separate affairs. 18

Turning back to the audience, Caliban launches into the final stage of his high-toned harangue. His previous role as echo has been an ironic means of revealing the anxieties of the "general popular type." Speaking for Ariel and himself, he diagnoses the audience's "clamor" as signifying their unease over the lost security of childhood make-believe and the onset of adult disillusionment. But the discrepancy must be addressed, not simply formalized. The audience has to "reckon with . . . the irreconcilable difference between my reiterated affirmation of what your furnished circumstances categorically are, and His
successive propositions as to everything else which they conditionally might be."

A basic comparison with "Prospero to Ariel" can be made. In each case, the Journey of life is raised as a figure for the reality of the self's progressive existence. In keeping with the contemporary setting and Auden's imaginative preference,\textsuperscript{19} rail travel serves as the metaphor for the "three or four decisive instants of transportation."

Through Caliban Auden proposes that over a lifetime we enter upon a determinable new phase only a few times, otherwise accommodating ourselves to the places and positions already reached. That is, we spend most of our life on the platform or in the station. In the context of the whole address this section is transitional, concerned mainly with the prospects of life's expenditure. It railroads those whose lives are largely still ahead of them into their later selves, whose lives are largely spent, "well inside one of those, all equally foreign, uncomfortable and despotic, certainties of failure or success." And at this juncture, Caliban warns, it is dangerous to turn either to himself or Ariel for guidance. To use a phrase of Ariel's from \textit{The Tempest} (I.\textit{ii}.210), Caliban predicts the twin "tricks of desperation" which the weary travellers will play.

In the following paired sections Auden vividly illustrates the dual alternatives of despair as defined by Kierkegaard in \textit{The Sickness unto Death}: 
Such a derived, constituted, relation is the human self, a relation which relates itself to its own self, and in relating itself to its own self relates itself to another. Hence it is that there can be two forms of despair properly so called. If the human self had constituted itself, there could be a question only of one form, that of not willing to be one's self, of willing to get rid of oneself, but there would be no question of despairingly willing to be oneself. This formula is the expression for the total dependence of the relation (the self namely), the expression for the fact that the self cannot of itself attain and remain in equilibrium and rest by itself, but only by relating itself to that Power which constituted the whole relation.  

Auden takes the condition of "despairingly willing to be oneself" first, considering it to be the more common malady. He makes Cupid, Caliban's mirror image, its winged genius. The perilous affection in this case is seductive nostalgia for the "specific Eden which your memory necessarily but falsely conceives of as the ultimately liberal condition, which in point of fact you have never known." The various pleaders all yearn to be free of "any and every anxious possibility," that is, to deliver themselves to self-defined necessity. The particular atmosphere and trappings of the childhood "green kingdom" is identified as home, the self's final Real Right Place. Home is where the senses are indulged by a munificent Nature, anxiety is exiled, romanticizing memories come to roost, and "nothing is at stake." What Cupid can offer is its mirror image, a veritable hell. Here, where the self is "the only subject," recollected otherness is reduced to a bare extension of personal stasis. The landscape has the typicality and poverty of a prehistoric set in which action is merely
simulated. All occurrence is "tautological repetition" because the here and now is final, yielding nothing beyond the primary facts of spatial arrangement. The self has despairingly willed to determine its own meaning, and has been granted its wish. Having wanted so desperately to "attain and remain in equilibrium and rest by itself" (Kierkegaard), "your existence is indeed free at last to choose its own meaning, that is, to plunge headlong into despair and fall through silence fathomless and dry, all fact your single drop, all value your pure alas."22 Basically, the self is incapable of coming to rest in any ne plus ultra of its own devising. It can neither conjure nor imagine a haven of absolute contentment, because it is a relation whose meaning resides beyond its self-relatedness.

Caliban next turns to that "smaller but doubtless finer group" who despairingly will not to be themselves. They have had their taste of success and found that after all personal achievement is not a final good. The world is populated by hopeless cases who burn themselves and set the forests ablaze with the Promethean contribution. So the elite seek release from "the terrible mess [of] this particularized life," wanting to be assumed into a state of essential being that is the true Universe, the impersonal City of God,

that Heaven of the Really General Case where, tortured no longer by three dimensions and immune from temporal vertigo, Life turns into Light, absorbed for good into the permanently stationary, completely self-sufficient, absolutely reasonable One.
But what do these pleaders really ask for, and what is within their capacity to gain? Ariel the reflective Angel can deposit them in a realm of possibility without necessity, but the resulting loss of actuality is dreadful. Whereas those who despairingly will to be themselves are seriously limited by their loss of possibility, these who despairingly will not to be themselves are lost in possibility. Ariel is "obliged by the terms of His contract to gratify this other request of yours, the wish for freedom to transcend any condition, for direct unentailed power without any, however secretly immanent, obligation to inherit or transmit." In opposition to the other nightmare heaven, this "allegorical landscape" lacks any primary significance. Open-ended possibility here makes for "a state of perpetual emergency and everlasting improvisation." Missing is the necessity which allows possibility a chance of meaning. In such a domain nothing is more than contingent, hence action of all sorts is senseless. Again, the state of despair Auden so brilliantly dramatizes is taken from Kierkegaard's The Sickness unto Death:

Now if possibility outruns necessity, the self runs away from itself, so that it has no necessity whereto it is bound to return -- then this is the despair of possibility. The self becomes an abstract possibility which tries itself out with floundering in the possible, but does not budge from the spot, nor get to any spot, for precisely the necessary is the spot; to become oneself is precisely a movement at the spot. To become is a movement from the spot, but to become oneself is a movement at the spot.23

Lost in rampant possibility is a sense of the genuine,
identity, and the want impels mercurial selves upon an ever-intensified search for the missing something: "there are as many faiths as there are searchers, and clues can be found behind every clock, under every stone, and in every hollow tree to support all of them." Regarding the self caught up in such an accelerating subjunctive mood, Kierkegaard has this to say:

At the instant something appears possible, and then a new possibility makes its appearance, at last this phantasmagoria moves so rapidly that it is as if everything were possible -- and this is precisely the last moment, when the individual becomes for himself a mirage. 24

But the stampede away from the necessary eventuates in a headlong dash against the hardness of that necessity, the refusal of its actualizing support inevitably leading to its solid proof against runaway selves: 25

And from this nightmare of public solitude, this everlasting Not Yet, what relief have you but in an ever giddier collective gallop, . . . . what goal but the Black Stone on which the bones are cracked, for only there in its cry of agony can your existence find at last an unequivocal meaning and your refusal to be yourself become a serious despair, the love nothing, the fear all?

Caliban half hopes that he has had "the futile honor of addressing the blind and the deaf," since the "open eye and attentive ear" are also mirrors of a kind, translating reproach and prohibition to the self's advantage. He feels "something of the serio-comic embarrassment of the dedicated dramatist" who needs to strike a nearly impossible balance
between Romantic conviction and naturalistic presentation. To err on either side is to diminish the implicating effect of the pressing discrepancy. As if in response to the Bronte query at poem's start, Caliban proposes not only justification but an imperative for the devoted scribe:

And, ultimately, what other aim and justification has he, what else exactly is the artistic gift which he is forbidden to hide, if not to make you Unforgettable conscious of the ungarnished offended gap between what you so Questionably are and what you are commanded without any question to become?

But the audience's awareness of the gap is insufficient as long as the circuit of self-interest remains closed. If the artist's looking glass is used as a vanity mirror "for the regarding of your defects," the intended opening-out of aesthetic consciousness is thwarted. Some unaccountable factor beyond authorial control may be required to jar the rapt self out of its critical narcissism. The absorption which the successful work embodies and engenders almost needs to be undermined by a dispelling effect that shifts the burden of seeing and enacting upon the turned-out audience.

Caliban's image for the drama at large reflects Auden's growing interest in opera at this period of his life. The "ungarnished offended gap" is likened to "the greatest grandest opera rendered by a very provincial touring company indeed." While the performance is lousy, the authority of the work's significance is redoubtable. Shakespeare stages
a comic understanding of the disparity between performance and contextual import in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where Bottom and his fellow amateur representers are given depth in all their ungainliness by merit of the dimensionality which they naively convey. The production of *Pyramus and Thisby* is laughable but suggestive of bottomless "glad meaning" (Gonzalo). Caliban pictures a more direly existential deep to lead the audience to "contrition and surrender." Once the life-production is finished, an utter failure, and the bottom drops out most vertiginously, there is only the lone self trembling above "the unabiding void." Its resources fail it because they were not independent faculties after all but provisional endowments. The self's dependence as a relation is made manifest:

It is at this moment that for the first time in our lives we hear, not the sounds which, as born actors, we have hitherto condescended to use as an excellent vehicle for displaying our personalities and looks, but the real Word which is our only *raison d'être*.

The liberality of grace comically (and ironically) suggested in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is here invoked conclusively:

Our shame, our fear, our incorrigible staginess, all wish and no resolve, are still, and more intensely than ever, all we have: only now it is not in spite of them but with them that we are blessed by that Wholly Other Life from which we are separated by an essential emphatic gulf of which our contrived fissures of mirror and proscenium arch -- we understand them at last -- are feebly figurative signs, so that all our meanings are reversed and it is precisely in its negative image of Judgment that we can positively envisage Mercy.
The language of reversal and bridged separation which Auden resorts to is that of conversational experience. For the sake of rhetorical cogency he conducts his transactions with systematic flair, running the risk of reductive achievement.

Following Caliban's long-winded public discourse, Ariel addresses a closing private plea to his earthbound complement. As an orphic, disengaged spirit, Ariel depends upon the generative difference between his sphere of existence and Caliban's: "Elegance, art, fascination,/Fascinated by/ Drab mortality." Possibly his plea counterbalances the urge to self-surrender voiced by Caliban. Ariel the spirit of lyric translation drags his light feet at the prospect of final divorce from the grounded flesh he requires. He thrives on the sadness and yearning of human want: "I will sing if you will cry." The symbiotic relation between mind and flesh can lead the self to seek an independent state of equilibrium. But Auden makes Ariel similar to Prospero in that the spirit acknowledges the delusive capacity of the self as a relation to itself. Both Ariel and Caliban

Can, alas, foretell,<n
When our falsehoods are divided,<n
What we become,<n
One evaporating sigh

Whether the final "I" echoed by the Prompter signifies despairing or reconstituted identity is indeterminable.
In the first extended critical evaluation of Auden's work, Richard Hoggart leveled this criticism at The Sea and the Mirror:

So obviously has Auden enjoyed all this highly conscious artistry that one is left wondering (as after reading the "Quest", though now in a greater degree) whether the manner is not, for a believer, in some ways a betrayal of the matter, whether Auden has not been so interested in the exercise of his skill that he has not sufficiently hoped, as Caliban says any "dedicated" artist must, that "some unfortunate mishap will intervene to ruin his effect."27

In comparison with the relatively effacing tones of Eliot's Four Quartets, The Sea and the Mirror does appear aesthetically girded. However, Auden clearly realizes that as a gifted poet he is in the process of reconciling his aesthetic delight with his seriously undertaken spiritual journey. The poem's admonitions are directed as much at himself as at his reading public. His transitional stance may seem straddling and inconsistent because he himself forces the crisis in severe terms. Unlike The Tempest, The Sea and the Mirror is a mid-life work, unsuited for valedictory unassertiveness. Writing in the latter days of Auden's career, Justin Replogle observes that after The Sea and the Mirror "all Auden's best comic poems carry Caliban's message about Art and life, but their speakers, with this message securely embedded in their style, are free to talk about whatever they wish."28 And in general the talk of Auden's later poems is reconciled and accommodating, as if a scribe might find his special place in a parabolic world.
Notes to Chapter Six


5 Reviewing the Swenson and Lowrie translation of Kierkegaard's Either/Or, Auden has this to say about religious faith: "The Or which, by the mouth of Judge Williams, Kierkegaard offers to the Either of aesthetic despair is fidelity to a single choice, which does not mean that the choice is made once and for all, but that it is continually rechosen at each successive moment, so that one's career becomes a vocation, and one's love a marriage." See "A Preface to Kierkegaard," The New Republic CX, May 1944, p. 684.

6 The offhand tone of the Stage Manager's remark evinces a strategy discussed by Kierkegaard in The Sickness unto Death (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 158: "All immediacy, in spite of its illusory peace and tranquillity, is dread, and hence, quite consistently, it is dread of nothing; one cannot make immediacy so anxious by the most horrifying description of the most dreadful something, as by a crafty, apparently casual half word about an unknown peril which is thrown out with the surely calculated aim of reflection; yea, one can put immediacy most in dread by slyly imputing to it knowledge of the matter referred to."

7 Auden, "Balaam and His Ass," p. 129.
8 In "Balaam and His Ass," pp. 133-34, Auden distinguishes between the free play of imagination as an end in itself and the application of imaginative play in self-actualization: "If I allow it to be the master and play exactly as it likes, then I shall remain in a dreamlike state of imagining everything I might become, without getting round to ever becoming anything. But, once imagination has done its work for me, to the degree that, with its help, I have become what I should become, imagination has a right to demand its freedom to play without any limitations."


10 Greenberg, p. 127.

11 Critics who take Antonio at his word tend to read his claim allegorically. For example, in A Reader's Guide to W. H. Auden (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1970), pp. 159-60, John Fuller sees Art, as represented by Prospero, sustained in its efforts to encompass the disorderly and incomprehensible in man's condition and behavior (Antonio). He further ventures that Art, through its seclusion, brings about the errors it takes upon itself to heal, but here he may be allegorizing somewhat too strictly.


14 Greenberg, p. 132.

15 The risk-taking applauded in this section could just as well be that of the master whose acrobatic sentences Auden fondly mimics. Henry James' later style in particular elicits admiring exclamations from critics, who enjoy describing his virtuoso performance. Cf. Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 11: "To what Keatonian risks did James not commit himself, risks of immobilization in mid-chaos, as he essayed for the thousandth time yet one more construction; and with
what wit each impasse becomes a node, as the arrested line strikes out of it in an unforeseeable direction, seeking new points of suspension!"


17 This concern of Auden's to implicate himself as well as others in his systematic overview is raised by Stephen Spender in "W. H. Auden and His Poetry," Atlantic Monthly July 1953, p. 78: "His problem has always been to shift the center of his dogmatic ways of regarding experience from himself to some objective authority, so that he himself becomes a part of what is judged, and not just the center of his own system."

18 Edward Callan relates the first two parts of "Caliban to the Audience" as follows: "Caliban reminds any poets present that they must reconcile the demands of Ariel's world with those of the real world despite the audience's belief -- which the poet is in danger of sharing -- in the autonomous spheres of art and reality." See Auden: A Carnival of Intellect (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 199-200.


20 Kierkegaard, pp. 146-47.

21 Here we are presented with a reflection of Alonso's imaged plunge in The Tempest.

22 Auden seems to be depicting what Kierkegaard means by "the sickness unto death" (p. 151): "Despair is the disconsolateness of not being able to die. It is in the last sense that despair is the sickness unto death, this agonizing contradiction, this sickness in the self, everlastingly to die, to die and yet not to die, to die the death."

23 Kierkegaard, p. 169.
24 Kierkegaard, p. 169.

25 The closing vision of this passage may have been influenced by the gospel account (Lk. 20:17-18) of Christ's figurative self-presentation: "But he looked hard at them and said, 'Then what does this text in the scriptures mean: It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone? Anyone who falls on that stone will be dashed to pieces; anyone it falls on will be crushed'."

26 The alternative routes which Auden thinks the self as first person can take are indicated in For the Time Being. On the one hand, "As long as the self can say 'I', it is impossible not to rebel"; on the other hand, "Love's possibilities of realization/ Require an Otherness that can say I." See Collected Longer Poems, pp. 138, 176.


POSTSCRIPT

Tempest and Tarot

The Tempest attracts and arranges primary motifs like metal filings in a magnetic field. Or, taking a less Tempest-centered view, we might say that it enters into close and shifting relations with much that is basic and protean in Western thought and imagination. In The Waste Land T. S. Eliot draws on this Romance's widespread affinities to accent the fragmentary nature of modern existence as well as to suggest that works like The Tempest may provide a kind of map for reintegration. He recognizes an emblematic quality in The Tempest which invites the arrangements of associative consciousness.

Auden's Prospero wonders whether Ferdinand will "be as fond of a Miranda/ Familiar as a stocking." In "A Game of Chess" Eliot's nameless golden boy and girl who have come to modern domestic dust mark time enduring each other's company. The daily routine is civilized and stifling. As for the reputed better things in life, like great literature, domestication has left only tags which join the ranks of catchy phrases long on style and short on significance:

I remember
Those are pearls that were his eyes
(125-26)

Shakespeare the national resource may have little relevance.
to the lives of those who daily trudge through the Unreal City that was once his playing ground, but his name appeal is still strong, and can arouse impressions of cultured enjoyment:

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag
It's so elegant
So intelligent

(128-30)

Perhaps the Shakespeherian Rag is wound up on the gramophone of the bored typist whose young man carbuncular, having got what he came for, has recently departed. Out of the window

'This music crept by me upon the waters'
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.

(257-58)

The figure at waterside (shore, canal, Thames), sitting, fishing, consociates the Psalmist with the Fisher King and Ferdinand (11.182, 189-92). He seems to expect no catch, no enchantment to raise what is sunk, no charm to distract him from the plainness of his world's disrepair. Upon the advent of a storm probably more surprising than that at the poem's start (11.8-10), however, misgivings jog the anomie:

Shall I at least set my lands in order?

(426)

What the future holds may be in the cards, but they can be so open to interpretation as to secrete what they reveal (like parable). Madame Sosostris, "known to be the wisest woman in Europe," suffers from a bad cold, and so performs
an abbreviated reading:

Here, said she,
Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,
(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)
Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,
The lady of situations.
Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,
And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,
Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,
Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find
The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.
I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.
Thank you.

(46-57)

Eliot makes free with the composition of the tarot pack,
mixing genuine and poetically forged cards. That he invents
an Arcanum depicting a drowned sailor and associates it with
Ariel's song to a bereaved Ferdinand is not surprising. In
doing so he recapitulates The Tempest's dialectic crossing
of elemental terms. Madame Sosostris does not find The
Hanged Man, so conversely warns against the alternate fate.
The hanged/drowned man figures the double bind in which
middle man finds himself, with release somehow originating
from the heart of the crux. Both Shakespeare and Eliot
(Auden also) tend toward a conception of human existence
which emphasizes its historic relation to paradox. What
Eliot glances at in The Waste Land is the emblematic quality
of The Tempest as hermetic drama.

Near the close of The Castle of Crossed Destinies Italo
Calvino weaves through Hamlet, King Lear, and Macbeth, using
tarot cards as guiding pictorial paradigms. This exercise
may be as much a reflection of his own narrative ingenuity.
as of the interrelations between the three tragedies, but study of the deep structures of Shakespearean drama does suggest that such an imaginative approach might be warranted. To my mind The Tempest is a work whose diverse narrative affiliations and archetypal aspects justify recourse to the popularly derived emblems of the tarot pack. I do not mean to imply that Shakespeare was acquainted with tarots. But in The Tempest he seems to have achieved a dramatic distillation of the European consciousness at a time when it was reviewing its medieval legacy of an integrated world view in the light of an expanded encounter with that world's plenitude and strangeness. Let us now embark upon an open-ended survey of Shakespeare's Janus-like dramatic coda, using the Major Arcana or Trumps of the tarot deck as an heuristic aid and guide to discussion.

Prospero combines several of the tarot designations in his person. He is the Juggler or Magician (I), the master of a subtle isle, engaged in a project of human alchemy. In special circumstances of his own devising human mediacy might be understood as an achieved relatedness buoyed by supernatural aspiration. Although his public bearing is not self-critical, awareness that Prospero strives to overcome faulty personal inclinations communicates itself just the same. He has had to counter a strong impulse toward insulation, the urge to set himself apart from and above common humanity. As the Duke of Milan he became an aesthetic Hermit (IX), for whom a private library was
dukedom large enough. Forced out of his proud Tower (XVI), he fell into a world of harsh exposure, and came to an island that could have sheltered his dream of control for the rest of his days. But intimations of mortality and concern for the next generation coming of age have led him to a pivotal Right Time for the high conjuring that is actually a movement of resignation.

Bringing the young persons together, Prospero momentarily plays an attendant High Priest (V) to goddess Miranda. This paragon of chaste fertility has been cultivated to renew the quality of humanity's stock. If Prospero, like Sarastro in The Magic Flute, is the paternal hierophant overseeing the encounter of complementary virtues, it is not difficult to identify the Tempest version of Astarte, Queen of the Night. The High Priestess (II), evil mother, has been buried in the past, that the wondrous daughter might alone embody the female principle. In order the better to emphasize his magic as white, Prospero stresses the blackness of Sycorax's sorcery. He may share certain traits with Medea and Circe, but their evil aspects are incarnated in the reviled witch. While her reign has been succeeded by that of the conscientious magus, her coupling with the Devil (XV) has preserved her influence. Caliban the offspring lays hereditary claim to the isle. Auden suggests that Sycorax is a grotesqued Venus, in which case the repressive father justifies his strictness by exaggerating the unnaturalness of passionate urges. According to Robert
Graves (The White Goddess, pp. 476-77), the displacement reveals Shakespeare's need to dethrone the supreme White Goddess who has haunted his imaginative career. Whatever explanation for the divorce of mixed qualities along hereditary lines may seem probable, both ruling father and mother are superseded by the prospective union of a new Emperor (IV) and Empress (III). The future King and Queen of the combined city-states play a game of chess in which "a score of kingdoms" (V.i.173) are love's tribute.

For his project to succeed, the magus claims that he must court the influence of a "most auspicious star" (I.ii.182). Neo-Platonism blends with Christian thought to make for mixed perspectives on the relation between the Stars (XVII) and human fortune. In its fallen state humanity is susceptible to the shifts and crossings of astral influence. Yet a worthy theurgist might extend his involvement with the ranked powers of the universe so far as to exploit starry auspices. Whether such dealing signifies self-enhancement bordering on spiritual trespass and hubris, or the lawful partaking of divine favor channelled through the created hierarchy, is an ambiguity Shakespeare keeps sufficiently current in The Tempest. Conjuration with the power of the Moon (XVIII), however, tends to connote dark purposes. More often than not the lunar effect is adverse, spellbinding and disruptive. In a fanciful but recriminatory mood, Gonzalo claims that Antonio and Sebastian would lift the moon out of its sphere if given the opportunity; Sebastian retorts that
they would use it as a lantern (II.i.177-80). The combination of trivializing and grasping qualities in the two gentlemen shows them to be disregardful of human proportions. Prospero later comments that Sycorax "could control the moon, make flows and ebbs" (V.i.270). The moral parallel is finely drawn: Antonio has exerted a tidal influence over Sebastian's fluid nature (II.i.216-23), to the end that insurgent waters nearly drown sleeping earth. Caliban and his fellow Sea-men also envision a new order, one based on drowned wits, to be misruled by the man out of the moon himself.

Even though Prospero has masterminded the original disruption of degree and observance, his intent is to effect the reemergence of a providential sense of existence from tempestuous activity (or, as Auden might have it, to elicit the necessary in the possible). The Hanged Man (XII), suspended topsy-turvy, could serve as an emblem for the untuned degree among things: "What! I say,/ My foot my tutor?" (I.ii.471-72). This figure suggests a sustained fall in its hanged position, as if the plunging drowned man were included in its representation. Is the fall sustained in the sense that humanity can only suffer the consequences of its disorderliness from generation to generation, or sustained in the sense of preservation from the full consequences of divergence? If strict Justice (VIII) were to be exacted, mankind would be left to hang and drown itself, as Ariel the Harpy chides the "men of sin." Auden's
Caliban publicly reflects upon the double-sighted understanding which perceives Justice under the aspect of Mercy (to which the *Tempest* Prospero appeals *in extremis*). He goes so far as to invoke the Word, upon Whose directive for prayer the closing couplet of *The Tempest* is based. While his Romance is a secular drama, Shakespeare exploits its dialectic interchanges to raise the seemingly incidental conceit that a particular man "born to be hanged" (I.i.32-33) might be a guarantor for the drowning-debts of all others on board. And while the middle man Boatswain is a comic rough-and-ready figure, the comedy which Shakespeare seems drawn toward depends upon the crucial paradox of a solely sufficient Mediator.

The cultivated quality gracing the lives of those who live in accordance with their human placement is Temperance (XIV). Its value is mainly implied within the design of Prospero's moral landscaping. In the betrothal masque, however, Prospero indulges his dialectic fancy to give temperate existence an ideal setting. True Love (VI) is celebrated between pure sky and fertile ground, where neither Cupid nor Venus is welcome (contrary to the tarot depiction). Cupid's vulgar cousin Caliban, a bundle of instinctive passions, is more emphatically a *persona non grata*, but as Auden humorously figures, he cannot be stopped from crashing the Muse's perfect party. Prospero represses knowledge of all the disturbingly natural claims which Caliban represents in order to stage his abstract vision;
the exertive psychic action results in a sudden, strong
reaction. The magus has used Force (XI) to subdue the
creatureliness which will not be sublimated. In turn he is
subject to a beating pulse which indicates the stress of his
mastery. When the green oasis vanishes, its conjurer
consigns all that he cannot comprehend to centrifugal
evaporation.

Even though Prospero excoriates Caliban as a spawn of the
Devil (XV), the intrusion which provokes his outburst is not
simply that of a rebellious slave. Rather, the persistence
of time and its reservoir of anxieties flows in upon him.
Two cards taken together, the Sun (XIX) and the Chariot
(VII), illustrate this scene of shattered mental barricades.
In The Tempest the sun is obscured by cloud cover; its power
to engender life out of the earth has already been worked up
in The Winter's Tale. Caliban wishes that its power of
infectious suction would cause Prospero to become disease-
ridden (II.ii.1-3). What the sun mainly evidences, however,
is the constant passage of time, which bears down upon
personal evasion or forgetfulness like a swift chariot. The
shape in the back of Prospero's mind is a declining arc, the
course traced by the sun from early afternoon until day's
end. While the summoning of life enjoyed as a winterless
zenith may be an innocent enough gesture, it also epitomizes
Prospero's desire for withdrawal and transcendence. Once
again he is expelled from his Tower (XVI), and in a psychic
chain reaction sweeps all towers, palaces, temples, and
their ground toward non-existence.

The personal significance of the downward arc for Prospero is its reminder of mortality. He must complete his project by sunset, and prepare himself for his own descent into the earth. In *The Tempest* attitudes toward Death (XIII) reflect the possibilities of the self's orientation. At the negative end of the scale there is Antonio, for whom death is a bad turn done the self by worthless others (I.i.55), or an expedient means of self-advancement. Stephano would like to think that death discharges all debts, but his bluff is called through scares and bodily pinches. Alonso becomes fixated upon loss and desires to deliver himself to inanimate blankness, but is reprieved by Prospero's humanizing action on him. Conversely, Miranda and Ferdinand are temporarily absorbed in the reaches of life which surpass subjective experience of loss. For Caliban, death is a corollary of earthiness; although he reveals subconscious longings for a skyey alternative, he simply cries for a donation from above. Yet the weave of sleep, dream, and waking which associates Caliban's visionary modulation with that of his master qualifies death in a context of interchanges.

Following through the arcing motion, we derive a circle, which is represented in the tarot pack by the Wheel of Fortune (X). Prospero speaks of consolidating energies at the height of his Fortune (I.ii.178-84), having long borne
the turns of misfortune as providential preparation. His suggestive opposite, Antonio, is given the memorable words about seizure of the present moment, however (II.i.245-48). More largely, the Wheel draws forth the figure of Caliban, who represents the embodiment and atavism which civilized, ascending humanity must acknowledge even as it struggles to wrest itself into a more advanced stage of human development. As Italo Calvino notes of the tenth trump in the Marseilles pack, its beastly riders suggest an evolutionary wheel. If this card is placed between those of the World (XXI) and the Last Judgment (XX), a collective consciousness of interwaved ascent and stratification as a prologue to some strange day seems to emerge.

He has only to conclude the great turn of The Wheel in which animal life evolves and in which you can never say this is the top and this is the bottom, or the even longer turn which passes through decay, the descent to the center of the earth in the deposits of the elements, the awaiting of the cataclysms that shuffle the tarot pack and bring the buried strata to the surface, as in the Arcanum of the final earthquake.

(The Castle of Crossed Destinies, pp. 62-63)

Browning finds in Caliban a lively vehicle for multidirectional spiritual satire; that Browning's own struggle to accommodate religious revelation and contemporary empirical discovery is shadowed in this portrait attests to the Romantic elementariness and projection of The Tempest's dialectic arrangements. As for a cataclysmic day when graves open, we recollect Prospero's ultimate claim in his divestiture speech (V.i.48-50). Is he
carried away by his rhetoric, or could he swear that he actually has raised the dead? Eschatology may be beyond the ken of this particular dramatic containment, but one feels a peripheral pressure sustaining concern for whatever significance is darkly reflected between the depths of sky and earth.

Do such long-standing concepts as a Wheel of Fortune and a Last Judgment warrant more than an interest in their past relevance? Can we still feel that there is something in the cards which concerns us as sophisticated descendants of long-rotted, quaint-minded ancestors? Perhaps we should consult what may be the most sophisticated novel of our time. Toward the end of *Gravity's Rainbow* young Gottfried kneels before a crazed Nazi officer, Colonel Weissmann (white man), also known as Blicero, in a reenactment of the Hansel and Wicked Witch tale. Weissmann plans to bleach the masochistically passive Gottfried into an ultrawhite state of life-in-death by launching him inside a custom-made V-2 rocket. "This ascent will be betrayed to Gravity" (758). Or the Wheel keeps rotating, as humanity's astral aspirations are countered by the downward turn which seems to prescribe primary allegiance to Death (XIII). Gottfried before Blicero at this crux emblazmatizes "generation after generation of men in love with pain and passivity . . . willing to have life defined for them by men whose only talent is for death" (747). Like Eliot, Pynchon deals a tarot trump not to be found in the standard deck (724):
It all poises here. Passageways of routine, still cogent enough, still herding us through time . . . the iron rockets waiting outside . . . the birth-scream of the latest spring torn across rainy miles of Saxony, route-sides littered with last envelopes, stripped gears, seized bearings, rotted socks and skivvies fragrant now with fungus and mud. If there is still hope for Gottfried here in this wind-beat moment, then there is hope elsewhere. The scene itself must be read as a card: what is to come. Whatever has happened since to the figures in it (roughly drawn in soiled white, army gray, spare as a sketch on a ruined wall) it is preserved, though it has no name, and, like the Fool, no agreed assignment in the deck.

Shakespeare's aspiring man renounces his magic in favor of a more becoming admission of limits, human kindness on a common level, and preparedness for death. His resignation is somewhat more formally than passionately undertaken because Shakespeare wishes to dramatize the difficulties and nuances of self-reorientation. Pynchon on the other hand sends up a warning flare to spot the strain of men whose drive for control is insatiable, whose fear of personal extinction leads them to drastic lengths of unkindness, and whose dreams of escape from the natural cycle threaten to drag the chain of life down into a slough of man-made detritus.

While Ariel breaks open a closed scene in the guise of an apocalyptic angel (a rank of being included in Pynchon's Romantic speculation), the trump of Judgment (XX) is not as relevant to The Tempest as that of the World (XXI). There is a simplicity to Shakespeare's world-approach in this play which yet comprehends the movement of human knowledge and the development of current identity. Between the up and the
down, the inner and the outer reaches, is poised the special sojourner for whom the world is a site and incentive for historical unravelling. On the one hand that world is a microcosm for the encompassing human mind. Darting Ariel the capable spirit cleaves to our thoughts when we feel ourselves to be masters of the island. In such a state a drunken butler and jester may pilfer across hemispheres, or a prince and princess stake a score of kingdoms on a game of chess, or a brace of mocking lords image another's sureness as a making of islands out of apple seeds. Prospero himself conjures an ideal small world conforming to his belief in human middleness, but the very imbalance of the mental effort impels him toward the antithetical world view. This matched perspective envisions a macrocosm incommensurate with feeble human attempts to generate meaning and a sense of place. It remains beyond ordering vision and the scope of human want. Such a macrocosm is indicated by the sea into which Prospero sheds tears, the mundus of impossible distances which a lifetime of travel cannot cover, the great disappearing globe of the revels speech. What The Tempest bequeaths is a model of dialectic balance for middle earth dwellers whose capacity for anxiety is of a piece with the possibilities of their parabolic situation. Should humanity settle on other surfaces, or burrow beneath them, or hover above them, the precedent of The Tempest will most likely be realized anew.
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