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The Tempest explores different ways of telling stories. The recollection of memories, the status of "true" memory and the drive to tell one's own version of the past shape the form of the play, and the preoccupations of its protagonists. Remembering is a creative, socialising act, the nature of which is indicative of both the teller and the world which he or she inhabits. Ariel's phrasing, when he informs the shipwrecked survivors of the prime motivation behind the wreck of their ship, and the upset it has caused them, is explicitly derived from a concept of memory as a means of reconciling oneself with the past; and a device by which one may set the agenda for the future:

But remember

(For that's my business to you) that you three
 From Milan did supplant good Prospero,
 Exposed unto the sea, which hath requit it,
 Him and his innocent child; for which foul deed,
 The powers delaying, not forgetting, have
 Incensed the seas and shores – yea, all the creatures –
 Against your peace. (III.iii.68-75)

Ariel's command to remember, and the direct correlation he suggests between the passion of Prospero's memory and his powers of illusion, makes manifest that which has been apparent from our first encounter with the ruler of this enchanted island.

Undoubtedly, Shakespeare's late plays display a profound interest in the possibilities afforded by developments in theatrical devices. Shakespeare does not employ the notion of spectacle in these plays to test only the technical dexterity

available to stage increasingly complicated illusory effects in a convincing manner. Spectacle and visual effects are also used to colour notions of power and wisdom in the play. Theatrical trickery is devised as a paradigm for modes of authority and wisdom in the world of the play, and in the world of the theatre house. Both the characters in the plays and, at times, the audience are made to re-evaluate their understanding of that which constitutes truth. The plays investigate the correlation between fiction and reality, and test the claims of art to replace truth. To function successfully in the world of the late plays is to achieve a sophisticated understanding of the manipulation of illusion. This is, perhaps, most explicit in the extraordinary reappearance of Hermione in The Winter's Tale: as revelatory to the audience as it is to Leontes, who has been forced to suffer for his belief in his own fictions. However, Shakespeare's other play about the dangers of illusion, The Tempest, is also dependent upon an investigation into the nature of illusion and artistic rendition and the relation either has with accepted notions of truth. The boundaries between artistic renditions of truth and art as an illusion of truth become disturbingly blurred. In these plays remembering becomes an explicitly artistic act: memories are somehow intrinsically suspended in artistic representation.

In this play it seems that the creative and dramatic emphasis looks to subordinate the development of character to the systematic exposure of the nature of artistic industry: one may say the play constitutes a meta-theatrical experience. Indeed Anne Barton suggests that Shakespeare's primary concern in his late plays is the nature and mechanics of theatre; which may account for the obvious interest in theatrical ingenuity apparent in the late plays: "Over and over again, Shakespeare jettisons consistency of characterisation because he is more interested in the impersonal quality of a moment of dramatic time" (Barton 137).

The inclusion of the masque scene poses questions of theatrical presentation in a highly-wrought and highly-theatrical mode. By showcasing this almost surreal moment Shakespeare uses theatrical ingenuity as a self-reflexive constituent of a sustained investigation, through the very performance of the play, into the idea of

theatrical and artistic expression. The distinction between the concept of the theatrical presentation, and the mode in which it is investigated, become intrinsically linked and undifferentiated; exploring a type of theatre which is almost self-perpetuating in the way it asks questions about its own identification. Prospero's picture painting with his narrative is linked to his conjuring of visual awe-inspiring displays; the questions asked of the relationship between truth and narrative are implied in any artistic endeavour which seeks to balance the nature of its own machinery with that which it is trying to express.

Rather importantly with regard to The Tempest, the exploration of how theatre operates alerts us to the particular nature of the theatre in which Shakespeare was working. Often, critics are attracted by the possibility of viewing Shakespeare himself illuminated by the light of an image of Prospero as orchestrator of events.¹ However, this tendency to speak of Shakespeare's authorial intention is profoundly disrupted by our understanding of Jacobean playhouse practices. The idea of a designated author is anachronistic with regard to Shakespeare's theatre and, indeed, this may well be reflected in the nature of The Tempest. A more experimental (and perhaps exponential) picture of the development of a production is implied by the play's escalating interest in theatrical images and practices and talk of artistic rendition. We are, perhaps, able to delineate a vision of the Jacobean playhouse where Prospero, as anxious overseer, vies with alternative characters' enchanting ways of telling the history of the island (which he is trying to control) in a disturbing and highly political image of collaborative art.

It is apparent from the second scene, which involves the telling of various stories and histories, that in this play narratives are offered as a prologue or ground for action. Prospero's hour is one of story telling, not action, and his command to obey is in order that one may be open to a version of artistic enchantment:

The hour's now come;
The very minute bids thee ope thine ear.
Obey and be attentive. (I.ii.36-38)

As will become apparent from studying the methods of Prospero's storytelling, and the implications that it has for the action of the play, we can conclude that narrative vies with action as the driving dramatic force behind the movement of the play. This provokes consideration of the power of narrative to captivate. The narratives which make up the design of The Tempest constitute an exposure of the necessarily creative and subjective nature of memorial reconstruction. Much of The Tempest is concerned with particularising accounts of the past. The different versions of events presented in the play bind together to create a sphere which holds destabilising contraries within it. The heightened theatricality of The Tempest serves to designate this play as one which is very much aware of the demands which it simultaneously figures in the experience of its characters, and in the audience in the theatre. The experience of watching, or reading, The Tempest is one of exposure of the fictions behind apparent truths. The knowledge that there are different possible versions of the truth is an important element of the play as it struggles to negotiate these versions and their relative claims as "truthful" discourse.

The main action upon which the dynamics of the play largely revolve takes place before the play has begun. This sets a precedent that it will be preoccupied by retelling the events of the past in a creative act of remembrance. Prospero's first appearance is as a story teller. The play goes on to explore the importance of accepted *versions* of the past in the controlling of the present. It also poses the disturbing suggestion that there may only ever be versions of the past and that the concept of a consistent, empirical, unchanging 'truthful' constant is always elusive for the inhabitants of the island: a suggestion which begs to be considered in the wider sphere of social controls. The inhabitants of the theatre are invited to reflect upon their own assimilation of versions of events: whether that be through their presentation in the playhouse or from other sources such as the similarly

theatrical pose of the preacher at the pulpit - another great designator of cultural acceptance in Jacobean England. How one tells one's story becomes explicitly linked to the nature of one's power. We learn that Antonio, like Leontes, has committed the crime of believing his own illusion. It is Prospero's formulation that Antonio has "tricked his memory" which alerts us to the fundamental principle which governs the type of power operating within the play – the artistic control of the past is the most important factor in setting the parameters of truth in the present:

He being thus lorded,
 Not only with what my revenue yielded
 But what my power might else exact, like one
 Who, having into truth by telling of it,
 Made such a sinner of his memory
 To credit his own lie, he did believe
 He was indeed the duke, (I.ii.97-103)

It is interesting to note that the editors of the New Arden edition of The Tempest (Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan) gloss line 100 with: "Into is used here in the sense of 'unto' (Warburton) or 'against'. Antonio has sinned against the truth" (156). They imply, therefore, that the version of events we hear from Prospero has some prior claim to being a truthful account. This is certainly the impression which Prospero seeks to perpetuate through his emotional account of his life to his daughter Miranda. However, as we learn from the Prospero's experience of the destructive power of the enchanting story, fictions have the ability to alter fact:

Being once perfected how to grant suits,
 How to deny them, who t'advance and who
 To trash for overtopping, new created
 The creatures that were mine, I say, or changed'em,
 Or else new formed 'em; having both the key

Of officer and office, set all hearts i'th' state
 To what tune pleased his ear, (I.ii.79-85)

It is interesting to examine the image which Prospero employs here to illuminate the nature of his brother's power. The courting of creative practices, which facilitate Antonio to set the tune of the state, is reminiscent of a patron of the arts, and the power he holds to set the agenda for a political atmosphere. Dictators and monarchs alike are adept in their use of the arts as propaganda. The possibilities for hegemony afforded by their position of wealth and power injects a notion of distasteful cynicism at the inception of the artistic endeavour: the commentator is forced to negotiate a path between "genuine" artistic endeavour, and the political aspirations of the funding patron. The tendency among commentators (who, one must remember, are also susceptible to political slanting) then, is to "diagnose" and politically label some art as, for example, "Communist art," fixing it as an "other" to "liberally" produced art. The destabilising concept which The Tempest provokes is that with the progression of exploration of artistic presentation comes the realisation that it is increasingly difficult to make a distinction between "genuine" and "agenda-driven" artistry. Rather, the play is alert to the knowledge that the consolidation of power involves an increasing sophistication in the manipulation of illusion and artistic rendition. Ironically, it would seem that Prospero has learnt from his usurping brother the most effective means of retaining political control: namely the close regulation of the interpretation and expression of events. 2

The early part of the play depicts Prospero as a compulsive story teller. This may be, in part, because he has learnt from Antonio that it is selling fictions which secures power. However, his particular narrative account of events in his past suggest many more motivations and preoccupations, resulting from his particular circumstances. Antonio's clever manipulation of identity through theatrical ingenuity in Milan does not result merely in the loss of Prospero's dukedom. Antonio has sought to usurp Prospero in the telling of the story of Milanese rule. As Prospero points out, he "like one / Who, having into truth by telling of it"

(I.ii.99-100) has looked to change the remembered past of the city. In effect, we can see that Antonio's manipulation and jurisdiction causes Prospero to be "left out" of the promoted annals of Milan and therefore to be cheated by official history.

In the teeth of this particular type of usurpation, whereby Prospero is made "invisible" through the silencing of his political voice, his line of protest is in the form of the dramatic telling of his own story; interestingly, Miranda then comments that "Your tale, sir, would cure deafness" (I.ii.106) in implied confirmation of Prospero's earlier silencing. In this Prospero is seen to be suffering the sort of "historical punishment" meted out to exiles who are simultaneously pushed out of their country's physical and historical confines. Prospero, in exile from his home country, must reclaim his past in order that he may gain recognition in the present. The study of the troubled recollection of lives in traumatic political situations such as the former Soviet Union is illuminating in understanding Prospero specifically as an exile and as a victim of history. Prospero's storytelling is anguished, characterised by the complex syntax of a disturbed narrator. His telling is a very active "re-living." This is, most comprehensively a re-experiencing of the past – suggesting the possibility even that the remembrance is a more vivid experience than the actual living. Indeed during the account Miranda comments that her cries are provoked by the recounting of her suffering.

Similarly recounting causes agitation for Prospero in the present.

My brother and thy uncle, called Antonio –
 I pray thee mark me, that a brother should
 Be so perfidious - he, whom next thyself
 Of all the world I loved, and to him put
 The manage of my state, as at that time
 Through all the signories it was the first,
 And Prospero the prime Duke being so reputed

In dignity, and for the liberal arts
 Without a parallel; those being all my study,
 The government I cast upon my brother
 And to my state grew stranger, being transported
 And rapt in secret studies. (I.ii.66-77)

The awkward nature of Prospero's telling, the repeated deferment of the verb relating to his mistake suggests the intensity of his engagement with the events of the past and the difficulty of recollection is clearly reflected in the nature of his narrative. Vieda Skultans infers from her study of the narratives of those in post-Soviet Latvia that those who have experienced troubling upheaval are particularly anxious to create some sense of order in their personal histories: "The narrator seeks to bestow a unity of experience upon the narrated life... Metaphor attributes an underlying unity to life and in doing so binds together past and present" (Skultans 24, 30).

This preoccupation is evident in Prospero's speech in his retrospective alignment of disruptive, discontinuous events with a common thread of his own dedication to his studies. Prospero's repeated reference to his love of study and his identification as a scholar looks to synthesise his past and present situations through a sense of continuation and steadiness: retrospectively seeking to impart some sense of unity in his personal history. Prospero is, in effect, re-engaging in the past in a vital way, creating a possible new mode of being: a self which straddles the plane of the present and the past, causing his narrative to be underpinned by a tense and dramatic dialectic. This re-telling renders the past as a coherent assimilation of significant moments, a creative selective understanding of the past affording the narrator a sense of control over his personal history. The narrator posits himself as a defining part of his own drama, thus avoiding his potential role as passive victim of a series of inevitabilities. These moments of intensity explode the concept of contingency in the name of a "realistic" expression of the past, which is more true to the view of history as it appears in the imagination.

Prospero's preoccupation with the events of the past suggests that, for him, the past must be resolved in the present in order that he may forge an identity for himself and "set the record straight." It is pertinent to note that before he begins his narrative Prospero prepares himself by instructing Miranda to "pluck my magic garment from me. So, Lie there my art" (I.ii.23-25) thus designating his narrative as an expression of direct truth, free from his usual distancing devices of artistry or slaves: this is to be an unmediated expression of Prospero's experiences. He attempts to naturalise his chosen form of expression, as though storytelling, in its simplicity, is somehow free from the muddying and corrupting influences of more consciously artistic modes. However, it is clear that narrative is as subject to the framing influence of present purposes as any other artistic endeavour: narrative memories are necessarily a creative act which seek to confer significance on an otherwise arbitrary series of past events.

Here a little further,
 And then I'll bring thee to the present business
 Which now's upon's, without the which this story
 Were most impertinent. (I.ii.135-138)

Skultans notes that those who have been the victims of full scale state perpetrated violence find their stories difficult to articulate in the context of hostility; they seek to replace their experiences with an overreaching wider historical narrative. Narrating one's life, however, affords the victim a creative re-experiencing of the past which proves, in some way, satisfactory by a number of criteria. She suggests that:

the narrator imposes a design on her life and this offers scope for creativity. The victims of history may reverse their status and devise strategies for wresting personal victories, however small, from history. (Skultans 22)

Remembering is an exercise in self definition, a means of creating a history for oneself. To express that memory is to subject it to the inescapable influence of personal selection. One seeks to invest one's past with some recognition of its role in the creation of one's present status. This view of the past as intrinsic to the present is influenced by a Freudian model of revelation, discovery and past/present interrelation. Psychoanalytic study invests in a notion of "uncovering" of hitherto silenced influence from the childhood self to the adult one:

interpretations of memory seek to trace unconscious investment in images and experiences that become intrinsic to present understanding. Freud's thoughts on the working of memory is germane to the model of Prospero's shaping of his own memory for his present purpose. Freud's comparison of the personal enterprise with the "compiation" of a nation's history implies that political dimension to this act of creation which is particularly relevant in Prospero's experience:

the memories that [a man] has of his childhood correspond, as far as their origins and reliability are concerned, to the history of a nation's earliest days, which was compiled later and for tendentious reasons. (Freud 174)

Experience is accentuated in the remembering almost more so than in the experiencing. This is certainly a consideration which plays a part in The Tempest's understanding of the effect of memorial reconstruction:

Alack, for pity
I, not rememb'ring how I cried out then,
Will cry it o'er again. (I.ii.132-133)

Prospero's version of the events in Milan is, unsurprisingly considering his emphasised bookish nature, literary in style. His experience condemns him to the

role of victim in his own narrative - he is the loser in the usurpation of Milan. However, as Skultans notes "author and hero coexist more happily than author and victim. After all, western literary conventions stipulate that plots should have heroes" (Skultans xii) and accordingly, one may note that Prospero casts himself in the oxymoronic role of hermetic hero whose constancy is derived from his unending dedication to his books. In addition, Prospero frames his story by a series of references to benevolent guiding overseers:

O' a cherubin
 Thou wast that did preserve me. thou didst smile,
 Infused with a fortitude from heaven, (I.ii.152-154)
 By providence divine. (I.ii.159)
 Heavens thank you for't. (I.ii.175)
 By accident most strange, bountiful fortune
 (Now, my dear lady) hath mine enemies
 Brought to this shore; and by my prescience
 I find my zenith doth depend upon
 A most auspicious star, whose influence
 If now I cour not, but omit, my fortunes
 Will ever after droop. (I.ii.177-184)

He creates for himself a history which seems somehow pre-ordained, waiting to unfold: a history prefigured in past literary representations of sea-faring heroes guided by fate and rightful benevolence. Prospero seeks to create a literary identity for himself. One must consider how narratives, constructed around a nostalgic view of the past, are in some way related to literature of mourning. Both seem to evoke the anxious dialectic between the troubled present and the longed for past as lost-object. Similarly, both modes of discourse ask important questions about the use of art as a consoling force, and as a satisfactory means of incurring a lasting, fixed memory. Both function by seeking to create a memorial in art either for a lost self or a lost object.

The anxiety of the exile is a result of the knowledge that lived experience becomes faded with distance and time. The narrative of his exile, which constitutes his imaginative remembrance, becomes particularly precious to him. For the exile, remembering becomes the most assertive act he can perform upon his enforced distancing. Again, this links to the mourner who is anxious to "keep alive" the memory of the lost object and to preserve it from the decaying effect of time on memory: rather arrestingly the author acts as his own elegiser for his past self. Inherent in this act of artistic memorial is the socialising aspect of art: its ability to fulfil a desire of the artist's to have his memory apprehended, and thus to achieve some sort of confirmation of its validity. Prospero insists upon Miranda's attentiveness throughout his discourse, positing a series of implications between captivation and coherence and conferring a truth claim upon his history: the captivated audience confirms the coherence of the narration, which in turn implies that the narrative has a claim to be taken seriously. The anxious storyteller seeks validation of his version of events through its being accepted in a social forum. Further emphasising the social implications of storytelling Prospero's warning, through Ariel, that his memory has the will to punish and compensate for his past constitutes Prospero's insistence upon memory as an agent of change for the victim of history. In this The Tempest entertains the notion that Milan Kundera asserts in The Book of Laughter and Forgetting (a novel remarkable for its personal, intense description of the trauma and pain of enforced exile from one's home) that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting" (p. 4). Both Kundera's novel and Prospero's narrative in some way represent their authors' determination in the face of organised, dictated forgetting to set down their version of the past in art: an assertion of the survival of their identity in the face of the threat of being scrubbed out of the history of their countries. Remembering becomes directly related to identity.

It is interesting to note that Prospero's relationship with his remembering self grows tense and distressing in the later parts of the play. His repeated use of terms such as "my beating mind," "my old brain" suggests that his earlier narrative has

somehow created a fixed, alternative identity for himself, attached to his previous experiences. His old brain, perhaps, does not refer to his age in the present, but to an earlier self constructed in narrative. This "old" self proves disturbing in the present. Narrative simultaneously involves an intense engagement with the past and a distancing through literary frameworks; a vigorous re-living and a means of designating that self firmly in the past. Continual remembrance is also distressing, and Prospero's repeated requests suggest that the past should, perhaps, be left behind:

There, sir, stop.

Let us not burden our remembrances with
A heaviness that's gone. (V.i.198-200)

Sir, my liege,

Do not infest your mind with beating on
The strangeness of this business (V.i.245-7)

This seems to concur with the painful "double-pull" effected upon the exile: Luria's claim that it is far more debilitating always to remember than never to forget (Skultans 28).

It must be considered important that the events of The Tempest – the usurpation of the Dukedom - is a plot frequently used in historical or tragic plays in which it is seen as heralding widespread corruption and moral breakdown. However, the world of the Romance play presents a dynastic battle in almost purely aesthetic terms. Art is potent in these plays and thus The Tempest does not dramatise tyrants in direct combat. Rather, the usurpation which constitutes the imperative in this play is the extraordinary concept of the usurpation of rightful rule by artistic mimesis. Further complicating this essentially textual coup is the deferment of the action into the past of the play. Antonio has proved temporarily successful through his belief that, provided one is a good artist and is able to paint one's own pictures of the past, a fictionalised duke may become a real one. Antonio has importantly changed the course of history through his repeated telling

of a falsehood. This eventually becomes the accepted truth. This possibility becomes a hugely important factor in the subsequent understanding of power and authority as an artistic feat. As already discussed Antonio's former swapping of the real for the artistically created is exposed in the context of Prospero's own engagement with his past. Therefore, lying in the very centre of Prospero's recollections, which are posited as some sort of constant truth, is the suggestion which undermines the whole concept of a truthful recollection – that the memory can be tricked, and that this trickery has a direct relationship with the events of the present. During The Tempest the most sophisticated plotters are literally that – those who can manipulate the most convincing plot in the manner of a dramatist. It is unsurprising that Prospero is so frequently identified and compared with a dramatist and as a supreme orchestrator. The attempting usurper or figure of authority must also be a dealer in illusion. However, obviously, if memory can be falsified then remembering what was true not only becomes all the more important, but also creates a peculiarly anxious narrative from the earnest rememberer.

The control of illusion is complicated on the island of The Tempest as perception is continuously hampered by a problematic relationship with subjective interpretation. The shipwrecked sailors find that on arrival at the island all assumptions become questionable as one is forced to recognise the subjective nature of perception:

GONZALO How lush and lusty the grass looks! How green!
 ANTONIO The ground indeed is tawny.
 SEBASTIAN With an eye of green in't.
 ANTONIO He misses not much.
 SEBASTIAN No; he doth but mistake the truth totally.

(II.i.55-59)

In this context, recovery and recollection are particularly troubled as perception is systematically wrong-footed in expectation and assumption, culminating in the

disappearance of the banquet heralding Ariel's command to remembrance. There is a difficulty deep seated in the play in finding any vantage from which to view anything. Exacerbating this conundrum is the plethora of narratives which are given vent during the play. As has already been discussed, Prospero's personal narrative of history is indicative of a personal re-creation of history. However, Prospero is also fully aware of the need to dictate the history of his subjects if he is to exert control. It is this which he has learnt from Antonio. Therefore Ariel's first appearance alerts us to the fraught relationship between the servant and master which is figured in a clash of possession of memory.

Ariel attempts to remind Prospero of his promise to set the sprite free: "Let me remember thee what thou hast promised" (I.ii.243). Prospero rejects Ariel's attempt to gain freedom by suffocating Ariel's memory through the enforced retelling of a narrative in which Ariel is identified as humble servant. Prospero exerts the etymological emphasis of authority by insisting on dictating the story of Ariel's past, and importantly, repeating that story as a means of embedding it in their mutual history:

Dost thou forget
From what a torment I did free thee? (I.ii.250-1)

I must
Once in a month recount what thou hast been,
Which thou forget'st. (II.ii.261-3)

In stark contrast to this display of authority and subsumption, Caliban's response to Prospero's attempts to dictate the past are fiercely challenged: Caliban attests to his own story of the past in which Prospero is cast as tyrannical oppressor:

This island's mine by Sycorax, my mother,
Which thou tak'st from me... (I.ii.132-3)

Caliban claims that in learning Prospero's language he learnt how to curse. It is perhaps apparent that the skill which Caliban has learnt from Prospero is the manipulation of artistic representation. Indeed, Caliban is sophisticated in his ability to enchant a listener. Caliban stands out in The Tempest as, perhaps, the most comparable rhetorician to Prospero himself. His speeches are extraordinarily arresting in their beautiful evocation of the island and of the artistic rendition of a dream world. Clearly, Caliban is able to use language artistically as an internal challenge to Prospero's command of the lyrical tone of the play:

The island is full of noises,
 Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
 Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
 Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,
 That if I then had waked after long sleep,
 Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,
 The clouds, methought, would open and show riches
 Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked
 I cried to dream again. (III.iii.134-143)

The enchanting tone of these speeches seems to refer back to the original usurper Antonio's ability to "set all hearts i'th'state / To what tune pleased his ear" (I.ii.84-5) and thus designates Caliban as a potentially effective political figure. Indeed, if one considers the earlier suggestion that captivation is posited as a means of conferring a truth claim upon a narrative, then Caliban's enchanting abilities nominate him as a certain authority, according to the play's criteria for 'truth-telling'. It is Caliban's involvement in the otherwise woefully inept drunken plot of Stephano and Trinculo's which imbues it with a threatening potential. Caliban's distinctive voice sits uncomfortably in the depths of what we have come to consider as Prospero's play: this potentially corrupting force, and his alternative narratives, threaten his master's rule which relies upon the repeated retelling of Prospero's accounts. Caliban's subversive nature is figured in his insistence upon the opening up of alternative histories which threaten Prospero's artistically

controlled political hegemony. Simultaneously, we may hear whisperings of an alternative play: one which does not operate at the behest of Prospero's commands. Caliban's capability for authority is evidenced by Stephano's belief in him as a compulsive dealer in deception and illusion who presents potentially effective alternative stories:

CALIBAN When Prospero is destroyed.

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

(III.ii.146-8)

Shakespeare presents to his audience in The Tempest the possibility of rule by manipulation of illusion. He uses his enchanted island as a means of distilling the effects of sophisticated artistry upon the structure of a hierarchical group. His play serves to expose the essentially artistic formulations which underpin a political scenario, thus asking questions about art as a means of identifying both oneself and one's culture. The specifically artistic ordering of life experience is recognised as an important factor in personal and political identification by anthropological, psychoanalytic and political commentators:

this mutual influence, this constant back-and-forth motion between character and plot, on display most directly in drama, [...] captures the connection between identity and narrative that I want to explore in political theory. (Dienst 5)

Social metaphors and literary structures are brought in to support people in extreme situations and to preserve their humanity. (Skultans xii)

Harold Bloom points out that Prospero's books and his staff become signifiers of his life as an exile (Bloom Ch 33). The symbolism invested in these signs of artistry make Prospero's role as a conjurer of illusion an expression of his identity as ruler of the island: this necessarily involves the layering of concepts of artistry, memory and recollection. This recapitulates the notion, teased out in the play, of the artist in exile engaged in an artistic attempt to redefine his world. This

Romance play asserts that, in the explicitly illusory world of the theatre, artistry serves the purposes of its most sophisticated advocates.

Endnotes

1 See for example Thomson (1992) and Bentley (1971)

2 Richard Abrams is particularly interested in the possibility that Prospero has learnt his mode of rule from the example of his brother's theatrically influenced usurpation of power. See Abrams.

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First Response

The writer has produced an intriguing essay on memory and testimony and on the manipulation of the past for the acquisition of power in 'The Tempest' -- a play in which much of the action has already taken place, in the past, and which depends upon a series of variant perspectives on the significance of that past. The writer focuses on testimony as the performance of a unique angle on the truth and on the re-evaluation of (and elusiveness of) truth (and which, incidentally, suggests closer links between 'The Tempest' and the subsequent play in the Shakespeare canon -- 'Henry VIII', or 'All is True' -- than have been previously acknowledged). Memory is read here as an "explicitly artistic act" and the writer notes -- particularly of Prospero's control of the direction of the play -- "the power of narrative to captivate". Yet he / she helpfully also notes that "our tendency to speak of Shakespeare's authorial intention is profoundly disrupted by our understanding of Jacobean playhouse practices" and produces a valuable model of a consciously metadramatic 'Tempest' in which "Prospero as overseer vies with alternative characters and enchanting ways of telling the history of the island (which he is trying to control) in a disturbing and highly political image of collaborative art". He / she deploys political theory -- notably the work of Vieda Skultans on narrative and memory in post-communist Eastern Bloc countries -- to good effect in analysing Prospero's and others' use of memory in the course of 'The Tempest', finding in this material a framework for relating the passivity of the victim of history to the activity of the narrator relating that history (or a version of that history).

The subject is well-chosen and resonant and the treatment of that subject engaging and wide-ranging: I wish the thesis of which this is a part well and hope to see it in book form before too long. As a future project, it would be particularly interesting to see if the writer can find a way to bring together this theoretical / literary critical work on memory and memorial reconstruction with recent reappraisals of the question of memorial reconstruction of early modern plays, especially as regards the Shakespearean so-called 'bad quartos'.