

Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: Some Thought Experiments

Keith Whitlock

The Open University, London

At the time that we were preparing the first Open University Shakespeare course, Arnold Kettle, the founding Professor of Literature at the Open University and a former teacher of Patricia Shaw remarked to me that he did not understand *The Tempest*. It was a typically honest remark from a colleague who retired shortly after. As I come to the end of my teaching career, I want to acknowledge that *The Tempest* presents particular problems, some arising from the text itself, others from nineteenth and twentieth century staging, and yet others from entrenched attitudes of scholars and critics.

What follows then are my attempts to address these problems. I am at that stage in life when I am happy to risk the amusement of colleagues at a deliberately simple approach to a Shakespeare text. I do not belong to any of the competing creeds and critical schools that Brian Vickers has so ably characterised, in his 1996 book *Appropriating Shakespeare*. I remain an independent scholar; I have no theory to thrust upon either the text or surviving material more or less contemporary with it. I prefer a phrase like 'thought experiments' which a philosopher colleague, after David Hume, is fond of using. By this I mean that, given certain circumstances, factual or imagined, we may then proceed to consider the consequences for the coherence and meanings of *The Tempest*. As teachers we are not free from epistemological constraints. Whatever narratives we create must have something to do with evidence and plausibility.

I believe all colleagues would agree that three editions of *The Tempest* have dominated in British university teaching in the last forty years, Frank Kermode's 1966 Arden, Anne Barton's 1996 New Penguin and Stephen Orgel's Oxford, reissued as a World Classic last year (1998). Kermode's edition acknowledges the text's incoherence and structural problems but concludes

briefly to sum up this whole section on the hypothetical pre-history of the Folio text of *The Tempest*, we have no need to invoke ... arguments ... to establish the right to interpret the play exactly as it stands, for no one has even half succeeded in disintegrating it. (Kermode 1966 Introduction: XXIV)

With due respect to an outstanding teacher and scholar, such language is an attempt to browbeat. Kermode insists that we "interpret the play exactly as it stands." This is precisely the problem identified by numerous scholars: there is uncertainty whether the play is a play; and as production after production has shown, in practice theatre directors have made cuts in the performance text in order to achieve coherence.

The key weakness of Kermode's edition is that he does not address *The Tempest* as a performance text, or its problems in staging.

Anne Barton's New Penguin retains its popularity because of its introductory essay. She too acknowledges the problems of structural and textual coherence but writes generously and in terms that fall pat with theatre programme notes. The programme to the 1998 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *The Tempest* quoted her introduction extensively. I believe outstanding teachers should enthuse and inspire. When however, Anne Barton writes that much that passes for criticism of *The Tempest* is better judged as "derivative creation"; and adds:

There has been a persistent tendency to regard the play as allegorical, to feel that the heart of its mystery can be plucked out by means of some superimposed system of ideas. (Barton 1996: 21)

surely she describes her own practice. There are grounds for concern when a text's, let us say, local incoherence and structural breakdown require the solvent of intelligent critical imagination. According to some interpretations, Prospero stands for Shakespeare, John Dee, true Imagination, King James the First, the Holy Roman Emperor and Inigo Jones! Anne Barton does not degenerate to this level; but her line of thought is allegorical.

Stephen Orgel is a recognised world expert on the Stuart masque and his collaboration with Roy Strong has produced the standard works. His World Classics edition is excellent on the text's performance history, and the influence of the court masque and Vergil's *Aeneid*. It is authoritative upon Renaissance political marriages and Jacobean court spectacles. However, having admitted that "No contemporary performances of *The Tempest* are recorded other than the two at court in 1611 and 1613" (Orgel 1998: 58) he falls in with editorial and scholarly convention, that *The Tempest* was part of the commercial repertory of the Kings' Men and performed at The Globe and/or The Blackfriars' theatres. Furthermore, having admitted that *The Tempest* as a whole has certain obvious qualities in common with the masque as Jonson was developing it (Orgel 1998: 45), Orgel offers no challenge to the convention of classifying the text as a play.

It was with relief that I read in John Demaray's 1998 *Shakespeare and the Spectacles of Strangeness*, and subtitled *The Tempest and the Transformation of Renaissance Theatrical Forms*, the following:

Problems in interpreting *The Tempest* arise in part from problems in assessing its elusive genre, its basic theatrical structures, its mode of initial stage presentation, and the performance site or sites for which it was probably intended. These issues remain very much open for analysis; critical assumptions on these and related matters have been shaped for too long by a massive body of editions and published works that stress assumed but undocumented early productions of the drama indoors at the Blackfriars' playhouse and outdoors at the Globe. These works give only minimal attention to the quite different production of the drama before the king at Whitehall. (Demaray 1998: 3-4)

These are brave words: the genre of *The Tempest* is elusive, that is, it may not, after all, be a play; and, contrary to scholarly convention, there is no record of performance in the commercial theatre. The single contrary voice is Dryden's remarks in the Preface to his and Davenant's reworking of *The Tempest* (1670). "The Play itself had formerly been acted with success in the Black-Fryers."

The context of Dryden's remark is a puff. He himself was born in 1631 and grew up after the theatres were closed. Davenant would have been a less than scrupulous source and had died three years before (in 1667). Dryden equally may refer to a Restoration revival. The sole *recorded* site is the Banqueting House at Whitehall.

The present day National Trust property is the Banqueting House designed by Inigo Jones and dates from 1623. This was the setting for all Court masques between 1623 and 1635. For the performance site of *The Tempest* in 1611 and, if it occurred, 1613, we have the well known report of the chaplain to the Venetian Ambassador, Orazio Busino, an account of the performance of Ben Jonson's masque *Pleasure Reconciled To Virtue* on Twelfth Night, 6th January 1618 [new style]:

In the king's court, in like manner, after Christmas day there begins a series of sumptuous banquets, well-acted comedies, and most graceful masques of knights and ladies. Of the masques, the most famous of all is performed on the morrow of the feast of the three Wise Men according to an ancient custom of the palace here. A large hall is fitted up like a theatre, with well secured boxes all round. The stage is at one end and his Majesty's chair in front under an ample canopy. Near him are stools for the foreign ambassadors. On the 16th of the current month of January [Busino uses Italian dating], his Excellency [the Venetian Ambassador] was invited to see a representation and masque, which had been prepared with extra-ordinary pains, the chief performer being the king's own son and heir, the Prince of Wales, now seventeen years old, an agile youth, handsome and very graceful

Whilst waiting for the king we amused ourselves by admiring the decorations and beauty of the house with its two orders of columns, one above the other, their distance from the wall equalling the breadth of the passage, that of the second row being upheld by Doric pillars, while above these rise Ionic columns supporting the roof. The whole is of wood, including even the shafts, which are carved and gilt with much skill. From the roof of these hang festoons and angels in relief with two rows of lights. Then such a concourse as there was, for although they profess only to admit the favoured ones who are invited, yet every box was filled notably with most noble and richly arrayed ladies, in number some 600 and more according to the general estimate; the dresses being of such variety in cut and colour as to be indescribable; the most delicate plumes over their heads, springing from their foreheads or in their hands serving as fans; strings of jewels on their necks and bosoms and in their girdles and apparel in such quantity that they looked like so many queens, so that at the beginning, with but little light, such as that

of the dawn or of the evening twilight, the splendour of their diamonds and other jewels was so brilliant that they looked like so many stars At about the 6th hour of the night the king appeared with his court, having passed through the apartments where the ambassadors were in waiting, whence he graciously conducted them, that is to say, the Spaniard and the Venetian, it not being the Frenchman's turn, he and the Spaniard only attending the court ceremonies alternately by reason of their disputes about precedence.

On entering the house, the cornets and trumpets to the number of fifteen or twenty began to play very well a sort of recitative, and then after his Majesty had seated himself under the canopy alone, the queen not being present on account of a slight indisposition [probably gout], he caused the ambassadors to sit below him on two stools, while the great officers of the crown and courts of law sat upon benches. The Lord Chamberlain then had the way cleared and in the middle of the theatre there appeared a fine and spacious area carpeted all over with green cloth. In an instant a large curtain dropped, painted to represent a tent of gold cloth with a broad fringe; the background was of canvas painted blue, powdered all over with golden stars. This became the front arch of the stage, forming a drop scene, and on its being removed there appeared first of all Mount Atlas, whose enormous head was alone visible up aloft under the very roof of the theatre; it rolled up its eyes and moved itself very cleverly. As a foil to the principal ballet and masque they had some mummeries performed in the first ; for instance, a very chubby Bacchus appeared on a car drawn by four gownsmen, who sang in an undertone before his Majesty. There was another stout individual on foot, dressed in red in short clothes, who made a speech, reeling about like a drunkard, tankard in hand, so that he resembled Bacchus's cupbearer. This first scene was very gay and burlesque. Next followed twelve extravagant masquers, one of whom was in a barrel, all but his extremities, his companions being similarly cased in huge wicker flasks, very well made. They danced awhile to the sound of the cornets and trumpets, performing various and most extravagant antics. These were followed by a gigantic man representing Hercules with his club, who strove with Antaeus and performed other feats. Then came twelve masked boys in the guise of frogs. They danced together, assuming sundry grotesque attitudes. After they had all fallen down, they were driven off by Hercules. Mount Atlas then opened, by means of two doors, which were made to turn, and from behind the hills of a distant landscape the day was seen to dawn, some gilt columns being placed along either side of the scene, so as to aid the perspective and make the distance seem greater. Mercury next appeared before the king and made a speech. After him came a guitar player in a gown, who sang some trills, accompanying himself with his instrument. He announced himself as some deity, and then a number of singers,

dressed in long red gowns to represent high priests, came on the stage, wearing gilt mitres. In the midst of them was a goddess in a long white robe and they sang some jigs which we did not understand. It is true that, spoiled as we are by the graceful and harmonious music of Italy, the composition did not strike us as very fine. Finally twelve cavaliers, masked, made their appearance, dressed uniformly, six having the entire hose crimson with plaited doublets of white satin trimmed with gold and silver lace. The other six wore breeches down to the knee, with the half hose also crimson, and white shoes. These matched well their corsets which were cut in the shape of the ancient Roman corslets. On their heads they wore long hair and crowns and very tall white plumes. Their faces were covered with black masks. These twelve descended together from above the scene in the figure of a pyramid, of which the prince formed the apex. When they reached the ground the violins, to the number of twenty-five or thirty began to play their airs. After they had made an obeisance to his Majesty, they began to dance in very good time, preserving for a while the same pyramidal figure, and with a variety of steps. Afterwards they changed places with each other in various ways, but ever ending the jump together. When this was over, each took his lady, the prince pairing with the principal one among those who were ranged in a row ready to dance, and the others doing the like in succession, all making obeisance to his Majesty first and then to each other. They performed every sort of ballet and dance of every country whatsoever such as *passamezzi* [a slow dance of Italian origin], *corants* [lit. a running dance to triple time], *canaries* [a lively Spanish dance], Spanish dances and a hundred other very fine gestures devised to tickle the fancy (*fatte a pizzate*). Last of all they danced the Spanish dance [probably a pavan], one at a time, each with his lady, and being well nigh tired they began to lag, whereupon the king, who is naturally choleric, got impatient and shouted aloud Why don't they dance? What did they make me come here for? Devil take you all, dance. Upon this, the Marquis of Buckingham, his Majesty's favourite, immediately sprang forward, cutting a score of lofty and very minute capers, with so much grace and agility that he not only appeased the ire of his angry lord, but rendered himself the admiration and delight of everybody. The other masquers, thus encouraged, continued to exhibit their prowess one after another, with various ladies, also finishing with capers and lifting their goddesses from the ground. We counted thirty-four capers as cut by one cavalier in succession, but none came up to the exquisite manner of the marquis. The prince, however, excelled them all in bowing, being very formal in making his obeisance both to the king and to the lady with whom he danced, nor was he once seen to do a step out of time when dancing, whereas one cannot perhaps say so much for the others. Owing to his youth he has not yet much breath, nevertheless he cut a few capers very gracefully.

The encounter of these twelve accomplished cavaliers being ended, and after they had valiantly overcome the sloth and debauch of Bacchus, the prince went in triumph to kiss his father's hands. The king embraced and kissed him tenderly and then honoured the marquis with marks of extraordinary affection, patting his face. The king now rose from his chair, took the ambassadors along with him, and after passing through a number of chambers and galleries he reached a hall where the usual collation was spread for the performers, a light being carried before him. After he had glanced all round the table he departed, and forthwith the parties concerned pounced upon the prey like so many harpies. The table was covered almost entirely with seasoned pasties and very few sugar confections. There were some large figures, but they were of painted pasteboard for ornament. The repast was served upon glass plates or dishes and at the first assault they upset the table and the crash of glass platters reminded me precisely of a severe hailstorm at Midsummer smashing the window glass. The story ended at half past two in the morning and half disgusted and weary we returned home. (Calendar of State Papers Venetian XV: 110-114)

This vivid account is of significance for many reasons, but for this present argument it may serve to highlight that James sat under a canopy on a raised dais in a rectangular hall, the only member of the audience with perfect sight-lines; that music, dance and spectacle were more important than words; in fact the dancing masters who coached the royal and aristocratic participants often received greater pay than librettist or designer; that aristocrats and professional actors had roles according to their status; and that "in the middle of the theatre there appeared a fine and spacious area carpeted all over with green cloth", a detail that could well be placed with a piece of dialogue in *The Tempest*

Adrian	The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.
Sebastian	As if it had lungs, and rotten ones.
Antonio	Or as 'twere perfumed by a fen.
Gonzalo	Here is everything advantageous to life.
Antonio	True, save means to live.
Sebastian	Of that there's none or little.
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.
Gonzalo	But the rarity of it is, which is indeed almost beyond credit —
Sebastian	As many vouched rarities are.
Gonzalo	That our garments, being, as they were, drenched in the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness and

gloss, being rather new-dyed than stained with salt water. (II. 47-63)¹

It is further worth noting that the choice of dances indicates a culturally hispanophile court, and in Busino's full account, a Spaniard gate crashes the Venetian box, much to his resentment. The male characters of the 'court' party in *The Tempest* all have Spanish names; the comics are Italian, a naming that may have been chosen to represent actual contemporary power relations in the Italian peninsula.

Given then the Banqueting House at Whitehall as the only recorded performance site of *The Tempest*, and the strong possibility that the actual performance was not unlike Busino's account of the Ben Jonson masque seven years later, let us pursue two further 'thought experiments': first, suspending the convention that *The Tempest* is a play; and second, treating the surviving Folio text as two enmeshed courtly entertainments, or pageants, the outer and older, celebrating James the First's concepts of monarchy, divine right and earthly harmony; the inner and accretive, if you like something bolted on, celebrating the betrothal and marriage of the Princess Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine in 1612/13. These two focuses will not remove or explain all the textual or structural inconsistencies highlighted by Gray 1921: 129-40. As Gray observes in his opening sentence, *The Tempest* is always grouped 'as one of the dramatic romances of Shakespeare's final period, but it is essentially different in tone from its companion pieces'. That the surviving Folio text is a revision of an earlier text, is widely held. In I.2 line 439, Ferdinand refers to Antonio's 'brave son' as one of the members of the court party lost in the wreck; no such character appears in the play or is ever mentioned again. Further, the first known performance of *The Tempest*, 1st November, 1611, did not coincide with any known eminent marriage, whereas the second, if it occurred, did. I do not seek to reconstruct an unknowable 1611 original but plausibly to disentangle what survives of 1612/13.

Let us then first suspend the convention that *The Tempest* is a play.

Covell 1968 pointed out that the occasions for music in *The Tempest* far exceed those of other late plays of Shakespeare. He lists (1968: 43-51) five in *Pericles*, five in *Cymbeline*, eleven in *The Winter's Tale* and seventeen for *The Tempest*, these last comprising either songs, one 'possible song', two 'snatches', three dances and three passages of instrumental music. *The Tempest*'s original staging clearly integrated music, song and dance routines. The text was known in performance for over two hundred years in musical-comic and pantomimic adaptation. It was the growth of Shakespeare scholarship that forced a re-appraisal of the Folio text as in some sense uncontaminated. The first recorded 'straight' revival of the Folio text was in 1838. Dryden and Davenant's reworking, to which they gave an alternative title, *The Enchanted Island*, published in 1670, surely transmitted a musical interpretation, that was the norm into Victorian times. Some surviving contemporary comments upon a play versus a masque or entertainment use music, song and dance as generic discriminators:

Of Thomas Campion's *The Lords' Maske*, performed in honour of the marriage of Princess Elizabeth and Frederick, the Elector Palatine, on Sunday 14th February 1613 [new style], Chamberlain complained

¹ See Demaray's 1998: 87 discussion.

I hear no great commendation, save only for riches, their devices
being long and tedious, and more like a Play than a Maske.
(Nichols 1828: 554 fn)

The masque had evolved during James' reign. For Chamberlain, Campion's masque erred towards the abstract and didactic, in short was too serious for an occasion that required festivity and gaiety. Chamberlain expected and missed music, song and dance.

Middleton and Rowley's *The World Tost At Tennis*, entered in the Stationers' Register, 4th July 1620, is described as

A Courtly Masque: The Device called, The World tost at Tennis;

and the *Prologue* reads:

This our device we do not call a play,
Because we break the stage's laws to-day
of acts and scenes

It was intended for a royal night:

There's one hour's words, the rest in songs and dances ...
(Bullen 1885 VII: 139 & 145)

It seems that this 'device' was prepared for King James at Denmark House, and subsequently made available to the commercial theatre. No performance records survive. This Prologue distinguishes play from masque not only in terms of acts and scenes but the temporal prominence of song and dance. Having suspended *The Tempest's* status as a play, let us acknowledge that, in common with masques, triumphs and similar entertainments, it is organised around spectacles: its protagonists do not develop or have inward life. The scholarly tradition that seeks to assimilate *The Tempest* to what are called Shakespeare's late romances may, quite simply, be mistaken. Generically *The Tempest* is far more elusive. Its presence as the first work of the First Folio, scrupulously prepared, divided into acts and scenes, may seem contradictory; but this may reflect a presentation copy, not an actual performance text. Greg remarks:

The text is a clean one, carefully punctuated, and in view of the lavish use of parentheses and other scribal characteristics of Ralph Crane, it is usually allowed to have been printed ... from a transcript in his hand ... It is significant that the list of characters at the end is the only such list in the Folio... The stage directions are ample throughout, and in the case of spectacles elaborate.
(Greg 1954: 418)

Crane eked a living from presentation copies. It is however important to reflect upon the function of presentation copies. They were more frequent with masques than plays and were in demand either as an elaborate record of a performance or to satisfy the curiosity of those who could not attend (Walls 1996:20 & 281). The King's Men were Grooms of the Bedchamber, a subtle control disguised as patronage. *The Tempest* recalled one or more important political festivities and in terms of James' expressed views on monarchy, as we shall see, was complimentary and ideologically orthodox. From such a viewpoint *The Tempest* as a model clean text at the beginning of the First Folio is tantamount to a royal dedication. *The Tempest's* presence as the

first text of the First Folio was plausibly, to honour the King's Men's and Shakespeare's royal patron. Surely this made commercial sense in the context of a speculative venture?

We are all familiar with the phrase 'the willing suspension of disbelief.' I suggest that different art forms persuade us to suspend our disbelief differently. We respond differently to opera, ballet and an historical novel. Masque in certain respects like its sung recitative, dancing, musical interludes and elaborate spectacle, is closer to opera and ballet than naturalistic drama. Perhaps one of the reasons the structure of *The Tempest* perplexes us is because we have allocated it to the wrong genre and approach it with the wrong horizon of expectations. The late Enid Welsford in a study of the masque that still holds its place upon university library shelves, wrote:

In *The Tempest*, as in the masque, music and dancing are closely associated. The mock banquet is accompanied by dancing and pantomime. The first song by which Ariel lures Ferdinand into Prospero's power is written on a dance pattern. With Ariel's first words, 'Come into these yellow sands', we imagine the fairies running in from all sides, they take hands in a ring, then turn to one another, curtsying and kissing, or, in the time-honoured phrase of the country dance, they honour their partners. (Welsford 1962: 337)²

Enid Welsford's response reflects experience of English country dancing as part of the curriculum in English schools. Many of these dances came from the famous Playford collections, which in turn derived from Stuart masques, entertainments and the theatre. English country dancing has now largely disappeared from English schools.

John Taylor, the Water Poet, rushed out an account of the sea-fights, fireworks and royal occurrences to celebrate the marriage of Elizabeth and Frederick in 1613, to satisfy curiosity and make money. His account contains a curious statement:

The night proceeding, [i.e. Monday 15th February 1613] much expectation was made of a stage play to be acted in the Great Hall by the King's Players, where many hundreds of people stood attending the same; but it hapned contrarie, for greater pleasures were preparing. (Nichols 1966: 551)

This 'stage play' could have been *The Tempest*, in which case we have a theatrical event whose preparation was paid for but not performed; setting aside Taylor's terminology, we must note that masques and similar festivities were on occasions subject to cancellation, but subsequently polished up and published, the best known example being Ben Jonson's *Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion* February 1613 [new style] This Jonson masque was planned for *Twelfth-night*, 1624, when the title page of the Quarto and the head-title of the Folio say it was performed; but Chamberlain writing to Carleton on 17th January 1624 [new style] says

the maske for twelfth night was put of, by reason of the Ks indisposition, as was pretended, but the true cause is thought to be the competition of the french and Spanish ambassadors.

² Her chapters, 'Influence of the Masque on the Drama' and 'The Masque Transmitted' may remind us of what much critical theory has forgotten.

Of course the political context, celebrated in the masque, was Charles' return to England without a Spanish Catholic bride, on 5 October 1623 (Herford et al. 1961 X: 658-59). In fact, and rather comically, the third masque of that marriage week of February 1613, Beaumont's *Masque of The Inner Temple And Gray's Inn*, or rather its prospect, proved too much for poor James:

But the worst of all was, that the King was so wearied and sleepy with setting up almost two whole nights before, that he had no edge to it. Whereupon Sir Francis Bacon ventured to entreat his Majesty, that by this disgrace he would not as it were bury them quick; and I hear the King should answer that then they must bury him quick, for he could last no longer. (Nichols 1966 II: 590)

The masque was then postponed from Tuesday 16th to Saturday 20th February 1613. James was bored with the formality and, I suggest, sheer repetition of some emblematic and neoclassical aspects of the masque. He did however like Beaumont's antimasques, and called for an encore "but one of the Statues by that time was undressed." (Nichols 1966 II: 597).

Let us now go on to our second thought experiment, treating the surviving Folio text as two enmeshed courtly entertainments. *The Tempest* has nine scenes, if we use the Folio's divisions for our purpose. I am proposing to pursue this experiment by separating out all participation of Ferdinand and Miranda, for separate consideration. We are then left with the following spectacles and tableaux:

A storm and shipwreck	I.i
Prospero and Ariel	I.ii
A court party debating government	II.i
Ariel's intervention to prevent an assassination	II.i
An antimasque of Caliban and commedia del'arte comics	II.ii
Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano parody political rebellion	II.ii
The banquet of temptation for three men of sin	III.iii
Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano are physically punished	IV.i
The court party is confronted and forced to recognise divine right	V.i

I want to suggest that in practice this separation out of the participation of Ferdinand and Miranda is easily achieved. I further propose that these summarised elements are the ones most plausibly located in the first 1611 performance of *The Tempest* and generically constitute an entertainment for James to parallel and respond to, the masques sponsored by his wife, Anne of Denmark. However James, unlike his wife, neither acted nor danced. He could not participate; the actors were all professionals, the King's Men. The function of such an entertainment was flattery and its procedural logic and aesthetic were emblematic. Incidentally, I am not surprised that Prospero has no wife. Anne had already enjoyed her public flattery in masques which she had commissioned; this occasion belonged to James. What then are the

allusions that flatter James? The name Prospero signifies both material prosperity and, in its classical and Renaissance sense, good weather:

[Frederick] had a speedy and prosperous passage from the Hague to Gravesend, and with the Princess Elizabeth from Margate to Flushing. (Herford et al. 1961 VII: 216)

Prospero then is God on earth, an absolute and controlling force in human and meteorological terms, but staged. Prospero's famous speech, beginning "our revels now are ended" and containing the words

The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself
... shall dissolve. (IV.i.148-158)

is not Shakespeare saying farewell to his art as Victorians understood, but refers to common features of masque stage spectacle. A globe was a commonplace, occurring in the spectacle of *Chloridia* (1631), *Salmacida Spolia* (1640) - which also begins with a storm - *Hymenai* (1606) and *Coelum Britannicum* (1634). It was so frequent that Lindley's 1995 *Court Masques* uses it for its cover. It is an obvious emblem for an art form devoted to the spectacle of absolute monarchical power. In the same speech, the words "Leave not a rack behind" also come from the machinery of a pageant. This is explicit in Jonson's *Hymenai*.

Here, the upper part of the Scene, which was all of
Clouds, and made artificially to swell, and ride
Like the Racke, began to open. (Herford et al. 1961 VII: 216)

It was a stage artifice for representing clouds and their movement in masque spectacle. It is very appropriate that Prospero as an emblematic weather god should mention it.

James advocated the 'divine right of kings', to us today, a preposterous notion, but acceptable to a predominantly Protestant England in the early seventeenth century because it challenged the claims of the Pope, who also pretended to divine right. Some quotations from James' writings and addresses may be placed with sections of *The Tempest*:

I am the Husband, and all the whole Isle is my lawfull Wife; I am the Head, and it is my Body; I am the Shepherd, and it is my flocke. ("Speech to both Houses of Parliament, 19th March 1603"; McIlwain 1965: 272)

Therefore (my Sonne) first of all things, learne to know and love that GOD, whom-to ye have a double obligation; first, for that he made you a man; and next, for that he made you a little GOD to sit on his Throne, and rule over other men. (*Basilikon Doron*; McIlwain 1965: 12)

Kings being publike persons, by reason of their office and authority, are as it were (as it was said of old) upon a publike stage. (*Basilikon Doron*; McIlwain 1965: 5)

And when yee have by the severitie of Justice once settled your countries, and made them know that ye can strike, then may ye

thereafter all the daies of your life mixe Justice with Mercie, punishing or sparing, as ye shall finde the crime to have been wilfully or rashly committed. (*Basilikon Doron*; McIlwain 1965: 20)

As for your choice in Marriage The three causes it was ordeined for, are, for staying of lust, for procreation of children, and that man shoulde by his Wife, get a helper like himselfe. (*Basilikon Doron*; McIlwain 1965: 35)

Ttherefore besides your education, it is necessarie yee delight in reading, and seeking the knowledge of all lawfull things; but with these two restrictions: first, that yee choose idle houres for it, not interrupting therewith the discharge of your office: and next, that yee studie not for knowledge nakedly, but that your principall ende be, to make you able thereby to use your office. (*Basilikon Doron*; McIlwain 1965: 38)

a *Monarchie*... as resembling the divinitie, approacheth nearest to perfection. (*The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*; McIlwain 1965: 53)

Kings are justly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of Divine power upon earth. ("A Speech To The Lords And Commons of the Parliament at White-hall, Wednesday 21st March, 1609 [1610]"; McIlwain 1965: 307)

but one Ile of *Britaine*. (*Basilikon Doron*; McIlwain 1965: 51)

but I meane of such a generall Union of Lawes as may reduce the whole lland, that as they live already under one Monarch, so they may all bee governed by one Law. ("A Speech To Both The Houses of Parliament Delivered In The Great Chamber At White-Hall, The Last Day of March 1607"; McIlwain 1965: 292)

It is noteworthy that some of these speeches were delivered in the very hall where *The Tempest* was performed. Having united the thrones of England and Scotland, James spoke constantly of the Isle and its union. This concern is reflected throughout Stuart masques. Caliban's words

... the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not. (III.ii.133-134)

must refer immediately to a consort, probably of lutes and viols, but have emblematic force.

James' observations upon monarchy, justice, study and marriage, are staged in *The Tempest*. Hence

[I] require
My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know,
Thou must restore. (V.i.132-134)

the rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance. (V.i.27-28)

Me, poor man, my library
Was dukedom large enough. (I.ii.109-110)

Heavens rain grace
On that which breeds between 'em'. (III.i.75-76)

If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be minister'd,
No sweet aspersions shall the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow;

and Gonzalo's sketch of a utopia is put down with Antonio's words

The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.
(II.i.154)

The Tempest does portray sedition, dissent and malice but these forces are overcome. I do not wish to be misunderstood. As Grooms of the Bedchamber, the King's Men had to toe a line. Prospero is not James I. Impersonation could have been indictable. Prospero in *The Tempest* should be compared with Pan in Jonson's masque *Pan's Anniversary* (1620) where Pan emblematically represents James as the promoter of his Book of Sports; the masque is subtitled *The Shepherd's Holyday*. The anti-masque character of the Tinker who

beates the march to the tune of Tickle-foot,
Pan, pan, pan, brave *Epam* with a *nondas*. (Herford et al. 1961
VII: 532)

could echo Caliban. Both evince musical practices with social hierarchical implications.

Let us now go on to the last of our 'thought experiments', the participation of Ferdinand and Miranda in *The Tempest* as a courtly entertainment enmeshed in an earlier one which effectively frames it. We find the following spectacles and tableaux:

Ferdinand comes ashore to song, dance and music	I.ii
Ferdinand and Miranda fall In love	I.ii
Ferdinand successfully completes trials of labour and chastity	III.i
A betrothal scene and betrothal masque to celebrate a contract of true love	IV.i
The 'discovery' of Ferdinand and Miranda playing at chess	V.i

I have been surprised how easily it is possible to disengage, or in Kermodé's word disintegrate, these elements from the rest of the play. The only practical problem is the re-allocation of some of Miranda's lines to Ariel in I.ii, something which many directors of the play in performance have done to make sense of the text, anyway.

Ferdinand in his opening words establishes a connection between monarchy, divine right and harmony: this music, he says,

... waits upon
Some god o'th'island. (I.ii.391-391)

In accordance with James' advice on marriage, Miranda proves herself a 'helper'; and the masque, proleptically, celebrates procreation.

It is instructive to place the Ferdinand/Miranda triumph - for that is what it is - beside the actual events of the betrothal and marriage of Elizabeth and Frederick in 1612/1613. It is not enough to examine *The Tempest* as shaped by masque, and especially Jonsonian masque; it is essential to place it beside the actual festivities of those six months, in none of which Jonson shared because he was out of the country, in Paris. I am then seeking to do what Stephen Orgel 1998 does not. Orgel locates *The Tempest* within a tradition, an evolving tradition, of wedding masques, where Jonson's influence predominated. I am proposing that the Ferdinand/Miranda material of *The Tempest* also be placed beside festivities, pageants, and other festive occurrences of the six months that the Elector Palatine was in England, 16th October 1612 to 25 April 1613. On November 3rd 1612 Chamberlain in a letter to Carlton wrote:

But the King himself is much pleased with him, and so is all the Court; and he doth so address himself and apply to the Lady Elizabeth, that he seems to take delight in nothing but her company and conversation. (Nichols 1966 II: 467)

In consequence of the illness and sudden death of Prince Henry, the formal betrothal was delayed until the 27th December 1612. As the Court was in mourning, actual marriage and consummation were delayed until 11th February 1613. At the marriage we learn

the Lady Elizabeth [came] in her virgin-ropes, clothed in a gowne of white sattin, richly embroidered. (Nichols 1966 II: 542)

and further on Monday 15th February 1613,

.... the King went to visit these young couple that were coupled on St. Valentine's-day, and did strictly examine him whether he were a true son-in-law, and was sufficiently assured. (Nichols 1966 II: 588)

These records confirm the stress upon virginity; and on a gap in time between betrothal and marriage and sexual consummation. Incidentally, like Ferdinand and Miranda, Frederick and Elizabeth do appear to have liked each other, in that lovely expression of *The Tempest*

At the first sight
They have chang'd eyes. (I.ii.443-444)

This marriage was of enormous dynastic and political importance. The Queen, Anne of Denmark, who is suspected of being a crypto-Catholic, at first disapproved of the match. I have sometimes wondered whether this is a secondary reason that Prospero has no consort. However Anne changed her mind (Nichols 1966 II: 515 & 524). The Protestant English and especially London rejoiced, indeed were overcome with joy. As Chamberlain wrote to Carlton:

All well-affected people take great pleasure and contentment in this Match, as being a firm foundation and establishing of religion and the Roman Catholics malign it as much, as being the ruin of their hopes. (Nichols 1966 II: 601-602)

Prince Maurice of Orange and Frederick Elector Palatine had been invested with the Garter, the highest Order of Chivalry. The argument to Beaumont's masque states

Jupiter and Juno ... do honour to the Marriage of the two famous
Rivers, Thamesis and Rhine. (Nichols 1966 II: 593)

Dekker, the most strident of Protestant playwrights, entitled his Lord Mayor's Pageant, November 1612, *Troia Nova Triumphans* — New Troy Triumphant.

The 'discovery' of Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess in Act V has then double emblematic force, conveying noble love and political alliance. Thomas Middleton's *A Game At Chesse* (1623), written of course to satirise the manoeuvres and political intrigue of Catholic Spain, and a proposed Catholic marriage, surely confirms the link between chess and international power politics. Chess was known as the Spanish game and words in modern English like 'chess' and 'pawn' still retain elements of sixteenth century Spanish pronunciation.

It is not possible to summarise all the festivities of that wedding week, but amongst the most significant were water pageants on the Thames, including mock seafights so realistically conducted that several suffered injury (Nichols 1966 II: 537-41 & 587), Campion's *The Lords' Maske*, Chapman's *Maske of The Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn*, and Beaumont's *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn*, which nearly did for poor James. The classical gods of these spectacles are repetitive as are their thoughts and forms of utterance. The little betrothal masque of *The Tempest* IV.i is easily assimilated to them in content and form. Chapman's masque does contain curious, dare we say, echoes or anticipations of *The Tempest*: the chief masquers were dressed as Virginian Indians, some performers were baboons in Neopolitan costume, and Plutus' dialogue contains these words:

Neptune let thy predecessor Ulysses live after all his slaine
companions, but to make him die more miserably living; gave
him up to shipwreck, enchantments. (Nichols 1966 II: 578)

The introductory caption to the masque states that it was

Invented and fashioned, with the ground and speciall structure of
the whole worke, by our Kingdome's most artfull and ingenious
Architect Inigo Jones. (Nichols 1966 II: 566)

Chapman's 'Epistle Dedicatorie' to the published text, tries to defend his masque against the charge of tedium: "the length of my speches and narrations". (Nichols 1966 II: 571)

It is, of course, very likely that the King's Men, as professionals, took the antimasque roles in Chapman's piece, too.

Where do these thought experiments leave us? Concern at the influence of the masque upon *The Tempest* has grown throughout this century. One clear reason is the practical difficulty of staging the play in terms that we might describe as naturalistic. Another is the growing scholarship of the Stuart masque. Perhaps the boldest re-assessment of the text was that of Glynne Wickham who, in an essay that no student of *The Tempest* can disregard, looked at the text in terms of 'Spectacles of state' and 'Court hieroglyphics'. (Wickham 1975:1-14). He clearly regarded *The Tempest* as like a masque in so far as it offered riddles that an audience was expected to solve by intelligent interpretation of the visual and verbal iconography. Wickham was Head of

Drama at Bristol University and was remarkable for combining scholarship with an acute practical grasp of the stage. He argues that

allusions to the royal patron, his family, his achievements and intentions spill obliquely into other aspects of [*The Tempest*] ... dynastic alliances in the marriage of children, reconciliation of former differences ... (Wickham 1975:12).

were processes to ensure the future prosperity of all. Yet he treats the hieroglyphics of the text narrowly making questionable identifications such as Elizabeth I with Iris; and he still persists in regarding *The Tempest* as a play. The merit of these thought experiments is to release *The Tempest* from a generic straitjacket, give it back its spectacle, music, song and dancing and allow the text to live (in Wickham's words) as 'a vivid allegorical charade'.

I leave you with the thought that *The Tempest* is a play by convention and could equally well be defined as a pageant, triumph, entertainment or celebration. It shares staging problems with other late plays, notably *Cymbeline*, where the naturalistic expectations of a modern audience are interrupted and frustrated. James' court appears not to have objected to the juxtaposing of emblematic and naturalistic matter, though modern taste regards them as conflicting aesthetics. This opens up another topic over which I have long mused, whether the taste and sycophancy of that Stuart court undermined Shakespeare's genius. But we have indulged enough thought experiments.

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