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"A vision of this island" : the prospero figure in post-World War II cinema

Hugh Howard Davis

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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Hugh Howard Davis entitled "'A vision of this island" : the prospero figure in post-World War II cinema." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

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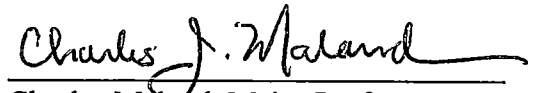
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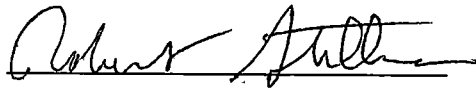
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Charles Maland, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:





Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

**"A VISION OF THIS ISLAND":
THE PROSPERO FIGURE IN POST-WORLD WAR II CINEMA**

**A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Hugh Howard Davis
May 1999**

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ABSTRACT

William Shakespeare's The Tempest is a work which has intrigued and enchanted both directors and audiences throughout its nearly 400-year history. The text's appeal has been particularly strong for filmmakers in the latter twentieth century, as several cinematic versions of the film have appeared since World War II. This project examines these films, considering in particular the presentation and depiction of Prospero in each, through an examination of these films' narratives and film styles.

The magical appeal of Shakespeare's play has been evident through the number of diverse adaptations and appropriations of it in the last fifty years, as this romance has been brought to the screen multiple times. The Tempest combines its magical spectacle with a human tale of forgiveness, and filmmakers have seized upon the play's strengths as inspiration for their films. This play has been transformed into different genres, and this project will trace the evolution of the Prospero figure throughout these transformations. This project will examine the presentation of Shakespeare's magus in a variety of productions, including spinoffs of the play. The focus of this thesis will be five major films: Yellow Sky (1948), Forbidden Planet (1956), The Tempest (1979), Tempest (1982), and Prospero's Books (1991).

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Introduction

What seest thou else
In the dark abysm of time?

--The Tempest, 1.2.49-50

In William Shakespeare's The Tempest, Prospero's interest in his daughter Miranda's recollections of the past helps establish prior action as well as define the character of Prospero, and scholars may also follow this cue by examining the history of the play--and Prospero within that play and its performances--itself. The Tempest is a peculiar text in Shakespeare's canon. Its recognized position as Shakespeare's last play (save possibly his collaboration on Henry VIII and The Two Noble Kinsmen) has enhanced both its importance and popularity, yet its highly theatrical nature (including both its morality play dimensions and the inclusion of the masque scene) makes it an awkward text to read. Regardless, The Tempest has remained, since its first appearance in 1611, an oft-performed work. In the twentieth century, The Tempest has also been popular for filmmakers, who have produced both adaptations and appropriations of Shakespeare's text. These cinematic versions of the play deserve study, particularly in their representations of the Prospero figure. This project will focus on the film versions of The Tempest after World War II, considering in particular the manner in which each depicts Prospero through a blend of narrative and film style.

The play's performance history and popularity are important factors in considering its durability, both for the theater and the cinema, to this day. The first known performance of this romance was on November 1, 1611, at the court of King James I, and scholars also know that it was staged for the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Prince

Frederick in 1613, for which the masque may have been added (Boyce 636). John Dryden reports that he attended a performance of the play at the Blackfriars Theatre, and he indicates that The Tempest was particularly popular during his life (Sturgess 108).¹ However, the play's history since it first appeared has been one based more on adaptation and reconsideration of Shakespeare than on the original play itself. Although the text's popularity has remained, The Tempest has been rewritten multiple times from multiple angles, a trend which continues in the twentieth century, with filmmakers creating their own visions of the play.

Ironically, this play, which William Hazlitt described as "one of the most original and perfect of Shakespeare's productions" (67), has also been, as Frederick Kilbourne notes, "one of the chief sufferers at the hands of those who should have known better" (27). Indeed, Dryden, an acknowledged admirer of Shakespeare's own play, joined with William D'Avenant in 1667 to create The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island, his attempt to correct elements of the original (Boyce 636; Kilbourne 27). Interestingly, Dryden, in his introduction to this play, reported a pair of potential Tempest spinoffs which appeared even before his: John Fletcher's Sea-Voyage and Sir John Suckling's Goblins. However, George Guffey, who quotes Dryden's assertions in his introduction to After the Tempest, suggests that the plays are only tangentially related (i). Guffey's dismissal aside, Dryden's assertions that he is not the first poet to devise a work based on The Tempest do suggest the popularity of the play itself, as well as the tendency to offer the play in new forms.

¹ Keith Sturgess provides a thorough discussion of this performance in "A Quaint Device."

The Dryden/D'Avenant version added multiple characters-- including siblings for Miranda and Ferdinand, and female opposites for Caliban and Ariel--while rewriting the bulk of the dialogue. Despite creating a work which now receives little critical praise, this reenvisioning of Shakespeare proved popular with audiences (Boyce 636). This play's popularity increased when Thomas Shadwell converted it into a semi-opera in 1674 (Vaughan & Vaughan, "Introduction" 2).² David Garrick offered another operatic rewrite in 1756, while the Dryden-D'Avenant-Shadwell construction was reworked anonymously into The Shipwreck in 1780 (Kilbourne 34-35). Throughout these adaptations, a trend did emerge that Shakespeare's original Folio text was slowly reintegrated into the scripts used, and, by the nineteenth century, a return to Shakespeare's own text was called for, instead of the musical pastiches which were seen in the eighteenth century (Boyce 637).

The return of Shakespeare's play to the stage did not, however, signal the end of transformations of The Tempest. William Macready's relatively faithful treatment retained Shakespeare's language, although a few scenes were rearranged, but many subsequent performances featured versions of the play which severely truncated Shakespeare's text while incorporating complex scene designs, dance numbers, and musical interludes (637).

During the nineteenth century, The Tempest also gained new life through a dramatic sequel, Ernest Renan's Caliban: A Philosophical Drama Continuing "The Tempest" of William Shakespeare, and through Robert Browning's poem, "Caliban upon Sebetos." These offshoots and spinoffs of Shakespeare's final play follow a pattern:

² The Shadwell edition proved so popular that Thomas Duffet ridiculed it that same year with his Mock-Tempest, or The Enchanted Castle (Kilbourne 34; Boyce 636).

although they continue and develop interpretations of The Tempest, they do not necessarily maintain focus on Prospero. As Ruby Cohn points out, the spinoffs "focus on Caliban rather than Prospero" (267), treating the play's central figure as secondary, as critics, particularly starting in the nineteenth century, have shifted focus to the figure of Caliban.

Such a trend has continued through the twentieth century, as writers have selected characters other than Prospero to be their focus. This repositioning of Caliban at the center remains especially common, particularly more recently, as postcolonial theory has embraced the play and read the indigenous Caliban as a symbol of native resistance to colonial rule, representing a victim of colonial oppression. Such postcolonial readings are exemplified in Césaire's A Tempest, which considers Caliban as a militant Third World native.³ Similarly, feminist critics have adopted the text, shifting their focus to the daughter Miranda as they rewrite Shakespeare. For example, Beresford-Howe's Prospero's Daughter considers the growth of Miranda (who here is split into a pair of sisters) under her domineering and traditionally patriarchal father. Both these rewrites and theoretical approaches are successful at opening new possibilities for the original text, but these moves also depart from the tradition of reading Prospero both as the play's central figure and as (a thinly-veiled biographical sketch of) Shakespeare (Murry 110; Boyce 522), thus considering artist as magician and creator. While the Prospero-as-Shakespeare

³ For recent readings of The Tempest as postcolonial literature, see Trevor Griffiths' "'This Island Mine'" and Alden Vaughan's "Caliban in the 'Third World'."

model has its flaws (such as the fact that this might not be Shakespeare's valediction to the theater), it is still an important consideration when examining the play.

The position of Prospero as an artist-figure is part of the appeal behind the overall play. Even as spinoffs shift attention to Caliban or Miranda, Prospero remains a compelling force who calls for and necessitates study. This magus dominates the entire play. His greater than 600 lines in this, Shakespeare's second shortest play, clearly show his preeminence when considered in light of other characters (by contrast, Ariel, the second largest part, has barely 200 lines); the result is that Prospero is the only character here with any true character development (Sturgess 109-110). The allure of Prospero combines with the magical spectacle of the entire play to create an appealing saga of rescue and recovery of a man who can control the elements, and who elects to give up his power in order to regain humanity and society. Harlan Kennedy labels the play "a lifeboat movie before its time," which combines a cross-section of humanity with a revenge plot that culminates in its most dominant figure showing forgiveness (46).

The dominant figure of Prospero has appealed to audiences throughout the history of the play. Stephen Greenblatt writes that "Shakespeare's contemporaries were fascinated by the figure of the *magus*," and this fascination mixed with a fear of both the unknown and an individual's ability to control that unknown (3048). Prospero's magic and extensive knowledge enable him to control the entire world of the island, just as he manages to control the imaginations of the audience. He is clearly a figure of importance, and his powers as wizard suggest a charismatic quality, yet he is not a pleasant person. He is domineering and at times tyrannical, as both master to Caliban and father to Miranda,

and his actions in the play prove he is both temperamental and vindictive--although, granted, he was exiled to the island (Boyce 521). Regardless, the character remains a compelling one, perhaps in part because of the redemptive qualities of the character. The Tempest is a play about transfiguration and transformation, as well as forgiveness, and Prospero is both the root of this transformation and transformed himself (522). When Prospero returns to society at the end of the play, he is a changed character who suggests the redemptive potential of humanity. This redemptive potential lies at the core of the character, and it provides the basis for his appeal. Coupled with the potential for magic and spectacle, it creates in Prospero a dynamic and potentially flamboyant character, who dominates the stage or screen in which he is presented.

A further reason for Prospero's popularity as a character rests in the biographical reading of the magician as Shakespeare himself, saying farewell to the theater. Prospero's magic may be read analogously to Shakespeare's writing, and, given this play's chronological position, critics have traditionally read Prospero and his speeches as the playwright's "valedictory to a career in the theatre" (Boyce 522). The character's lines, particularly the epilogue, are thus to be read as the voice of Shakespeare. This reading remains popular despite the evidence that Shakespeare did not fully retire at this point, for directors have continued to see the allure of the artist-magician character. Tradition has read Prospero as alter ego for the great playwright, but this same tradition may be extended to those directors who have fashioned their own versions of the play. These creators, who appropriate and adapt Shakespeare's words for their own means, are

appropriating and perhaps both adapting and adopting this appealing alter ego figure as well.

The appeal of Prospero and the play has been clearly evident in the twentieth century. With the advent of motion picture technology, new worlds were opened for Shakespeare in general and this romance play in particular. The Tempest exists in "a world of the imagination" (Bevington 1526), and filmmakers have tapped into this world, creating multiple visions of Prospero's island. While The Tempest is not "the most oft-adapted stagework in screen history" (that distinction appears to belong to Hamlet) (Kennedy 45), Vaughan & Vaughan are probably correct that it has been "the most inspirational to late-twentieth-century filmmakers who privilege the camera's visual potential over the theater's spoken word" ("Introduction" 9).

This potential was actually tapped early. In 1905, the storm from Herbert Beerbohm Tree's stage production was filmed by Charles Urban.⁴ This two-minute scene, which was tinted and colored by hand, was then used by Tree as his company toured, so that he could depict the storm scene without travelling with heavy set pieces (Ball 30). Over the next sixteen years, five other silent film abridgements of The Tempest were produced, in 1908, 1911, 1912, 1914, and 1921. While these silents tended to pick and choose selective scenes to dramatize, the 1921 Pathe film, according to Ball's comprehensive Shakespeare on Silent Film, is a modernization of Shakespeare, showing

⁴ In keeping with Victorian stage traditions, the director Tree played Caliban, dethroning Prospero (McClellan 111).

the early tendency to create radical versions of The Tempest (it is also the only feature-length silent) (266-267).⁵

The Tempest tradition in film has followed two distinct paths: productions have either been filmed plays, which simply move the stage into a studio, or they have been radical transformations of the text. Virtually all of the traditional representations of the play have been produced for television. Kenneth Rothwell lists seven television productions, dating from 1939 through 1979, all of which fall into the former category (282-293). Also falling within the domain of that category are the 1985 Bard video production (intended for educational/library use), and the 1969 Nicholas Young and David Snasdell film, which records the Rafters Players stage production (McKernan & Terris 166-167). Such productions are clearly important for chronicling performances of Shakespeare, but their traditionally conservative manner of presentation tend to hinder the overall interpretation. Herbert Coursen suggests that The Tempest is a work which requires the grander scale of film, rather than the smaller setting and parameters of television ("Energizing" 28-29). While Coursen is clearly recognizing the faults in staid, traditional productions of The Tempest, he is perhaps over-emphasizing the merits of one medium. Vaughan & Vaughan conversely note the fact that the play's visual qualities (they call it a "designer's play") are conveyed through the "technological magic of special effects," noting that the more successful productions are the "cinematic appropriations," not adaptations, of the text ("Introduction" 9).

⁵ In 1916, Triangle signed Herbert Beerbohm Tree to a contract, and he announced he would make a (never-produced) film of The Tempest (Ball 229). This is the first of many never-made Tempests.

A distinction should be made between adaptations and appropriations of the text. The cinematic adaptations of The Tempest are those films which remain closer to the original text. These films are intended to be viewed as Shakespearean productions, whereas cinematic appropriations tend to play more loosely with the text. The result is that these films are not always initially recognizable as Shakespeare. Although appropriations change such key elements as setting, they remain important variations on Shakespeare. For this study, the term adaptation is used for those films which follow the original text somewhat closely and which directly intend to present Shakespeare cinematically, while the term appropriation is used for those films which have more loose connections to the original text. The Tempest films following World War II through the 1960s appropriate the play, while the later films have more clearly adapted Shakespeare.

The more effective and noteworthy versions, particularly for this study, are those productions which radically transform Shakespeare's text into cinematic forms. Directors have chosen to use The Tempest to make statements on both art and performance, just as the play traditionally can be read as Shakespeare's final statement on the theater. Within these reconsiderations and reviews of The Tempest, the Prospero-figure has shown a gradual evolution which reflects changing times.

The first section of this thesis will examine the sound film versions of The Tempest from World War II to 1970. The first full sound cinematic version of The Tempest is the appropriation Yellow Sky (1948), a western by William Wellman which has slowly come to be recognized as Shakespearean rewrite. Prospero here is in the background, as the focus is on a group of outlaws who ride into the ghost town of the title. This film is

followed by the science-fiction film Forbidden Planet (1956), Fred Wilcox's space-age production which promotes its philologist lead, Dr. Morbius (Walter Pidgeon), as a Prospero fighting his own subconscious. These two films are products of the studio system (they were released, respectively, by 20th Century Fox and MGM), and they stand as interesting visions of a literary classic as it was produced at the time. Neither film was marketed or even pitched as Shakespearean rewrite, as filmmakers made pictures in dominant film genres without having to sell the studio heads on adapting a literary classic.

In the 1960s, the Prospero-figure appeared in a pair of further Tempest spinoffs. Yellow Sky was remade as The Jackals, showing once again a kindly old Prospero for the audience, while James Mason starred in Michael Powell's Age of Consent, a film which is now read as a Tempest spinoff in light of Powell and Mason's long attempts to make their own version of the play. Here, links may become more tenuous, but Prospero remains important in these appropriations of Shakespeare.

The second section for this project will consider the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, two major films were released: Derek Jarman's 1979 "art-house" film version,⁶ and Paul Mazursky's Tempest (1982), which updated the story by using a contemporary setting on a Greek island. While Jarman's film was a low-budget production, made on a shoestring budget and given only limited release, Mazursky was able to garner a large budget from Hollywood as he cashed in on star power and his own reputation as an auteur to make and market his adaptation. The films may differ in production quality and budget,

⁶ Some confusion appears to exist regarding the date of Jarman's film. Although many sources list the film as 1980, Derek Jarman says in Dancing Ledge that the film's first showing was on 27 August 1979, and that is the date used for this paper (206).

but the Prosperos here grow closer together. The magus becomes an increasingly more controlling figure, with less redeeming grace. The final section treats The Tempest in the 1990s. This decade began with the release of Peter Greenaway's Prospero's Books (1992), which deconstructs the text. Greenaway's film, which makes use of elaborate electronic special effects, rearranges scenes and lines as the story is told solely by Prospero (John Gielgud), who speaks virtually every word. Greenaway's own status as an auteur and "art-house" director enabled him to create this avant-garde picture in which the iconic Gielgud presents an imposing Prospero. This important film has so far been the latest full-fledged cinematic version of The Tempest, although its appeal remains strong, as it has continued to be referenced in a variety of productions in the 1990s. Although these have been television, and not motion picture, productions, they demonstrate the continuing evolution of the Prospero-figure, suggesting the character's ever-strong potential.

Clearly, The Tempest in general and Prospero in particular are a part of post-World War II culture, as the Prospero figure has grown increasingly darker and become increasingly more important to each subsequent film. Where the Prospero-figure was almost a background character in Yellow Sky, he is commanding and absolutely necessary for Prospero's Books.

Casting becomes interesting when considering the evolution of the role. Yellow Sky's James Barton is an old vaudevillian, a former entertainer, while Forbidden Planet's Walter Pidgeon is the consummate character actor, taking the ambivalent role as Morbius (the sympathetic Prospero). The same "Grandpa" role of James Barton in Yellow Sky is present in its remake The Jackals (1967), with horror star Vincent Price serving as the

wizard. Price is not playing a horror character here, but audience awareness of his other roles plays a part. Mason's turn as an artist in Age of Consent suggests a Prospero in control of the visual. Since then, Prospero has been played in succession by a poet/playwright (Heathcote Williams in Jarman's film), thus maintaining control over the written word, a film director (John Cassavetes in Mazursky's film), thus maintaining control over the visual and aural, and the iconic Shakespearean actor of the twentieth century (John Gielgud in Greenaway's film), who thus keeps control over all of the film's domain as a symbol of high culture in an artistic film. The commanding actor demands respect and authority as the mage Prospero, who has become larger than any one role and has turned into the symbolic figure of Sir John Gielgud.

Relying on such radical adaptations and transformations may seem tenuous, but the connections are present and available. This project will trace the representation of the character of Prospero through cinematic interpretations, through an examination of each picture's cinematic style. The depiction of each Prospero will be considered through the manner in which that character is communicated to the viewer. While some emphasis will be placed on the text, and on that Prospero's relation to the overall narrative sequence, discussion will also consider the use of mise-en-scene, framing, editing, and sound in each picture as Prospero is presented within each vision of the play.

Some of the appropriations and adaptations discussed here may be less commonly recognized interpretations of The Tempest. As this project glances through the "dark abysm of time" at films with less direct connections to Shakespeare, the focus will attempt to be on the Prospero-figure in these texts. Of course, the influence of Shakespeare is

great, and the range of The Tempest is broad. As Harriett Hawkins notes in her essay "From King Lear to King Kong and Back," connections might be drawn to any number of Star Trek or Doctor Who episodes (or possibly any other literate science fiction show) to both Forbidden Planet and its forebearer The Tempest. Hawkins even nominates Obi-Wan Kenobi of Star Wars as a Prospero figure (45). She further suggests that this play might be the most influential of Shakespeare's for high or low culture this century, producing and prompting such works as John Fowles' novels The Magus and The Collector, Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, and Auden's The Sea and the Mirror (n.13 54-55). Russell Jackson further nominates film doctors Moreau, Frankenstein and Caligari as Prospero's cousins (109), while Mariacristina Cavecchi and Nicoletta Vallorani find Dr. Strangelove and mad scientists from Blade Runner and Lawnmower Man are "Prospero's Offshoots" (35-37). There is an inherent danger in the extension of such logic, as Hawkins points out, as it expands farther and farther beyond the text.⁷

However, this project will not attempt to catalog all films related, even distantly, to The Tempest, but to trace the ever-darkening, yet continually compelling, figure of Prospero through the cinematic dramatizations and reconsiderations of Shakespeare's text noted above. While Prospero has often been cast aside critically, his importance to the text (both dramatically and cinematically) remains. As films of the play since World War II demonstrate, Prospero has slowly, over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century, become a darker and more egomaniacal creature. From the virtual stock

⁷ Hawkins title may suggest a further film connection, for at the Fall 1998 PCAS Conference, Carey Smith delivered a paper on "King Kong as Caliban," suggesting another possible appropriation.

character of a kind prospector in a western, to a demanding and controlling ancient wizard in an art-house fantasy film, the spectrum of cinematic Prosperos has slowly developed, reflecting changes in attitudes about the character, shaping perceptions of the deposed Duke of Milan.

"What have we here, a man or fish?":
Cinematic Spinoffs of The Tempest
From the 1940s to the 1960s

Since World War II, multiple cinematic versions of The Tempest have appeared. While none of the films have been extremely traditional versions, the films made from the 1940s to the 1960s have been especially dramatic rewrites, appropriating Shakespeare and moving the play into the very American genres of the western and science fiction. By the 1960s, the story was proving popular enough to lead to a remake and to a minor version set in Australia. Perhaps the most dramatic of these cinematic rewrites (and the least discussed), however, is William Wellman's Yellow Sky, the *film noir* western which shifts the action to the desert.

Wellman's film recasts the castaways as outlaws on the run, who encounter a desert oasis in the form of the ghost town Yellow Sky, with only an old prospector and his granddaughter living there. The focus shifts to these outlaws, led by Stretch (Gregory Peck), but this psychological western remains an intriguing alteration of Shakespeare's romance. As a western, Yellow Sky transforms The Tempest into a new form. Its presentation of Alonso and the other castaways as outlaws on the run from the law and Prospero as a kindly old prospector (with a tomboy Miranda at his side) suggests the film should be considered for its curious decisions to rewrite Shakespeare as frontier adventure.

Yellow Sky has so far received little critical attention, and, in fact, the idea that it is a Shakespearean rewrite seems to be something of a novelty to many critics. Indeed, when it was first released, and for many years after, the Yellow Sky/Tempest connection

seems to have been overlooked. Ironically, Bosley Crowther, in the film's original New York Times review, described it as a "tempestuous tale of lust and greed" (36), but his word selection appears to be merely an apt coincidence and not insight into the story's classic roots.⁸ In general, the connection has been overlooked by film critics.

Shakespearean scholars have likewise ignored Yellow Sky in general, although it is part of the Shakespeare collection in Britain's National Film & Television Archive, as noted by McKernan and Terris in Walking Shadows (164). Harlan Kennedy's discussion of the film within his article "Prospero's Flicks" provides the most thorough consideration so far (45-48), but one article is an obviously too brief examination of this film. The film "metamorphically" transforms The Tempest (Kennedy 45), and these transformations alter perceptions and interpretations of the play.

This western saga begins with masked gunmen robbing a bank and fleeing onto a salt flat, eventually arriving in the ghost town Yellow Sky, which proudly proclaims itself "the fastest growing town in the territory." In Yellow Sky, they find a girl named Mike (Anne Baxter) and her old prospector grandfather (James Barton). The old man has gold hidden in the hills, which the men, who also lust after Mike, hope to steal. The outlaws make a deal to share the gold, but a power struggle ensues between the leader Stretch (Gregory Peck) and the usurper Dude (Richard Widmark). Stretch wins the gun battles,

⁸ In a similar vein, Michael Freedland's biography of Gregory Peck reveals that Charles Laughton told Peck while the two were making The Paradine Case (1948) that he should try Shakespeare. Freedland notes with unknowing irony that this never came to fruition (91). Peck's next film was, of course, Yellow Sky.

and the film ends with Stretch and the surviving outlaws riding away, along with Mike and her Grandpa.

Many of the parallels to the play are obvious. Grandpa, the prospector who helped found the town and who has held out to claim his gold, is obviously Prospero. His granddaughter Mike is a sharp-shooting Miranda, and the town Yellow Sky replaces the island. Where Prospero's kingdom is a Utopia of his devising and control, Grandpa's long-dead ghost town is a similar ideological construct. This ideal place is perfect for Grandpa and Mike until the outlaws disrupt their lives. As in Stephen Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," the town represents an opportunity for change. The Yellow Sky signifies both the rising and the setting sun; eras begin and end under that sky, and, through the course of the film, Stretch and his men, as well as Mike and her Grandpa, change their ways.

In this Shakespearean rewrite, Caliban is an entire tribe of dangerous Apaches, who once worked for Grandpa and who "still hellraise through town on idle days" (Kennedy 47). As Caliban is thus relegated to a menacing cameo, and with Prospero bedridden for the latter half of the film, the focus of this Tempest is necessarily shifted to the outlaw castaways, who ride out of a desert sandstorm to reach the ghost town. However, the depiction of Prospero remains important. This Prospero, in the guise of an old prospector, prompts the outlaw Stretch to redeem his ways.

The relationship between Stretch and Grandpa is key. As much as Stretch's cynicism is eroded by this Prospero's wisdom and "the wonder of his Miranda" (Buscombe 312), Stretch (acting as both Alonso and Ferdinand) helps Prospero see the potential for

humanity. This outlaw can ride in from the desert storm and represent a new day. Stretch "literally becomes a new man" by shaving his beard and changing his clothes for the first time (McKernan & Terris 164), and he helps initiate and instigate change. Like the sheriff in Crane's story, he is ready to retire from his previous career, as he demonstrates when he returns the money to the bank at the end.

In Yellow Sky, Prospero's magic--possibly the most difficult parallel to transfer to the western--is in his gold. The outlaws are overtaken by madness in the form of greed. The old prospector seems to recognize that the men will tear each other apart for this money, and he leaves them to destroy themselves, victims of their own powerlust, as he lets his spells fall over them. However, Stretch refuses to let the men cheat the old man out of all his gold, showing an empathy which helps prompt redemption. Stretch sees good in Grandpa, recognizing he will keep his word, while at the same time recognizing his own good.

With the old prospector in the background, Stretch's role in the foreground also contains hints of the Prospero figure. He is able to deal well with the old man, convincing him to trust these men, and his authority over the men (three of the four others return to his side during the battle with Dude) suggests a charismatic power, indicative of Prospero. Like Grandpa before him, Stretch enters this territory and claims dominion. In the penultimate scene, Stretch returns the money to the bank, providing the western-outlaw equivalent of breaking a magical staff. Prospero gives up his magic; Stretch hangs up his guns.

The outlaws are the focus here, with Prospero taking a supporting role (Kennedy 47), but this foregrounding of the castaways suggests possibilities for The Tempest. Such a transformation necessitates that greater emphasis falls on Miranda and her interactions with the travellers, as witnessed by the stronger, more independent role of Mike in this film. This Miranda is stronger because, as Harlan Kennedy suggests, here Prospero has "handed [his] granddaughter ... all his power" (47).⁹ With the play's redemption theme now more prominent, the complexities of these outlaws is highlighted. However, Prospero remains an important and compelling figure for this Tempest.

James Barton's Grandpa is a stock western character, the grizzled and gray oldtimer, who has cynically seen it all and who knows human nature well. Here, he speaks in a soft, yet gruff voice, as he remains a quiet figure of the background. His thick, long beard, slow walk, and stooped back all suggest his advanced age; as a grandfather (with no other name), this Prospero appears even older than usual, and the audience may presume he has been on his island an even longer time.

Grandpa is almost always relegated to the background of scenes, and he is normally shot in long and medium shots, creating a distance between this Prospero and the viewer. When he is given clear close ups, he is bedridden, and, although he may garner sympathy, he is still separated from the audience by the frame of the bed covers. Once he is bedridden because of injury, he simply becomes part of the mise-en-scene--Grandpa and the bed are elements of the set, but the action continues despite his immobility. Although

⁹ One possible reading is to see Miranda and Ariel as one. The inherent magic of the gold incites a sort of madness in the men; so too does the magical and enchanting allure of Mike.

he becomes a set piece, the key function of Grandpa does remain, as scenes take place around and beside him. The film's emphasis ceases to be on him (if it ever truly made him the focus), as evidenced by the framing of shots, and Wellman offers in this film a low key Prospero who observes and serves as backdrop for the action.

William Wellman's vision shapes this film, as he merges the western with Shakespeare's final play to reinvigorate the text with possible interpretations. When discussing this film, J.R. Nash and S.R. Ross find that Wellman "demonstrates motion picture alchemy here as he takes basic western dress and turns it into gold" (3950). Wellman's success thus suggests Prospero, as cinematic magic here enchants moviegoers. Each Tempest film seems to blaze new trails and head off in new directions, and Yellow Sky demonstrates possibilities in the first of these cinematic trails, showing a "brave new [west]world/That has such people in 't!" (5.1.185-86).

* * * * *

After Yellow Sky, the cinema would wait eight years for another version of The Tempest.¹⁰ The next cinematic appropriation, and arguably the most popular, is Forbidden Planet, MGM's entry into the 1950s film space race. In the post-atomic age of the 1950s, science fiction began to become an increasingly popular movie genre, and a tradition was born with the release of many films in this genre. This change is particularly noteworthy, for major studios began to spend big budgets to produce many of these films, breaking

¹⁰ In 1953, Robert Helpmann announced he was to direct and star in a film of The Tempest (Walker 121), presumably playing Prospero (although, then, he would have been a relatively young magus). The only information currently available is from a "Show News" column from Elizabeth Frank, dated February 11, 1953, which reported that Helpmann was "to make a 'deep' version of the play" (qtd. in Stec).

from the typical perception of the genre as "kiddie fare" churned out by the poverty row studios. The sudden popularity of science fiction relates to changing American sensibilities following World War II and entering into the Cold War (and its related nuclear age), as well the growing interest in and possibilities for space exploration, which began to capture the country's imagination in this decade. Irving Block, who helped prepare the story treatment for Forbidden Planet, noted that the escapism which the movies provided had to expand, and therefore "Hollywood turned to outer space" (qtd. in Rubin 6).¹¹

Forbidden Planet is a key film in this turn to outer space, as it helped prove that science fiction could be made as adult fare. The attitude that only children will watch is revealed in the film's New York Times review, as Bosley Crowther has to suggest that children "extend an invitation to Mom and Dad to go along" (21). Certainly, Forbidden Planet is not the first or only film of this era to offer intelligent science fiction, but it is the first to present "a future where mankind is spreading out into the universe in faster-than-light starships" (Clarke & Rubin 6), revealing intelligently the potential effects of intergalactic exploration.¹²

Clearly, one of the reasons critics have praised this film is for its strong script. Science fiction author and critic Frederick Pohl, noting the traditional disparities between

¹¹ Although it is not typically cited as a reason for science fiction's growth at this time, the parallel growth in television's popularity undoubtedly prompted studios to put money into lavish and spectacular films which could draw audiences to the theaters.

¹² Other important science fiction films of the era include The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951), War of the Worlds (1953), and Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956). All of these films, of course, take place on Earth, with aliens visiting it.

filmed and written genre work, praised Forbidden Planet as "the first original science-fiction film I've seen that could have made a fine novelette" (Pohl & Pohl 131). John Brosnan similarly praises it over other similar genre films of the period, noting that it is one of the few "which could have had a written basis," perhaps because, as he later notes, "it was originally by William Shakespeare" (73; 121). The connections between this film and the play tend to be universally recognized, even if they are sometimes challenged.

In 1954, Allen Adler approached Irving Block and suggested they combine their talents to write a script treatment for a science-fiction film. Block suggested they use The Tempest, his favorite play, as the basis for their story (Clarke & Rubin 6). Block saw the potential to add "a fresh angle to the repetitive and stagnating science fiction film genre," and he partly accomplished this by adding a layer of horror based in Freudian psychology (Rubin 7). The use of the then-popular psychological terminology helped sell the picture initially. The pair had originally planned to pitch their film--then called "Fatal Planet"--to poverty-row studio Allied Artists, but then they decided instead to aim big, and they pitched the story to Nicholas Nayfack at MGM. Nayfack was particularly interested in the economic possibilities for an invisible monster (although the creature from the Id does appear in outline form when it is attacking the ship's forcefield), and he accepted their bid. The two did not pitch the film as Shakespearean in origin. Cyril Hume wrote the screenplay while working with Adler and Block (Clarke & Rubin 6-7).

Critics have traced other allusions in the film. Besides Shakespeare, the film alludes to modern science fiction, such as Isaac Asimov's "Laws of Robotics" (Trushell 82), as well as classic mythology, such as the legend of Bellepheron (Jolly 84-86), the

Garden of Eden, and the magical way wild animals are charmed by the chastity of a young woman (Clarke & Rubin 6-7). The terrifying Id-creature has been defined as part of "a space-age Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (Schelde 148), an updated Grendel (Hodgens 85), and as Beelzebub, in a parallel to the eighteenth-century novel The Devil in Love (Kyrrou 93). Merrell Knighten has suggested the Id-creature and Morbius be read as parallels to Marlowe's Dr. Faustus (36-37).

Despite the film's literary roots, MGM did not begin with ambitious plans for the picture. The connection to Shakespeare was hidden at the time (perhaps because of fears the literary link would hurt the film). The actors clearly were unaware of the parallels: Leslie Nielsen said in an interview with Bill Warren that such parallels "never occurred to [him]" (26); Richard Anderson also revealed in an interview that "while the film was in production, no one seemed to realize" the connections (Weaver & Weaver 31). The studio, meanwhile, began the production with plans for a B-picture, given its initial budget (Von Gunden & Stock 130), and those involved considered it simply a well-made program picture (Weaver & Weaver 29). Plans for such a program film explain why Fred McLeod Wilcox was selected to direct despite his lack of experience with genre fare. Wilcox was a dependable company director fulfilling an assignment.¹³ The studio's initial conception of this as a B-movie is evident in the cast, for Walter Pidgeon, despite being an established character actor, was not a box-office draw, and Leslie Nielsen was appearing in only his second film. The rest of the cast was made up of young talent (Clarke & Rubin 28).

¹³ Wilcox's most famous film is Lassie Come Home (1943). Although he made multiple films for the studio, he was regarded as a B-film director (Von Gunden & Stock 128).

Initial budget was less than a million dollars, "the dividing line which separated it from the first class A productions" (Clarke & Rubin 16). However, once set design and construction began, the budget grew. MGM's tendency towards spectacle worked in Forbidden Planet's favor, and, once filming was complete, the studio had completed expenditures totalling \$1,900,000 (Rubin 5), making this the first large budget science-fiction film "tailored for the screen" (Clarke & Rubin 6).

The plot does suggest clear parallels to The Tempest. In the year 2257 AD, a United Planets spaceship lands on the planet Altair-4, hoping to discover what has happened to a previous mission over twenty years before. The ship's crew discover once they are there that the mission's only survivor is Dr. Morbius (Walter Pidgeon), a philologist who now lives on the planet with his daughter Altaira (Anne Francis) (born on the planet after the original ship landed) and his robotic servant Robby the Robot.¹⁴ The earlier crew were all torn to bits by some unseen force, and Morbius has lived on the planet in peace until the new ship arrives. The planet was previously inhabited by the Krell, an advanced race of people who built enormous cities with highly developed technology beneath the surface of the planet. The Krell, too, mysteriously disappeared at some point prior to the arrival of humans.

Morbius is insistent that he does not want to return to Earth, and, at night, crewmen are murdered viciously by a mysterious, unseen force which rips the men apart, as the earlier menace returns. As the invisible monster attacks the ship, a cut to Morbius

¹⁴ Robby was played, alternately, by Frankie Darro and Frankie Carpenter, who wore the robotic suit, and Marvin Miller, who provided the voice (Clarke & Rubin 24), although the credits list Robby as having "played" himself.

reveals he is in the midst of a nightmare. When confronted by Adams and Ostrow, Morbius reveals he has used a "plastic educator" built by the Krell which, although it nearly killed Morbius the first time he used it, has enhanced his intellect. Morbius uses his enhanced mental capacity to begin to understand Krell technology (the knowledge allows him to build Robby) and to control this planet.

Aided and enhanced by Krell technology, Morbius' subconscious has manifested as a powerful, destructive force (the creature of the Id). With Robby unable to protect anyone (he has been programmed to never harm a human, so he is unable to act against his master's subconscious), the surviving crew and Morbius appear doomed. In the climactic final scenes, Morbius shouts to the rampaging demon, "I deny you! I give you up!" and this confrontation appears to save the others, although Morbius collapses under the strain. In his last words, he instructs Adams to destroy the planet using the Krell technology as he leaves in his ship. Morbius then dies, a victim of his own dangerous mind, although he appears at death finally to have achieved peace.

Some parallels to Shakespeare are obvious. The enchanted isle has become the mysterious planet Altair-4. Morbius the philologist/scientist is Prospero the magician, and both maintain control of their worlds through their evolved knowledge, particularly knowledge of the written word. Krell technology and its ability to expand the human mind replace Prospero's library of magic books (Cavecchi & Vallorani 35). Miranda is now Altaira, and Commander Adams (Leslie Nielsen) is Ferdinand.

The characters of Caliban and Ariel have traditionally received the most emphasis in discussion of the parallels. The standard reading tends to suggest Ariel is Robby the

Robot, and Caliban is the Id-monster (or, at least, the Id-monster is inserted into "the hole where Shakespeare had plugged Caliban" [Pohl & Pohl 132]). However, several critics have suggested alternate possibilities for these parallels. Pauline Kael, for instance, has offered two different conceptions of the characters: in a programme note, she notes that "the lumbering Caliban, 'not honoured with a human shape,' becomes Robby, the friendly robot," while she finds that Miranda and Ariel have been merged in Altaira (prompting an interesting parallel to Yellow Sky's Mike) (qtd. in Johnson 23). However, Kael's Forbidden Planet entry in her own 5,001 Nights at the Movies reveals that she has returned to the more conventional thinking, with Altaira solely the daughter, Robby the sprite, and the Id-monster Caliban (194). Daniel Fineman suggests that Robby's mechanical nature correlates to the earthly being Caliban, thus making the monster Ariel, as the sprite did Prospero's bidding just as the Id-monster subconsciously does for Morbius (807). Insistence on labeling Robby as one or more role suggests the character's appeal and malleable nature.¹⁵

These attempts to label more than one character as Caliban reveal the protean nature of "the beast against which humanity identifies itself" (Youngs 215). Such readings enforce the reading of Caliban as other, but they often overlook the positioning of the Prospero-figure in this film. Here, Prospero's own fears bring destruction to his island, as he is unable to control the magic which gives him power.¹⁶ The knowledge which allows

¹⁵ The popularity of Robby led to the genesis of Invisible Boy (1958), in which Robby returned to the silver screen, prior to his continued use as a "guest star" on various television series.

¹⁶ In order to further suggest Morbius' destructive power, the monster's face in outline form was designed to resemble a distorted version of Walter Pidgeon's face (Pohl & Pohl 134).

the scientist to define himself as superior is that which also crushes him. The protean nature of Prospero, then, must be considered.

In this retelling of Shakespeare, the Prospero-figure Morbius is the center of an entire world, controlling an even larger place than his literary antecedent. Man has not yet found other life forms in space, and thus Morbius' knowledge--of an entire civilization and its inhabitants--is "unique and momentous" (Clarke & Rubin 54), for he is the possessor of knowledge which none other may claim. Steve Rubin suggests Morbius may possess a greater and more concrete power than Prospero as he considers the technological and material resources made available to Dr. Morbius (10). However, this may be extended further to suggest that Morbius' power is greater because he is the only one who can possess it. Whereas we may assume others, such as Sycorax and even Ariel, have control of some forms of magic, we know that Morbius is the only one with this ability, for when Doc Ostrow (Warren Stevens) attempts to claim the same knowledge, it kills him.

The power possessed here also appears to be greater, for it cannot be controlled. Morbius does not have the option of leaving Altair-4; to break his staff is to destroy the entire planet and himself with it. The invasion of Adams and his crew disrupts Morbius' peace and causes him to lose his power. On an MGM Parade segment previewing the new film, Walter Pidgeon (as narrator and host of the show) discusses the flying saucer which brings "the earthmen who invade our planet." Such language is an inversion of the typical science-fiction plot (i.e., flying saucers bring Martians to invade Earth), but it does indicate the possessive control maintained by Morbius, whose planet and home is invaded

by men attempting to take him from his world. The result of such a mission is the destruction of an entire planet and the death of nearly an entire ship's crew.

Morbius' role, then, is as a "reluctant Prospero" (Diether qtd. in Trushell 84), who attempts to drive away Alonso and Antonio, rather than force them there. Such a reading of the character suggests an ambivalent nature for Morbius; his mistakes and "mad scientist tendencies" are somewhat understood. He has abused his power, yet Adams and his men can sympathize--and perhaps empathize--with his plight. As the ship escapes from Altair-4 at the end of the film, Adams tells Altaira that, once man has achieved at the levels of the Krell, Morbius' name will shine "like a beacon in the galaxy." Despite his failings here, as he became too consumed by his own intellectual abilities, Morbius will be remembered (eventually) as an heroic pioneer who stepped ahead of mankind in the name of knowledge.

Morbius' nature as an intellectual appears to be the source of some of the ambivalence surrounding the character. Despite and because of his tremendous intellect, Morbius is deemed dangerous. This attitude may be linked in part to the time of the film's making, when an anti-intellectual sentiment was widespread (Sutton 116; Trushell 85). Such "anti-egghead" concerns clearly work against the philologist Dr. Morbius, who Kennedy defines as "Mr. Intellectual Machismo" (47). In the post-war era, the scientist-intellectual became a figure of distrust, much as Prospero falls into disfavor because he devotes his time to his books. The scholar is in danger of becoming too consumed by his (or her) studies, and Morbius--like Faustus--falls into that trap. This Prospero-figure thinks he and only he may decide who will share in this knowledge. Morbius further

becomes a victim of his own studies when he exceeds his own ambitions, as the result of his research becomes that which destroys him (47). He is clearly presented to the audience as an intellectual in the sequences in the Krell laboratory, in which the solitary figure of Morbius is surrounded by enormous scientific equipment. Computers blink and hum around him as he surveys his domain. Dr. Morbius, the intellectual, fits perfectly within the futuristic and mechanised world of the Krell, as his intellect allows him to control the technologically advanced lab and the Krell's entire subterranean civilization.

In appearance, Dr. Morbius suggests a film villain--he dresses in black, wears an immaculately trimmed beard (which comes to a "devil-like" point), and he seems coldly scientific, suggesting an evil scientist. His eloquent diction and commanding presence give him authority and control for all of his scenes, and his shadowy figure--Morbius is darkly lit in contrast to the others--appears to be a villainous one. Sutton even suggests he evokes Fu Manchu (115), and his obsessive control of the planet in general and his daughter in particular do suggest maniacal tendencies. However, as Sutton further points out, even though this Prospero is "painted . . . in dark colors, . . . his home has seductive, cheerful beauty," and he truly does "care about mankind's future" (116). His home's subdued yet cheerful colors (including the garden) contrast with the harsher colors of the lab, where Morbius gains his power. The film suggests that the enemy lurks in everyone, and therefore Morbius, who realizes his mistake and confronts his own subconscious, shows a redemptive escape from this terror. Despite his villainous air and mistaken judgement, Morbius/Prospero is in the end redeemed through his actions and by those who visit his island. This Prospero has his own musical theme--an electronic progression

of chords which, in sterile sound waves, remind the audience of his cold, ambivalent personality.

In this mid-1950s Tempest, Prospero has become a would-be maniacal scientist, whose primary occupation is philologist, maintaining knowledge through control and understanding of words. Knowledge literally is power in Forbidden Planet, as Morbius is destroyed by the knowledge he attempts to use. The shift to a science-fiction setting allows for cinematic spectacle, but the film remains the story of Prospero/Morbius. Morbius' nightmares, as manifested in the form of the Id-creature, wreak havoc upon the castaways, as his magic, and this entire world, is brought crashing down upon him. For once, Prospero loses control, rather than relinquishing it. Adams sees that, in the future, Morbius will be regarded as a hero to all for what he did, but in the present of the film, he is a defeated magician, whose spells (and whose Caliban) overcame him.¹⁷

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The late 1960s brought two Tempest spinoffs to the screen. Following Forbidden Planet, The Tempest appeared on British television in 1956 and 1968, and on American television in 1960, and an "amateur" film was released in 1969, but all of these were simply filmed recordings of stage plays. However, a pair of derivative adaptations may be briefly examined: The Jackals (1967) and Age of Consent (1969).

¹⁷ In 1985, Bob Carlton's stage sequel to Forbidden Planet, billed as "Shakespeare's Forgotten Rock and Roll Masterpiece," premiered. The rock musical appropriated Shakespearean elements from several plays, and the characters took the names of their classic antecedents (e.g., Morbius was rechristened Dr. Prospero). In 1985, Methuen's New Theatrescripts published this play's script.

The Jackals is a remake of Yellow Sky, which changes the setting to the Transvaal in South Africa in 1883. The plot is virtually identical, and the film, which was directed by Robert Webb, attempted to cash in on W. R. Burnett's fame as the writer of the original story. In general, this picture has been ignored, and, considering that it basically reshot Wellman's film in color with less atmosphere, this is not surprising. However, the presence of Vincent Price makes the film somewhat noteworthy for this discussion. Price plays Oupa the Prospector, who lives in the town of Yellow Rock with his daughter Willie, or Wilhemina (Diana Ivarson). Into the town ride a band of outlaws (the "jackals" of the title), led by Stretch (Robert Gunnar), and the plot remains the same.

Although the Grandpa/Prospero figure is once again relegated to the background, Price enjoys a greater screen presence than Barton. The classically-trained Price spent the vast bulk of his career in horror films, and thus the casting is significant. Although Oupa in The Jackals is still the sort of kindly, agreeable old-timer that Grandpa is in Yellow Sky, with a gruff beard, ragged hat, and stooped posture, viewers will recall Price's other, more diabolical roles. Harlan Kennedy suggests that Price plays the role of Prospero to some extent in the many Roger Corman/Poe films he made, and the memory of all of those roles earlier in the decade are evoked when he finally does play the part (49).¹⁸ Thus, despite the kind portrayal of this Prospero, the cinematic trappings and traditions surrounding Vincent Price suggest a turn towards a much darker figure.

¹⁸ Price, of course, had earlier played Prince Prospero in Masque of the Red Death (1964).

The other spinoff, Age of Consent, is based on a Norman Lindsay novel. While making this film, its director Michael Powell and star James Mason (they were also its co-producers) decided to make a film of The Tempest, and this film has since been viewed as a derivation (McKernan & Terris 166; Kennedy 45). Its plot does contain intriguing parallels to the play. Artist Brad Morahan (Mason), having lost his Muse, returns to his native Australia with his dog Godfrey and sets up shop on the Great Barrier Reef, where he is inspired to paint Cora (Helen Mirren), a young girl who doesn't mind posing in the nude. By the film's end, Brad and Cora have begun a romantic relationship together on the island.

In the most basic parallels, Brad is Prospero (although his romantic inclinations also make him Ferdinand), and Cora is Miranda. Cora also represents a sort of Ariel, while her mother Ma Ryan (Neva Carr-Glyn) is the Sycorax figure (McKernan & Terris 166). Cora's role as Brad's artistic inspiration serves as his magic and the source of his power, which appears to be directly tied to her in this version.

As Tempest adaptation, this film is mainly a curiosity which results from Powell's long-held hopes to produce a film of Shakespeare's play.¹⁹ While making Age of Consent, he and Mason decided they would coproduce the film, with Mason as Prospero, Mia Farrow as Ariel (Powell 370),²⁰ and Malcolm McDowell as Caliban (533), and with music

¹⁹ In 1952, Powell had first hoped to make the film with John Gielgud as Prospero and Moira Shearer as Ariel, although he was only able to interest Gielgud in the potential project (Powell 369-370).

²⁰ Farrow, of course, did play the free-spirit Ariel in A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy (1982), Woody Allen's Bergman/Shakespeare homage.

by Andre Previn (513). Despite his many plans, Powell never found funding for his film, leaving Age of Consent as arguably his only cinematic version of The Tempest.²¹

Age of Consent may be a minor version of the Tempest, but its reconsideration of Prospero as artist anticipates the changing perception of that figure over time. Just as Price's role in The Jackals anticipates the ever-darkening portrayals of the sorcerer, so too does Mason's role in this film anticipate the ever-more controlling Prospero figures. Here, Prospero is an artist, a creator who can control the visual. His magic is based in his artistic power. As more films have been made, the subsequent Prosperos have claimed more and more power and control. As the 1960s ended, the Prospero figures of Oupa the Prospector and Brad Morahan the artist presage the later Prosperos to come.

²¹ At least part of Powell's script treatment still exists, and his plans were to include an opening scene in which Prospero was deposed, and this sequence was to include Galileo, another man who became engrossed in his studies (Powell 509-512).

"Show me the Magic!":
The Cinematic Prosperos of the 1970s and 1980s

In the 1970s and 1980s, the film versions of The Tempest became more direct adaptations of the play. As appropriations, the earlier films were derivative spinoffs which drastically rewrote the original text without acknowledging the source, while the more recent films have remained closer to Shakespeare in script, concept, and production. These adaptations were deliberately based and marketed as Shakespearean in origin, as they intended to present and recreate Shakespeare in new ways. While the play was also presented in "straight" fashion on television and for video during these two decades, the two cinematic versions made during this period are less traditional representations of Shakespeare.²²

Of the two Tempest films from the late 1970s and early 1980s, the earlier of these two is an oft-forgotten film which deconstructs Shakespeare's text and suggests unique possibilities in its interpretation. Derek Jarman's The Tempest is a low-budget film which appears to have been forgotten by many film scholars since its debut.²³

The Tempest is only Jarman's third directorial effort. Jarman, who was in his late thirties when he made this film, often focuses in his works on homosexuality as well as on the very nature of art. This preoccupation with creative powers and the artistic

²² A third cinematic version almost appeared in this period. Animator George Dunning, best known for Yellow Submarine (1968), worked on a feature-length cartoon of the play from 1974 until his death in 1979; his "Sketches for the Tempest" were showcased in A Tribute to George Dunning (1979) (McKernan & Terris 167).

²³ One possible reason this film has been lost is the fact that it is not currently available on video. England's Channel 4 did air the film in 1994, but it remains a seldom-screened picture (Coppedge, "Jarman" 12).

imagination stems from his background training in art (Monaco 280; "Interview"14). An independent director, Derek Jarman struggled throughout his career to raise money for his films, and "his first seven features were produced for a combined cost of only \$3 million" (Monaco 281). Despite his low budgets, Jarman, whose influences include Jean Cocteau, Kenneth Anger, and Ken Russell, has made multiple experimental films which stylishly challenge form while considering the role of art in society, and The Tempest reflects these concerns (280).

Derek Jarman's vision for a Tempest film appears to be linked to a long-standing fascination with the Renaissance in general and this play in particular. His personal film canon, which is comprised of ten feature films (Coppedge, "Jarman" 12), includes several which are concerned with the Renaissance: Jubilee (1978), in which Queen Elizabeth I is transported 400 years in the future; In the Shadow of the Sun (1980), a film about Dr. John Dee; The Angelic Conversation (1985), which focused on Shakespeare's sonnets; Caravaggio (1986), about the Renaissance painter; and Edward II (1991), based on Marlowe's play.²⁴ Jarman's interest in the period seems to relate to his own interrogation of English culture, and in particular his fascination with the enigmatic and powerful figure of John Dee (O'Pray 101, 112; Zabus & Dwyer 285-86).

However, the draw of The Tempest appears to have been particularly strong on Jarman. Jarman has said that The Tempest obsesses him (Jarman 203), for he is attracted

²⁴ For discussion of all of Jarman's films, see Dreams of England, by Michael O'Pray, and By Angels Driven, edited by Chris Lippard.

to "the concept of forgiveness" found in the drama (202). As Jarman revealed in an interview, he first envisioned a Tempest production for the stage in 1969, with "the Round House [Theatre] flooded all the way round the outside, with rocks--big inflatable rocks--in the centre, and the audience on this island"; "trampolines and tightrope walks" were to fill the space of the theater (14). Jarman even discussed these designs with John Gielgud, arguably the most famous portrayer of Prospero in the twentieth century, but this stage version was never mounted.

In the 1970s, Jarman began to see greater potential in films than in staged plays. Feeling that most theatrical productions lacked "a sense of fun" (Jarman 203), the director, who believes "Shakespeare would have loved the cinema" (194), sought to avoid the stuffiness he found in The Tempest on stage. Instead, he hoped to make an accessible and enjoyable version. Jarman thought that part of the answer was that he did not need merely to reproduce the play, so he attempted to create a balance, with a production which was part film and part play at the same time ("Interview" 14). Jarman's first attempt to find this balance was a 1975 cut-up of Shakespeare's text, "in which a mad Prospero, rightly imprisoned by his brother, played all the parts" (Jarman 183); obviously, as others have noted, this earlier version bears a fascinating similarity to Greenaway's film (Harris & Jackson 91; Lanier 195). Jarman abandoned this plan for Prospero in Bedlam and opted for a less experimental script, although his version does still restructure Shakespeare ("Interview" 14).²⁶

²⁶ According to Coppedge, a total of 961 out of 2039 (or roughly 47%) of the original lines are retained (which is in keeping or ahead of most filmed Shakespeare), although much of the text is transposed and out-of-order, as in a dream ("Jarman" 14).

This restructuring of Shakespeare is obvious from the start of the film, which begins with a rhythmic, deep breathing which runs over a blue-tinted storm scene at sea. Shots then alternate between a sleeping Prospero, tossing in his sleep and muttering lines to himself, and a ship struggling in the storm. The breathing continues throughout this prologue, muffling Prospero's already whispered words. Here, "the tempest itself emanates from Prospero's nightmare, with the mariners' cries ... echoing through Prospero's disturbed soul" (Crowl 5). Jarman explained that this dream format "enabled [him] to take the greatest possible freedom with the text" (188), and this format allows his interpretation to take shape. The final sequence, in which Prospero in voice-over speaks the epilogue over a shot of the still-sleeping mage, reveals that the entire film has been his dream, as "the film conceives of the play as a product of Prospero's nightmare/dream vision" (Crowl 5); indeed, the film's action appears to be a manifestation of the wizard's vision (Wheale 54). With the action occurring "in Prospero's wide-screen cranium" (Zabus & Dwyer 277), the film text has become a "dreamwork" (Wheale 55).

This dream expands beyond the initial storm sequence to reveal that Prospero's island is in fact a Palladian mansion, in which all of the characters interact and the post-storm action occurs. Narratively, Miranda is shown sitting up fearfully in bed, as though she were experiencing a nightmare; she thus "shares the fearful dream" with her father (Coppedge, "Jarman" 13). Cinematically, the dream encompasses the entire filmic text. The blue filter indicates that the film remains a visualization of the dream. All shots which occur outside the mansion are filmed through this filter; the color "distances the audience from realism" (Coppedge, "Jarman" 13) and establishes an "illusory quality" (Harris &

Jackson 91). This "derealizing" effect removes these scenes from a possible reality, leaving them in Prospero's mind (Holderness 72). Jarman tells that he "was desperately anxious that the exteriors should not look real" (203), allowing him "to give a hallucinatory sense of the action" (Wheale 52).

Even after Prospero has supposedly woken and the dramatic action begins to occur, film clues suggest that "the entire film is his dream" (Lanier 195). Jarman's continual use of the blue filters is just one means for viewers to recognize that they still witness a dream. The "deep somnolent breathing" of Prospero's dream vision stops when he sits up in bed (Wheale 52); however, it is initially and immediately replaced by the wind, as one airy sound simulates another. Flashes of blue lightning illuminate rooms in instantaneous reminders of this film's dream source, and Ariel, who even blinks on screen in a blue flash, is often highlighted (or haloed) in a bath of the same blue light.

Other elements of the film's mise-en-scene also suggest the film is the product of Prospero's subconscious. The costumes do not (and cannot) suggest a specific time. Walter Coppedge suggests that Jarman may be "the first filmmaker to detemporalize the classics" ("Jarman" 12), and Yolanda Sonnabend, the film's designer, said that "Derek was ahead of his time. It is fashionable now to combine periods, psychologically and sartorially; Derek anticipated this" (78). The characters' costumes, then, mix and match over different eras, with Prospero described as being both "dressed in a Romantic style" (Holderness 72) and "like a dishevelled early eighteenth-century squire" (Wheale 57), while Miranda "bursts the seams of a tight Regency decollete" (Holderness 72-73), her hair "plaited into wisps and tails which are nicely balanced between 1610 and 1976,

neither elf-locks nor dread-locks" (Wheale 54-55). Such eclectic use of design enables and prompts the film to exist outside of a specific time, allowing the film's decor to appropriate a dream-like state. In his disparaging review of the film for The New York Times, Vincent Canby felt that the use of costumes from different eras, which he reports Jarman intended to illustrate "the timelessness of the play," simply produces "a limbo" (20). Although the purist Canby is critical of this more radical decision, he accurately describes what Jarman creates in this vision. This Tempest, as a dream, represents a form of limbo, in which times run together.

The film's lighting also contributes to the dream motif. The Tempest is predominately dark, which is the result of a conscious effort by Jarman to obscure shots in shadows. He reveals that, after early rushes were not satisfactory, he and lighting coordinator Peter Middleton "decide to let shadows invade"; as "boundaries disappear," Jarman's vision ironically comes into focus (194). The reasons for this darkness may be economic as well as aesthetic, however, as Jarman often used one-source lighting for scenes, which allowed quick, and inexpensive, filmmaking. Viewers will have difficulty at the start of the film making out more than dark shadows in some scenes. Slowly, as the dream progresses, shots become more and more clear, but shadows still dominate the scenes. As in a dream, some elements are hard to distinguish.²⁷

A significant component of the dream is the mansion which serves as the island. Jarman's film is "set within the quintessentially British confines of Stoneleigh Abbey in

²⁷ Another contributing factor to the dark appearance of the film is that Jarman blew it up to 35mm from 16mm (O'Pray 217), so some of the darkness may be a result of low-budget filmmaking.

Warwickshire, in the haunted ruins of a fire-gutted manor house" (Zabus & Dwyer 276), and this choice of setting, with its cavernous hallways, endless corridors, and maze-like constructions, continues to suggest the dream. Prospero's mind is creating the enormous mansion, causing it to seem to stretch into the darkness (or the corners of the mage's imagination) forever. As with the lighting of the film, part of Jarman's impetus for selecting this setting appears to have been economic. Having found that most Shakespearean film settings "clash with the language," Jarman "sailed as far away from tropical realism as possible" and sought instead an "island of the mind, that opened mysteriously like Chinese boxes: an abstract landscape" (186). Knowing that his low budget would not allow him to either find an exotic location or build an expansive and expensive set, the director needed to find a location which would help "create a powerful mood which would establish from the start a magical atmosphere" (Hirst 53-54). This island of the mind, then, serves in the film as a construct of Prospero's unconscious mind, existing as part of this sequence of Chinese boxes and serving as puzzles for the audience.

This "high-camp Erewhon" is at the center of the dream vision (Kennedy 48). "The characters fitfully inhabit the great house as if it was too big for them, and they move through it as if it were an unknown island, improvizing an existence within its interstices and circulation spaces" (Wheale 55). Wheale finds the characters out-of-place and out-of-sync in this mansion; they are so because of their (unwilling) participation in Prospero's dream. These characters are part of his mind, and their confusion in this unknown island is because they are figures in Prospero's dream, acting in dream-like manners, and thus appearing to improvise awkwardly throughout the film.

The mansion is the centerpiece of the dream. Scenes filled with shadows remind the viewer that contours (and reality) do not exist inside Prospero's mind or beyond this film's fictional constructs. The soundtrack, which Prospero dominates with voiceovers, his breathing, or his dialogue, reveals the cavernous nature of this world, as lines echo down the hallways. Interestingly, Boyce describes the setting as "an abandoned church" instead of a manor house (637). Boyce's confusion, however, suggests just how central Stoneleigh Abbey is to Jarman's presentation of Prospero. The house, which here serves as his cell and thus the nexus for his existence, is his sanctuary, serving as an empty church for the sleeping protagonist. Here, he is central, and, with his magic, he is the god of the suggested abandoned church.

This god, obviously, is the key figure for Jarman's presentation. The casting of Heathcote Williams creates "an unusually youthful Prospero" (Harris & Jackson 91), played for the first time as "young and healthy" (Jarman 196). Next to an older Ariel, a reversal of traditional casting occurs (Jarman 196). The result, strikingly, is that "the powers he exercises seem to have little to do with either patriarchal authority or avuncular benevolence" (Holderness 72); thus, the youthful Prospero's actions are less easily explained away by suggesting they are the moves of an ancient man. Here, Prospero's forgiveness (the theme which captivated Jarman) cannot be rationalized as a man regretfully looking back over his life, but instead this suggests potentially a more naturally kind Prospero.²⁸

²⁸ Those seeking "imbedded biography" in this film (just as critics often read Shakespeare as Prospero) might note Yolanda Sonnabend's summation of Jarman's film in conjunction with his youthful Prospero: "A young man's film of an old man's thoughts" (79).

Interestingly, most critics commented on this Prospero's appearance (beyond his youth). Several noted that Williams' hair evoked Beethoven (as, perhaps, did his costume), alluding to a level of creative genius (Hirst 54; Harris & Jackson 91), but they tended to ignore the fact that such wild, dishevelled hair also suggested a man asleep, tossing about in a nightmare. Ironically, this Prospero who is noted for his youth is twice compared to television's Doctor Who (Harris qtd. in Harris & Jackson 91; Wheale 57), an eccentric and eclectic character noteworthy for both his advanced age (despite a sometimes youthful appearance) and his magus-like ability to travel through time. He is also noteworthy for his eclectic costuming, which evokes different times. When Doctor Who premiered in 1963, the title character was an ancient scientist (William Hartnell) travelling with his granddaughter, suggesting the traditional representation of Prospero with Miranda; the younger Doctor at the time of this film (Tom Baker) recalls Williams through his unconventional appearance and youth. The Prospero-Doctor Who parallel may also suggest a connection between the Doctor's time travels and this magician's timeless dream.

The casting of Williams suggests Jarman's conceptions of the character as a latter-day John Dee. Williams, who is often listed as an actor-playwright (Kennedy 48), was not an actor when he was cast. Jarman wanted to avoid using an established actor in the role (fearing that casting would overpower the rest of the film), so he wanted to cast a non-professional actor in the lead ("Interview" 14). However, Heathcote Williams is also more than a poet and writer; Williams is also a magician and occultist (Crowl 6; Holderness 72; Coppedge, "Jarman" 13). Thus, this lead exercises control over the word and the mind,

through illusion. While Jarman obviously did not cast Williams solely because he believed in his necromantic powers (Holderness 72), the decision is clearly a striking one, particularly given the fact that Jarman refers to Williams as Heathcote/Prospero in his memoirs (191); character and actor become interchangeable. As Williams "performs sympathetic magic" (194), he and Jarman (serving as magician in his role as filmmaker) together create this vision of Shakespeare's romance.

That vision is clearly informed by Jarman's perceptions of the Renaissance philosopher John Dee, a sorcerer and astrologer in Elizabeth's court. As noted earlier, Jarman has focused on Dee in other films, but he specifically notes that his "readings in the Renaissance magi"--particularly Dee, as well as Cornelius Agrippa--"helped to conjure the film of The Tempest (Jarman 188), for he was sure Shakespeare knew (and was influenced by) Dee (189). Through consideration of Prospero as Dee, Williams' younger, healthier character is not as kind as he initially appears. Michael O'Pray suggests that Dee-as-model reveals Jarman's commentary on the Elizabethan political world, which is manifested in a Prospero who is "a wily, Machiavellian politico." Indeed, this is a Prospero who enjoys subtle, manipulative control over others, and, if this film is a "comment on the Elizabethan 'police state,'" then its central figure--modeled after a man "associated with terror, authority and revolution"--is a dark figure, whose nightmares allow him complete control over all involved (112). Through the dream motif, Williams' Prospero-figure appears both kind--as Prospero envisions himself in his dream state--and as controlling--as Prospero reveals himself to be as the film unfolds.

Indeed, Prospero maintains a filtered control over all. Unlike Jarman's original script, in which the story would originate in an asylum, and unlike Greenaway's later approach, in which the Prospero-figure clearly and maniacally dominates the entire text, this Prospero subtly maintains control of the narrative. The viewer is reminded throughout that this is Prospero's dream. Characters appear as he calls for them, and each is seen through his perceptions. The viewer is shown everything through Prospero's filters, a fact suggested by the use of the blue filter to initially indicate the dream.

Jarman's film suggests a Prospero who is not, despite Jarman's suggestion, completely ready to forgive, as he remains in domineering control of this mansion/island of the mind. Despite suggestions that his powers are eroding, "this Prospero has no intention of giving up his art or his power" (Holderness 71). Nor, as Hirst points out, should the youthful magus reject his magic, for "it has served him well and achieved all his aims"; he is "virtually omnipotent," particularly in his mind (55). Through this reading, Prospero's manipulative control becomes apparent, for even if he appears "near-demented and out-of-control" (Zabus & Dwyer 277), this is the presentation of Prospero the dreamer, with all images the manifestations of his own thoughts, so he may have the potential of instability, or he may just want to appear that way.

An examination of the other characters reveals Prospero's (subtle) control. Toyah Willcox's Miranda is at once a child and an adult, maintaining qualities of both, like a dream-figure.²⁸ Prospero's dream vision of his daughter confuses times, as he continues to

²⁸ Willcox was known at the time of the film as a punk rocker; she is now known as a voice on the children's show Teletubbies.

see her as a child, despite her obvious maturity, until he suddenly perceives of her as an adult, prepared for marriage (Harris & Jackson 92-93). This confusion of Miranda's age to Prospero is highlighted through a cinematic trick: Prospero shows his daughter the mirror atop his staff, and the reflection, thanks to special effects, is of her as a cherub-like child, not as the young woman she has become (Shaw qtd. in Watson 36).

Prospero's dream child is an amalgam of his memories, as is his relationship with her, and therefore this film version presents a kinder father than the play has sometimes been thought to suggest. The "manipulative horror implicit in the father-daughter relationship" of the play text is erased here, as the manipulative story-teller presents an image of a concerned father, when in fact that image is of his construction (Wheale 56); the audience sees that which Prospero chooses for them to see. In this interpretation, Prospero perceives himself to be a wonderful, if neglectful, father, not a force of domineering control. He perceives his daughter to be independent and safe, as the reformatted rape scene illustrates. "Jarman's film lightens the aspect of Caliban's sexual threat to Miranda" (61), for Miranda easily chases Caliban away when the threat is suggested, mocking him by aping his high-pitched laugh. Miranda, to Prospero, could not be hurt by anyone, especially not the dimwitted Caliban. This Caliban is more pitiful than dangerous, as Jarman "seeks to soften the harsher treatment of character in the prototype" (Coppedge, "Jarman" 13), and, at film's end, Prospero "seems more regretful than vengeful about Caliban's plotting" (Wheale 61). Obviously, the cruel slave master often found in the play is not present in this film, which belongs to Prospero.

This Prospero's Ariel (Karl Johnson) maintains an interesting and ambiguous relationship with his master. Wheale states that this "difficult faery could never fawn" on the mage, and thus the play's question "Do you love me, master, no?" (1.4.48) is cut (58). However, Prospero at times seems to fawn over his boiler-suited aide. A homoerotic undercurrent runs through their scenes, and the balance of power appears capable of shifting to Ariel at any moment (Harris & Jackson 94). Power never does shift, however, for Prospero continues his control over both narrative and spirit. Jarman's magician cannot see that he is abusing Ariel (or anyone else), and so he continues to control him. In the final scene, Ariel is not granted his freedom, but he instead disappears while Prospero remains asleep; even in his dream, Prospero cannot grant his slave true freedom.

The film's final sequence is a rousing, oft-discussed moment, alternatively praised as inspired (Crowl 7) and condemned as "a bravura effect gone feeble" (Canby 20). In Jarman's version/Prospero's vision of the masque scene, a dancing chorus of sailors surround blues singer Elisabeth Welsh, who single-handedly serves as Iris, Ceres and Juno (Jarman 191).³⁰ Welsh proceeds to sing Richard Arlen's "Stormy Weather" as a final summation of this film's tempest.³¹ The masque here becomes the climax and conclusion of the film, as the artificialities of production are highlighted through the self-conscious musical revue (Zabus & Dwyer 280). Jarman's "quality of irreverence" further establishes that this Tempest occurs in a place removed from reality or even the traditional stage (Wheale 62). The production number is the brightest moment in the film, just as later

³⁰ Although she plays the Nymph, Welsh is credited in the film as playing herself.

³¹ This scene anticipates Jarman's inclusion of Annie Lennox singing Cole Porter's "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" in Edward II.

moments in a dream remain clearer for the memory. Prospero's final vision is one of golden brightness, with the chanteuse allowing a lyrical culmination for his dream.

The song is a comment on Prospero's power to conjure a storm. Its refrain, "Keeps rainin' all the time," suggests his perpetual power to continually create storms, even as the magical revue suggests a happy ending for all involved. Critics have connected this recurring line to Feste's refrain in Twelfth Night, in which he sings "the rain it raineth every day" (Crowl 7; Harris & Jackson 96). However, by solely suggesting a connection to Shakespeare's comedy, these critics overlook a further link to Shakespeare which suggests a darker potential for this song. The Fool in King Lear also sings a stanza of this ballad, and Jarman's Tempest seems to fall between the happier ending of the comedy, which is noted for its madness, and the darker resolution of the tragedy, which is filled with chaos. The Tempest lies in the middle, existing as one possibility, while hinting at another.

By framing his film as a dream for Prospero, Jarman suggests both ends of this spectrum. Prospero's own vision of the masque is one of happy revelry, in which the subplots all resolve; however, the end suggests a darker reading as well. Even though the screen has been bathed in brightness for the song, those characters who suggest happiness blink--through special effects--out of Prospero's existence and off the screen when the song ends. The viewer then sees Ariel escape magically from a slumbering Prospero. He is left alone with his dreams, as the viewers are reminded that the film, despite its seemingly satisfactory resolution, has been the imaginative construct of one, controlling individual.

In the final moments of the film, the camera rests on the face of Prospero. He is collapsed in a chair, presumably too exhausted to release Ariel (Wheale 64), although this possibility suggests he wants to free his servant, and we have no proof this is desired. He speaks in a hushed, tired voice-over: "We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep" (IV.I.156-58). Derek Jarman's film is this stuff which Prospero evokes. It is at once a film about a "gentle mage" (Kennedy 48), and a film about that mage's dark control over text, characters, and audience. Prospero here is a subtly manipulative figure, who refuses to truly relinquish power, even in his dream. He filters all images through his mind, and, thanks to the dream motif, Derek Jarman is able to fashion The Tempest to have a sense of fun and to be about forgiveness at the same time that it deconstructs the possibilities of Prospero as a dark magus, maintaining control while managing his island. Jarman's film marries two conceptions of the text--that Prospero might be both forgiving and self-serving--through the use of the inventive dream framework as presented through the film. The result, as the slumbering Prospero creates a storm within his mind, is a tale "rounded with a sleep."

* * * * *

Paul Mazursky was a leading director of the Hollywood Renaissance of the late 1960s and 1970s. He first made his mark with his directorial debut, Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice (1969), and he followed it with "a series of elegant comedies" which comment on middle-class concerns (Monaco 365). Mazursky, who started as an actor and comedian, was in his early fifties when he made Tempest, and his concern with his own advancing age appears in his reading of the play. Although the Hollywood Renaissance had ended by

the early 1980s, Mazursky still retained his status as an auteur director. His films in the 1970s helped develop this image as a filmmaker creating pictures from a unified view, and Mazursky builds on his previous successes with his Shakespearean production.³²

Although only three years separate them, Derek Jarman's The Tempest and Paul Mazursky's Tempest stand in stark contrast to one another as examples and artifacts of filmmaking. Jarman's film was independently produced and filmed in one location for a small budget of \$325,000 (Crowl 5); in comparison, Mazursky's film was produced for Columbia Pictures, a major studio, and filmed on four different (and global) location shoots for \$13 million (Rothwell 290). Whereas Jarman's film was completely independent, Mazursky's film is the product of Hollywood, as he combined star power with his own reputation as an auteur to make his picture. However, both films are products of their time, offering "era-responsive presentations of the drama's protagonist" (Kennedy 48). These Prosperos live "in the wake of the Sixties," and the depiction of them is informed by their times (47).

Paul Mazursky's vision of The Tempest updates Prospero's story, while maintaining a firm connection to the original. His film is derivative of Shakespeare, but it is also virtually "overliteral" in its translation of characters to the screen (Kennedy 47). The result is a film which may stand on its own as a tale of a New York architect seeking an escape from the fast-paced city in which he lives, but the film also asks for viewers to

³² Diane Jacobs focuses a chapter on Mazursky (as well as discussing his Prospero, John Cassavetes) in Hollywood Renaissance.

recognize its indebtedness to literature. Therefore, while Mazursky clearly appropriates the play here, he does so willingly and intentionally.

Mazursky had intended to make a film of The Tempest for ten years before he finally succeeded. He first wrote a treatment in 1972, in which he envisioned a contemporary story of a travelling troupe of actors touring the Mediterranean; the actors would be preparing a performance of The Tempest on a cruise ship when they would become caught in a storm. The actors would then become the characters (Taylor 6). At this point, Mazursky had never seen the play performed, but he was drawn to the work because of its use of magic and the theme of forgiveness.³³ His original plans were to make the film "in a very Marx Brothers way," "with lots of music and anachronisms but in Shakespeare's language," but, Mazursky revealed, his own chief obstacle was the language. Over the next ten years, he continually planned The Tempest to be his next project, but he feared the film would be inaccessible. In 1978, he shared his vision with screenwriter Leon Capetanos, and the two agreed to collaborate on the potential picture (6).

With Capetanos involved, the characters became attendants at the Cannes Film Festival, but Mazursky realized he was "trying too hard to make a Shakespearean film," so he changed his focus to what drew him to the story: "A man consumed with negative feelings about his past," who could, in the end, "put down his magic and forgive" (8). With this outline, Capetanos and Mazursky could create their vision of the story, and they

³³ Mazursky was partly inspired by Edmund Dulac's illustrated edition of the play text (Taylor 5, 7).

shifted away from Shakespeare's language, to create what they felt was a more accessible picture.

Capetanos could see Mazursky was fascinated by the play as an actor and director, as he was intrigued by Prospero's character (8). The two had planned a comedy, as both knew this film "was going to be funny" (Viera 34), and their initial plans kept with Mazursky's Marx Bros. idea, but the writer finally realized that the play was one of a father and daughter's relationship, and he realized Mazursky was obsessed as a father with this relationship. Capetanos then found that their vision of The Tempest was not of a man who possesses magic, but of a man who people believe has magic (Taylor 9-10). The film then lay in the balance between the wizard who can control the elements and the human who is striving for control, and the pair found their Prospero in this balance.

The script went through three drafts, with each "progressively losing Shakespeare and gaining more" of Mazursky and Capetanos (Taylor 10). Mazursky's original hopes had been for a more magical, "more unreal, more dreamlike" picture, but his emphasis changed. Original plans to film in the Caribbean and for a native Caribbean to play Caliban were dropped, as was the planned casting of rock stars Mick Jagger and David Bowie as Caliban and Ariel, respectively (Viera 35).³³ As the film progressed, it became the very personal vision of Mazursky, Capetanos, and Pato Guzman (the film's designer), as the three joined (along with cast and crew) to put their spin on Shakespeare's last play (Taylor 93).

³³ In an intriguing form of near metacasting, Malcolm McDowell, Michael Powell's would-be Caliban, portrayed a takeoff of Mazursky's almost-Caliban Mick Jagger, when he played Reggie Wanker in Get Crazy (1983).

Their spin is an updating of the original play, resetting Shakespeare for the 1980s. As Kennedy notes, the modernization of The Tempest makes Mazursky's film, paradoxically, the least like the romance play and "the most slavish in its transliteration of characters and events" (47), and the result is that the parallels are easily discernible. Prospero is now Phillip Dimitrious (John Cassavetes), a successful New York architect who leaves the city behind to start a new life on an island in the Mediterranean. His wife Antonia (Gena Rowlands) is having an affair with Phillip's boss, mafioso Alberto Alonzo (Vittorio Gassman), establishing the parallels for villains Antonio and Alonso, respectively. The other castaways take appropriate 1980s roles: Stephano is Dr. Sebastian (Anthony Holland); the clown Trinculo becomes comedian Mr. Trinc (Jackie Gayle); Gonzalo is Harry Gondorf (Jerry Hardin), Alonzo's lawyer.³⁵ Here, Ferdinand is Alonzo's son Freddy (Sam Robards). Caliban is now the Greek Kalibanos (Raul Julia), who serves "the big Boss," while Ariel is alternately the intelligent dog Nino and Aretha (Susan Sarandon), "a sexy nightclub chanteuse who drinks Sprite" (Coppedge, "Mazursky" 19); Aretha has an affair with Phillip, although he imposes celibacy upon both of them, as he perceives his powers are linked to his sexual abstinence. The direct connections for these parallels are underscored by Phillip's fourteen-year old daughter Miranda (Molly Ringwald, in her first role), who is not renamed, thus emphasizing the link to the original.³⁶

³⁵ In a cinematic in-joke, Harry Gondorf is the name of Paul Newman's character in The Sting (1973) (Coppedge, "Mazursky" 24).

³⁶ Ringwald played Cordelia in Jean-Luc Godard's King Lear (1987), playing Shakespeare's "other most famous daughter."

This film strives for a balance between Shakespearean adaptation and modern story. Instead of incorporating Shakespearean dialogue into its script, the film chooses instead to tell its story in contemporary language, thus preventing Mazursky's fear of a film made inaccessible by its own words.³⁷ In order to make the 1980s setting clear, contemporary allusions abound: celebrities are invoked (Woody Allen and John Travolta), and pop music is referenced (the Go-Gos and Devo). The result is a film which is quasi-Shakespeare and quasi-contemporary drama. This film's subsequent version of Prospero is as rooted in 1980s filmmaking as in Renaissance theatre.

Peggy Knapp accurately points out the difficulty of making the play a contemporary film. Its magical subject matter requires a developed suspension of disbelief which does not translate easily to the explicit realm of dramatic film (46). Leon Capetanos realized this as well, noting that, while Prospero on stage may be accepted as a wizard, he cannot be a literal wizard in a realistic film. With Capetanos' and Mazursky's decision to make "a literal film" with a Prospero who is "a little crazy and thinks he has magic," the filmmakers needed to ground their film and keep from just modernizing Shakespeare (Taylor 10). Instead of offering a modern wizard, the pair sought a modern equivalent.

That modern equivalent proves to be an architect. Phillip was originally to have been a writer, but designer Pato Guzman explained that an architect was more filmically involved in aesthetics (Taylor 39). The filmmakers wanted a visual profession which could be depicted on the screen, so Phillip became an architect, instead of the originally

³⁷ An example of a modern-day film incorporating Shakespeare's words is Gus Van Sant's My Own Private Idaho (1991).

planned writer or, as in Cassavetes' suggestion, a director (Taylor 18; Viera 35).³⁸ When Phillip journeys to the island, he has become disenchanted with his occupation. His hopes to create whole worlds, like a magus casting spells, has become "scaled down to creating flossy gambling casinos for" Alonzo. On the island, Phillip returns to "the noble and ancient roots of architecture by designing an outdoor amphitheatre" (Benson 1), as the women and Kalibanos provide the labor, stone by stone. Here, Phillip's creative explorations are to produce a theatre, which may serve as a monument to his estranged wife, an actress, but which also serves to remind the audience of the film's classic roots.

Phillip's creative inclinations are underscored by the casting of John Cassavetes as the protagonist. Mazursky and Cassavetes are both auteurs from Hollywood's Renaissance of the late 1960s/early 1970s, and, as two top-ranked filmmakers, they lend status and authority to this film. As with Jarman's casting of Heathcote Williams, Marzursky also "uses an un-actorish actor better known in other creative spheres" (Kennedy 48). Where Williams was a playwright, with command over the written word, Cassavetes is primarily known as a director (and screenwriter), with command over the visual as well. (Cassavetes, like Williams before him, can be considered an actor, although he is better known as a film director). His subsequent impact on the film and on viewers familiar with his own work as a director is unmistakable. The Prospero figure traditionally dominates The Tempest, but Cassavetes suggests an even greater control for Phillip on Tempest. Andrew Sarris thought the film "play[ed] more like a Cassavetes movie than a

³⁸ Mazursky relates that he met with architect Paolo Solari for research, and Solari was building his own city in the middle of the Arizona desert, proving that he understands Prospero/Phillip's desire to create a new world (qtd. in Taylor 39).

Mazursky movie" (45), while David Sterritt noted in his review that the lead's "influence is felt . . . far beyond the limits of his own quirky performance" (19). Indeed, Peggy Knapp's discussion of the picture refers to it as "Cassavetes' Tempest," not Mazursky's (46-54).

Such influence is hardly surprising, given the nature of the two directors.

Although Phillip is an architect, and not a filmmaker, Cassavetes read the part as partly autobiographical for Mazursky (Taylor 18), and the two film directors began to meld during filming. Cassavetes told Geoffrey Taylor, "I really don't think I acted the part alone. If I got a haircut, Paul got a haircut." Cassavetes even wore Mazursky's shoes for the jogging scene (26). The actor-director further revealed,

I am Phillip. So is Paul. Which makes it a problem when we see each other. I say, "Hello, Phillip," and he says, "Hello, Phillip." (90)

This confusion of the two into one character, who is a manifestation of Shakespeare's figure, reveals the ever-dominant role for Prospero. This is Phillip's movie, as he chooses to tell it.

The present action of this film takes place in one day, but, because of Phillip's multiple flashbacks, the action depicted covers much more time. Phillip's memories then determine what the audience sees, as he exercises obsessive control over the story. This obsession is prompted by Phillip's preoccupation with his own age and his subsequent selfishness (Taylor 38). Just as Jarman provides a surprisingly youthful Prospero, Mazursky offers a non-traditional age for his Prospero. Instead of an ancient magus, Tempest offers a middle-aged one. Phillip confronts his slowly advancing age with defiant vanity. Encountering a gray chest hair, he pulls it out, only to find it replaced with

another. Cassavetes' graying temples suggest a man in his mid-life, but he keeps that hair closely coiffed, and he is immaculately trimmed, even during his pastoral life on the island. This is the first cinematic Prospero to be completely clean-shaven, after a series of men with beards, goatees, or stubble. Phillip may obsess over his island and his new amphitheatre, but he also obsesses over his physical appearance, as he attempts to preserve his youth.

On the island, this Prospero shifts from the expensive suits he wears in New York to a loose-flowing Kimono-style robe, which represents the magician's cloak (Knapp 50). However, the robe also denotes Phillip's status as sovereign of the island. His colorful satin robe is clearly more elaborate, and more expensive, than the white or off-white and plain clothes worn by Aretha, Miranda, and Kalibanos. Even in his pastoral world away from the city, Phillip is the fashionable recluse.

Phillip's possessions also reveal his prevailing selfishness. While he refuses to let Aretha or Miranda have modern luxuries, and he is angry to learn that Kalibanos has a television set on the island (it airs Greek episodes of Bonanza), he has kept his telescope. The telescope represents his talisman and his staff, a possession which gives him greater sight than any one else may have (Knapp 50). Kalibanos' attempts to use the telescope result in his being rebuked, as Phillip selfishly keeps all to himself. Phillip also avoids wearing his glasses, choosing instead to use them as a prop for gesturing. Thus, his face remains unobstructed, even as he might need aid for his aging eyes.

Phillip is holding--but never wearing--these spectacles when the storm occurs that washes the castaways ashore. He simply repeats to the heavens, "Show me the magic," as

the skies darken and a powerful lightning storm begins. The magic's origin is unclear. Phillip may be working through chance, a lucky coincidence which gives him what he needs. Or he may be actually calling upon his powers to create a storm. Kennedy suggests this latter possibility rests in the services of "Rent-A-Miracle" (47), but it is clear in the film that Phillip believes he can control nature.

In a flashback scene, Phillip returns to his apartment to find his wife auditioning for a play which is described as a cross between A Chorus Line and MacBeth.³⁹ (Miranda reports that MacBeth in school was unbelievably boring.) Angry at the intruders, Phillip kicks them out, confronting his wife, and seeming to start a thunderstorm. Maniacally, Phillip screams to the skies, "Tell it like it is, baby," "Once more with feeling," and his mantra, "Show me the magic," as thunder crashes loudly. His face is lit by continuous lightning flashes as he watches his apparent creation through the skylight. "The storm," Mazursky explains, "is Phillip's rage and that is our first glimpse of it" (qtd. in Taylor 46).

Later, Phillip confesses to Aretha that he has powers over "electricals." Clearly, Phillip believes he is able to create these tempests, and he imposes celibacy on himself and Aretha (apparently for the six months prior to the film's start) in an effort to sustain and control his powers. Cassavetes believed Phillip knew he had a connection with magic, but that he might not understand it (Taylor 46). The creators of the film all reported to Taylor that they intended to suggest that Phillip believes he can create the storm (62-63). Phillip's belief in his own power is thus more important than any actual power he might have. This

³⁹ The director is played by Mazursky; his character thus helps spur Phillip to action.

drama's suspension of disbelief is based on the potential of a man to cause a storm rather than in the magical storm itself.

This storm occurs late in the film. Unlike other Tempests, Mazursky's film shifts the titular event to the climax of the picture. Mazursky decided that he needed to transplant the storm to almost the end of the narrative to make the film work; otherwise, he felt he would have nowhere to take his film after such a grand opening (Taylor 8). This textual and structural change allows the necessary reconciliation to occur just after the storm (Coppedge, "Mazursky" 20). Phillip confronts the castaways, who are in essence his prisoners, and he tells them they have all been spared by a miracle. Phillip, now revered by Kalibanos as a god for manufacturing a storm, proceeds to sacrifice a goat. With them all wary of what he might do next, he then looks for reconciliation. Phillip is in control throughout this scene, even though he struggled to control the storm moments before.

While discussion has often focused upon this film's version of the masque sequence, in which Kalibanos plays his clarinet in accompaniment to Liza Milleni's "New York, New York" amidst dancing goats (Kauffmann 28; Coppedge, "Mazursky" 21), comparatively little attention has been given to Mazursky's addition of a closing curtain call.⁴⁰ After the final credits, and a final sequence which shows the newly-rejoined family arriving in New York, the entire cast appears on the terrace of Phillip's home on the island

⁴⁰ The masque sequence is also evoked when Aretha and Miranda amuse Phillip with their duet of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?," but few critics have discussed this element of the film.

and bow to the audience.⁴¹ Coppedge accurately observes that this sequence is a culmination of the film's preoccupation with creative art in general and theatre in specific (the amphitheatre, Antonia's play, the use of Shakespeare to frame and create this tale) ("Mazursky" 24). However, none have discussed the actualities of the curtain call. As Phillip, John Cassavetes is last to step back on stage, as he returns to the island he just left, and he does not offer a full bow, as do all other cast members, only slightly bending his head stiffly towards the camera. As the rest of the cast smile triumphantly for their final gracious bow, Prospero/Phillip/Cassavetes looks solemnly into space. He remains an outside figure from the rest of the characters, refusing even after the action has concluded to truly join with them in their revelry. Their "revels now are ended" (4.1.148), and this Prospero seeks to escape such excited theatricality.

Where Morbius is a "reluctant Prospero" (Diether qtd. in Trushell 84), Phillip is a deliberate one, for he creates the situation himself. Shakespeare's Prospero is obsessed with his books, resulting in his being deposed by his brother; Mazursky's Phillip is obsessed with his age and overall life, resulting in his separation from his wife. His mid-life crisis prompts him to seek out his island, creating what Harlan Kennedy calls a menopausal *Tempest* (45). This Prospero has chosen to enter his island, and he can therefore completely choose when he wishes to exit it. He has no staff to break here, opting instead to break his own oath of celibacy and return to his wife. However, the final theatrical sequence, which serves cinematically to remind viewers of the film's origins, also

⁴¹ Mazursky reports he dreamed up the sequence in New York, figuring "What the hell, what have I got to lose?" (qtd. in Taylor 88).

serves to illustrate the continually obsessive behavior of Phillip. Phillip/Prospero is able, even as he combats his mid-life crisis, to control his family and those surrounding him.

Mazursky and Cassavetes combine to create a controlling and creative Prospero who manipulates (or at least believes he can manipulate) both nature and the other characters.

Both Jarman's and Mazursky's visions of The Tempest present Prosperos in control of the story. Jarman's Prospero dreams the images and events which make up the earlier film, while Mazursky's Phillip causes all of the events to occur. The increasing control of these Prospero-figures suggests a trend which becomes even more apparent in the 1990s. The sleeping Prospero in Jarman's film and the selfish and vain Prospero-figure in Mazursky's picture suggest ever-dominating versions of the magus, as the cinema would find with Greenaway's vision.

"The baseless fabric of this vision":
Prospero's Continued Evolution in the 1990s

In the 1990s, The Tempest has appeared as a theatrical film only once, but it has also been featured in elements of popular culture, showing the pervasive and continual influence of the text on directors and writers. The productions which have appeared have directly intended to adapt, appropriate, and evoke Shakespeare's original text. These productions have presented their respective Prospero-figures as figures of dominance and, at times, of malevolence. Prospero has become a prominent figure with iconic status, controlling both the other characters and the text.

Prospero's role is clearly one of dominance in the only cinematic Tempest of the 1990s, Peter Greenaway's Prospero's Books. Greenaway's film has, even in its relatively short history, garnered considerable critical attention. As an auteur producing an interpretation of Shakespeare, Greenaway's status as an art director has influenced and informed his film. Like Mazursky's film, Greenaway's production has an international flavor, with cast, locations, and funding from around the globe. The British filmmaker combined money from England, Holland, and France, "with technical assistance from Japan" (Lawrence 19) to complete his picture, and it was released as a co-production from Miramax Films and Allarts-Cinea/Camera One-Penta, with additional funding from Elsevier-Vendex Film Four International and NHK & VPRO Television.⁴² While the film was shot in Holland, Greenaway completed his special effects work in Japan, combining film and television shots to frame his movie (Coursen, "Nudity" 173). Although its budget

⁴² McKernan & Terris also name Italy as an international sponsor for the film (170).

was a relatively small \$2.7 million (Turman 105), the film's early use of High Definition Television (HDTV) through a deal with Japanese broadcasters NHK (Greenaway shot scenes using HDTV Video) gave the film a polished and unique look. The result is a lavish, special effects-laden picture which dramatically visualizes Prospero's island as Prospero presents his story.

Greenaway brought his reputation as an art director to this project. Like Jarman before him, Greenaway trained as an artist, which has helped inform and create his distinctive visual style. The director, who was nearly fifty when he made Prospero's Books, makes films which are concerned with "formal symmetries and parallels" (Monaco 233). Greenaway's films are experimental, taking their basis in "metaphor and paradox" (Lawrence 1). The director, who lists Alain Resnais and Hollis Frampton as his two chief influences (3), has created multiple films which consider the nature of the artist/creator-figure: the central figure of The Draughtsman's Contract (1982) is a painter; Belly of an Architect (1986) focuses--like Mazursky's Tempest--on an architect; The Cook, the Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover (1989) is primarily focused on a chef (2). Greenaway's vision of The Tempest, in turn, studies the artist-figure, as it considers Prospero as author. Greenaway's reveals in his films a constant concern with the role of the artist. As Lawrence suggests, Greenaway, like such directors as Pasolini and Godard, raises questions about how the artist can create art out of abstract ideas about that art (5). Such concerns in creative powers inform and define Greenaway's films, especially his reading of Shakespeare, and he attempts to answer these concerns by combining different forms of art. Rather than narrowly relying on just narrative aspects of storytelling, Greenaway uses

the possibilities of film completely, as he draws on his own artistic background to create films which tell stories visually as well as orally and textually.

In Prospero's Books, Greenaway balances Shakespeare's play with a filmic design influenced by Renaissance artists to complete his vision. Russell Jackson even suggested it was "art-historians' Shakespeare," existing as a collage and an homage to various Renaissance artistic influences (109). Although Herbert Coursen suggests the film is making false claims to its intellectual level, serving instead as "self-indulgence" ("Nudity" 166), the film was clearly marketed for those familiar with Shakespeare's work (whether or not this requires intellectualism might provoke a far different debate), and it was presented, like Greenaway's other films, as an art-house picture (Turman 105). Indeed, without a knowledge of the original play, Prospero's Books would likely "be meaningless to the uninitiated" (Vaughan & Vaughan, "Tampering" 17). Besides making films noted for their visual impact, Greenaway's films reflect his interest in and knowledge of literature.

Like Jarman before him, Greenaway has worked on a number of projects which deal with the Renaissance, and Renaissance drama in particular.⁴³ The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover is heavily influenced by Jacobean revenge tragedy, especially John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore (Tran 25; Rodgers 12).⁴⁴ Greenaway once wrote a script called "Jonson and Jones" about Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones and their production of

⁴³ Greenaway has also worked with Restoration drama, as The Draughtsman's Contract, which is set in 1692, evokes such playwrights as Sheridan, Congreve, and Wycherley (Lawrence 5).

⁴⁴ Marcia Pally reports Greenaway's interest in the period began with Ford's play (qtd. in Lawrence n. 2 193).

Jacobean courtly masques. Although it was unproduced, Greenaway dealt here with issues of creating a spectacle from a text, which he has continued to focus on throughout his career (Rodgers 11). On two different occasions, he has dealt on British television with the European Renaissance, producing first "Canto 5" (1984) and then "Cantos 1-8" (1988) as part of the TV Dante project, which attempted to dramatize Dante's Inferno. While working on this mini-series, Greenaway met John Gielgud, who was providing the majority of the narration as Virgil (Lanier 194), and the idea for Prospero's Books was born.⁴⁵

Greenaway is apparently fascinated by The Tempest. He has explained that his fascination with the English Renaissance (and the seventeenth century) stems from his sense that era was a transitional period: just as England was undergoing the changes brought by this new movement, that movement was ending in Europe. The auteur sees Shakespeare's final play as similarly focused upon concepts of both genesis and conclusion; it is a story relevant for both its own time and Greenaway's time, at the end of the millenium (Rodgers 12). Greenaway further reads the play as "Shakespearean self-portrait," the final great character in the final play of the great poet's career (Greenaway 9). Prospero as magician doubles with Shakespeare as playwright, and Greenaway suggests some potential overlap with him as artist as well, as he serves in his role as

⁴⁵ Gielgud first played Prospero on stage at the Old Vic clean shaven, "looking like Dante" (Gielgud, Shakespeare 109).

filmmaker in the same sort of creative capacity (Schwenger 273). Greenaway's title clearly shows the possessive hold which Prospero has over both the story and him.⁴⁶

Prospero is clearly in control of this film of The Tempest. He dominates the action even more than in a typical presentation of the play, for here Prospero (John Gielgud) speaks all the parts for most of the film. Alternately described as a ventriloquist (Kennedy 48) and a puppet master (Tran 23), this Prospero illustrates his control of the other characters by giving them voice. Gielgud provides these lines in voice-over, and his voice is at times electronically modulated to seem different, or, as in the case of Miranda, a woman's voice is heard echoing Prospero's. Only at the end, when Prospero has offered and sought forgiveness and given up his magic, "do the characters he has created come alive and speak in their own voices" (Rodgers 11), for the wizard "only allows others to speak once they cannot challenge him" (Lawrence 148).

Until this moment in the film, Prospero creates all, and it is only through his benevolence and decision to forego his magic that the characters speak even here. The entire world of the island is a creation of Prospero's magic, including those creatures who reside there (Donaldson 169). His spells create the world around him, as well as the action which occurs; Prospero, like Shakespeare, devises the play which unfolds (Tran 23). As in Jarman's film, in which the entire drama is an element of Prospero's unconscious mind, the drama found in Greenaway's film is an element of Prospero's

⁴⁶ The play has continued to influence his work. In 1994, Greenaway published Prospero's Creatures, a novel about that which happened before the play's start (Rodman 39), and he has also written Miranda, a sequel play about what happens after the action of the play on the ship home (Turman 107; Rodman 39; Rodgers 12).

magical desires. Russell Jackson suggests Prospero's Books might be a "deluxe version" of the earlier British film (109), and the two clearly share dominant, creative protagonists, but Prospero here maintains a more direct control. Here, the magus is also the dramatist, creating characters, writing their lines, and choosing when and how they speak (Steinmetz & Greenaway 110). In fact, through film magic, many scenes feature two Prosperos, as "Prospero-the-magician walk[s] by Prospero-the-writer at work in his study" (Hotchkiss 15). One Prospero is taking part in the action, while the other is simultaneously recording and creating it.

Prospero-as-dramatist recalls Jarman's use of Prospero-as-dreamer. Just as the earlier wizard created that film's events, so too does this one. As Prospero pens events, they occur. For instance, Ariel is played by four actors of differing ages--Orpheo, Paul Russell, James Thierree, and Emil Wolk--who appear as the sprite at different stages, to reflect Prospero's description of the character at that moment. The difference here, between Jarman's and Greenaway's Prosperos, is one of intent. Both sorcerers create these films from their imaginations, but Jarman's Prospero sleeps through his creative burst. That sequence is in his unconscious mind, while Greenaway's Prospero devises his version while awake. The latter magus clearly exerts the more direct control, as this Tempest is the product of his conscious mind.

The idea of producing a Tempest based in the psychology of Prospero, a theoretical angle which Herbert Coursen calls "The Tempest as if it were a Henry James novel" ("Nudity" 165), is based on Greenaway's fascination with the books of the title. The director has explained that this is a film about "you are what you read" (Rodgers 15),

for Prospero is defined and shaped by his books. These are the tomes which consumed him when he was Duke, prompting his brother to depose him, and they are the books which Gonzalo saved for him, knowing his love for them.

Peter Greenaway engages in speculation about what books Prospero might have had to inform and enlighten him, and this speculation defines the film. Greenaway suggests in his published script for the film that the film exists in ninety-one sections, each indicating a change in film location (13), and he further breaks his script into three (admittedly) unequal sections of Past, Present, and Future (37; 97; 149), but the film is clearly shaped by the books, which denote large sections of the film. Each book is introduced separately, as the title of each book, as written with a quill (the suggestion is that this is Prospero's hand, yet most of these books have already been written), appears superimposed on the screen. The mise-en-scene is often dominated by the subject of each book.

For example, the first book to be highlighted is The Book of Water. The film begins with it and with a single drop of water. Prospero appears in the opening scene in a Roman bathhouse, immersing himself in the subject of the first book. Meanwhile, book twelve, A Book of Architecture and Other Music, is an animated pop-up book of architectural treasures. The sixth book, A Harsh Book of Geometry, features three-dimensional geometric models, while "pages flicker with logarithmic numbers and figures" (Greenaway 6). Greenaway takes cinematic opportunity to "bring the word and the spectacle together" as he links the texts which Prospero owns with the magic which Prospero commands (Rodgers 11).

The complete list of books numbers twenty-four: The Book of Water; A Book of Mirrors; A Book of Mythologies; A Primer of the Small Stars; An Atlas Belonging to Orpheus; A Harsh Book of Geometry; The Book of Colours; The Vesalius Anatomy of Birth; An Alphabetical Inventory of the Dead; A Book of Travellers' Tales; The Book of the Earth; A Book of Architecture and Other Music; The Ninety-Two Conceits of the Minotaur; The Book of Languages; End-plants; A Book of Love; A Bestiary of Past, Present and Future Animals; The Book of Utopias; The Book of Universal Cosmography; Lore of Ruins; The Autobiographics of Pasiphae and Semiramis; A Book of Motion; The Book of Games; and Thirty-Six Plays. Obviously, these books combine to offer Prospero a more than slightly-developed knowledge of matters, both magical and mortal.

Much has been made of the twenty-four volumes selected and what that number might indicate. Peggy Phelan has offered a comprehensive examination of all possibilities for this number, but perhaps the two strongest suggestions both relate to this Tempest and art. Twenty-four hours are obviously in a day, thus recalling that, with The Tempest, Shakespeare follows the dramatic unities, while twenty-four frames equal one second of film (45), thus suggesting Greenaway's medium of expression.⁴⁷ When asked about the number, Greenaway quoted Godard's reflection that "cinema's truth is 24 frames a second" (Tran 24).

Although the play features only a passing reference to these books, Greenaway chooses to focus on them, creating elaborate effects and scenes with them. This is

⁴⁷ Phelan also suggests that the number of drowned books--23--also has significance as well, since Shakespeare's presumed birthdate and deathdate is April 23 (48).

because the books "are the ultimate reason for all that happens to Prospero" (Steinmetz & Greenaway 109). The magician uses the books "to dominate, subject, and (most stunningly) silence those around him" (Lawrence 5). Clearly, not all books receive equal importance in this system, and the most important for the purposes of this study is the last book, Thirty-Six Plays. Donaldson points out that Prospero's important books are not written by him (170), but this book supposedly is. It is a collection of plays, initialled W.S., written in long hand, with nineteen blank pages at the beginning, waiting for Prospero to complete the thirty-sixth play which he is currently writing and orchestrating, The Tempest. Thus this play, finished last, will take the first place in the collection (as the play does in the First Folio). At the end of the film, as Prospero leaves his island, he drowns his books in a scene which often goes unstaged (Lanier 201). Here the scene is the dramatic climax, as Prospero forsakes his magical past and throws away the magical world he has just created. However, in the final scene, Caliban (Michael Clark) retrieves the play texts, thus preserving for the director the two most important books. Character merges with author here, as "Shakespeare's play becomes the magician's fantasy" (Vaughan & Vaughan, "Tampering" 16).

The blurring of character and author is further confused by Greenaway's choice of Prospero. John Gielgud is the actor most associated with the part, and Greenaway cashes in on Gielgud's past with the character.⁴⁷ Filmgoers associate the actor with his classical past as he lends authority to the production. The film, in fact, was originally his idea.

⁴⁷ Gielgud has played the role four times on stage, in 1930, 1940, 1957, and 1974 (Gielgud, Actor 136-137).

With Prospero a favorite character of his, the actor hoped for several years to make a film of The Tempest, conceiving of it at times as "a wonderful thing to do at the end of one's career" (Actor 136), an idea which Greenaway echoed, continuing autobiographical readings of the character (9).⁴⁸

Gielgud's vision for a Tempest film was never formalized in a script treatment, although he did envision opening scenes dramatizing Prospero and Miranda being set adrift at sea (Gielgud, Shakespeare 115). The actor, who feels Shakespeare must be transformed in order to be put upon the screen (114), talked with several directors over the years (particularly in the 1960s and early 1970s) about completing an adaptation. He approached international auteurs Akira Kurosawa, Alain Resnais, Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman, and Italian theatre director Giorgio Strehler about possibly directing the film, but none of these directors responded (111-112).⁴⁹ Powell and Jarman had both talked with Gielgud for their projects, and the actor briefly discussed a film with the American Peter Sellars (112-113), but he had given up hope to ever make this movie. While working on TV Dante, Gielgud shared his ideas with Greenaway, and shortly after, the director prepared a script for the actor.

The director and actor together present this Prospero. Where Jarman could work with playwright and poet Williams, and Mazursky's vision could be informed by fellow director Cassavetes, Greenaway is able to combine with the iconic actor Gielgud to

⁴⁸ The idea that this film might have been Gielgud's last is also suggested by Vaughan & Vaughan ("Tampering" 16) and Schatz-Jacobsen (143), although he has gone on to many other roles.

⁴⁹ Benjamin Britten had agreed to compose the music for this never-produced film (Gielgud, Shakespeare 112).

present a dominant Prospero who controls images, characters, and scenes. Just as Prospero is creating the island around him, he is writing the play The Tempest, and Gielgud in this film is both creator and player, suggesting that the actor is also potential auteur. Gielgud's performance as Prospero "becomes the source of The Tempest's text, rather than that text the source of his performance" (Lanier 197). Many critics noted the triple conflation of Gielgud-as-Prospero-as-Shakespeare (Tran 23; Wall 336; Coursen, "Nudity" 171), and Greenaway himself suggests "there should be much deliberate cross-identification" among the three (9), but such a consideration of Prospero should expand to include Greenaway as artist-magician. Phelan finds that Greenaway multiplies "the possibilities of reading the play as an autobiography of artist as Magus" (43). Greenaway then is following in the path of Shakespeare/Prospero as he prepares his vision of the island (Lanier 197), for he is deconstructing the role of the author by breaking down differences between creator and creation (Burt 115). Perhaps such deconstruction occurs with the creator of any Tempest variation, but given this film's emphasis on text construction, it is especially important here. Prospero's Books locates the artist/magician "amid the rubble of a postmodern consciousness," as Greenaway places himself alongside both Shakespeare and "the entire British theatrical tradition as exemplified by John Gielgud" (Lawrence 5).

Greenaway serves as Prospero through the magic of filmmaking. While Prospero's Books does use conventional film techniques, it also uses "the resources of high-definition television to layer image upon image, superimposing or opening out a second or third frame within [a] frame" (Rodgers 11). Digital technology expands the possibilities for

filmmaking, and Greenaway takes advantage of these possibilities through special effects. The director, who was trained as an artist, uses the Quantel Graphic Paintbox to create and place images directly on the screen (Greenaway 28; Tran 24). This use of computer graphics, which mixes science and art, enables Greenaway to magically transform a standard film image into a scene occurring in another world (Phelan 44). Thus, Greenaway becomes a Prospero-figure himself as creator and controller.

The two Prospero-figures unite to create the dual-vision of Prospero as both author and magus. The two possibilities are represented visually by the images of one Gielgud, portraying Prospero the wizard, walking by another Gielgud, portraying Prospero the playwright. The image of Prospero-as-Shakespeare writing the text for this film recalls the image in Pier Pasolini's Canterbury Tales (1971) of Chaucer, played by Pasolini, writing the tales which make the film.⁵⁰ While Greenaway could have portrayed one of these Prosperos himself (perhaps evoking both Pasolini's turn as author and Mazursky's pivotal cameo in his film), he chooses to have Gielgud act as both, thus emphasizing Prospero's dominance. Visually, these different Prosperos are established through costume. The overall costume for the character is meant to resemble that of a Venetian Doge, which also establishes Prospero as different from the rest of the characters. While surrounded by nudity, Prospero is elaborately and immaculately dressed, offsetting elevating the magician from and elevating him above the others.

⁵⁰ Richard Burt connects these two films, particularly for their use of nudity, in Unspeakable Shakespeare (112).

His robes also change color throughout the film (Greenaway 12). The wizard's cloak is scarlet, while the playwright's cloak is blue. It also becomes "black when at rest," such as when it functions as a blanket for Miranda (63). Gielgud, white-bearded with short but wild hair, has a look modelled after the image of St. Jerome (40), as this multi-faceted Prospero adds a dimension of religious iconography. His dominance, which is first established through his control of the sound in the film, is subtly emphasized visually.

The overall visual impact of this cinematic vision of the island is an amalgam of Renaissance artistic influences and designs. Prospero's library room is an homage to Michelangelo's own library (Greenaway 60), while the entire island is meant to evoke a Renaissance kingdom, with Italian characteristics (12), as the island (and the film itself) "conjures up a high-Renaissance universe *en miniature*" based in Greenaway's visual background (Schatz-Jacobsen 133). While the term visual feast is virtually a cliché when describing a Greenaway picture, that phrase is still appropriate, as the combination of special effects with elaborate visual quotations of classics in art produces a film which exists on two planes, as both Shakespearean adaptation, where "there is not a word in it that is not in the play" (Gielgud, Shakespeare 113), and as Shakespearean appropriation, where visual additions offer a secondary reading of the text which highlights the importance of Prospero.

Greenaway's paintbox creations of Prospero's books, as well as of Prospero's cell, island, and world, add a second dimension to this film which reinforces Prospero's control and preeminence. Narratively, the picture is Shakespeare adapted, with an important role for Shakespeare's character. Visually, the picture develops this character even further, by

creating a subtext based on the books which inform Prospero. Just as Prospero is informed by his books, Greenaway's vision of Prospero is informed by his knowledge. Prospero's Books re-envision Shakespeare's last play by making Prospero even more dominant. Greenaway and Gielgud together offer this vision of the iconic magus, controlling and creating the action through the respective magics of film, art, and wizardry.

* * * * *

After Prospero's Books, there have been no cinematic adaptations of the *Tempest*.⁵¹ However, The Tempest has become a product of popular culture, appearing in multiple forms as spinoffs and derivatives which suggest a continued malevolence for and the dominance of the Prospero-figure. The history of The Tempest in the 1990s has been one related to television.⁵² Herbert Coursen discusses Greenaway's film in Watching Shakespeare on Television because its use of HDTV introduced television to Shakespearean film (163-176), and The Tempest versions since then have appropriated Shakespeare for television. In the mid-nineties, the play has twice been converted to children's television, in abridged versions for HBO's Shakespeare: The Animated Tales and for PBS's Wishbone.⁵³

⁵¹ The Swedish telefilm adaptation Stormen premiered in 1998, although it is unavailable in the US. Another further spinoff might be the British/Dutch television series Maelstrom, in which Miranda takes center stage.

⁵² Cuban director Tomas Gutierrez Alea attempted for many years to make a Tempest film with Michael Chanan based on Roberto Fernandez Retamar's postcolonial version of the play, but he never managed to make this film (Lopez).

⁵³ Although associated primarily with children, the animated series is "addressed both to adults and to children" (Burt n.32 284). Wishbone has a similar appeal to a diverse audience.

The cable series produced half-hour abridgements of Shakespeare, and The Tempest premiered in 1992, directed by Stanislav Sokolov.⁵⁴ Such editing of the text results in producing an even more dominant Prospero than might have been presented in a full version, thus continuing a trend which manifests in Greenaway's film. This magus speaks most of the text here, and his role as a puppet here recalls and underscores the creative control a director, like Prospero, holds over the story, as the means of production parallels the wizard's magic (Osborne, "Poetry" 115). Although this episode returns to a somewhat benevolent Prospero, the short film offers an interesting image for this main character. Following on the heels of the iconic John Gielgud, this Prospero recalls the iconic figure of Moses. The promotional art for the episode and its video release, of Prospero creating the storm, suggests Moses parting the Red Sea. In the episode, the puppet resembles a wizened prophet-like figure, as his staff, flowing robe, and long white beard recall both the standard look of a sorcerer and that of the religious figure Moses. Like the "church-based" Prospero in Jarman's film and the St. Jerome-influenced one in Greenaway's picture, this televised romance centers on a god-like figure, who evokes religious iconography.

The look of Prospero as ancient wizard is also used for the Wishbone episode "Shakespaw" (1995). Wishbone is a public television series for children in which a terrier named Wishbone (apparently a well-read dog) tells stories based on literary classics which relate to the main plot of each episode.⁵⁵ (Wishbone then plays either the main character

⁵⁴ While this episode was made with stop-motion puppetry, the series used a variety of animation techniques (Osborne, "Mixing" 78).

⁵⁵ Wishbone has also produced versions of Romeo & Juliet and Henry IV, Part I.

or an important secondary character in his version of the story.) Therefore, most of these adaptations are cut to fit into half of a regular, half-hour episode. The Tempest, however, receives slightly more time, for the main plot of this episode is about a production of the play by the pre-teen lead characters, thus continuing the trend of focusing on The Tempest as creative exercise. This prompts Wishbone (voiced by Larry Brantley) to tell a condensed version of the play as the subplot, in which he plays Ariel. Within this version of the story, which focuses heavily on the redemption plot, Prospero (Sean Hennigan) is costumed in long robes with an elaborate headdress, and he wears the long white beard often associated with the ancient character. The more important aspect of Prospero here is in the primary plot, in which the production is being mounted. David (Adam Springfield), the African-American young man both directing and starring in this play, becomes so consumed by his version of the play, including how Ariel is to act, that he is made to step down as director when he becomes too consumed by the text. David must ask for forgiveness from his friends, and he breaks his staff as director by walking away from the play. He then spends the night of the play with his uncle in a night of traditional African storytelling, thus evoking Caliban. Here, Prospero, the cultural center, exchanges places with Caliban, the cultural other, thus expanding Prospero's dominance over the text.

In the summer and fall of 1998, Prospero appeared in three productions, each derivative of Shakespeare in different manners, which continue to offer possibilities for the reading of Prospero's character. Each of these appropriations contains an increased connection to The Tempest, and the Prospero-figures have shown continual dominance, as well as an often-growing malevolence. In August of 1998, the feature film version of the

1960s show The Avengers was released. In it, the villain Sir August de Wynter (Sean Connery) demands money from world powers or he will destroy the earth by controlling its weather. The satellite system he is using to control the world is called the "Prospero Project," a name which John Steed (Ralph Fiennes) recognizes as "Shakespeare's wizard." Allusions to Shakespeare's play end here, but with Prospero the inspiration for this over-the-top, tyrannical villain, an even more evil possibility is offered.⁵⁶ This Prospero is not simply controlling his island, but he is threatening to destroy the entire earth, so that he has become a full-fledged villain, as the darkening of Prospero continues.⁵⁷

The Tempest was next evoked in the short-lived revival of the Fantasy Island series. In the original 1970s show, Mr. Roarke (Ricardo Montalban) fulfilled people's fantasies through magic.⁵⁸ While the original's Tempest connection is tangential, filmmaker Barry Sonnenfeld's high-budget remake has made the connections much clearer. This show's Mr. Roarke (Malcolm McDowell) has rejected the white suits made famous by his predecessor, and he now wears black Armani suits, as he becomes a 1990s-Prospero figure.⁵⁹ Some parallels are obvious, such as Roarke's two assistants Cal (Louis Lombardi), representing Caliban, a heavy-set, slow-witted man, and Ariel (Madchen Amick), whose magic rivals Roarke's, but who remains indebted to him for an unspecified

⁵⁶ Julie Kaewert's novelization of the film continues the connection by integrating quotes from the play at the start of each chapter.

⁵⁷ Connery's presence as the former James Bond challenging secret agents suggests the prominence of even this minor Prospero figure in a genre which the actor dominates.

⁵⁸ Richard Burt notes this Roarke's similarity to Prospero (133).

⁵⁹ McDowell was Powell's choice for Caliban in his unmade film, so here the cultural other shifts to pop-cultural center.

reason.⁶⁰ While these connections remain loose, occasional episodes hinted at further Tempest allusions. Roarke's associates plot (unsuccessfully) to overthrow him; Ariel is able to create parties with a wave of her hands (alluding to the masque scene). In one episode, Roarke's daughter Miranda, who washed ashore from a shipwreck, returns to the island; Roarke's fantasy, fulfilled at the end of the episode, is to see his daughter married. Even in this episode, the general tone is dark, as Prospero exercises complete control over every characters' very desire.

The most recent Tempest is more directly related to Shakespeare's play, although it is an appropriation of the text. NBC premiered a tv-movie of The Tempest (1998), starring Peter Fonda as Frederic Prosper. Unlike other NBC productions (such as Gulliver's Travels or Alice in Wonderland), which offer a "Classics Illustrated" approach to their material, this appropriation of Shakespeare is yet another radical version of the text.⁶¹ It starts in the Antebellum South, when Prosper, his daughter Miranda (Katherine Heigl), and the runaway slave Ariel (Harold Perrineau) are forced into the swamp by Frederic's brother Anthony (John Glover). Twelve years later, Prosper, now a master of voodoo, controls his island world, served by both Ariel and Gator Man (John Pyper-Ferguson), the Caliban figure. The plot of the play is basically followed, until Prosper uses his magic to help General Grant win the Battle of Vicksburg.

⁶⁰ Harry (Edward Hibbert), the third assistant, is played with an effeminate air, which suggests the often androgynous Ariel.

⁶¹ Although the producers directly intended to adapt Shakespeare (The Tempest Press Packet), the network opted to omit references to the author in their promos ("Cheers" 8).

The Prospero-figure becomes complicated by this film decision. A careful balance is struck with the character, who is heroic for protecting his slaves from abuse, but still a slave owner, who rejects pleas from first Ariel's mother Ezeli, then Ariel himself, to free any of the slaves.⁶² Thus, he is a morally ambiguous character--yes, he owns slaves, but he is the kind master. In the end, his previous dilemma over his efforts to treat his slave fairly while still maintaining a domineering ownership over him is cast aside, as he decides to reenter society by aiding the North against the evils of the South. This tv-movie's view of Prospero is one which strives to achieve a balance between a hero with a politically correct consciousness and one who maintains control through his power.

* * * * *

The Prosperos of the 1990s reveal an evolution in the presentation of the character, which can be observed throughout the film history of The Tempest. Since the first sound cinematic Tempest, Prospero has become increasingly more dominant (with that dominance often becoming a dark malevolence), and these Prosperos have also become more focused on creative powers. Grandpa the prospector, the initial screen Prospero, serves as a stock western character but remains in the background while the story unfolds around him, and, in some ways, without him, while Prospero in Prospero's Books stands as his polar opposite. Where Wellman's Yellow Sky appropriates Shakespeare, Greenaway's film directly adapts the play, and its main character completely controls the magic of the play. The growing dominance of Prospero reflects the trend of

⁶² Ezeli, as Ariel's magic-using mother and Prosper's teacher, partly represents Sycorax as well as Prospero's books.

filmmakers to make more directly related adaptations of Shakespeare. Whereas the films made from the 1940s through the 1960s are spin-offs of Shakespeare, the films since then have been more direct adaptations, which have afforded Prospero an increasingly more important role.

The illusions created by filmmakers approximate the magic of Prospero. The growing prevalence of the magus character reflects the equally growing prevalence of the films' directors. During the era of the studio system, Wellman and Wilcox produced Tempest derivatives in which Prospero was a smaller part of a larger film, while the later filmmakers Jarman, Mazursky, and Greenaway have made adaptations of the romance which foreground the wizard, creating visions of Shakespeare's play in which Prospero maintains creative control. The growing attention to the creative powers of Prospero is evident in both the casting of the screen Prosperos and in the professions of these Prosperos, particularly in the spin-off films. The final triumvirate of poet-playwright Williams, director Cassavetes, and stage-and-screen actor Gielgud demonstrates an association of Prospero with figures of creative importance and control. A similar interest may be found with the characterizations of philologist Dr. Morbius, who commands words, artist Brad Morahan, who commands the visual, and architect Phillip Dimitrious, who commands both the visual and the physical, as his images are constructed. The continued importance of Prospero reveals partly the association of the magus with the artist, and the appeal of the story is revealed through the continued efforts by directors to make film adaptations and appropriations of the text.

In Act V of the play, Alonso fears he is witnessing an illusion when he is reunited with Ferdinand. His assumption, that he sees yet another "vision of this island" (IV.i.176), is rooted in his own fears of being continually deceived, but it recalls also the magic of filmmaking. These directors create their own visions of Prospero and his island. Each director highlights a different element of the play with each vision, and radical transformations reveal the persistence of both Shakespeare and these directors' perspectives. Each film taps into Prospero's rough magic, and viewers may find a variety of Prosperos, who both are painted upon and who paint images upon "the baseless fabric of this vision" (4.1.151).

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