



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Corso di Laurea in Lingue e
Letterature Europee, Americane e
Postcoloniali

vecchio ordinamento, ante D.M. 509/1999

Tesi di
Laurea

Adapting *The Tempest*

Shakespeare for
special readers

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2016 / 2017

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank sincerely all the persons who really encouraged me to finish this career despite all the difficulties and opportunities I took over these years. First of all my family, who has been always present with its tact and discretion; my colleagues, and at this point, more than colleagues but real friends, who pushed me constantly, motivating me even when the thought was to give up.

Thanks everyone, without you this could have not be possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

CHAPTER 1: Introduction to *The Tempest* page 4

CHAPTER 2: History of Adaptations page 9

CHAPTER 3: Caliban's origins and Caliban in the world of art page 12

CHAPTER 4: Tad Williams' adaptation of *The Tempest* page 24

CHAPTER 5: Shakespeare in prison page 37

5.1. *Hag-seed* page 37

5.2. *Shakespeare Inside and Shakespeare behind bars* page 44

5.3. *Shakespeare saved my life* page 55

5.4. *Shakespeare, women and prisons* page 58

CHAPTER 6: Shakespeare for a young audience and for today's primary school students page 64

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION page 83

BIBLIOGRAPHY page 85

“If its mother was a mermaid, his father was a sailor”¹

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO *THE TEMPEST*

The Tempest is considered one of the last masterpieces written by William Shakespeare between 1610-1611, first performed in 1611 and first published in the 1623 Folio. The context in which Shakespeare wrote this play is not so easy to define because it references not only Shakespeare’s local context with the King’s Company at the Globe or The Blackfriar theatre in Jacobean London, but also the rest of the British islands, continental Europe and North Africa, Bermuda and all the Virginia’s Company explorations. The play was appreciated by the Court thanks to the brevity of the plot and the presence of music, song and masques. Soon after, in the Restoration, a period in which playwrights interpreted the plays in terms of contemporary politics, considering *The Tempest*, they saw Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo’s conspiracy as a parody of Parliamentarians trying to overthrow Charles I.

The Tempest has been considered different from the other Shakespearean plays since it constitutes a new genre, a romance, where the darker themes are always on the surface. It means that it is neither a tragedy nor a comedy, even if it presents elements of both. The reasons why it can be considered as a romance are that it presents comedic characteristics such as the love story, the happy ending, the supernatural magic of the main character, Prospero, acted thanks to his loyal spirits and nymphs, and the retrospective presence of evil. Moreover, even the setting is very different: there is no court life and the mysterious island could be imagined as a symbol of a dream, of a life

¹ A.D. Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory. A study of Shakespeare’s The Tempest and the logic of Allegorical Expression*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007, p.136.

lived constantly surrounded by magic which does not let you understand if you are sleeping and dreaming or if what happens is real life, and also of prison and freedom at the end.

Another important interpretation is the postcolonial view of the play. In 1960 the decolonisation movements in Africa and Latin America influenced the readings and adaptations of *The Tempest* because of the rising of interest on themes such as race, ethnicity and equality. From this moment thanks also to the writings of Octave Mannoni, Ndabaningi Sithole, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Albert Memmi and George Lamming the focus moves from the benevolent and powerful Prospero to the poor, exploited Caliban².

As far as the structure is concerned *The Tempest* is Shakespeare's shortest play and although the information about space and time are not so explicitly explained, the action takes place in a mysterious island and lasts about four hours and the shipwreck seems to be always present during the narration. The play presents a large amount of stage directions and it is composed of nine scenes and its symmetric structure gives it the appearance of a mirror which reflects all the events and its contraries, for example the beginning and the end with the shipwreck and the restoration of the ship, or the feeling of being lost and found. The presence of comic subplots really entertained all the spectators. One last consideration about the structure of this play is the presence of a Masque within the play where the goddesses start to bless Ferdinand and Miranda's wedding.

Another important element is the language of the play where the verse is often elliptical even though there are some passages written in blank verse. Shakespeare's device of omission and repetition contributes to give a sort of mysterious halo. Furthermore, language changes depending on who is talking, obviously a character as Caliban will not speak as a court character as Alonso.

As far as the sources are concerned, there is no specific written source of this play even if it presents many influences: William Strachey's *True repertory of the Wrecke, and redemption of Sir Thomas Gate*, Erasmus' *Naufragium*, Peter Martyr's *De orbo novo*,

² C. Zabus, *Tempests after Shakespeare*, New York: Palgrave, 2002, p.43.

who all wrote about experiences or real events happened during the New World discovery. As far as the characters are concerned there are other borrowings such as: The Italian commedia dell'arte which featured the clown and his partner who can be associated to Stephano and Trinculo, Montaigne's essay *Of the Cannibals* reflecting Gonzalo's description of his ideal society and giving a huge influence to the role of Caliban; Ovid's *Metamorphoses* borrowing Medea's speech by Prospero while his farewell to magic, and Aeneid's most direct allusion when Gonzalo refers to widow Dido or the supernatural beginning of the narration. Last consideration about influences it is they even come from Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* concerning magic and occult learning, and the Masques of Queen which were choreographic and musical events at court that recall Prospero's Masque.

The characters of the play and their actions are crucial to understand all the dynamism of the plot and embody the most basic human relationships. Prospero is the main character because almost everything happens thanks to him and his magic. Considering the Romantic tradition, he could be seen on the one hand as Shakespeare himself during his last years because both of them renounce their power to come back to real practical life, but on the other hand he could be seen as the reflection of James I considering that they both are concerned with the marriage of their children, the future of their dynasty, and the control over their people. It is because the Romantics tended to read the plays as if they were psycho-biographies. An important work, is Edward Dowden's *Shakespeare: a Critical Study of his Mind and Art*.

It is not chiefly because Prospero is a great enchanter, now about to break his magic staff, to drown his books deeper than ever plummet sounded, to dismiss his airy spirits, and to return to the practical service of his Dukedom, that we identify Prospero in some measures with Shakespeare himself. It is rather because the temper of Prospero, the grave harmony of his character, his self-mastery, his calm validity of will, his sensitiveness to wrong, his unfaltering justice, and with these, a certain abandonment, a remoteness from the common joys and sorrows of the world, are characteristics of Shakespeare as discovered to us in all his latest plays.³

From another point of view, Prospero is first of all a father, secondly a magician, whose darker side could make him be the mirror image of Sycorax; like her, he arrived to the island with a child, and they both use magic to control the spirits and elements, and finally

³ E. Dowden, *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art*, New York: Harper & brothers, 1881, p.417.

a master who serve him and to whom at the end he will give freedom. Prospero is omniscient, in some actions the spectators see him, but when he is not visible, he is however present and active thanks to his spirits, servants and magic.

There is another interpretation about the character of Prospero, which is Noel Cobb's, who sees Shakespeare and Prospero as the projection of John Dee⁴. The first one sees John Dee like Prospero in the episode of the Spanish Armada in which he anticipated that devastating storms would destroy the mighty Spanish Fleet and that it would be best to keep the English ships at bay. Some have suggested that it was Dee himself who conjured up that storm and this makes a strong connection with Prospero. The second one concerns the image of the banishment of Dee when the reign of King James started, seen as the end of the play in which Prospero and even Shakespeare farewell their arts.

Moving on to the other characters of the play, each one of them can be compared to a specific kind of human being: Miranda's role is first of a daughter and then of a future wife, it means she represents the chaste ideal of early modern womanhood; Ariel and Caliban, Prospero's servants, represent one the opposite of the other. While Ariel is a loyal servant representing lightness, music and grace of movements, Caliban is awkward, ugly and disobedient. All the other characters, which are the crew of the ship, are secondary and help to develop all the subplots of the play, contributing to the happy ending.

To conclude this brief introduction to Shakespeare's *Tempest* it will be relevant to analyse the main themes of the play:

- Politics: the characters want the power instead of others. Everybody feels more important the others and this connect to other themes like Conspiracy, Usurpation and Legitimacy involving Prospero, Antonio, Stephano and Trinculo and in a different but comparable way even Ariel and Caliban looking for their freedom.
- Loss: a feeling experienced by the majority of the characters throughout the succession of events.

⁴ N. Cobb, *Prospero's Island: the secret alchemy at the heart of The Tempest*, London: Coventure, 1984, p. 18.

- Gender: Miranda is the only female character present in the play, even if there are two more which are mentioned. The first one is Sycorax, Caliban's mother, the other one is Claribel, Alonso's daughter. Therefore, this play could be defined as focused on male characters.
- Magic: it is a central presence of the story, thanks to Prospero and his spirits, and it ends the play.
- Repentance and Forgiveness: the reason why this play ends happily is because of the kindness which appears at the end of the play and enable the character to repent about the past and forgive for a better future. These themes connect with rebellion which appears three times within the play: the first one described by Prospero and caused by his brother, the second one when Sebastian tries to assassinate Antonio and the last one in which Caliban wants to kill Prospero.
- Colonialism: it is the establishment of a political power in a new territory. *The Tempest* has been interpreted as a play about colonialism after Prospero's occupation of the island and the resulting resistance by Caliban. Prospero, subduing the island and imposing his own culture could be seen as the Europeans usurping the lands of the native Americans.

CHAPETER 2

HISTORY OF ADAPTATIONS

“Adapting is a bit like redecorating”⁵ (A. Uhry)

The literal definition of adaptation matches with the idea of Julie Sanders who thinks that adapting means offering the public a revised point of view, new motivations, a voice during the silenced moments and concepts easily comprehensible⁶. Another point of view defines the adaptation as the product of the above-mentioned process, and it concerns not only literature but also all the other forms of art such as music, film, painting. The last definition to take into considerations is Margaret Jane Kidnie’s who argues that “play and adaptation processes that evolve over time in accordance with the needs of users”.⁷

This idea of adapting stories comes from the past and include also mythical traditions; it can be assumed that every new generation tries to include the great myths in their works evoking or altering them. This is the same for fairy tales and folklore, and one of the simplest examples is the story of Robin Hood, adapted and presented from different social and psychological points of view. Every genre offers some of its main characteristics which the future narrators try to transform in order to be able to communicate values and specific messages to their people. Shakespeare used the process of adaptation himself, because he transferred historical events to the stage.

An important fact to take into consideration is that adaptation did not have always the same importance in the past, sometimes in fact the will to adapt came with specific genres in specific time-period. The Victorian era seemed to be a real inspiration for a great

⁵ L. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, London: Routledge, 2013, p. 6.

⁶ J. Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 218.

⁷ M.J. Kidnie, *Shakespeare and the problem of adaptation*, London: Routledge, 2009, p. 1.

amount of writers and the majority of them tried to work using also new sub-genres, such as suspense and detective fiction or industrial and provincial novels.

As far as Shakespeare is concerned, the adaptations of his masterpieces make him understandable in other contexts and cultures and, he also took inspiration and borrowings from other authors. It is important to consider that a form of adaptation, imitation, was learned and practised at school in the past, so this process has ancient origins.

Linda Hutcheon affirms that there are different intentions behind the will of adapting a work and that adaptation could be seen: first as the transposition of a specific work shifting medium, genre and changing the point of view even if the original text is granted and always present; second, as a process of creation, reinterpreting and recreating, or simply, taking possession of another's work; third and last one, as a process of reception as a form of intertextuality.

Moreover, she claims: “the separate units of the story can also be transmediated – just as they can be summarized in digest version or translated into another language. But they may well change in the process of adaptation, and not only in terms of their plot ordering. Pacing can be transformed, time compressed or expanded”.⁸

Telling, showing and interacting are three keywords to describe the three ways of adapting a masterpiece, but they all have some specific characteristics: the principal of the telling mode is that only words can do justice to ambiguity, irony, symbols, metaphors which are elements almost “untranslatable” while the showing and interacting mode are peculiar thanks to their chance to represent and show almost everything.

Any type of adaptation interacts with the audience. What makes the real difference is the medium adopted; in any case language and context have to be taken into consideration during all the process of adaptation, because they can change quite a lot the meaning of the story. The most common form of transforming a story today is from the page to the stage and screen and it means changing the medium but also the genre. On the one hand the positive side of the written narration is that the reader can stop on some passages or read again his favourites, on the other hand the visual version infuses some information

⁸ L. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, London: Routledge, 2013, p. 11.

which are very subjective. During the process from written to visual there are some information the adapter has to infer because they are not clearly present on the text, this means all the information about gestures, the tone of voice, and the music to use. The other two methods used are from showing to showing, but changing the genre, this means adapting a play to a musical or a movie and the last one, which is becoming popular during the last twenty years is the adaptation to an interacting mode, which is the mode used in videogames.

The focus now will be on the person who decides to undertake this adventure: the adapter. Author and adapter could be the same person, but the majority of cases they are different persons and sometimes even more than two. This is the example concerning the interacting and showing mode, where so many persons are involved that every one of them could be considered as an adapter. Linda Hutcheon describes the adapter as an interpreter and creator, while H. Porter Abbott uses these words to explain what the adapters do:” they don’t copy, they steal what they want and leave the rest”; his words connect to a problem the adapters could face during their work: the copyright. They have to pay attention to the laws that regulate this subject, even if it has to be said that today is quite difficult to be punished for this reason because of the fact that adaptations from book to screen generate a great amount of alterations considering the original. One last consideration about the adapter concerns the reason why they decide to start this process. Most of times is for personal, political or cultural reasons, and following to their motivations they have to be respectful toward the original and talented in founding new devices to attract the audience. One of the reasons why adapters decide to work on Shakespeare is as a tribute toward him or just to erase some prejudices that Shakespeare is almost went out of fashion.

CHAPTER 3

CALIBAN'S ORIGINS AND CALIBAN IN THE WORLD OF ART

Now, the focus will move on Caliban, a character who has been defined as a “fascinating but ambiguous literary creation”⁹. The reason why he fascinates could be because he represents the very opposition to Prospero’s hegemony, defining the appropriator’s assumptions and values.

Many scholars during centuries tried to affirm where this character comes from and what it represents, in fact the Vaughans affirms that they see Shakespeare’s monster as an important expressive symbol, a cultural signifier that changes through space and time.¹⁰

The great varieties of Caliban interpretations, appropriations and adaptations date back to many centuries ago. In the seventeenth century Caliban was a pure monster and the focus of the situation was on the difference between savagery and civility. In the eighteenth century, he kept being a monster but with some virtues hidden inside him, while in the nineteenth century, with the Romantic movement, he became more docile and newly appreciated. Last, as far as the twentieth century is concerned, “although to some literary critics he is still a monster or benevolent wild man, he now most frequently symbolizes the exploited native who struggles for freedom, dignity and self-determination from European and American Prosperos”.¹¹

The historical period on which *The Tempest* was written, is the kingdom of King James I. The play was staged before Princess Elizabeth and her fiancé. No doubt that the plot would have had a considerable appeal for a royal audience celebrating an equally political

⁹ A.T. & V.M. Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban, A Cultural History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.1.

¹⁰ Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban*, p. XVII.

¹¹ Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban*, p. XXII.

and dynastic marriage; and to add more appeal Shakespeare included an elaborated masque and a plot based on royal themes such as conspiracy and usurpation.

To many introductions to the play, it may seem that Caliban is not an important character, but as Frank Kermode observed:” he speaks more words than any other character, except Prospero”¹². This consideration, with the fact that there are so many word spoken to or about him, make him one of the most important characters of the play.

Savage is the most common adjective used to describe Caliban: in Shakespeare’s days this word meant wild, barbarous and uneducated, and is a word which can tells much about his cultural condition, as perceived by Miranda and Prospero, but nothing about his physical appearance, or better, there is a quote by Miranda which could, but at the same time not. The focus of the issue is Caliban’s physical humanity. When Miranda sees Ferdinand for the first time she exclaims:” This is the third man that e’er I saw the first that e’er I sigh’d for”¹³: this could mean that the other two are his father and Caliban, but soon after, talking to Ferdinand she contradicts herself by saying:” ... nor I have seen more than I may call men than you, good friend, and my dear father”.¹⁴So, does she not consider Caliban a man anymore?

And to add doubts to the readers, the great amount of adjectives used to describe Caliban, which make seem him an animal more than a man. Both Miranda and later Stephano and Trinculo describe him as a beast, thing and fish due to his smell. One more consideration about Caliban comes from his parentage. He seems to be son of a witch and the devil, and according to conventional wisdom this kind of unions only bring all sorts of grotesque births.

Two characters who are comparable to him are Ariel and Miranda. Ariel as his opposite representing air and goodness even if their common characteristic was that both were on the island when Prospero arrived, and both are servants. Miranda because both were isolated at a young age and educated by Prospero.

¹² Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban, A Cultural History*, p.7.

¹³ W. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999, p. 203

¹⁴ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p. 203.

Various are the studies on Shakespeare's sources, and even if none of them are completely certain, the majority of the scholars agree about them. The case of pointing out which are Caliban's sources is very different and not shared by everybody. Some of the hypothesis are these: Caliban

- represents American Indians.
- *The Tempest* represents a reflection of Jacobean politics.
- The mobs of Caesar's Rome and Elizabeth's England.
- The paganization of Christianity¹⁵.

Starting from the very beginning, the point on which all the scholars agree is that the name given by Shakespeare to Prospero's slave, cannot be meaningless. Since the late eighteenth century, the most popular idea was that the name Caliban was the anagram of Cannibal. Due to the fact that in European transliterations some consonants were interchangeable, it comes the idea that Caliban could have even be the anagram of Carib, and it suggest that Shakespeare imagined him as a monster of the New World but not necessarily a man-eater. But none of them can be taken for granted.

Etymologically speaking, Theodor Elze proposed that the island on which the play is based on, could be Pantalasia, easily reached by Prospero and Miranda from Genoa's port. Nearby there is an African town called Calibia, which could be a connection to Caliban and his african origins¹⁶.

During the nineteenth century some critics affirm the name Caliban comes from the Arabic word *kalebon*, which means vile dog. Unfortunately the argument is reasonable but at the same time the absence of other evidences invalidate it¹⁷.

One last theory comes from the gypsy language where Caliban meant "black". Shakespeare should have been familiar with gypsy language because it flourished in England for a century before 1611. The fact that gypsies were a lively reality during Stuart-Tudor kingdoms give this theory plausibility and the fact that they were considered

¹⁵ A.T. & V.M. Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban, A Cultural History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 25.

¹⁶ Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban*, p. 51.

¹⁷ Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban*, p. 33.

a menace gives it even more. Caliban could be said, have some of the characteristics of gypsies such as slovenly appearance and savage behaviour¹⁸.

All the theories mentioned above make every reader see Caliban as a “bad thing”, but there is an opposite way to see him and his role in *The Tempest*. He laments his and his mother possession of the island. From here, comes a parallel between him and the dispossessed Indians and as Walter Cohen summarizes: “*The Tempest* uncovers, perhaps despite itself, the racist and imperialist bases of English nationalism”.¹⁹

It could be said that *The Tempest* is linked to Africa. The references concerning Africa are Claribel’s marriage with the king of Tunis and the connections with Caliban’s mother: she was Algerian before she came to the island and before his son’s birth. Theodore Elze saw in this information a connection with the town of Calibia. The representation of a play about absolutism, rebellion, property and subjection seem be present in *The Tempest* especially because of the social and political issues of Elizabethan and Jacobean England lived in that historical moment. For Gary Schmidgall “Caliban embodies the forces of rebellion that Prospero, representing King James, is going to repress and punish”.²⁰ Another different point of view comes from Donna Hamilton who affirms that Prospero symbolizes King James and Ariel and Caliban with their will of freedom could be seen as the Commons expressing their rights to liberty and freedom. It means that Caliban represents the fear of the English folks of being made slaves in their own land, or even the American natives dispossessed. Following with the attempt of finding out which are Caliban’s references for Shakespeare, it could be said that there are also non-historical texts about it. The first one is Homer’s *Odyssey*. “Although Caliban does not share Polyphemus’s taste for human flesh, he lives in a cave, is morally blind, and succumbs to Stephano’s celestial liquor. And Caliban’s monstrosity, though never specified, is stressed throughout *The Tempest*. In these respects, Shakespeare may have borrowed from Homer’s one-eyed giant”.²¹ Another literary source could be Virgil’s *Aeneid*. As Jan Kott states:” *The Tempest* repeats the sequence of the first four books of the *Aeneid*: the

¹⁸ Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban*, p. 36.

¹⁹ Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban*, p. 49.

²⁰ Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban*, p. 53.

²¹ Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban*, p. 58.

sinking of the royal ship, the saving of the shipwrecked men, the attack by the Harpies, the ordeal of hunger and thirst, the interrupted wedding pageantry.²² Donna Hamilton adds:” Caliban is a parody of Aeneas. His lust for Miranda evokes Aeneas’ sojourn with Dido”.²³

However all this information is useful to understand what Shakespeare could have known while writing his work, the tradition of the wild man helps to understand where Caliban comes from. He was a crucial figure in European folklore. He was a man-beast living in the forest and sleeping in a cave. He had no reason and spoke no language but with extraordinary powers and this description suits with Caliban, even because Shakespeare and his audience should have well-known this traditional story.

Other traditions which could have influenced Shakespeare are the one concerning fascinations for monsters. First of all *The Mirrour of Knighthood*, a Spanish romance, which provides a model of Caliban in Fauno, coming from the union of an evil woman and the devil; secondly, some other critics state that Caliban may have descended from the carnivalesque figures of the Italian *commedia dell’arte*.

If many masterpieces could have influenced Shakespeare to create his *Tempest*, which are the works *the Tempest* influenced in turn? Here is the example by Dryden and Davenant *The Tempest: Or, The Enchanted Island* where Caliban has a sister Sycorax, Miranda too has a sister, Dorinda and Prospero’s son is Hippolito who have been kept hidden in a rock. Here Caliban and his sister are simply two monsters of the isle.

What happens in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century is a re-examining of Shakespeare’s work without assuming automatically Prospero’s point of view but trying to empathize with Caliban and his attempt to control his island and his life. William Hazlitt recognizes Caliban’s as a dispossessed native. From now on even the performances bring on stage new more kind and gentle Calibans creating more pity on him than anger²⁴.

²² Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban*, p. 59.

²³ Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban*, p. 60.

²⁴ Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban*, p. 119.

In the late 18th century some Shakespeareans began to associate the play to Europe's exploration and colonization of America and this associations became more significant in the early nineteenth century. Only at the end of the century an English scholar, Sidney Lee, declared "Bermuda is Prospero's island and Caliban is an imaginary portrait conceived with matchless vigour and vividness, of the aboriginal savage of the New World".²⁵ During the following years he became more specific about Caliban adding:" Caliban is no precise presentation of any identifiable native American. He is an imaginary portrait, an attempt to reduce the aboriginal types of whom the dramatist and his contemporaries knew anything to one common denominator".²⁶ He was convinced that Shakespeare had to do with Indians, so Caliban was the portrait of an Indian lacking moral sense, control and ratiocination.

Another scholar who contributed to the Americanization of *The Tempest* and in a certain way of Caliban, is Rudyard Kipling, stating that Shakespeare "may have gotten much of his play tone from overhearing a drunken sailor's slurred story of maritime adventures, real and imagined".²⁷

A new trend was officially inaugurated by Leo Marx in 1960. He depicted the play as a prologue to American literature. He found affinities between the play and American colonization, but the point is, it was not the shipwreck or the references to Bermuda to catch his attention as it has been until that moment. Marx started to stress the play's action: its primitive setting, its European protagonist and the final reconciliation of nature and civilization²⁸.

In 1950 there is a shift in Caliban's image from symbol of the oppressor to symbol of the oppressed, and this occurred in the Caribbean and Africa, where writers started to think that *The Tempest* embodied their reality. In fact, like Caliban "colonized peoples were disinherited, exploited and subjugated. Like him, they learned a conqueror's language and perhaps that conqueror's values. Like him they endured enslavement and contempt

²⁵ Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban*, p. 120.

²⁶ Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban*, p. 121.

²⁷ Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban*, p. 123.

²⁸ Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban*, p. 131.

by European usurpers and eventually rebelled. Like him, they are torn between their indigenous culture and the culture superimposed on it by their conquerors".²⁹

This Third World interpretation of Caliban is symbolic because uses this character to represent their point of view not to explain what Shakespeare could have in his mind.

Last, but not least, the idea of the French psychoanalyst Octave Mannoni, who saw the colonials like Prospero, with his lack of patience and lust of power. Caliban represents the natives of Africa with their inferiority towards the colonials. With Mannoni agrees even a Barbadian novelist George Lamming, who adds to his idea the fact that all turns around the language. It is through language that Prospero controls his slave, teaching Caliban his language and culture takes control over him. Going a bit deeper on this psychological aim quoting Mannoni:" the savage is identified in the unconscious with a certain image of the instincts. And the civilized man is painfully divides between the desire to correct the errors of the savages and the desire to identify himself with them in his search for some lost paradise".³⁰

The colonizers of the era of colonial expansion were convinced to represent a superior civilization offering their own ideals and this persuaded the natives to imitate and obey to them, in the sense of being educated. This at beginning could have brought to a positive result but as Mannoni states:" the 'colonial' is not looking for profit only; he is also greedy for certain other psychological satisfactions, and that is much more dangerous".³¹ He means that there is a very short gap between educating and exploit in such delicate situations. When the process of colonization keeps incomplete, there are the origins of hatred, and Caliban explains this event with his own words:

...When thou camest first,
Thou strok'dst me, and mad'st much of me...
...and then I lov'd thee

Mannoni explains:" You taught me to be dependent, and I was happy; then you betrayed me and plunged me into inferiority. It is indeed in such situation as this that we must look

²⁹ Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban*, p. 145.

³⁰ O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1990, p. 21.

³¹ O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*, p. 32.

for the origins of hate sometimes shown by the evolved natives”.³² The key stands on which way the colonizers decide to use to dominate a colony: there is not only one way to do it, not only conquering, but also assimilation and association. Some end with extermination but others with absorption. The case of Caliban and Prospero stands in the middle because the first aim was to educate him, but not all the natives can be dominated, in fact Caliban with his strong personality does not allow it. The failure of Prospero in dominating completely Caliban is the same with his daughter Miranda and the servant Ariel: he tried to dominate both but the result is the liberty of the first one with her engagement and the other with the departure of everybody.

During the early eighteenth century, the role of Caliban was a minor one and actors were selected even due to their voice and physic. But as argued before, even in theatre the character of Caliban changed with the cultural shifts during years. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Caliban started to reach more importance becoming the Caliban portrayed as a victim of oppression. His role switch from being a monster to be a man-beast and his appearance was emphasized by costumes which underlined his animal characteristics: this means “brown flashings, covered with hair, green nails, toes and fingers, fins on shoulders and arms, calf on legs, goggles on eyes, wolf skin shirt and beard”.³³ The results were performances “human in their emotional power, but animal in appearance and behaviour”.³⁴ Only during the 1980 the role of Caliban started to have a political focus, he was used to represent the oppressed minorities; but it was later at the end of the decade when the colonial theme was still present but left space to the original thought which saw Caliban as a monster.

In 2008 something innovative was written by the hand of Suniti Namjoshi: one of the most revised editions of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest: Snapshots of Caliban – Sycorax*. The work of the Indian author tries to move the focus from colonization to interpersonal

³² O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*, p. 77.

³³ A.T. & V.M. Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban, A Cultural History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 183.

³⁴ Vaughan, *Shakespeare’s Caliban*, p. 184.

relations. This does not mean that the theme of colonization is not so important, but it means that Namjoshi wants to keep it on the background. She decides to reincarnate the rebel male Caliban in a woman whose poems related to Prospero's words try to focus on the relations between human beings. With a female Caliban everything changes: her desire for Miranda, which becomes envy towards her beauty, Miranda becomes a desirous homoerotic murdering figure and Prospero the defeated and excluded patriarch. So, everything will concern these characters adding Sycorax. It is necessary to know some biographical information about Suniti Namjoshi to understand her stylistic choices. She was born in 1941 in Mumbai, India. She studied English literature in English colleges, becoming a teacher and winning a position at Indian Administrative Service: it is in this period when she starts writing poems with the help of her grandmother. In 1969 she moved to Canada and later to Great Britain: it is in this moment that she did not want to hide her sexuality anymore. Today she lives with her partner in Great Britain.³⁵

Anger is one of the key words from the very first lines of the text. The first four snapshots are quite ambiguous because the reader cannot understand who is speaking; but the information which is so clear is the use of the possessive her which stands for a female Caliban.

Snapshot ii and iii seem to be the words of Prospero describing her creature: in snapshot ii the words he uses are pejorative such as: disgust, murder, monstrous, squat and ugly and refer to the original version of William Shakespeare, while in snapshot iii it seems Prospero's compassionate reflexions towards a poor creature who he will not love in different situations such as while sleeping or while being found alone in the island. The last snapshot is a report of an external voice telling the episode on which Miranda and Caliban are both playing and later arguing while Prospero is thinking about the tempest he is going to create.

Snapshot v is an extract from Caliban's journal on which he writes all his thoughts: some of the episodes she relates are the same of the original *Tempest*, the only difference is that all she writes has the addition of her personal ideas. For example, the fact that she sees Ferdinand chopping woods and Miranda pitying him or the two lovers playing chess

³⁵ S. Namjoshi, P. Bono, *Istantanee di Caliban; Sycorax*, Napoli: Liguori, 2008, p. XXVII.

makes her so envious and excluded. Caliban knows some people who believes are God, but the most interesting of these events is when Caliban tells Miranda she is beautiful. This cause Miranda's fear and Prospero's anger. This is a crucial point because it is considered Namjoshi's reconstruction of Miranda's rape. Namjoshi rewrites the violence of the stereotyped, heterosexual Third World rapist.

The following words come from Miranda's diary. Initially she is very angry at Caliban, but later when Caliban seems ill, both Miranda and Prospero try to do their best to help her to recover. The fact of being poisoned will be understood only after the snapshots of Caliban telling about fishes, water and all she knows about the island until arriving at the snapshot of the dream: she dreams about hunting a tiger. The animal is a metaphor simultaneously for colonialism and anti-colonial force.

The tiger signifies the retribution of the oppressed, "destroying" and "consuming everything," but it also serves as the embodiment of Miranda's murderous rage against Caliban. In hunting the tiger, Caliban too "destroys everything" of the colonial past, both the colonizer's will to mastery and the colonial subject's (purported) passivity, thereby clearing the decks for reconciliation with her colonizers³⁶.

From a certain moment on, the relation between the two girls changes: Miranda confesses Caliban it was her who use the poison, not to kill her but only to make her feel pain. Caliban's reaction is unexpected. She feels surprised, angry but at the end, remembering her dream, they succeeded in explaining their ideas.

The first part ends with Prospero's words of uncertainty about the nature of the relationship between him, Miranda and Caliban. "Yet even as Caliban and Miranda unite against Prospero, and against colonialism/imperialism beyond him, Namjoshi recognizes the continuing power of the "nightmare" of patriarchy and so gives over the last words in "Snapshots" to Prospero."³⁷

But to understand the profound aim of Namjoshi the reader needs the words of H.S. Mann:

Just as Caliban and Miranda disrupt Prospero's narrative of paternal possession, so do they defy his control of their sexuality as revealed in their discourse of desire and the body.⁶ While they underscore her colonialist, racialized "disgust" of Caliban, the poems written from Miranda's perspective also articulate an enabling desire for the other woman. While Prospero

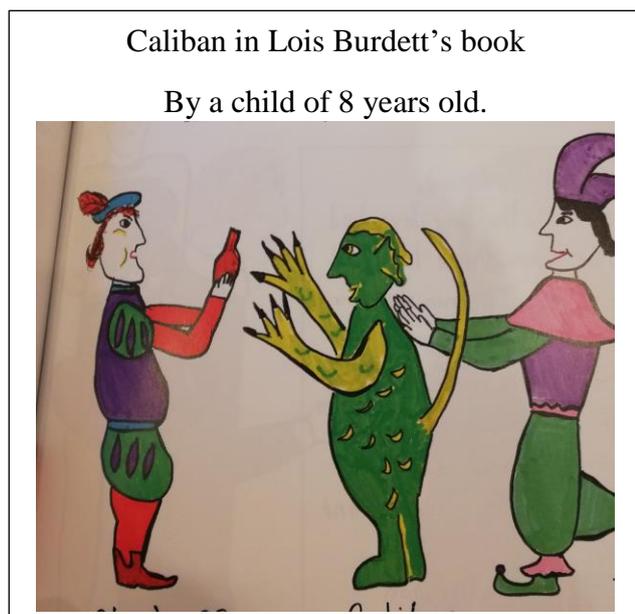
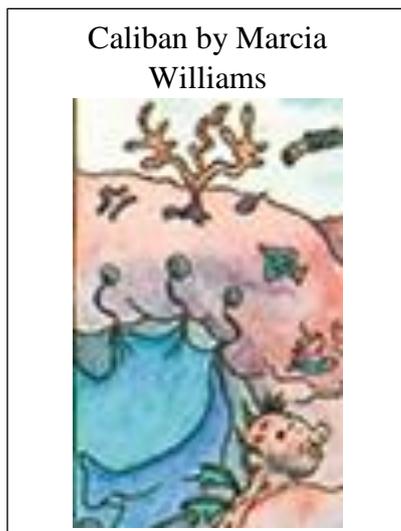
³⁶ H.S. Mann, *Suniti Namjoshi: Diasporic, Lesbian Feminism and the Textual Politics of Transnationality*, New York: Midwest Modern Language Association, 1997, p.103.

³⁷ Mann, *Suniti Namjoshi*, p. 105.

regards Caliban's and Miranda's mutual sexual desire as bestial, describing them as crabs "scrabbling and scuttling, / climbing and sliding on top of one another", Caliban loves Miranda with the innocence of the uncorrupted. She catches crayfish for her, takes her to pools where crabs hide, brings her berries, and "gaze[s] longingly at [her] blue eyes", and, finally, even forgives her murderous anger, to establish a bond, however tenuous, between the colonialist and colonized woman. Namjoshi represents her resistance to and subversion of patriarchal imperialism not only through her language of desire in "Snapshots" but also through changing the perspective.³⁸

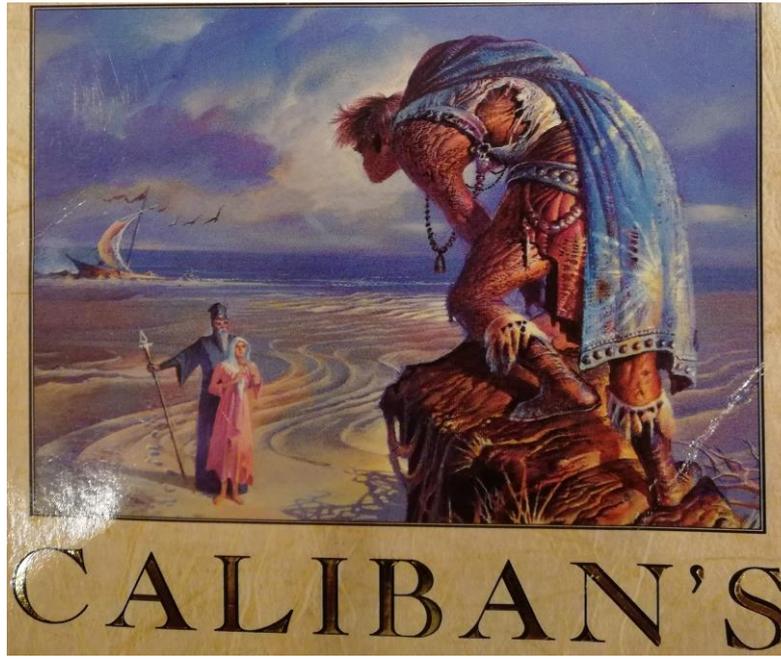
To conclude, her rewriting of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* from a Third World, lesbian feminist perspective establishes the legitimacy of alternative narratives. Her adoption of multiple speaking subjects instead of a single, trustworthy narrator gives a much wide panoramic idea of the situation using different points of view.

Below some representations of Caliban over the years:



³⁸ Mann, *Suniti Namjoshi: Diasporic, Lesbian Feminism and the Textual Politics of Transnationality*, p. 105.

Caliban in Tad Williams' book



Caliban in Lois Burdett's book

By a child of 10 years old



CHAPTER 4

TAD WILLIAMS' ADAPTATION OF *THE TEMPEST*

A good way to see how the original work of a great writer is interpreted in time and space from other artists is to analyse the prequels and sequels other authors wrote in relation to their works.

An interesting point of view is Tad Williams, who wrote a sequel of the original *Tempest*, focusing the entire story on Caliban. This matches with all the theories which consider Caliban the most important, interesting and the real victim of the play.

Tad Williams was born in California in 1957. He has always been interested in art, and he did several jobs concerning art, such as music, television, and theatre.

Williams traces his interest in science fiction and fantasy back to the books his mother read to him when he was a child. In an interview, he states that the reason why he focused on the fantasy and science-fiction genre is of course because it is the one with which he grew up, but also because he thinks it is a flexible genre which gives him the freedom to write so many different stories. He usually writes quite long stories, telling his readers that he has always been so prolific. In another interview, he told that when he was at primary school and had to write a three-page tale, he ended up writing a seventeen-page one.

It can be said that he is known for his great ability in developing long stories but also for the complexity of his plots, characters and places. The major themes used by Tad are magic, the power of storytelling, the concepts of family and identity and last but not least

the theme of colonialism which is present in *Caliban's hour*. Considering the theme of colonialism, it is very interesting what Tad Williams affirms:

Shakespeare, brilliant thinker that he was, was pointing out some problems of colonialism before anyone else realized that such a thing as colonialism even existed. Caliban was one of the first representations of a colonized people in English literature -- the first thing he says is, "This was my island once". Like all those other folks in the New World who accepted visitors from Europe only to find that those visitors soon became their masters, Caliban is as much a victim of history as he is of Prospero the magician.³⁹

The story Tad Williams writes answers the question on William Shakespeare readers: "What happened then?"

The narration is divided in three parts. The first one and the last are the present set in Naples, the second one is Caliban's narration of the past and set in the island.

The first scene is an open-air one, in Naples, one evening. The only character with a name is Sebastiano, which is out with his friend going to a tavern and stopping alone behind everyone because of his need to pee. It is in that moment that he meets a dark shape who firstly he thinks to be a thief. But it is in the following lines that the reader understands that this figure was no thief: "The shadow figure said something guttural and urgent that the drunken sailor could not understand".⁴⁰ Even now there is no name and no help or clues to guess who is this unknown shadow, but later the development of the situation is clearer: "Again the thing questioned him: this time he could almost understand the rough speech, but his heart was beating so fast he was sure it would burst and could not think properly. At last he heard what seemed to be a name, then heard that name said again".⁴¹ It is from this moment that the situation becomes clearer: there is a monstrous figure who is looking for a person, and the monstrous figure can only be Caliban, searching for someone who will be presented in the next pages. After a quick climbing, this shadow is inside the castle where who is searching lives.

The scene moves inside the castle where there is a lady almost ready to go to bed arguing with her daughter Giulietta about the arranged marriage she does not want to celebrate. While arguing a servant enters with a baby, Cesare, who is crying because he thinks he

³⁹ <http://fantasybookcritic.blogspot.it/2010/06/interview-with-tad-williams.html>

⁴⁰ T. Williams, *Caliban's hour*, London: Legend Books, 1994, p.5.

⁴¹ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.5.

saw someone out of his window. So this is the situation now: in the room there are Giulietta and Cesare who are the children of this lady, who is recognizable in Miranda thanks to the speech of her daughter:” Grandfather took you across the ocean. You saw a whole new world! I will die here among the same faces I have seen my entire life, in dreary, gossipy Naples!”⁴².

This seem a pray towards her mother to let her change the thing which have been already decided. Giulietta does not want to get married and envies the mother for the fortune she had to see the world outside Naples; she presents herself like a little rebel who wants to escape the routine.

The castle now is quiet, everybody has gone to bed and the bells are ringing the eleventh hour. It is now that the shadow met in the first page can approach the lady sleeping on her bed. Initially she does not recognize who is near her bed, she only heard a Milanese accent in her visitor and when she asks him if he is from Milan the reader has the confirmation that these two characters are Miranda and Caliban exactly from Caliban’s answer:” So you recognise your native speech, but you do not remember me, Miranda?”⁴³

Miranda understands that Caliban is there to kill her but before he has to tell her his story. During their dialogue they speak about Prospero’s death five years earlier and the importance of their language teaching. Caliban honours the power of the words they thought to him, which are the same words now that will make Miranda listen what she did to him.

The second part is entitled *The Villain’s tale*, and it is Caliban speaking to Miranda and telling her what he would have told her for twenty years. From the very beginning, there is a connection with the previous part concerning the language:” You taught me that all things have names. Your gift to me was words – a language”.⁴⁴ Soon after he admits that words were tricks and lies more than a gift, comparing them to the solid truths of the island before their arrival and comparing them to the present Miranda’s reality:” I have now seen your cities, the streets and dockside teeming with people hurrying like termites

⁴² Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.12.

⁴³ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p. 16.

⁴⁴ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.25.

in a split log. With so many crushed together, and each one telling a thousand tiny lies in an hour, lying with every breath, every glance".⁴⁵

The arrival of Prospero and Miranda has been as a turmoil of emotions as Caliban remembers that moment:" I had never seen a grown man before of any sort – had, at that moment, never seen any other human creature except my mother and my own reflection in the island's pools".⁴⁶

During his story-telling there are some moments on which the tale moves from the past to the present time where Caliban and Miranda are in the same room one night in Naples. These movements in space and time seem to be a signal of the truthfulness of what is happening. When Caliban continues his tale, the reader will know and understand so many things that from the original version of *The Tempest* would have never discovered. Here it is a large part in which is widely described the life in the island of Caliban and her mother Sycorax, who only was mentioned as a witch from Algiers and nothing else.

Caliban starts the tale of his mother by saying how she died two years before Prospero and Miranda's arrival; then he follows by presenting his feelings toward this person who he claims is a witch:" I worshipped her, I feared her, I hate her. I loved her until it burned me inside. And she in turn, was the only living creature who has ever loved me".⁴⁷ During the descriptions there are also some connections between Sycorax and Prospero, such as the fact that both knew magic:" But power, eminence, these are dangerous possessions. Your own father found that out, Miranda, did he not?"⁴⁸. Everybody in the little town where she lived feared her even if they were aware of the validity of her magic, but one night after scorching out her tongue with a fire-heated iron they put her while pregnant, in a boat, out to the open sea and she survived thanks to the help of a neighbour who gave her some food and water. And here is another connection to Prospero, who lived the same experience to be abandoned in a boat with a child with the little help of a loyal servant. All this information is known because of the gossip brought by sailors and merchant, so this is how Prospero knew all this information and told Caliban, unfortunately because

⁴⁵ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.26.

⁴⁶ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.29

⁴⁷ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.30.

⁴⁸ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p. 31.

her mother could not speak. The fact that Sycorax was not able to speak means she and Caliban had no words to share: they communicated through glances and glimpses and last but not least, the fact that she was silent means that Caliban until Miranda and Prospero's arrival had no name.

The relationship between Caliban and her mother is dual: some moments he could not stand her no more, while in other moments during his telling he repeats and wants to be sure that the readers will know he had loved her. This ambivalence is quite well expressed in a sentence Caliban says: "It was a strange magic my mother had – perhaps all mothers have it, I do not know – but to be near her was to feel the need to obey her".⁴⁹ Here is another connection to Prospero: Caliban felt this need to obey the mother and continued to feel it also when he lived with Prospero even if in a different way which will be analysed later.

Sycorax is described only as a witch from her son until this moment, but is now that the story develops that Caliban adds more information about his mother and the place where they lived: "it was a dark cave, the house of my childhood, with a hole in the top to let some – but never enough – of the smoke float free", "my mother was mad, as I suppose I too am now mad", "to my childish eyes she was unhappy"⁵⁰, and finally a brief description of her grey-shot hair and her ragged dress. Immediately follows a very interesting Caliban's speech: "all men are made by those who raise them, it is true, but was ever a man so crookedly shaped by two people, my mad mother and your cold father? They were the two opposites that swelled to fill my universe."⁵¹ This is how Caliban saw his mother and Prospero, once again connected and compared. The other interesting side of this speech is the similarity and in a certain way agreement to Prospero's most famous speech:

" We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep"⁵².

⁴⁹ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.37.

⁵⁰ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.45.

⁵¹ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.46.

⁵² W. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999, p. 276.

One of the most significant episodes is the moment in which Caliban, while wandering in the island, meets a sow: it is only thanks to his ability of climbing that he could save himself from the great anger of the big sow. While running and climbing he hurt himself and spent some days after with great pains and fever. He remembers this moment as “the time he learned about hatred”⁵³, a feeling which was born after a great fear. It is that sense of fear transformed in hatred that pulled him to plan revenge over the sow. He succeeds and he traps the sow with great pleasure. After accomplishing his mission, he wanders until arriving at his favourite place: his valley, a place discovered some time before and which belonged only to him. But it is here where he thinks about what he did: his thoughts were full of anger but at the same time with compassion for a mother who did what he did only to protect her children. This feeling was not enough to make him change his mind, and totally convinced he went back to the place of the sow to kill her. That night was the first one he could sleep well without nightmares.

Before arriving at the moment in which Sycorax died, Caliban remembers the moment in which Prospero and Miranda saw him for the first time, repeating the same words they used that moment:” Look Miranda, this apparently deserted island seems to have at least a few larger inhabitants. An ape, I think – no, perhaps something a shade more interesting. A so-called natural man, a savage. A cannibal”.⁵⁴ This speech matches with the theories of colonization, cannibals and last but not least the origin of his name. It is Miranda who answers her father’s speech trying to reproduce the word ‘cannibal’ with another one similar: Calibal.

The death of Sycorax was unbelievable to Caliban: it happened so fast during an argument about their dinner. She was about to cuff him away when she suddenly stopped and fell dead on the floor. Caliban did not understand what happened and realized his mother’s death after a little. With the consciousness of her death came also the thought of being completely alone. He started to associate the death of Sycorax to the death of the sow, so he finally decided to make a grave with his own hands.

⁵³ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.55.

⁵⁴ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.65

To a cold and insensitive Caliban with the sow, follows a tender-hearted one who is barely able during his tale to express to his listener how he felt after his mother death:

“How can I make you understand what I felt when my mother died? Your own mother died at your birth; you did not know her. And with all the suffering of your solitude, you always had Prospero your father, the foundation on which your life was erected. Also, even in your island exile you knew there were other people in the world, some who had been kind to you, even loved you. But I had only that mad woman, and when she was taken from me I had less than nothing, for I could not conceive of there being anything else remotely like me”.⁵⁵

His feelings after his mother’s death are described as howling emptiness, speechless grief and madness of solitude: this proves that even if the relationship with his mother was not a real relationship between mother and son, he has been affected by the loss of the only reference point he had in his life.

“Two years of solitude had passed before your boat grounded upon my island. I was lonely”⁵⁶, a long period of bad feelings which opens to some reflexions Caliban starts making after Prospero and Miranda arrival. The colonization is the focus of his believe and it confirms the theories which considered Caliban as the victim of the play. He says:” I sensed that there was something dangerous about a creature who would so blithely occupy another’s territory, but I still cannot understand his thought. Could he, who himself had been driven from Milan by a usurper, not see that he did the same?”⁵⁷. This is a coherent mindset and a good question he could have asked to Prospero. Prospero, indeed tries from the very first moment to buy his confidence off by bringing him food and fruit, but he did not succeed. The following days Caliban is oppressed by the idea that accepting his gift would have change things, even if he did not know how things would have changed. So he accepted a fish Prospero prepared to him, and that is the moment he realised the was fascinated by the person of Prospero. Being looked by “the sorcerer”⁵⁸made him think he was still looking over the walls of his separateness t an invader. He did not realise that Prospero was already inside the citadel.⁵⁹ One day however is Caliban who ends up peeking at Prospero’s magic while creating two puppets and make them doing whatever he wished. Caliban’s curiosity was so intense that he

⁵⁵ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.71.

⁵⁶ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.73.

⁵⁷ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p73.

⁵⁸ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.76.

⁵⁹ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.77.

moved closer to the mannequins before they disappeared make him thinking it was his fault if they disappeared. This sense of guilty could be related to the sow's episode: for a very little moment he blames himself of the mannequins' "death".

The beginning of the cohabitation starts with the personal impression of Caliban about his new companions. He felt in love with Miranda since the very first moment he saw her, in fact, what he confesses that night in Naples is: "I cannot say you were beautiful. I am certain that you were, but I had no point of comparison", and some lines later "and there were you, with hair like autumn, like fire, like the colour of hope".⁶⁰ With this passionate description comes also the awareness of being too much different: "When I first saw that Ferdinand, it was clear that he and the other shipwrecked mariners shared something with you that I did not"⁶¹, starting from the height, size of the arms, appearance of the eyes. It is surely this physical approach that made Prospero call him Cannibal, Ape, Demonspawn and little savage, added to the rumors which says that Caliban was son of a demon. For the first year Caliban felt like part of the family, and even though he did not now any word, he started learning that everybody and everything had a name, starting from Prospero, who one day he called 'father', Miranda, and also he accepted his own name 'Caliban'. He lived special and happy moments with his new companion Miranda, wandering through the island and teaching her swimming, feeling so proud when she called him instead that her father when she was scared. Even Prospero at the beginning was kind to him, made him presents and give him the honour to choose where to build a new house for them. His first idea was share with them HIS valley, but soon after he changed his mind, so he brought them to another place. The sum up of those days are this words: "perhaps I might have discovered a spell to stop time. For those days, those few months, perhaps two shorts year in all, were the happiest I would have"⁶². The choice of the place where to build a new house is a crucial moment in Caliban's life, because "by the day we found your new home, Prospero had already sown in me the seeds of corruption"⁶³. This is a consideration Caliban is able to awake only in the present at Miranda's presence. Only that night he was able to realise he was a little manikin, dressed

⁶⁰ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.82

⁶¹ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.83.

⁶² Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.102.

⁶³ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.102.

in human clothing but by no means a human, made to dance for entertainment of a secretive old man and his spoiled child. He was a puppet, useful only so long as he amused.⁶⁴ This is the moment in which the events collapse. This memory makes him thinking at Prospero's death and gives the reader an idea of what is going to happen by the end of the tale: if I had found him (Prospero) alive in Milan, I would have wept before I killed him, and not just from rage. Just as I will weep before this night is out, Miranda⁶⁵.

Twelve moons later the house is finished, a beautiful house with more than a room, so it was time to celebrate; but even in his last happy moment he is afraid of being punished for the crime he committed with the sow many years before. His fear disappears when all of them start to celebrate by drinking a bottle of wine and Caliban ends up drunk.

As mentioned before this is his last happy moment: from that moment of their relationship suffers a very bad change, and this is how he lived it:" at first Prospero asked me to do things as a favour, a kindness from me that would allow him more time for gathering leaves and seeds. But when repetition and the passage of time had made those same deeds routine instead of extraordinary, he began to criticise any small error or dereliction"⁶⁶. One more episode which gave him pain was the fact to be excluded from the house he built with his own hands, but one of the most important moments of Caliban's pain and life was when he saw for the first time Miranda completely undressed. It was one day Prospero ordered him to fetch some leaves and he went to accomplish his will. During his wandering, he heard Miranda's voice so he decided to get nearer him and make her company. The sight he had was breath-taking:" I stood and stared, helpless, my tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth, the joking shout I was about to loose frozen in my throat. You stood knee-deep in the pool beneath the waterfall, Miranda, naked and beautiful as splendid Heaven itself"⁶⁷. Caliban's words represent in a very eloquent way what he felt in that moment. The following reaction he had, however, was trying to justify himself even if he did not do anything wrong:" I was not spying, they were thoughts of an innocent, as was my heart an innocent's heart. In my years of life I had never seen a flesh-

⁶⁴ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.102.

⁶⁵ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.103.

⁶⁶ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p. 112.

⁶⁷ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.120

and-blood woman unclothed”⁶⁸. These words clearly tells how and why he felt so. It was his first experience with a woman, for he did not know nor see any woman, least of all without clothes.

After this moment of psychological confusion, the sense of guilt becomes pure desire, and Caliban’s way to express change:

You were so beautiful that it hurt me; I wanted you, wanted you more than anything I have ever desired. So powerful was that desire that for a moment in my confusion I became the cannibal of your father’s prejudice: I wanted to possess you and your beauty so fiercely that I could almost imagine devouring you⁶⁹.

This second moment in which Caliban becomes even more aware of being attracted by Miranda ends with no consequences for both of them: it remains Caliban’s secret experience. It is with the third episode that the consequences for Caliban damage even more his relationship with Prospero and Miranda. One day Prospero was ill, so they both decided to go for a walk with the sense of freedom they only felt when Prospero was no there to control them. It is an important moment for Caliban for he decides to bring Miranda to his only favourite place. The decision to share this moment with her makes everybody understand how much important she became to him. He donates that place to her, but is in that intimate situation when Caliban surrenders to the powerful physical attraction he feels toward Miranda. The physical approach scares Miranda and is interrupted by a voice calling them from the trunk of a tree: it is this diversion makes Miranda escaping. The same night, after Prospero learns everything from her daughter he went to Caliban and hit him almost to death. The only person the following days, who brought him water and care was Miranda. Her behaviour demonstrates she felt a little guilty for what Caliban suffered. Here there is another connection to the sow’s episode because Caliban had nightmares and pain worse than after the sow’s attack.

From this episode in the valley two are the main consequences in the narration: the first one involves Caliban and Miranda relationship which changes definitely and the second one that Caliban was no longer the favourite servant of Prospero because of the entrance of a new character in their life: Ariel the imprisoned spirit of the trunk tree in the valley.

⁶⁸ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.120

⁶⁹ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.122

After Ariel's arrival Caliban was able to feel only betrayed until him and Prospero could have a discussion. The dialogue between them resembles in the first lines the dialogue between a father disappointed by his child:

P: "I expected too much of you

C: I have done you no wrong

P: No wrong? You are alive this moment by virtue of my daughter's pleading only".⁷⁰

The sense of being deceived by his friend Miranda, and the pain of hearing such words by Prospero make him becoming what they have ever thought about him: a monster, an animal: "if ever I truly was an animal, it was in that time"⁷¹, he said that night in Naples to Miranda, regretting of not having acted in a different way: "I would have killed you a dozen times, but I feared what your father would then Ariel do to me"⁷².

His vision and idea of Prospero changed completely: from a good man a to bad one, meditating and make Miranda meditate on Prospero behave after the storm. Was he a good man when he wanted to risk all the sailors life with a tempest? And, was he a good man when he sold his daughter to his enemies to get his power back?

The arrival of other human beings after the storm, made Caliban's familiar island becoming a maze of confusion⁷³. Here the tale should be the same as in Shakespeare original *The Tempest*, but Tad Williams decides to give Caliban the power to tell the story from his personal point of view, denying what Prospero could have told his daughter: "oh, the lies you father later told you, Miranda, and which you hurried to believe. He told you that those sailors and I plotted some murderous rebellion. Lies, lies, lies!"⁷⁴.

What happens to the island during the stay of all those people is not told, but Caliban wants everybody know that what happened when everybody met again all together, is that it is not the same Prospero told her:

⁷⁰ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.147

⁷¹ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.154

⁷² Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.154

⁷³ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.158

⁷⁴ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.156.

Ariel laid a further spell on Stephano and Trinculo that made their weariness seem drunken foolery, those to discredit their warnings. King Alonso, bemused by your father's magics had made a great apology and renunciation, and now stood beaming like a drunkard himself, clasping Prospero's hand and proclaiming that all wrongs would be righted, all crimes punished.⁷⁵

Who is lying and who telling the truth? Is Caliban's anger towards Prospero so powerful to see the things with such a different point of view? Or is Caliban right and Prospero a profiteer of his magic?

The last part of Caliban's tale is a confession before the departure to Naples and Milan. Miranda's speech is in a certain way liberatory: "Caliban, my father is a strict man, but not a cruel one. He has decided to forgive you. You will be punished no further. And you will have your island back again, as you wished." The answer of Caliban is pretty similar to one Miranda's speech in the original version of William Shakespeare. The idea is Tad Williams wants to create some connection to the 'real' *Tempest*: "oh brave new world it must be, that has such creatures in it. Go to it, you!"⁷⁶ referring to the world where Miranda is moving soon.

Before going away, one last unbelievable confession comes from Prospero. His last words to Caliban are incredible: "I have dealt harshly with you in the past, Caliban, but it was for your own betterment. Now I leave you to your future and your freedom. In my way, little savage, I loved you once"⁷⁷. The key words of this speech are freedom, a condition so much wished, and love, a word which never appears connected to Caliban and Prospero.

Caliban's tale is over, so it is the moment to face the truth in Miranda's bedroom. The morning is coming and with the morning also Miranda's awareness of being killed in any moment. Caliban, for the first time, informs us about the time passing. He claims that twenty years are passed since that moment they left the island, leaving him alone in an island he could not recognize anymore: "during the two decades of miserable, solitary

⁷⁵ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.158

⁷⁶ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.164.

⁷⁷ Williams, *Caliban's hour*, p.164.

exile after you sailed away, the island never again felt like home it had been. You took the only things I possessed – my island, my heart, my life – and sailed away”⁷⁸.

The only thing Caliban now wants is to get revenge over his enemies, and to accomplish this desire, he is there to kill Miranda, but it is in the high point of climax, while Miranda is going to be suffocated that something unexpected happened. Giulietta enters the room after having heard all the story during the night and incredulous asks her mother if what she heard is the truth. Giulietta wants to repay the debt to Caliban by going with him to the island and being his servant, instead of killing her mother and being forced to stay in Naples and marrying someone she does not want. This a praiseworthy decision, even if it could be seen a little selfish. Is she doing so to save her mother or to save herself from a boring and undesirable life?

Tad Williams book ends with Caliban promise to Miranda:” I will treat her with exactly the same respect and kindness and love which I showed to you. I swear that by all the spirits of my island”⁷⁹.

To sum up, Tad Williams wanted to let all *the Tempest*’ readers the story of such an important character as Caliban. In Shakespeare’s version he is described only as the bad monster, but here his personal past is revealed, with all his experiences, feelings and thoughts. There are analogies in Miranda and Caliban’s childhood which create between them a connection and a desire to compassionate them, but there are also two important moment’s in Caliban’s life which made the being he was and became: the sow’s episode, and the love confession to Miranda. Also the theme of colonization is hidden in some moments and Caliban’s reflexion.

It could be said, to end this part on Tad Williams, that he used all the information he had by scholars and critics to create this sequel of *the Tempest*, a book which liked most of the readers who were curious to know how what happened after Miranda and Prospero’s departure.

⁷⁸ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.169.

⁷⁹ Williams, *Caliban’s hour*, p.178.

CHAPTER 5

SHAKESPEARE AND PRISON



5.1. HAG-SEED

A more recent novel, is the one by Margaret Atwood, published in 2016 and maybe the most unconventional *Tempest* between the previously analysed. Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed* is part of a collection by the Hogarth Press, the publishing company founded by Virginia and Leonard Woolf in 1917. The aim of this project is delighting Shakespeare's lovers and bring him to a new readership, both old and new.

The reviews of the newspapers in the following days of the publication are positive and in favour of this unconventional and current retelling of *The Tempest*:

“You don’t need to be a Shakespeare geek like me to enjoy *Hag-Seed*; it’s a good story, and will introduce you to the play gently, with Felix himself as your guide.” —*NPR Books*⁸⁰

“What makes the book thrilling, and hugely pleasurable, is how closely Atwood hews to Shakespeare even as she casts her own potent charms, rap-composition included... Part Shakespeare, part Atwood, “Hag-Seed” is a most delicate monster — and that’s “delicate” in the 17th-century sense. It’s delightful.” — *The Boston Globe*⁸¹

Margaret Atwood is a Canadian poet, novelist and essayist. She realized she wanted to write professionally when she was sixteen and after graduating she started her career as professor at several Canadian Universities and kept writing her own works. The Shakespeare retelling she wrote was commissioned by Random House, an American book publisher. Her idea of the *Tempest* is considering it is some ways a sort of multimedia musical:” if Shakespeare was working today, he’d be using every special effect technology now makes available”⁸². To make her novel even more contemporary, she affirms her references has been *Orange Is the New Black*, *All About Eve*, and also JK Rowling.

Hag-Seed tells the story of Felix, a famous theatre director being fired from his position and who goes to a prison to teach the prisoners about theatre. During these years he has time to plan a revenge on the one who did this to him while living his life between the prison and his lonely house where his daughter Miranda waits for him every day.

The novel is divided in five parts:

- The first one entitled *Dark Backward* tells about the present situation of Felix and his past. He is going to be replaced by his partner Tony as a director of an important festival in the town, so he decides to isolate in a countryside house where he lives with the memory of her wife who died during the birth of their child, and with her daughter Miranda, or better, the illusion of living with her

⁸⁰ <http://hogarthshakespeare.com/hag-seed/>

⁸¹ <http://hogarthshakespeare.com/hag-seed/>

⁸² M. Atwood, *Hag-Seed*, London: Hogarth Shakespeare, 2016, on the cover.

daughter who died at the age of three. To avoid to become mad, he decides to accept a position as theatre teacher in a prison.

- The second and third part, *A Brave Kingdom* and *These Our Actors*, tell the moment in which Felix decides to plot his revenge after having known that his enemies will visit the prison and see the performance they will stage. These parts are full of important discussions and debate between him and his students about all concerns *The Tempest*.
- The fourth part, *Rough Magic*, is when Felix can put in action his evil plan.
- Last part, *This Things of Darkness*, tells what happened after the show, including all the ideas of the students of how the stories of their characters followed.

After this very brief introduction to the structure of the novel, every single part will be analysed. Felix is a well-known and important theatre director scared by the loss of his beloved wife and after three years the loss of his daughter. After the death of his daughter he had a powerful will of staging William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in honour of her daughter Miranda. Here the name is itself a clue to this story in the story. He himself would be Prospero and he had clear ideas about how his cast would be. He wanted his Ariel to be a transvestite, his Caliban a black or Native paraplegic street person and his Miranda will be superb, and thanks to this show she will live again. Felix was obsessed by this project so much that his partner Tony decided to exclude Felix from the important Festival they were organizing and made him be dismissed. Felix, as Prospero, lost his "dukedom" thanks to a person who believed loyal to him, and also their physical aspect is similar because both of them are grey-hair with beard.

From this moment, Felix disappears and becomes Mr. Duke. First step for a new life is to find a new place where to live. He found an isolated house. The only neighbours were hundred meters away. He went to them to know if he could rent that house. They made an agreement and so much he was moved by his failure that he saw in that family a cast to performance a *Tempest*, but he realized it was a crazy idea. In that new house he lived with the phantom of his daughter: he talked to her, he read her some books, he treated her like his beloved daughter. But with this plain routine comes also the awareness of all the losses the had to face:" what did he care about? What did he want? What was his purpose now? what did he have to live for? His occupation was gone, and the love of his life. Both

of his loves”⁸³. In one word, he was lost, so he felt he needed a purpose, a focus, and he found them: first, he needed to get his *Tempest* back, and second, he wanted revenge:” he longed for it. He daydreamed about it. Tony and Sal must suffer”⁸⁴. The first one was more difficult to achieve, so he concentrated on the second one.

Because this novel is set in the present days, Felix has some instruments specific of this moment: computers and Google, and thanks to these instruments he can check and control what his enemies are doing in their lives and later on get in contact with the actress who will be Miranda: thanks to Facebook. In the meantime his Miranda was growing and he starts to count the years passing remembering the age Miranda should be. One day scared by his isolation and afraid of becoming mad being always alone talking to someone who does not exist, he decides to apply for a job as teacher in a correctional institute and received back an email for an interview in the following days. The woman who made the interview was the supervisor of the institute and recognized him as Felix Phillips, the great theatre director. They agreed to keep his identity as a secret, and started to discuss about the programme Felix should teach. He is convinced about teaching and performing Shakespeare, but the supervisor tries to discourage him, considering that he will have to do with criminals and considering that Shakespeare is quite difficult to read and understand. Felix succeeded even if the first period was quite difficult, starting from the choice of the play to study: he could neither romantic play, not depressing plays. He was successful with *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar* and *Richard III*, but now it’s the fourth year of teaching and it came the moment for him to start his plan. The month before the beginning of the school he met with the supervisor, and she told him that this year they would have had special guests during the performance: some important Ministers, who are those who twelve years before, ruined Felix life. This is the reason why, against everyone opinion, he decides to work on *The Tempest*, his *Tempest*.

Since this moment the plot is simple, elementary, and the reader can start to think about Felix, or Mr. Duke as Prospero. They have some similarities: the physical appearance with long beard and grey hair; the betrayal of someone close to them; both their daughters

⁸³ Atwood, *Hag-Seed*, p.40.

⁸⁴ Atwood, *Hag-Seed*, p.41.

are called Miranda; they live isolated; and they both want revenge against who wounded their feelings.

From this moment on, instead, there is a part in which Felix works with his student, and the reader dives in his teaching methodology. It seems to be in a real school with students and Felix's method could be a spark to all those literature teachers who every day has to deal with classes more or less interested in learning Shakespeare. The point is only one: if you teacher can be interesting and fascinate your students, it is a done deal. Learning while having fun is one of the simplest way to learn. This is his method: giving his students the text with his notes before the beginning of the course, so they have time to read and understand what is going on. Then all together in class they establish the keynotes: musical, magic, prisons, monster and revenge. The following exercise is finding in the text at least ten curse words in the lay which should be the only curse words they can use in class. Soon after an exchange of views and after listing all the bad words they found Felix introduce a game of spelling so anyone learns how to write even the most difficult words.

After these linguistic and grammar exercises, there comes one of the most important parts before a performance: a debate about the characters. The first one to be considered is Ariel: everyone in the class thinks it is too much a feminine role, so anybody wants to be Ariel in the performance. Felix's skill is to make them reflect and find out all the qualities of this character which could not be necessarily of a female. This is what emerges: this creature can be invisible, can fly, has superpowers and above all is not human, but the majority of the class see it as a product of Prospero's mind, or something like an imaginary friend he has. And here is the intervention of Felix: he wants to make them think about Ariel as a real figure. The way in which they imagine it, is like a superhero or an alien, so the costume for this character will be a blue one, like air; he will be vegan and he will be more than a simple character of the play: he will be the special effects of the entire play, because it is only thanks to him that there is a play, a tempest, and it is only thanks to him that Prospero can act. All these considerations made Ariel so attractive at the end of the lesson that everybody wanted to performance him.

The following lesson will be an attempt of listing the main character and see how much they want to be one of them. Felix decides to use the chronological order to list them and

to everyone makes a comment. He starts from the real owner of the island, Caliban, describing him like Prospero's friend at the beginning but becoming his slave later; Miranda and Prospero are arriving in the island after Caliban. Their aim is to survive and be back at their lives as soon as possible. Here there is a gap of twelve years until someone else arrives on the island: it is a group of people, the King Alonso and his brother Sebastian, Prospero's brother Antonio and the good servant Gonzalo. For Antonio and Sebastian the island is the opportunity to get rid of Alonso and Gonzalo so they can be the rulers when they will be back; Ferdinand arrives alone in the island and thinks his father is dead. He meets Miranda and immediately falls in love with her. The last two are Stephano and Trinculo, a sort of comic version of Antonio and Sebastian. The conclusions they did are that the island is in a certain way a theatre, and Prospero the director putting on a play within which there is another play. This conclusion represents the situation of Felix: he is the director and the prison is his theatre.

The majority of the class want to be Caliban in the play, so Felix thinks they need a deeper analysis of the character in order to understand who they think they are going to embody. All of them decide Caliban is human, and he is more than all the bad words with which he is called. He is also musical and romantic when he speaks about his island which he knows better than anybody else, but he is also vengeful because he wants his island back. Some of them arrive to think that Caliban is similar to Prospero, and Felix congratulates with them: their thought is correct because both Prospero and Caliban want what they owned before the misfortune.

The last exercise they do before starting with the real work about performance is the one of finding in the original text the prisons of the play. There are many, and they succeeded in finding all except one. The island is the prison for most of the characters of the play starting from Sycorax, following with Prospero and Miranda and finishing with all the victims of the shipwreck. The other prison is Ariel's pine, follows Caliban's cave and last in a metaphorical way is the magic and the enchantments done to the shipwrecked.

Prospero seems to be the top jailer in the play and most of the students does not like him, because they see him like a tyrant, a land stealer and exploiter.

Here then will start the real work about acting and memorizing all the speeches. All the main character will have a team which will help them with the speeches and gesture and specific characteristics. The guys are allowed to make some changes in speeches and

scenes without change the plot, and they decide to use their technology to make some changes, for example use the scene where Prospero tells Miranda their story as a flashback filmed and projected, using the professionalism of the actress doing Miranda, who is a choreographer, and dancing and rapping that scene.

All these learning process ends with the characters' teams imagining what happens to their characters once the play is over:

- Team Ariel decides he will take a holiday after everybody left the island, and after his holiday he decide to help to solve the climate changes and problems there are on earth.
- Team Antonio imagines him, while sailing to Naples, killing Alonso, Ferdinand, Prospero and scared Gonzalo almost to death. Then he and Sebastian rape Miranda including Miranda and throwing her overboard after raping.
- Team Miranda decide to reinterpret what Team Antonio did. Miranda transforms in a heroine saving the life of all the persons Antonio wanted to kill.
- Team Caliban, called Hag-Seed, imagined three versions: the first one which is quite boring because sees a Caliban in his isle but alone with nobody else. The second one in which Caliban sails to Naples and is chained by Stephano and Trinculo while Antonio kills Prospero and Miranda after having raped her. After their arrival in Naples Caliban dies of disease. The third one is that Caliban discovers Prospero to be his father so Prospero takes care of him, washes him, dresses him and once arrived in Milan he makes him become a famous musician.

This was the method used by Felix to impassion his students to Shakespeare's world. But why this novel is considered a retelling of the real *Tempest*? Because Felix as Prospero has a daughter called Miranda who he loves with all his hearth. Even if Felix cannot see her anymore because she was dead at the age of three he pretends to educate her as Prospero did. Both of them are removed from their kingdom, Milan and the Festival, but both of them succeeded in having revenge over their enemies. Felix, thanks to the help of his students, enacts a performance of the *Tempest* using his enemies as actors, scaring them to death, that at the moment of their encounter he blackmails them and gets his position back. The result is for both the achievement of their aim. One last consideration is that as Prospero dis, also Felix decided to retire:" as for Artistic Director, he's accepted

the position but in name only. He'll work behind the scenes. He'll break his staff, he'll drown his book because it's time for the young people to take over"⁸⁵. This moment resembles the one in which Prospero decides to give up with magic. This novel goes beyond the simple retelling of a well-known masterpiece: it represents, an incitement for teachers to use unconventional methods to attract every type of student's attention, the will to see how the things would be nowadays taking into consideration a nonconventional set, and the wish to keep alive a great author such as Shakespeare.

5.2. *SHAKESPEARE INSIDE and SHAKESPEARE BEHIND BARS*

Considering that the word Prison is one of the key-words of the play, it could be interesting what Shakespeare becomes in a such peculiar context. To this purpose, the documentary *Shakespeare behind bars* by Hank Rogerson can give a great support, added to the book entitled *Shakespeare Inside* by Amy Scott-Douglass. This book is the successful completion of a project to which she worked hard and initially also with some afterthoughts, but considering the outcome, she affirms that going to prison has been the most important and enlightening experience of her adult life⁸⁶.

In the book she mentions mainly three Institutes:

- The Luther Lockett Correctional Complex: a minimum and medium-security state prison located in Kentucky.
- The Massachusetts Correctional Institution: a medium-security correctional facility for female offenders.
- The Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women: a prison only for Women inmates.

All is principally based on SBB, Shakespeare Behind Bars, an acting company founded in 1995 by the Artistic Director Curt Tofteland. This innovation wanted to be a way to develop the artistic expression, learning literacy, improve the social skills and last and

⁸⁵ Atwood, *Hag-Seed*, p.280.

⁸⁶ A. Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, London: Continuum, 2007, p.x.

most important, a way to come to terms with what these inmates did and suffered: the theatrical representation of crimes and violence can open the actors' minds and make them reflect about their past, present and future. During the 1980s and 1990s many were the companies and project born both in the United States and England which involved Correctional Institutes for all types of inmates: women, men and even the youths. To express even clearly the aim of these ideas the words of the theatre director Chris Johnston are perfect: "We set up a kind of parallel universe where experiences as profound as those of both the offender and the victim can be explored. Participants can begin to experience some kind of victim empathy because they recognize the intensity and compulsions of the drives which make them want to offend"⁸⁷.

In 2004 there was the representation of *Julius Caesar* at the Luther Luckett Correctional Complex and that day was the first time for Amy Scott-Douglass in a prison, who years later affirms: "I never in a million years would I have thought that I'd be going to prison to see, of all things, a Shakespeare play"⁸⁸. Scott-Douglass is taking part to the last rehearsal, and for her it seems a disaster, but the performance in the evening is perfect, because nobody forgot any line and nobody laughed when one of the inmates performed Portia. This is an interesting concept Scott-Douglass wants to underline to her readers, maybe because as seen in Margaret Atwood novel, it must be very difficult to convince a man, especially those men, to perform the role of a woman, and one of the prisoners confirms it later in the book: "it takes tremendous amount of courage for any man in here to play a woman's part"⁸⁹.

"the Shakespeare Behind Bars participants know Shakespeare better than many academics do": this is what Scott-Douglass asserts after the second performance of the company, the one opened also to their families and some professors. One of the professors in the audience congratulates to the actors and the answer of one of them proves that the aim of the Company is achieved: "I guess you as an audience would see that we do live through Shakespeare, but that's only because we reflect ourselves. In that way it lends an authenticity to the characters because each of us is resolving issues through Shakespeare.

⁸⁷ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p. 6.

⁸⁸ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p. 3.

⁸⁹ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p. 31.

Through the art or theatre, Shakespeare helps us learn how to better cope with life”⁹⁰. In that occasion Amy learned about one of the cruellest rules of that Institute: the rule of the visits. Physical contacts between the inmates and the visitors are limited only to a brief hug or kiss at the beginning and conclusion of the visit, and the inmates can hold their child only when he is less than one year: this means that a 2-years old child cannot have any physical contact with his father. And it is very sad even only to think about it.

During her stay in the prison Scott-Douglass had the occasion to talk to the guys who performed *Julius Caesar*, and she asked them how was their approach to Shakespeare when they were young students. Two of them told her they did not like Shakespeare at that time, but now they changed their mind thanks to the opportunity they had to live and embody the characters. One of the sweetest moment is one of the inmates starts crying because of his deep feelings while talking about how Shakespeare changed his life. This speech is another proof of the fulfilment of this project’s aims.

“I’ll tell you something Shakespeare’s done for me” he told Amy. “It’s helped me to talk to people. Before, like talking to you now? I couldn’t talk to you at all. I was afraid that you was gonna judge me. Like you are a superior person. You’re a professor, you know, and I would be intimidated more than anything. But when I started Shakespeare, I was in awe of the fact that total strangers could come in here and treat me like I was somebody”⁹¹.

One of the most important conversations Scott-Douglass had, was with the guy who performed Brutus. He killed his lover and he is in prison after a life verdict. Everybody thought he was the one who changed completely after his experience in the company. This guy, Sammie, tells Amy he read Shakespeare while in high school, but did not understand a word. The real change comes when he could perform characters like Othello, Aaron, Proteus or Brutus:” what Shakespeare has allowed me to do, is to see myself and to see how destructive I have been, the effect I have had on people. So, in a sense, role-playing has really helped to see myself”⁹². After this affirmation Sammie succeeds in telling Amy the story of his life, especially about the moment in which he committed his crime. The power of his story makes him much more aware of what he did, and makes

⁹⁰ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p. 12.

⁹¹ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.18.

⁹² Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.29.

him feel real repentance crying again and again, so much that Amy at a certain point thinks he is pretending to cry.

The following interview is between Amy and DeMond, who is in prison for 11 years after a very difficult childhood when both his grandfather and father were in jail. He, as a religious man describes his approach to Shakespeare affirming that God used Shakespeare as the number-one tool. Now thanks to Shakespeare, and playing the Bard's characters, he is able to see through the characters' eyes, thinking about the hurt he brought to other people's lives⁹³.

Ron is the other guy to be interviewed that afternoon. He played the role of Cassius, a role with a specific meaning as Amy states:" in the Shakespeare program, volunteering to play the role of the antagonist, especially when it's an antagonist who commits a criminal act, signifies that you've reached a milestone and you're ready to take accountability for your own criminal acts"⁹⁴. And this is what Ron did. His personality is much different than all the other guys. He seems introvert but at the same time very smart confessing that when he performs Cassius he thinks to the many analogies between his character and George Bush and between Rome and the United States. He is the only one who does not love Shakespeare and the program as they are:" I'm one of the founding members, but I don't really so much have a love for Shakespeare, I have a love for learning. I read books. I read history. I read social sciences"⁹⁵. His longing for knowledge makes him, while reading Shakespeare, connecting what he is reading with what is going on in the present world. One of the reasons why he took part to the project is for Curt, the director. He considers him one of the three persons most important in his life, after his grandfather and his mother.

The first interviews of Amy with the actors are important moments in which she can learn and understand something about them. The characteristic in common of the interviews is the fact that every one of the inmates is able to talk about the reason why he is in prison. Some of them is detailed in expressing the feelings felt in those moment when they committed their crimes, and every one of them could realize only during their

⁹³ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.37.

⁹⁴ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.43.

⁹⁵ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.44.

imprisonment how much they hurt to many other persons: not only their victims but also the victim's families, their own families and their selves.

The difficulties during the projects are mainly two: the assignment of a role depending on the gender and ethnicity which is going to be performed, and the fact that during the nine months of rehearsals anything could happen: for example, the inmates' transfer from one prison to another. Sometimes happens that the conferment of a role is a sort of self-casting, exactly because as mentioned before, the inmates have the opportunity to identify themselves with some of the Shakespearean characters; one of the oddest examples is the one of a guy who embodied Tamora. It was odd because first of all he had to be a woman and secondly because he is a black man and has to become a Scandinavian white woman, but the most important thing during this casting was the fact that this guy shared the same past of the character: they both have lost two children. As far as the matter of casting is concerned Amy states: "when it comes to Shakespeare Behind Bars, the actors' ethnicities and life experiences provide possibilities for radical, enlightening interpretations of Shakespeare"⁹⁶, even though the majority of the inmates are African-American. To examine in depth the choice of the inmates to interpret a feminine role, they assert that so many and so different are the reason of each one of them: some of them are forced to play the women by the elder of the group; some offer to play that role to get it over with; many see it as an opportunity for personal growth; some want to challenge themselves to overcome their chauvinism; some because in their past they have committed crimes against women so this could represent a fundamental moment in their rehabilitation and last, because in part some of them have been emotionally, verbally, physically or sexually abused by men⁹⁷. Another example is Marcel's one who had to be Miranda. At the beginning he absolutely did not want to play that role, later, after having read Miranda's speeches he accepted precisely because he saw in Miranda and Prospero his relationship with his father.

The attention now moves to another project: Prison Performing Arts, a project started in the same years of the previous one by Agnes Wilcox, but which only attracted people's attention in 2002. This was the year when they performed *Hamlet*, or it is better to say,

⁹⁶ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.56.

⁹⁷ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.77.

the year when they started their perform, because, due to the strict rules at the maximum-security prisons, the inmates are not allowed to stay in the same room as long as a play lasts. The solution was performing one act at a time during the following three years. In 2006 Amy Scott-Douglass went to Northeast Correctional Centre in Missouri to see Act two and three of *Julius Caesar*. She liked the performance, but she appreciated even more the after-show, when a group of five guys started a rap not about Shakespeare, not about Rome, not about Julius Caesar but surprisingly about George W. Bush, criticizing his behaviour during the events of Hurricane Katrina, the Iraq's War and the New Orleans deaths. They used this rap as an epilogue of their *Julius Caesar*, to mirror Rome's situation to the present American one.

The aims of this two projects, both Tofteland and Wilcox's, are the same and also the results and the effects they have on the participants. The difference is that if in the Shakespeare Behind Bars Company the inmates play the role also of the feminine characters, in Wilcox's company they use professional actresses, as it was in Margaret Atwood's novel. This choice has been made to avoid sexual abuses between the inmates, and this was confirmed during Amy's interview with one of the actors: "this is prison", he said, "if I went around acting like a woman, there could be serious consequences on the yard"⁹⁸. At the beginning, it was very hard for them to get in touch to a woman after so many years, but at the end all went good and they succeeded in get used to it.

In 2004 the Shakespeare Behind Bars went to the Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women to perform their *Julius Caesar* and Amy was present that afternoon. In her book, she affirms that a hundred women were there to see the show or better, to see the men⁹⁹. The feminine audience felt quite upset during the murder scene and at the same time almost offended during Caesar and Brutus' chauvinist speeches. The most moving part of this episode is when Amy does her best to be allowed to seat with the inmates during the performance. One of the girls before go back to her cell thanked her: "thank you for sitting with us. I was so surprised that you wanted to sit with us. Most people are either afraid of us or they think we're scum, with us being locked up and all"¹⁰⁰. One the

⁹⁸ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.67.

⁹⁹ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.71.

¹⁰⁰ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.76.

contrary, the most average moment is when one of the girls asks Scott-Douglass information about one of the actors. She wanted to know when he will be free because he fell in love with him at first sight. This proves that they think about an after-life, they have projects and they still have hope to reconstruct a new life.

In 2006 Scott-Douglass met Jean Trounstine, a theatre director working with women inmates in Massachusetts and they started talking about men interpreting women and vice versa. Trounstine affirms:” my women actresses are better at playing men than Curt’s male actors are at playing women”¹⁰¹. And she is convinced about it because:” women watch men more. Women know how men move. We know how they look. We know how to disguise ourselves as men. Also, there’s a freedom when a woman plays a man that comes from being your aggressive, assertive self that you’re not allowed to be in real life”¹⁰². So, it means that for her women it is a sort of escape, something which make them feel free and feel who they really are, even if for an instant.

Jean Trounstine’s project started because one of the inmates knew about the men having a theatre group in their Institute, so starting a women project meant give them the opportunity to be equal to men. The work they do with Shakespeare texts is readapting them using their own words, and the result is that Shakespeare seems acquiring much more sense. The inmates feel successful thanks to a relaxing work they to all together on the texts, conversely to what the Shakespeare Behind Bars do. On Jean’s opinion, they conduct their rehearsals in a too much competitive way¹⁰³.

After her experiences in Correctional Institutes is time for Amy to meet the Kentucky State Reformatory’s warden: Mr. Chandler. Her interview seems to be forgotten by the director, so the interview starts while they enter into the psychiatric ward. She describes that situation surprised by the fact that in the inmates’ cells there is no toilet,” there is nothing. This is worse than any depiction of prison I’ve ever seen in television or film. And the thing that makes it worse, even more striking than the pathetic state of the inmates, is the smell. The psychiatric ward smells like death”¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰¹ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.89.

¹⁰² Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.89.

¹⁰³ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.90.

¹⁰⁴ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.100

Warden Chandler is a resolute but also sensitive man and this shine through his words:” I still believe in people. No matter what they’ve done, no matter what mistakes these men have made, life goes on”¹⁰⁵. He believes in what he does, and this is his best success. He believes that discipline and respect are the basis to succeed. He supported the theatre projects because he also believes in education and religion. He considers his job “a try to put as many educational opportunities out there as possible”¹⁰⁶. One Chandler’s thought which could seem a little incoherent is his last speech during the interview:” people should pay for their crimes, but I’m not sure that prison is where they should pay for them”¹⁰⁷ and it is not clear if he is referring to a lack of trust in the system or to an empathy towards the inmates that after being out will have so a hard life with all the prejudices they have to face.

This is the example of Mike Smith, an inmate who went out and persevered in finding a job. This perseveration is the result of the self-confidence and communication skills developed during his experience as a member of Shakespeare Behind Bars. Besides self-confidence he acquired an intelligence and a capacity of self-analysis demonstrated by the fact that now he is able to admit that he knows what he did and he was responsible for those crimes.

Amy Scott-Douglass’ book end with a dialogue between her and an inmate of a maximum-security Institute. He asks her if she wants to start a Shakespeare programme for inmates in the future and she replies it could be possible, so he suggests her:

” if you have a Shakespeare programme for inmates, you gotta let it belong to the inmates as well as yourself. You gotta let it be a dialogue. They talk and then you respond. It’s important that they are allowed to voice their own interpretations, and it’s important that you give feedback and respond to them. Because I can tell you. I’ve been locked up in solitary confinement for years now, and there’s nothing worse. People are social beings. They need to be able to participate in conversations. There’s nothing worse than not being spoken to. Remember that”¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁵ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.105

¹⁰⁶ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.104

¹⁰⁷ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.106

¹⁰⁸ Scott-Douglass, *Shakespeare Inside*, p.114.

This conclusion could be applicable not only to Shakespeare programs for inmates but also for the teaching of all the subjects and for every-day life kind of issues. Communication is important and even more important is the exchange of views.

Connected to Amy Scott-Douglass' book is the 2005 documentary by Hank Rogerson *Shakespeare Behind Bars*. The director's words help to understand the reason of his choices:" I as attracted to the idea of making *Shakespeare Behind Bars* since it combined two of my greatest passions – documentary filmmaking and acting¹⁰⁹"; he considers a great satisfaction to see how they mount the production of William Shakespeare's play after many months of psychological struggle. He considers this documentary a very challenging film to make, because of his dealing with issues such as murder, truth and forgiveness both in the play and in the prisoners' lives. In the interview that follows the documentary in the DVD, the director and producer talk about the project of Shakespeare Behind Bars as a therapy for the inmates and an emotional journey through their past. They support this kind of experience because there they can put their own experiences in their characters, they have a group support and because through Shakespeare they can discover things and become better persons.

Hank Rogers spent a year filming such a production, from initial idea to casting through rehearsals and, finally, through the performances, going behind the story and into those men's lives.

The director Tofteland's choice of interpreting *The Tempest* depends most of all on its plot has many similarities with the life in the Lockett Correctional Institute, for example the island which represents a prison itself and the continuous research for redemption and forgiveness. The difference with Scott-Douglass' book is that here all is focused on *the Tempest* from the casting in September until the show in May. During these long months Hank gets in contact with the inmates during their diction and recitation exercises. The odd thing is that while they are exercising all the other inmates are busy with other activities such as beach volley, billiards and soccer. During the lessons and the rehearsal

¹⁰⁹ H. Rogerson, *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, 2005, DVD.

there are many moments of exchange of views, in which everybody can express his opinion about the characters, the words and speeches and the way of acting and interpreting. These are positive moments in which they can also unconsciously work on their psychology. The final objective is the performance of the play in front of a public composed by relatives they can see rarely. After months of hard work, they can finally see who they become thanks to Shakespeare.

An important thing that the viewer of this documentary faces is the fact of seeing every actor talking about his past and most of all showing without filters all his feelings. Starting from the very beginning there is Hal-Prospero, who killed his pregnant wife. He identified as the reason of his weakness his family, with whom he never had a real relationship and communication. Today he has been awarded a 1st place Pen Award in essay and a 3rd place in poetry. He continues with the SBB program. His next parole hearing will be in 2025.

For Red-Miranda it was a challenge to interpret a feminine role. The moment in which he realizes to be as Miranda is when during the rehearsal Prospero confided his daughter to be the Duke of Milan and she answered incredulous asking he was really her father. Red knew his father at the same age of Miranda, when he was more or less 15. He received parole in 2008. In 2010, he returned to prison on a new conviction. His sentence expires in 2018.

Big G-Caliban, who sold drugs and killed a policeman, considers his character as many prisoners, a savage. Caliban is angry as well as hurt and to interpret him Big G said he had to regress in a certain way. He went up for parole in February 2011 and got 10 more years. He began a mentorship program for young offenders. He worked in a dog training program and continues with the SBB programme.

Leonard-Antonio has a strong desire for redemption. He sexually abused seven girls and would be remembered not for the worst things he did. he thinks he was like Antonio in his past: arrogant. After fighting several bouts with cancer, he died in November 2016. During the documentary, he has been transferred to a maximum-security institute. Rick has replaced him. He feels gratitude towards this opportunity to participate to the SBB. He killed two men who killed his stepfather. He has been removed from the programme

after violating one of the prison's rule: making tattoos. Years later he took the shoe laces out of his tennis shoes, tied them together, and used them to hang himself in his cell.

Sammie-Trinculo has been sexually abused and killed his woman's lover. During the documentary he was responsible of a computer laboratory, but years later he got into trouble with computer fraud. He was transferred to 2 other prisons. After serving more than thirty years in prison, he was paroled in August 2014.

The great sensitivity of some of the inmates is shown by their tears while talking about their past, the great desire for redemption and the efforts they make every day to become better men.

The most moving words are the warden's: "the day they walk in we start preparing them for the day they leave"¹¹⁰. This demonstrate how much they care and believe in what they do for these needy people.

Below some images of the show:



¹¹⁰ H. Rogerson, *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, 2005.



Miranda, Prospero and Ferdinand



Prospero's speech



5.3. SHAKESPEARE SAVED MY LIFE

The same attitude is Laura Bates, an English professor at Indiana State University, where she has taught courses on Shakespeare for the past fifteen years. She created the world's first Shakespeare programme in supermax and long-term confinement units. The preface of her book *Shakespeare saved my life*, is the summary of the contents the reader will find in it:

This is a book about a prisoner in solitary confinement...and how his life was changed by Shakespeare. It is also about a Shakespeare professor...and how her life was changed by the prisoner. Welcome to a world that few ever enter, a world in which both prisoner and professor spent ten years together, learning, sharing and growing through Shakespeare".¹¹¹

This is the real story of Laura Bates and Larry Newton which started in 2000 at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, Indiana. Bates just completed a PhD and started working as a part-time professor while during her Friday nights she worked as well as an English literature professor to maximum-security students. The reason which pushed her

¹¹¹ L. Bates, *Shakespeare saved my life*, Illinois: Sourcebook Inc., 2013, p.1.

to a similar decision was first of all the will to help the prisoners and also the fact that the experience could have provided material for an article which would have helped her to earn a permanent position as professor at University, even if her friends and colleagues did not approve completely her choice. Bates remembers the prison when she first met Newton describing it as dirty, noisy and smelly, but luckily she affirms that after recent Human Rights studies the things changed making those prisons more liveable. It could seem absurd that Bates taught group session in a solitary confinement, but she really did it. In a photo she posted in her book there is her talking to the doors of the cells of her students. Her lessons there were reading sessions followed by debates and discussions about the homework the students had to do. This was the real teaching, because the debates were the instrument for them to teach something one another.

One of the reasons why Bates cared so much about Newton is the fact that they shared similar life experiences during their childhood: both grew up in an inner-city ghetto, both were white in a black neighbourhood and both were insecure and rebel.

In 2006, after more than ten years of isolation, Newton has been released into the general prison population, with the astonishment of the prison's director. He was changed, and Newton himself was aware of his persona change. During one lesson Bates asked her students to write on a paper what Shakespeare did for them, and Newton admitted that Shakespeare saved his life, allowing him to start a collaboration with Bates in a project of a realization of a workbook about Shakespeare. But it is only after some time that Bates asked him what he meant when he wrote that Shakespeare saved his life. His answer is striking: "I meant it in both ways: literally and figuratively. Literally because for so many years I had been really self-destructive, on the razor's edge every day. And figuratively because he offered me the opportunity to develop new ways of thinking"¹¹². He explicitly admits that without Shakespeare he would have committed suicide because he did not find a single reason why to continue living. So, from this moment on, the aim of Bates changes: "If Shakespeare saved the life of a violent criminal through rehabilitation, then

¹¹² L. Bates, *Shakespeare saved my life*, Illinois: Sourcebook Inc., 2013, p.173.

he saves the life of potential future victims”¹¹³. Thanks to Shakespeare after so many years Larry could reunite with his own family after a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*.

The most moving moments are two: the first one is when Bates receive in occasion of the Mothers’ day a card from Larry in which he describes her as the most blessing thing to him. This is a real declaration of love and gratitude. The second one is when Bates remembers Larry frequent quote:” Everybody put himself into so many prisons”, and thanks to his words she will find the bravery to face her fears.

To conclude, the story of Bates and Newton could be seen as an exchange of experiences, knowledges and feelings which make both of them richer in spirit.

Are these instruments, books and documentaries, useful to today’s young students? The answer of Niels Herold, an Oakland University Professor who had the opportunity to meet Curt Tofteland is yes:” thanks to the documentary on SBB, students studying Shakespearean high schools and at university have now been able to consider the special angle and critical inquiry that looks at Shakespeare through a prison performance”¹¹⁴. To be honest, it changed my point of view too. I had no idea about the existence of such projects and the documentary really opened my mind. the initial idea connected to the projects is that today, to quote Herold, “mass incarceration is not the solution to the problem. It makes inmates sick and mentally ill”¹¹⁵. The results of the SBB projects for Herald are objective: the psychological change and improvement on their behaviour are sample and he justify these changes because of:” the immersion of the inmate actor’s self in a Shakespearean role, the full admission of personal responsibility in the commission of the inmate’s crime as a precondition to serving in the company and the therapeutic and socializing effects during a long-term preparation”¹¹⁶. More than those positive evidences, there are also historical elements in Shakespeare’s plays that as a potential on

¹¹³ L. Bates, *Shakespeare saved my life*, p.179.

¹¹⁴ N. Herolds, *Prison Shakespeare and the Purpose of Performance*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p.viii.

¹¹⁵ Herold, *Prison Shakespeare*, p.2.

¹¹⁶ Herold, *Prison Shakespeare*, p.5.

the inmates' feelings:" Shakespeare's language and dramatic structure embody the performance codes and scripting for deep transformative change"¹¹⁷.

One of the reasons why inmates sense a powerful connection to Shakespeare is that in his plays there are scenes concerning corporeal confinement and psychological isolation. To the concept of prison there comes the concept of freedom: the inmates fit perfectly in the role of incarcerated because they experience it every day, never desisting in hoping about their freedom. Freedom is a quite wide concept especially if resembled to inmates and *The Tempest*. Herold states that freedom for Prospero and his forgiven enemies may be as illusory as it is for SBB parolees, that is to say, that even free the inmates have to face lots of difficulties to reintegrate in a society even more complex. The same is for Prospero, who, after so many years of confinement have to become to the real life, meeting a society that during all these years might have changed¹¹⁸.

5.4. SHAKESPEARE, WOMEN AND PRISONS

One last remarkable and innovative theatre project involving Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, is Phyllida Lloyd's *Shakespeare Trilogy*. Before focusing on Lloyd's work there should be a brief introduction about how the world of theatre and actors changed during the years.

English Renaissance Theatre is a period between 1562 and 1642 characterized by the presence of acting companies composed by only male actors. During the Elizabethan Era, women were not allowed to act on stages, so their roles were performed by young boys in women's costumes. These companies never performed the same show the following days, but they added new plays every week while touring around England.

With the rise of the Puritan movement there has been the closure of theatres due to the thought that there was no need to amuse during such difficult times; only with the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 the theatres opened again and much more important, in this years happened a remarkable and important episode: the first woman actress on stage. She was Margaret Hughes, she was born in 1630 and she is considered officially

¹¹⁷ Herold, *Prison Shakespeare*, p.5.

¹¹⁸ Herold, *Prison Shakespeare*, p.95.

the first professional actress on English stages. She played Desdemona in the *Othello* representation at the Vere Street Theatre in London. Before that date women were on stage since 1629, when a group of French actresses invaded the English theatrical panorama. The introduction of women in theatre made the interest of public growing, but despite their popularity, they never achieved the same status as men, for example considering the salary.

Phyllida Lloyd is an English film director, who decided to give importance to women performing three Shakespeare plays using a cast of only women. Her education is based on theatre: she attended an art-based school, she read English drama at University and after it, she got a job at the BBC as an assistant in the drama department.

Innumerable are the articles that *the Guardian* dedicated to her and her works. One of the titles of an article enunciates:

” Phyllida Lloyd: a director who's determined to put women centre stage. From all-female Shakespeare trilogys to hit musicals and films, she has a gift for works that focus on – and resonate with – women”.¹¹⁹

In this article, the journalist Emine Saner seemed to be aware that Lloyd’s work would not have been a conventional production. She describes Lloyd as the woman who had leapt from the rarefied world of opera to the West End and then to movies when she steered the Abba musical *Mamma Mia!* to global domination, and whose stage dramas were bold and innovative¹²⁰. The collaboration between Lloyd and Harriet Walter, the actress of all her plays, gave birth to a mission for both of them: they wanted to demonstrate how much unfair is the discrimination that women sometimes have to suffer. For this reason in their interview, they state that being women in the world of theatre is hard, especially if you are over a certain age, or of unconventional size, shape,

¹¹⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/nov/25/phyllida-lloyd-director-all-female-shakespeare-trilogy-mama-mia-iron-lady>

¹²⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/nov/25/phyllida-lloyd-director-all-female-shakespeare-trilogy-mama-mia-iron-lady>

accent, ethnic origin¹²¹. Lloyd has been praised over the years for her ability to re-imagine traditional works for modern audiences working always with great dedication and passion.

Shakespeare Trilogy is considered one of the most important theatrical events of the past twenty years¹²². The project started in 2012 when Lloyd put on stage Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, continued in 2014 with the performance of *Henry IV* and culminated with the staging of *The Tempest*. Lloyd's aim is principally challenging conventional notions of who has the right to take on Shakespeare's plays, casting a diverse all-female company from all backgrounds, and putting Shakespeare's words in the mouths of prisoners. The project's education and outreach program encourages young people to take ownership of Shakespeare for themselves¹²³. Once again, the connection between Shakespeare and prison emerge, this is clear because each of the plays in the Shakespeare Trilogy takes place within the setting of a women's prison and moreover, one of the members of the acting company is herself a former offender, and women in prison were consulted throughout the process of rehearsal. It could be said that one of the major aims of Lloyd has been achieved because of the fact that during the program she had the opportunity to work with more than 6.000 young people¹²⁴.

The journalist Susannah Clapp, in her article of *the Guardian* affirms that these productions wanted to prove something more essential: that the norm did not have to be male and how arbitrary our sense of difference is¹²⁵. Here comes once again the topic of being different in gender and race. The point here, however, is that good actors make you notice the differences between characters, not the differences the actors bring to a show¹²⁶. Furthermore, Harriet Walter adds that Lloyd during their collaboration was

¹²¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/nov/25/phyllida-lloyd-director-all-female-shakespeare-trilogy-mama-mia-iron-lady>

¹²² <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/nov/27/shakespeare-trilogy-review-donmar-kings-cross-phyllida-lloyd-the-tempest-rsc-simon-russell-beale>

¹²³ <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/exhibit/zAICvkwwKuUNKA>

¹²⁴ <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/exhibit/zAICvkwwKuUNKA>

¹²⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/nov/27/shakespeare-trilogy-review-donmar-kings-cross-phyllida-lloyd-the-tempest-rsc-simon-russell-beale>

¹²⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/nov/27/shakespeare-trilogy-review-donmar-kings-cross-phyllida-lloyd-the-tempest-rsc-simon-russell-beale>

driven by anger at the exclusion of women from history and from the narrative of our culture.

The central idea of connecting Shakespeare, *The Tempest* and prisons is demonstrated clearly in Lloyd's *The Tempest* first performed in 2016. The New York Times journalist Ben Brantley describes this show as if: "There's freedom within captivity in the exhilarating production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* that is wreaking poetic havoc with an all-female cast at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn. He is talking about the giddy liberation that comes from being caught up in a collective fantasy that makes you forget how small your existence can feel"¹²⁷. To connect once again to prisons, Susannah Clapp of *The Guardian* consider *The Tempest* captive, physically and emotionally¹²⁸.

Harriet Walter deserve to be briefly analysed. She is an English actress of 67 years old, and except of the fact that her age is important in the choice of Lloyd, there are some other information to take into consideration. She boasts a great career ads actress since 1980. For Elisabeth Vincentelli of the NYT, *The Tempest* meant for Walter the opportunity of redemption: even if getting older she keeps handing great roles¹²⁹. The work she did to embody her characters as best as she could, was admirable. To be inspired she looked at political inmates, particularly Judith Clark. Clark is an American activist who has been in prison since 1983 for her involvement as unarmed getaway driver in the Brink's robbery of 1981 in New York. In that incident a security guard and two police officers were killed. She was arrested and convicted of felony murder for her role in the crime. She and Lloyd visited Clark at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women in Westchester County. Clark inspired Walter throughout the trilogy, but proved most significant in "*The Tempest*". Harriet Walter in an interview stated that her and Lloyd decided to make the play within the mind of Prospero, who's acting out his fantasies, so there is a parallel with someone in a prison cell, where the entire world is only in their head¹³⁰. Thinking on the strong passion and desire to be free there is a connection between

¹²⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/theater/review-in-the-tempest-liberation-and-exhilaration.html>

¹²⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/nov/27/shakespeare-trilogy-review-donmar-kings-cross-phyllida-lloyd-the-tempest-rsc-simon-russell-beale>

¹²⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/11/theater/harriet-walter-the-tempest-shakespeare.html>

¹³⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/11/theater/harriet-walter-the-tempest-shakespeare.html>

Walter, Clark, Prospero, and the inmates of the various projects examined through these pages.

Last review of *The Tempest* by William Shaw, describes it as “about a powerful wizard in command of a mysterious exotic island, so setting it in a chilly concrete cell seems counter-intuitive. In its best moments this produces an interesting tension, but it often feels like the play is struggling against its own concept. Rough, strange, and a little bit shambolic”¹³¹. Thanks to him also who could not have the opportunity to see the show can immerse in it and its atmosphere. Shaw affirms the stage dressing is minimal, but nicely evocative. The play starts with the cast lining up, and Harriet Walter announcing she is serving a life sentence for “a politically motivated bank robbery”, before taking up her role as Prospero. The story unfolds as a performance, or shared fantasy, of the prisoners, with the realities of prison life intruding at key intervals¹³². During the performance there are funny Caliban and Ariel followed by excellent Prospero interpretation, most of all expressing a touching affection to Miranda moving the focus of Shakespeare paternalism to a genuine mother-daughter relationship. The most personal comments is about the end of the play, where Shaw affirms:” Lloyd’s ending goes beyond Shakespeare’s text — Walter delivers her final monologue, and then steps out of character, becoming a prisoner again. We then hear a set of messages from Walter’s friends and family, including the daughter she left behind when she was arrested. The message is clear: don’t give up”¹³³.

Another journalist helps us to experience what the audience of Lloyd play felt, and he is Michael Giltz of the *Huffington Post*. His attention focuses firstly on the set design. The setting is the open area of a modern prison where guards are observing and ready to intervene in case of emergency. Soda bottles and milk cartons are used to create the outline of the island. Differently from the previous review, Giltz attention is on Prospero’s willingness to show mercy at the end of the performance, which becomes Clark’s one. Then what happens is that the prisoners/performers say their goodbyes to her, thanking

¹³¹ <https://theoxfordculturereview.com/2016/09/29/review-the-tempest-2/>

¹³² <https://theoxfordculturereview.com/2016/09/29/review-the-tempest-2/>

¹³³ <https://theoxfordculturereview.com/2016/09/29/review-the-tempest-2/>

their friend for her companionship and guidance, wishing her the best as they escape to parole and new lives while she is left behind, trapped on her island forever¹³⁴.

¹³⁴ https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/theater-phyllida-lloyds-tempest-the-first-triumph_us_587fd9e3e4b0fb40bf6c460b

CHAPTER 6

SHAKESPEARE FOR A YOUNG AUDIENCE AND FOR TODAY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The adaptations of Shakespeare for children have existed since the XIX century, even if during these last years, a remarkable increase of new versions of Shakespeare plays has been noticed.

One of the problems in adapting Shakespeare for children is the need of protecting these young readers from situations and characters considered dangerous or not appropriate for a child. One of the problems which an adapter meets with is language, which should be as much clear and simple as possible. Secondly, the privilege and, in a certain way, the duty, to create something which could be the first approach to Shakespeare for a child: it means inventing something attractive which becomes the connection between the ancient past and the present without forgetting that Shakespeare represents one of the most important English authors.

A very peculiar example of Shakespeare for children made by children is the great job managed by Lois Burdett, on whom the Stratford Festival's Artistic Director Richard Monette claims: "To the child fortunate enough to be introduced to Shakespeare by Lois Burdett, he has every chance of being a friend and playmate for life"¹³⁵. This supports his idea of how important are early influences in the formation. Unfortunately, sometimes school teachers impart a wrong idea of Shakespeare; to quote Richard Monette: "This is Great Literature, and it's good for you" declaim the schoolroom mantra, and thus is

¹³⁵ L. Burdett, R. Monette, *The Tempest for Kids*, Ontario: Firefly Books Ltd., 1999, p. 3.

perpetuated the idea of Shakespeare as medicine to be swallowed stoically rather than a giddy pleasure to be pursued at every opportunity”.¹³⁶

Douglas Kings states that language and story are the two variables considered in the mediation of Shakespeare’s drama using two specific processes: paraphrasis and narrative interpolation¹³⁷. Normally the new version contains less original dialogues than the original and in new adaptations sometimes the reader finds a third dimension, the visual one characterized by illustrations. The visual element could be essential for children who very often tend not to read the whole text but just look quickly at the pages.

Amy E. Mathur instead claims: “Writers must consciously and carefully decide how to incorporate or preserve the spirit of the original without stifling personal creativity or sacrificing a child’s comprehension. By manipulating troublesome chronology and infusing authentic language into the text, authors create original adaptations that educate and entertain young readers”.¹³⁸ In her opinion the aim of creating a Shakespeare’s adaptation is to offer children a unique reading experience preserving Shakespeare’s original and she tried to focus on *The Tempest* and the problems which tis play could cause to adapters, from the language to the confusing sequences of events and subplots occurring simultaneously. So, the main role of an adapter is to find out a way to arrange the events in a comprehensible manner. She considers the example of Burdett, who adheres to the original sequence of events and incorporates Shakespeare’s text without compromising her creativity.

On the contrary, Howard Marchitello states:

When one reads Shakespeare for children in which the language has been subjected to the most rigorous negotiation, what stands as the most thoroughly “Shakespearean” feature of the adaptation is the plot of the plays it adapts. One of the striking ironies here is the fact that a great number of Shakespeare’s plots are in fact not Shakespeare’s but rather the result of creative borrowing.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Burdett, Monette, *The Tempest for Kids*, p. 3.

¹³⁷ N. Miller, *Reimagining Shakespeare for children and young adults*, New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 129.

¹³⁸ N. Miller, *Reimagining Shakespeare*, p. 147

¹³⁹ N. Miller, *Reimagining Shakespeare*, p. 182

This means that there are different approaches to adapting Shakespeare. Most of times the adaptations depend on how the adapter see the original, which could be both a source or a destination.

The presence of a narrator helps to guide the audience or the reader to clear and univocal concepts and this bypasses the problem of adapting concepts not so appropriate for children; on the contrary the narrator's comments and opinions impede the reader to have their personal ideas on the events. This is what Charles and Mary Lamb and later Marcia Williams tried to do and succeeded.

During the XVIII century some texts started to emerge which introduced Shakespeare to children, even though the first world-recognized version of Shakespeare for children was *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles and Mary Lamb. The context on which this collection arises is when William Godwin founded the *Juvenile Library*, a collection of texts whose aim was entertaining and intriguing the younger readers. This was quite nonconformist, because on that time children's education was based on John Locke creed who considered fairy tales and fantasy literature irrational and useless. What happened later is quite bizarre, because during the second half of the XIX century Shakespeare becomes subject at school and this means that the main worry of people was the fact that becoming a subject at school implies studying it only to pass a test or an exam losing all the charm it had before. This belief was applicable even to the *Tales from Shakespeare*.

1807 was an important year for Charles and Mary Lamb, who wrote this collection after a hard period distinguished by the murder of their mother, Mary's mental illness and Charles' problems with alcohol. Despite all these complications in their early life, they could be considered the first English authors to consider all the aspects of narrativizing Shakespeare for children becoming a model for the future authors, and this happened especially due to some choices they made: they decided to remove all the secondary characters and plots just to focus on the main ones creating new versions of Shakespeare's masterpieces with no ambiguity on them. Working on tragedies, Charles tended to use the periphrasis while Mary on the comedies tried to preserve the original dialogues avoiding bad words. In both cases, they counted on a specific type of author. The main characteristic of the narrator of the Lambs is giving the characters some adjectives which

tag them as bad or good and secondly rearrange events and simplifying things. While the role of the narrator is trying to keep in mind these issues, the adapters try to become sensitive to the problem of language and even this is what the Lambs tried to do. Moreover, Charles was sure that Shakespeare's plays were not compatible with stage representation because it could have limited the audience's imagination while his idea is that adaptations could be perceived as an increase of children's heritage.

Before focusing on Mary Lamb's *The Tempest* it could be very interesting to analyse some of their beliefs founded in their *Preface*.

Mary made the main work, and, if on the one hand she claims: "I have wished to make these Tales easy reading for very young children, but the subjects of most of them made this a very difficult task"¹⁴⁰, on the other hand she states: "For young ladies too it has been my intention chiefly to write, because boys are generally permitted the use of their fathers' libraries at a much earlier age than girls are they frequently having the best scenes of Shakespeare by heart, before their sisters are permitted to look into this manly book".¹⁴¹ This means Mary wanted to allow girls getting in contact with Shakespeare as boys did and increase their education and knowledge. After explaining these two main objectives of Mary, the focus moves on the most difficult purpose to pursue: the language.

In those Tales which have been taken from the Tragedies, as my young readers will perceive when they come to see the source from which these stories are derived, Shakespeare's own words, with little alteration, recur very frequently in the narration as well as in the dialogue; but in those made from the Comedies I found myself scarcely ever able to turn his words into the narrative form.¹⁴²

This important information found in their *Preface* added to the information of their biographies help everybody to understand better their work and now the focus will move from the Lambs to *The Tempest* by Mary.

One of the peculiarities of Mary's version is its brevity, a common characteristic as far as children literature is concerned. To achieve clarity Mary made some stylistic and structural choices such as: remove some of the secondary characters, limit the dialogues

¹⁴⁰ M.,C. Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*, London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2007, p.4.

¹⁴¹ Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*, p. 4.

¹⁴² Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*, p. 3.

and delete the secondary scenes. Therefore, the plot becomes easily to understand for a young audience.

Starting from a consideration about characters, the reader will see that in the Lamb's version Stephano, Trinculo, some of the boatswains and the nymphs are missing and consequently all the scenes of the original in which these characters acted, are vanished. It could be considered a quite bizarre choice, mainly because Mary decided to eliminate the characters who could have been appreciated from children, the nymphs for their fairy and magic presence, while Stephano and Trinculo for their comic side. Maybe this choice depends from the fact that without them the plot doesn't undergo remarkable changes. For all the other characters Mary decides to use adjectives which permit the reader to have a definite idea of the characters: they could be good or bad.

Prospero: old man, master

Miranda: very beautiful young lady, lovely lady, goddess

Sicorax: bad witch, enemy

Ariel: little sprite, faithful servant

Caliban: ugly monster, slave

Ferdinand: handsome person, beautiful young prince

Gonzalo: a kind lord, kind, old

Antonio: cruel brother

This parenthesis about characters links with the variations they implicate in the plot. Mary's tale could be divided into three peculiar moments: the first one in which the reader is put in contact with the island and the characters living there, that is to say, Prospero, Miranda, Caliban, Ariel and a quick mention to Sycorax; the second one in which the storm takes place and the reader is introduced to the story of Prospero and Miranda and the arrival of Ferdinand with whom Miranda immediately fell in love; and the third and last one in which there is a happy ending with the reconciliation between Prospero and his brother, Ariel's freedom and the return back home.

Mary softened the tensions between the male characters and finally, inverting the order of the events and simplifying the language, she gave her story a sort of similarity with a fairy tale adapt for children of all ages. Now there will be mentioned the main differences between Mary's and Shakespeare's version.

In chronological order the first variation is that Mary decides to cut the whole first scene of Shakespeare, it means, the scene which gives the title to the play. The original starts with the description of what is going to happen

A tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard¹⁴³

A sentence which gives immediately the spectators, but also a reader, the idea of the mood of the characters on stage. The first scene is important because of the information concerning place, atmospheric conditions, and characters. The first line explains clearly the first two points, the last one find an answer in the following line.

Enter a Shipmaster and a Boatswain¹⁴⁴

The first two characters met in the original play are them, who, after a brief dialogue about the dangerous conditions of the sea, are followed by the introduction of other five main characters and some sailors: Alonso (the King of Naples), Sebastian (Alonso's brother), Antonio (Prospero's brother), Ferdinand (Antonio's son) and Gonzalo (a councillor). An agitated dialogue between them let everybody imagine the danger they are trying to bypass. This scene of uncertainty, danger and action precede another important scene which starts with a dialogue between Prospero and Miranda, so the action has moved to another place, an island and introduces other two essential characters of the play.

Moving to the Lamb's version, it could be said that the choices of Mary transform her beginning of the tale considerably. She decides to introduce her readers first of all the characters of Miranda and Prospero and the place where they are living: There was a certain island in the sea, the only inhabitants of which were an old man, whose name was Prospero, and his daughter Miranda, a very beautiful young lady. She came to this

¹⁴³ W. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999, p.165.

¹⁴⁴ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p.165.

island so young, that she had no memory of having seen any other human face than her father's.¹⁴⁵

These simple three lines are quite similar to the beginning of a fairy tale, and in their simplicity, they include remarkable information: the location where all the tale is focused, two of the main characters and their relation and the fact that they live in a deserted island since a very long time. The following lines are crucial to know something more about the island and its inhabitants. With her clarity and conciseness, Mary succeeds in presenting her readers the whole situation in the island: Prospero and Miranda live in a cell and they arrived there by a strange chance; Prospero studies on his books which allowed him to release some good spirits imprisoned there before by the witch Sycorax whose son, Caliban, an ugly monster, is their slave, while Ariel is his trusty assistant.

Here are some comments on the two versions: Mary decides to omit the first scene of Shakespeare, probably because considered violent and striking to a young public, or considered irrelevant. She focuses on the island and its inhabitants which are two crucial elements of the narration.

As far as vocabulary and language are concerned Mary decides to report almost completely the dialogue between father and daughter of Shakespeare's Act 1, Scene 2, simplifying the vocabulary and avoiding some archaism. The direct speech is present in Mary's version between Prospero and Miranda, as long as she falls asleep, and then continues between Prospero and the spirit Ariel. The conversation starts with the worry of Miranda for the ship seen in the middle of the storm, but her father reassures her and starts telling the story of their arrival in the isle connected to the story of who they are. The differences found are few: firstly the fact that Mary decides not to mention Miranda's mother (in Shakespeare's version, Prospero claims: "thy mother was a piece of virtue, and she said thou wast my daughter"), maybe because considered irrelevant for the plot and the dialogue; secondly a notable cut of the relationship before their arrival between Prospero and Antonio, which Mary simplifies considerably; and last one, the switch of

¹⁴⁵ M. Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*, p. 7.

two sentences: the first one which tells who was Gonzalo, and the second one when Miranda worries about having been a trouble for her dad.

A second remarkable change is Mary's choice to cut the scene of the original where there is the introduction of Caliban and the bad things he tried to do to Miranda. The great difference between the two versions is that Shakespeare describes Caliban as a cruel monster who did unforgivable actions, while Mary decides to introduce him at the beginning of the story as an ugly monster, son of a witch, and someone on whom Prospero trusted at first, but later, because of his bad personality, reduced to a slave. This introduction of Caliban in a certain way minimal but expresses the fact that she does not want focus her attention on the monstrosity he did, but only on his appearance. The thought of being read by children maybe influenced Mary's choice about the introduction of this character, so all the information in Shakespeare version could be considered unsuitable and useless. This could be inferred also because of in the Lamb's version there is no other mention of Caliban. He becomes a secondary character. Focusing now on Shakespeare's Act 1, Scene 2, it could be noticed the fact that Mary decided to seek to a very young audience a very serious moment: the moment in which Prospero and Caliban discuss about a past attempt to rape Miranda. The scene begins with Prospero asking a reluctant Miranda to go to Caliban. The purposes of this visit are positive, because Prospero is conscious about the usefulness of this slave who serves them, and this is clear in line 308

Miranda: "'Tis a villain, sir. I do not love to look on".

Prospero:" But as 'tis, we cannot miss him; he does make our fire, fetch in our wood,
and serves in offices that profit us".

To this dialogue follows another one between Prospero and Caliban about the property of the island and the beginning of the deterioration of their relationship. In fact, when Prospero first arrived to the isle, taught Caliban to speak and he repaid him loving him and showing all the qualities of the isle. But something happened:

Prospero:” Thou most lying slave, whom stripes may move, not kindness; I have used thee with human care and lodged thee in mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate the honour of my child!”

This fact is quite serious even if not completely explicit. The way in which Mary decides to manage this situation is very simple: she cuts all the information about Caliban, except the fact that he was in the island before the arrival of Prospero and Miranda and the fact that he is their slave.

One last consideration about some differences of the two versions is their happy ending. There are some discrepancies in the order of the events and some information treated in two different ways.

In Shakespeare text, there is a very important information about time only at the end of the narration. In two different moments the readers understand how much the whole story lasted. The first one is in Alonso’s speech:” How thou hast met us here, whom three hours since were wrecked upon this shore”.¹⁴⁶ The second one in Prospero’s speech:” Sir, I invite your highness and your train to my poor cell, where you shall take your rest for this night”.¹⁴⁷ So, thanks to these references, it is supposed that the narration lasts less than twenty-four hours. On the contrary, in Mary’s version there is no suggestion about the duration of the story.

Another theme treated differently is the concept of freedom. Shakespeare’s play remarks many times this idea, from different points of view. Prospero starts to announce the imminent liberty of Ariel, but it culminates only ten pages later with Prospero’s words:” Bravely, my diligence. Thou shalt be free”¹⁴⁸; from this moment on, Ariel disappears. On the other side there is Mary who only writes: “Before Prospero left the island, he dismissed Ariel from his service”.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ W. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999, p.294.

¹⁴⁷ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p.305.

¹⁴⁸ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p.301.

¹⁴⁹ M. Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*, p. 16.

Another episode linked to freedom is when Prospero gets rid of his magical books. For Shakespeare is an important moment: Prospero decides to drown his books and to this decision follows a solemn music; Mary limits this event to some words:” Prospero then buried deep in the earth his magical books”.¹⁵⁰ Even the way in which Prospero throw the books is not the same. The importance Shakespeare gives to magic and to the books is from the beginning of the play, while Mary moves the focus on the love story, their personal experiences and reconciliation.

The last analysis concerns the moment of forgiveness: in the original, there is Alonso’s request of forgiveness agreed by Prospero. In the Lamb’s version, there is a sort of emotional narration including tears, sad words of sorrow, true repentance and embraces as in the lines following:” These kind words which Prospero spoke, meaning to comfort his brother so filled Antonio with shame and remorse, that he wept and was unable to speak”.¹⁵¹

Maybe Mary, aware that many children will read her story, wants to focus her attention on the good actions to teach her readers.

From the stylistic point of view Mary decides to end her story in a simple way, telling about their arrival back home and the joy of the imminent marriage between Ferdinand and Miranda; Shakespeare, instead, ends with Prospero’s epilogue/monologue which summarize the restoration of the dukedom and the forgiveness of his enemies. The first one seems the end of a fairy tale, the second one is Prospero’s consideration.

The footnotes on the Arden Shakespeare edition state that:” the Epilogue is not required for a coherent reading or production, because the play’s action is complete. Shakespeare may have added it or special performances, perhaps at court”.¹⁵² This could demonstrate how many Shakespeare’s choices have been made thinking about the mean used to spread this play.

¹⁵⁰ M. Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*, p.17.

¹⁵¹ M. Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*, p. 16.

¹⁵² W. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999, p.307.

What Lois Burdett and Marcia Williams are two important personalities when we talk about Shakespeare for young children in schools.

Lois Burdett is an elementary teacher in Ontario, Canada, working with second and third graders, and her idea represents the idea of the majority of people today:

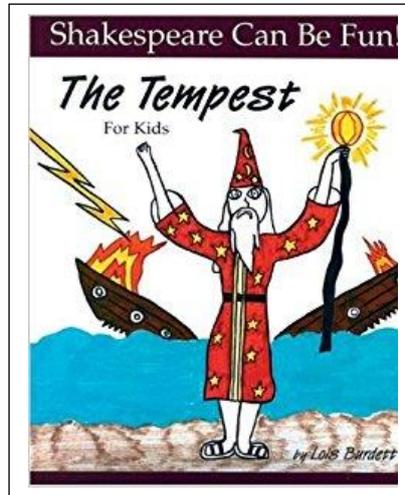
Most students will be exposed to the works of Shakespeare at some point in their educational careers. Traditionally, this initial exposure has been delayed until their high school years, presumably based on the theory that the language and contents of the plays are too difficult. I believe this attitude underestimate the potential of young students.¹⁵³

This prejudice about Shakespeare and children is still present today, so in order to bring Shakespeare to young audiences, she decided to publish a series of books entitled *Shakespeare can be Fun!*

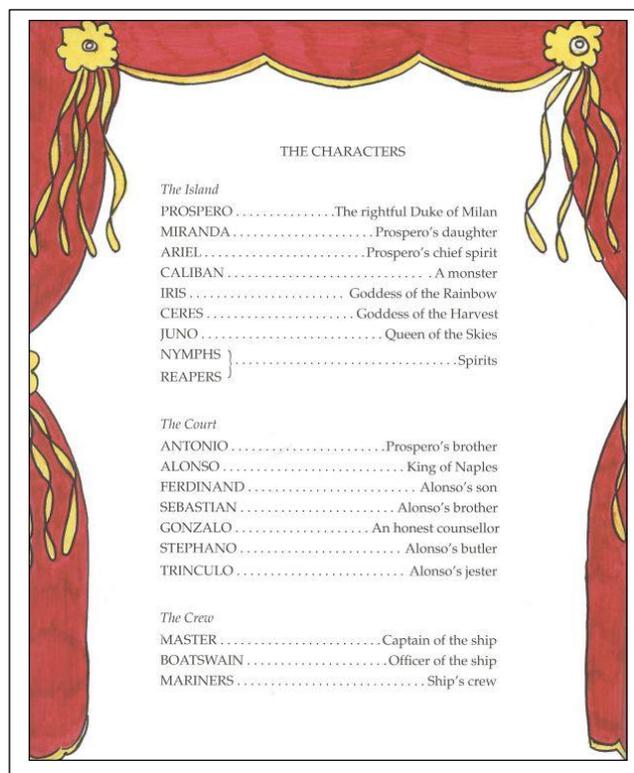
This is a measure which should be taken even in Italy, because what Lois Burdett thinks represents today's situation in Italy and my personal experience. I studied Shakespeare for the first time at the age of 20 when I started University and it is unusual for a student today. If a student starts sooner is at high school when Shakespeare's masterpieces are introduced and studied only by memorizing information which almost definitely will be forgotten the day after. Italians' curricula and methodologies in high school consist on the teacher explaining and evaluating while the majority of the students has no role in what is explained in class. I think everything would be different if teachers used adaptations or involved their students in other activities which increase their student's interest toward a great author.

¹⁵³ N. Miller, *Reimagining Shakespeare for children and young adults*, New York: Routledge, 2003, p.44.

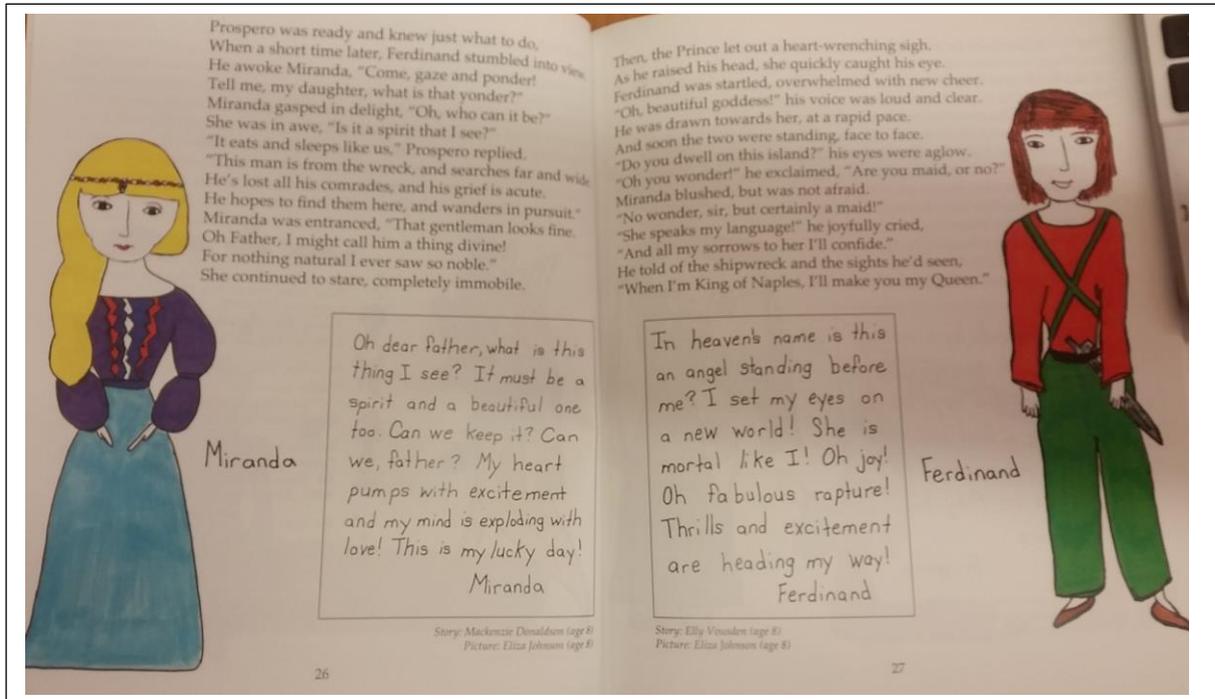
For *The Tempest*, she writes a narrative in couplets making stylistic choices including colloquial language and archaic, Shakespeare phrases and children’s comments and drawings.



The book begins with a page drawn as if it was the stage of a theatre, and on it there are all the names and the roles of the characters; this is like if Lois wants her readers to enter the theatrical dimension. The next page represents Shakespeare drawn by a child of 8 years old and his invitation to enjoy the reading.



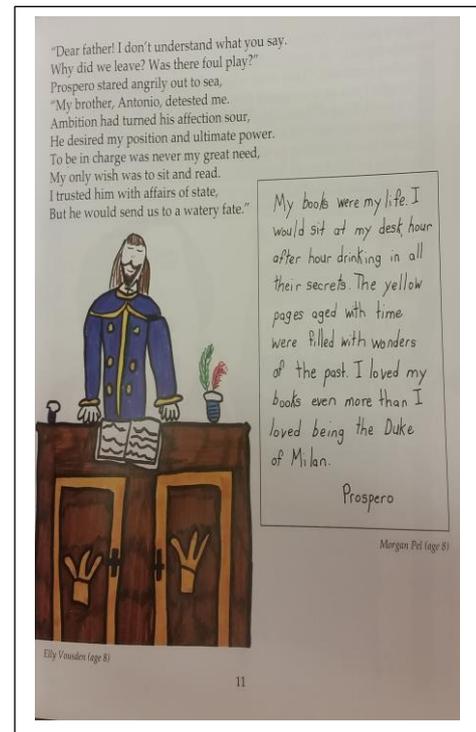
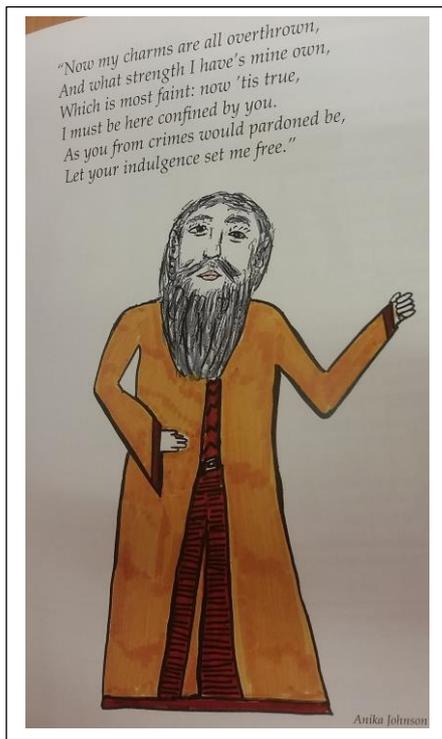
The following pages are a mixture of children's colourful drawings that are the representation of how they imagine them;



Shakespeare dialogues assembled in Lois' couplet narration, but the innovation is represented by some notes written with a different graphic mark because it means they were written by a child and what emerges is incredible. The children write down lines as if they were the thoughts of the characters or a letter sent one to another. Here is what a child of 8 years old writes about Prospero's idea of his books: "My books were my life. I would sit at my desk, hour after hour drinking in all their secrets. The yellow pages aged with time were filled with wanders of the past. I loved my books even more that I loved being the Duke of Milan".¹⁵⁴

Lois does not cut any character or episode: she only tries with her students to make everything accessible to a young audience. The book ends with Prospero's epilogue and some advice for teachers who want to make a different use of the book adapting it to all the school subjects.

¹⁵⁴ L. Burdett, R. Monette, *The Tempest for Kids*, Ontario: Firefly Books Ltd., 1999, p.11.



The other important author is Marcia Williams. Her mother was a writer and her father a playwright and director so she grew up loving books from a very early age. She did not receive any art education until leaving her job to paint she decided to study at the Richmond College in London and held some successful exhibitions.

She affirms that when she was at school she dreamed of being an actor, so ending up writing and illustrating for her is a way of fulfilling her childhood dream, but to understand better the idea she has about her work, it is better to see what she says in an article released to Actes des Congrès de la Société française Shakespeare. The title of it is “You don’t mess with the Great Bard! You never expected it to be easy, did you, Marcia?”.

Marcia’s opinion is clear from the very first lines:” It seems to me that for too long in Britain, there has been a conspiracy to keep Shakespeare from young people”.¹⁵⁵ Her idea represents the same panorama of Italy today. As far as the experience of different students is concerned, it emerges as mentioned before, that Shakespeare today is only a subject to study to pass some exams. Students start to know him only at secondary school, and in

¹⁵⁵ M. Williams, *Actes des Congrès de la Société française Shakespeare*, Paris: Société Française Shakespeare, 2016 p.2.

the majority of cases the syllabus are so boring and not stimulating that the pleasure to discover more and more becomes boredom and dislike.

Considering this view today of Shakespeare by so many young students, Marcia's aims and means seem the perfect one to overturn the situation: "My aim has never been to replace a Shakespeare play, or even to recreate it in its entirety, but to kindle a young person's interest in Shakespeare".¹⁵⁶

Marcia's words and ideas in this article are so accurate even when she talks about her idea of adaptations: she affirms she is conscious that retelling any story make losing language and magic of the original, but she is as conscious stating that "retelling can give a new life to writings for and of another era. If I do not create my own vision of the play and bring with it my knowledge, then I do Shakespeare a disservice by not giving it fresh life and vigour".¹⁵⁷

One last consideration concerns the connection between the Lambs and Marcia. Her idea about *Tales from Shakespeare* is not a positive one. She thinks that there is much to admire in the Lamb's work, but, in her opinion they failed in their most important task: leave young readers feeling excited about Shakespeare and simplifying plots. To the Lambs' defence there is to say that they, in their introduction explain they only want their works to be an introduction to the study of Shakespeare, rendering the *Tales* easily understandable from a young audience. But most important is that the two works took into consideration belong to two different historical period and for this reason is difficult to compare them because they are the result of a specific moment in a specific period.

Maybe she feels she succeeded in it because she used some devices the children love: comic strips and a lot of colourful images. The book cover with the musicians at the bottom, attracts and call everybody in to the performance. Turning pages means entering the Globe.

Marcia's decision to use comic strips comes from her experience as a child:" The tradition of comic strip is not as strong in England as it is in France. I was not allowed to read comics as a child because my mother considered them an abomination, full of American

¹⁵⁶ Williams, *Actes des Congrès*, p.2.

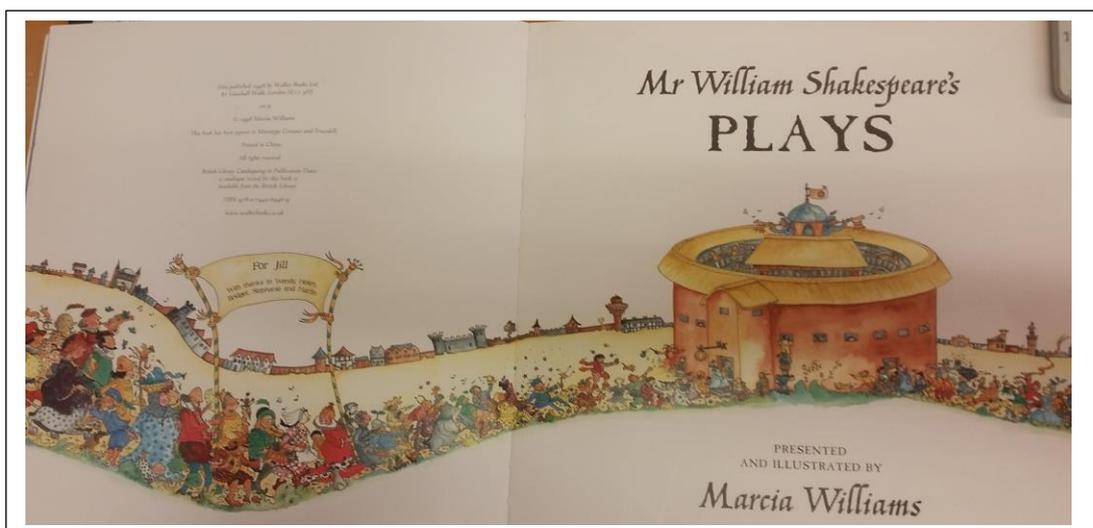
¹⁵⁷ Williams, *Actes des Congrès*, p.2.

slang, bad English and inappropriate violence”.¹⁵⁸ This could be one of the reasons why she decided to use strip, also considering that a sense of drama will be created by the interaction between the audience represented in the borders of the pages, the story, the speech bubbles and the pictures.

The beginning of her book *Tales from Shakespeare – Seven plays presented by Marcia Williams*, is a blue page on which she deals with her readers making them imagine a view of London with the Globe and letting them know about the price of the entry and what they will find inside her story:

Dear play-goer, imagine you have been transported to the England of William Shakespeare’s time. On the banks of the river Thames is the Globe Theatre, the wooden building where all the plays in this book are to be performed. See if you can spot Queen Elizabeth I and Shakespeare among the spectators. For a penny you can stand in the open courtyard with other “groundlings” and see the play (watch out for pickpockets!). or for an additional penny, you can sit among richer people in one of the covered galleries. There are three parts to each performance: the words that actually Shakespeare wrote are those spoken by the actors; the story, or plot of the play is told underneath in the pictures; and the spectators – who are famously rude and noisy – can be seen and heard around the stage.¹⁵⁹

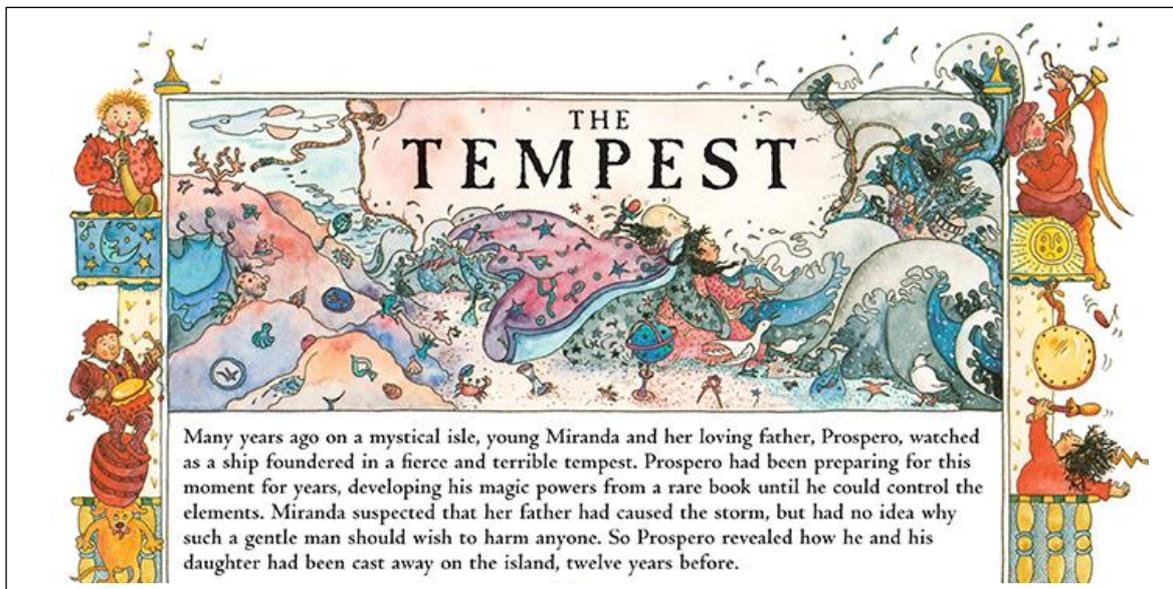
The following one, is a colourful page on which the Globe stands out. A very long queue made by people of any age and any social class and even animals is waiting to enter the theatre. There is a joyful atmosphere with music everywhere.



¹⁵⁸ Williams, *Actes des Congrès*, p.6.

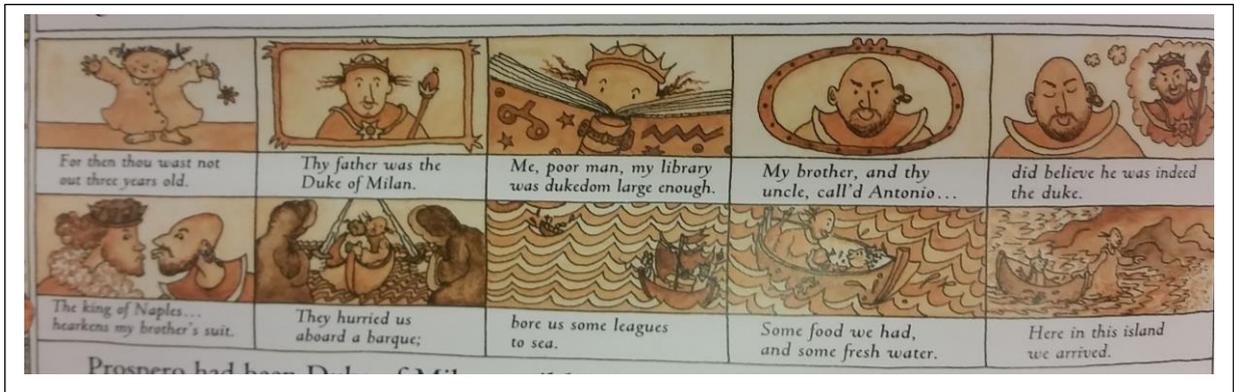
¹⁵⁹ M. Williams, *Tales from Shakespeare – Seven plays presented by Marcia Williams*, London: Walker Books, 1998, p. 1.

When the reader gets the page of *The Tempest*, the first image which attract the attention is the one with the title, an image which summarise all the narration: Prospero, Miranda, and a little bit hidden Caliban, looking at what happens to a vessel in the sea.



Even in this version, the beginning is different from the original: in Shakespeare's play the first approach to the narration is the dangerous and fearful situation lived by who is in the vessel during a tempest; here this kind of approach is only visual because the only thing the reader sees is the vessel in a tumultuous sea. The first lines are a sort of brief introduction of the two main characters and the information the reader gets are little and basic but at the same time the most important to understand what is happening: there are Miranda and his father Prospero in a mystical island watching a ship in the middle of a tempest. Prospero s considered who provoked the tempest thanks to his magic, and Miranda suspected it without knowing why, so Prospero decides to tell her their story of twelve years before.

Marcia's choice to represent Prospero's tale is representing what happened in sepia colour, just to give the idea of something which happened long ago.



She used Shakespeare's words below this image, so everybody can understand what is going on, even a child, and once again the information is little but clear and basic explained also in three lines soon after. So, in half a page the little reader knows everything about the past of Prospero and Miranda.

Next, is the meeting with Caliban and Ariel described as the only inhabitants of the island. Caliban is represented by Marcia as an ugly polka dot monster with blue tongue, little wings, and a long tail, while Ariel is a little spirit playing pranks on Caliban.

The peculiarity of Marcia's book is what the reader finds all over the story: in fact, in the first page there are so many spectators expressing their opinion about what they see. Most of what they say concerns Ariel and Caliban: someone hopes Ariel picks Caliban's nose while all the others discuss about if they can see or not the little spirit. Only a little mention about Caliban's mother whose name the readers will never know. The only thing Marcia decides to tell is that she was so cruel to entrap all the spirits in the trees, before dying.

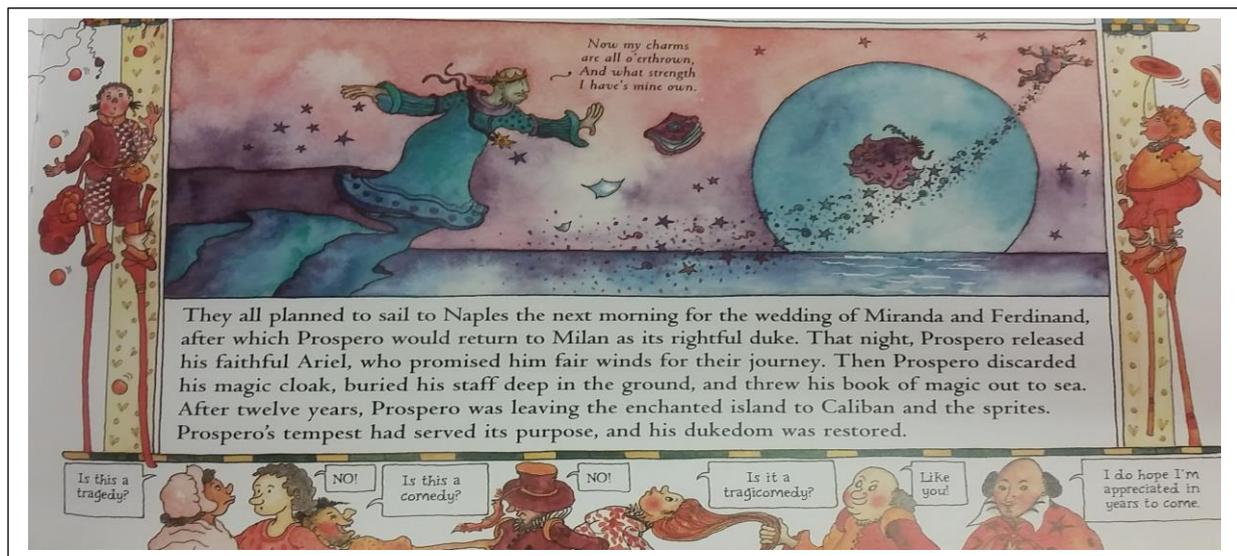
The fact that both Mary Lamb and Marcia Williams decide not to give importance to what happened in the original version between Miranda and Caliban is absolutely an intelligent choice considering that this book will be read from children.

Marcia's choice not to cut the scene with Stephano and Trinculo is to understand: while Mary decided to eliminate them maybe because considered useless to the tale, Marcia keeps them in the narration maybe because considered two comic characters who could be appreciated by the little readers. Stephano and Trinculo dressed like clown meet Caliban who thought they were dropped from the moon and powerful persons, and for this reason he decided to plan the murder of Prospero with them. Two spectators in the

edges of the page make two interesting considerations: one asks why Stephano and Trinculo are not wet if they have been shipwrecked, while the other, a mother with a child, intimidates her son to be good, otherwise Caliban will get him.

The last page is full of peaceful images which perfectly represent the happy ending found in all the three versions analysed until this moment. Marcia uses the same important words like Shakespeare and Mary: repentance and forgive. In the last lines Prospero gets rid of his books, releases Ariel, and plans to leave to Naples to celebrate Miranda and Ferdinand's wedding before he goes back to his dukedom.

At the bottom of this page, the audience discusses about the fact of this tale being a tragedy, comedy or tragicomedy while Shakespeare says: "I do hope I'm appreciated in years to come".¹⁶⁰



¹⁶⁰ M. Williams, *Tales from Shakespeare*, London: Walker Books, 1998, np.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has examined, first of all the impact of reading Shakespeare on specific groups of readers such as inmates, children and adolescents, and secondly how those readers reacted to these new unconventional stirrings.

The analysis started from seeing how the way of adapting Shakespeare changed over the years, due to the change of the historical and social contexts. In addition, also the points of view and the roles of some characters changed, especially Caliban, and it is for this reason that many are the critics and scholars focused their attention on him.

The effects of Shakespeare on children and inmates were surprising because they are more sensitive subjects and sometimes more motivated than standard readers, but even more surprising was seeing how big realities such as the United States and United Kingdom created for these readers some custom-made instruments.

Inmates thanks to Shakespeare and all the projects born for them, achieved educational aims. In addition, taking part in those projects meant for them more than entertainment: meditation and the possibility of redemption through the embodiment of some characters who shared with them their same characteristics and experiences. For a great part of them, who had difficult past experiences and low educational levels, taking part to the project was also an opportunity to grow and have positive developments on their lives.

Children and adolescents get firstly a great incentive to learn Shakespeare using the books of authors such as Marcia Williams and Lois Burdett, and secondly a help to develop personal opinions and ideas using other adaptations like Tad Williams one. The result is a more conscious way of studying and learning which lasts more over the years. From my personal point of view and considering my past experiences I can affirm that if only I

could have had the opportunity to study Shakespeare with these instruments it would have been much more pleasant and funny. In this case, Italy should learn from foreign realities, copying and rearranging such powerful instruments, in order to create interest on those authors considered by the majority of the students boring and useless.

In a world every day much more concentrated on technology and new devices, we all should catch the opportunity to create innovative ways of teaching for the benefit of the future generations.

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