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Wayne Cristaudo: Wisdom and Mastery in Shakespeare's The Tempest Study Guide, 2013

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**WAYNE CRISTAUDO: WISDOM AND
MASTERY IN SHAKESPEARE'S *THE TEMPEST*
STUDY GUIDE, 2013
Steven Alan Samson**

Wisdom and Mastery in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Outline

- A. INTRODUCTION (1-2)
 - 1. **Prospero**: Former Duke of Milan
 - 2. New Beginnings
- B. RANK IS NOT LEADERSHIP (2-6)
 - 1. **Boatswain's** Mastery
 - a. Leadership
 - 2. Ferdinand: Alonso's son
 - 3. Alonso: Duke of Naples
 - a. One of the conspirators against Prospero
 - 4. **Gonzalo**: Alonso's Foolish Counselor
 - a. Aided Prospero and Miranda
 - b. Full of hot air
 - c. Storms judge the adequacy (or inadequacy) of our authorizations
 - d. His difficulty seeing evil, and hence preventing it
 - e. Fools hang onto words and insignificant sign in times of distress: cf. Prov. 18:2
 - f. His reliance on words contrasts with the boatswain's right action
 - 5. Sebastian and Antonio: the World-Be Fratricides
 - a. Clarity of malicious intent
 - b. Break with the seven cardinal virtues
 - c. Sebastian uses the **language of moral righteousness** [cf. political moralism]
 - d. Alonso is the master of brutal power (Machiavellian)
 - 1) His indifference to death: titanic degree of defiance
- C. ATTENTIVENESS AND COMMAND (6-8)
 - 1. Miranda's Relationship with Prospero
 - a. Her compassion
 - b. Prospero's ability to work for the common good
 - c. His loving purposefulness
 - d. His real leadership
 - 2. *The Tempest* as a Commentary on *King Lear*
 - 3. Prospero's Wisdom
 - a. His knowledge of how to exercise authority
 - b. Context is king: Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy
 - c. Prospero's story
 - 1) His earlier false loves and self-deception
 - 2) His bondage to mimetic fascination (bewitchment)
 - d. Fruits of his previous inattentiveness
 - 4. His Good Fortune
 - a. **Opportunus**: a favorable wind that brings a ship into port, presumably resulting in a "prosperous voyage" [contrast Machiavelli's conception of *Fortuna*]
- D. FREEDOM AND SERVICE (8-14)
 - 1. **Ariel**
 - a. Prospero's purpose
 - b. His need for Ariel's assistance

2. **Caliban**
 - a. Weighed down by resentment
 3. Politically Radical Reading of Caliban [cf. Rousseau's Noble Savage, Montaigne's cannibal]
 - a. Post-colonialism
 4. Modern Sympathy for Caliban Makes It Difficult to Empathize with Prospero
 - a. Shakespeare's focus is on problems about wisdom and leadership
 5. The Witch Sycorax
 - a. Ownership of the island by discovery
 - b. How Prospero and Miranda differed from colonialists
 - c. Issue of ownership
 6. Caliban's Speech Is Self-Serving [cf. Gollum]
 - a. Tormented cries of the imprisoned Ariel
 - b. A leadership lesson for Prospero
 - c. Caliban's Attitude toward Speech and Civilization
 - 1) cf. Calvin on obscenity of language
 - 2) Prospero's language magic
 7. Caliban Condemned to Powerlessness Because He Cannot Curb His Appetites
 - a. Freedom merely enables him to follow his limited capacities
 - b. His treatment as a beast of burden
 8. Caliban's Notion of Freedom
 - a. He is by nature an Aristotelian slave
 - b. By contrast, Ariel is only a slave by convention (but a natural aristocrat)
 9. Trinculo and Stephano [a.k.a. Dumb and Dumber]
 - a. Caliban's **idol worship** [cf. Exod. 32:24; cf. the Golem made of "unformed substance"]
 - b. How they use Caliban's information and servile nature
 - c. Caliban's ditty [cf. Gollum]
 10. Shakespeare's Coupling of Freedom and Servitude
 - a. The Question: Whom do you serve?
 - b. Caliban takes the lead in this conspiracy of clowns
 - c. Why Caliban is doomed to fail
 - d. Caliban's final openness to grace
 11. Caliban's Kind of Freedom Cannot Suffice for Men and Women in Society
- E. UTOPIA (14-17)
1. Gonzalo's Unbridled and Unreasonable Optimism
 - a. He notices good prospects without noticing the danger
 - b. His kindly heart
 2. Gonzalo's Utopian Vision
 - a. A world in which sovereignty is meaningless
 - b. A world which has little need of wisdom
 - c. False premises
 - d. Caliban is the reality of his **utopian dream** {Montaigne's "Of the Cannibals"}
 - e. Unwitting invitation to tyranny [cf. Wells's dystopian "Time Machine"]
 - f. Gonzalo's defensiveness
 - g. Impetus for utopia stems from deep ambivalence about civilization
 - h. Montaigne: Discovery of the New World provided a yardstick for measuring the defects of the Old World
 3. Vile Conspiracy of Antonio and Sebastian to Murder Alonso
 - a. Sebastian is "standing water" [He lacks initiative]
 - b. Antonio will teach him "how to flow" through rhetoric [cf. the Sophists]
 - c. Sebastian is captivated by the lingering power of words [cf. Gonzalo]
- F. PROSPERO'S MAGIC AND MORAL CONTRIVANCES (17-20)
1. Failure of Antonio's Conspiracy
 - a. Antonio's black magic: evil deeds for self-empowerment [cf. Machiavelli]
 - b. The commanding nature of Prospero's speech

- c. Ariel: Magical power of music and song [cf. Estonia's Singing Revolution]
 - 1) Ariel's impish delight
 - d. Uses of music [e.g., Harald Sæverud's Ballad of Revolt was composed during the occupation of Norway by Nazi Germany; one of the homes of the Romanian national composer George Enescu is at Sinaia, near the royal castle]
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OXbfek7o64>
 - e. Antonio and Sebastian are untouched by both music and speech
 - f. But even the three fools repent
 - 2. Fundamental Limitation of Prospero's Magic
 - a. It cannot enforce goodness of heart [it cannot convert]
 - b. It cannot rid Prospero of the need to be attentive
 - c. He turns his attention to comic conspiracy only at the last minute
 - d. Wise leadership involves all-consuming attention
 - 3. Prospero's Political Ends
 - 4. Political (Dynastic) Importance of a Union between Ferdinand and Miranda
 - a. Prospero and Alonso will now be linked by kinship ties
 - 1) Otherwise, bad blood raises the possibility of a cycle of vengeance
 - b. Matters of political succession must not be left to fortune
 - c. Every moral compulsion is a demand for sacrifice
 - d. Modern sensibilities make *The Tempest* easy prey for "The Miranda Trap"
 - e. Claribel is miserable in her obedience
 - f. Miranda's practical wisdom
- G. CONCLUSION
- 1. A Play of Findings Rather Than Loss
 - 2. The Two Losers
 - 3. One's Place (in Life) Brings Responsibilities

Review

Prospero
Antonio
opportunus
idol worship

Boatswain
Sebastian
Ariel
utopia

Gonzalo
language of moral righteousness
Caliban