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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