

THE ALLEGORICAL NATURE OF *THE TEMPEST*

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only "heavily [dejectedly, sorrowfully] vanish" (IV.i.138: S.D.4). Ferdinand, disturbed by Prospero's irate outburst directed unwittingly, perhaps, at the luckless spirits ("avoid, no more!" - IV.i.142), remarks: "This is strange: your father's in some passion/That works him strongly" (IV.i.143-4).

The strangeness in this incident lies for Nuttall not in Prospero's anger *per se*, but in the idea that the supposed reason for the anger - the remembrance of the easily quashable conspiracy of Caliban and his companions, which in itself could scarcely pose a threat to Prospero - should lead to the disruption of the masque.⁴⁷ Could Prospero's outburst not have waited until the completion of the spirits' performance, and the marring not only of the spell but of the betrothal gift to Ferdinand and Miranda thereby have been avoided, we might add? By no means. Time, Prospero makes it clear to us, is of the utmost importance: "the minute of their plot/s almost come" (IV.i.141-2), he declares in an aside. Nuttall's perplexity remains. Magarey's ingenious solution is to see the moment of Prospero's remembrance of Caliban's threatened insurrection as the moment of Caliban's interiorization in the play:⁴⁸ how else could the confederacy of a sub-human monster and two drunken accomplices give rise to Prospero's anger and lead to the disruption of the masque? The idea, plausible as it may appear, is not entirely convincing. Caliban is "decisively" (my italics) seen to be "interiorized" in the speech in question (IV.i.138ff.), says Magarey,⁴⁹ which suggests either that Caliban has been nebulously and thus unconvincingly interiorized until IV.i.138, or that he is interiorized only at this point and not before, in which case we must accept the implausible notion of the *random* reification of the spirit of earth (Prospero calls Caliban "Thou earth,

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.150.

⁴⁸ Magarey, *op. cit.*, p.131.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

ABSTRACT

This dissertation attempts to demonstrate that the singularity of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* resides in, and is most effectively perceived through a consideration of, its allegorical nature.

The Introduction establishes the parameters within which the ensuing discussions of allegory, *The Tempest*, and the allegorical nature of *The Tempest* are located. The first chapter propounds two disparate allegorical paradigms - those of Nuttall and Magarey - to establish a context within which the evolution of a concept of allegory comprehensive yet distinctive enough to describe the uniqueness of *The Tempest* can take place, considers briefly the position of allegory in history, and proceeds to develop a dualistically-conceived notion of allegory based on an analysis of the allegorical theories advanced by Coleridge and de Man.

The second chapter explores the nature of strangeness and magic in *The Tempest* and analyses the responses of the play's characters to these phenomena. The third chapter considers the characterization of Prospero and Miranda, the dualistic conception of whom is subsequently revealed to suggest most strongly the operation of allegory in the play. The final chapter examines the perceptions of the cast in terms of the extent to which they manifest the dualistic notion of allegory evolved in Chapter I.

A discussion of the way in which an allegorical perspective suffuses the world of *The Tempest* concludes the argument.

thou" in I.ii.316) according to the dictates of the moment. Clearly neither option is acceptable. It is all very well to credit the interiorization of Ariel, for Ariel is patently spirit (in "Names of the Actors") and conceivably an aspect of Prospero the magician's psyche, externalized and personified to be enabled to perform his master's magical feats (Prospero summons Ariel with the words "Come with a thought", to which Ariel replies: "Thy thoughts I cleave to. What's thy pleasure?" - IV.i.164-5). But Caliban is an all-too-palpable flesh-and-blood monster, and cannot be conveniently spiritualized.

Caliban can, however, be seen to represent the 'lower self', in the Plotinian sense,⁵⁰ of man's psyche, that aspect of the soul given over to the animalistic instincts of human nature, chief amongst which is the instinct for survival. Hence the urgency with which Prospero contemplates the impending confrontation with Caliban (IV.i.166: "We must prepare to meet with Caliban"). Prospero's 'true self' must gain a decisive victory over his 'lower self' as swiftly as possible: as magus, as the representative of Art, he must achieve control not only over nature but over himself,⁵¹ and the anger he bears both Caliban (for conspiring against him) and himself (for allowing his anger towards Caliban to unsettle him) must promptly be conquered. If Caliban is both flesh-and-blood monster and representative of the "'natural man'" aspect of man's soul,⁵² not only in IV.i.138 but throughout the play, then Prospero's remembrance of him during the masque is merely a reminder of the temporal, earth-bound existence he (Prospero) shares with all humanity. Caliban is something Prospero must live with, both physically (when Prospero acknowledges the

⁵⁰ See A.H. Armstrong, "Plotinus", in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A.H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 222-235.

⁵¹ See Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. xlviii.

⁵² Nagarey, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

DECLARATION

I declare a) that this dissertation is my own, unsided work;

b) that it is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts
in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg;

c) that it has not been submitted before for any degree
or examination in any other university.

McKoy

27 March 1987

"thing of darkness" as his own in V.i.275-6), and spiritually (whenever he is reminded of his earth-bound nature).

Notwithstanding this tension within Prospero, the power of his magic is not to be underestimated; he is god of his domain, the island and its surrounds, and no character who enters that sphere is in any position to challenge his authority. Nuttall's attempts to gainsay this proposition are not convincing. "Ariel", he persists, "is more than Prospero's puppet (he can surprise his master: V.i.21) and the isle is more than Ariel's checker-board".⁵³ But does Shakespeare ever give any indication that Ariel could control his master, that he is greater than his master? His one attempt at challenging Prospero's justice and demanding his liberty is swiftly and effectively countered, and quashed (see I.ii.246-300). Prospero's righteous indignation is not unlike that of the Almighty in Isaiah 10:15: "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?"⁵⁴ (Ariel is Prospero's axe to grind.) Indeed, Ariel can surprise his master because, as we have established, he can be considered an aspect of Prospero's psyche: if Ariel can be summoned "with a thought" (IV.i.164), and a thought can surprise (our thoughts are capable of surprising us), then Prospero is capable of being surprised by Ariel.

Moreover, the isle does not seem to be "more than Ariel's checker-board". Ariel, fleet spirit that he is, is a ubiquitous presence on the island. He performs Prospero's commands "exactly" (I.ii.238), and no part of the island is beyond his jurisdiction. The island is not only his checker-board; it is his stage, where, within the parameters defined by Prospero, Ariel can perform any role at Prospero's will.

⁵³ Nuttall, "An Answer to Mr. Nagarey", p.263.

⁵⁴ *The Holy Bible*, Authorized Version.

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I should like to thank Professor B.D. Cheadle for supervising my work and for helping me to see through a glass less darkly, and my wife, Elaine, for her unflagging support.

The precise nature of the relationship which exists between Prospero and Ariel requires closer examination. Shakespeare adheres to an accepted pneumatological scheme in his characterization of Prospero and Ariel in *The Tempest*. Prospero is generally acknowledged to be modelled on the Renaissance magician John Dee,⁵⁵ and Shakespeare is throughout indebted to the pneumatology of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535), whose *De occulta philosophia* provided him with the magical framework he adopted in *The Tempest*.⁵⁶ (Ariel's name is actually mentioned in Agrippa's work.)⁵⁷ The occult magician, or theurgist as Agrippa called him, possessed good means whereby he could evoke good spirits who served him because of affinity.⁵⁸ Shakespeare's Ariel is clearly the good spirit who, being an aspect of Prospero's mind, serves Prospero because of affinity; the sympathy between them is determined by their common interest - the control of their environment through the operation of good or 'white' magic. (Ariel is apparently a "spirit too delicate" to perform the wicked Sycorax's commands - I.ii.272-3.)

Ariel, as elemental spirit, possesses extraordinary powers. His characterization appears to have been conceived according to a scheme derived from the Neo-Platonic classification of daemons (spirits) by the 11th century Byzantine Michel Pselios, who maintained that *aerial* daemons live in the air about us, sometimes descend to hell, appear to men, and *raise tempests*⁵⁹ (Ariel's assistance in raising the tempest in I.i. is clearly in this tradition). *Terrestrial* daemons dwell in forests and fields and

⁵⁵ See F.A. Yates, *Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p.95.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.93.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.126 n.43.

⁵⁸ See R.H. West, *The Invisible World* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1939), pp.39-40.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.23.

To Elaine, whose love for me is the outward sign of an inner Love.

covers and sometimes secretly with men⁶⁰ (Prospero first addresses Caliban as "Thou earth, thou!" in I.ii.316). Shakespeare seems, then, to follow Psellos's delineation of aerial and earthly spirits in his characterization of Ariel and Caliban in *The Tempest*.

Remy developed this Neo-Platonic idea, claiming that daemons had four qualities: power (to move bodies locally without union); motion (the transfer of angelic power from one place to another); speed (the power of instantaneous transfer); and knowledge (an innate knowledge of all things inferior to them).⁶¹ Moreover daemons could, through "fluency and rapid dexterity" in manipulation of the elements, take bodies of condensed air like clouds, or of fire - bodies as though palpable, capable of imparting motion and heat⁶² (in I.ii.195-206 Ariel reports on his incendiary activities on board the king's ship: "I flam'd amazement...I'd divide/And burn in many places...flame distinctly...").

The characterization of Ariel appears to have been conceived according to Remy's notion of aerial spirits. There is sufficient evidence in *The Tempest* itself, however, to suggest that Ariel has been given minimally qualified *carte blanche* to operate within the magical framework Prospero subscribes to: the storm and shipwreck, the safety of the passengers, the leading of the different parties to Prospero's cell, the music in its various forms - all are accomplished by Ariel, who, though he uses his own discretion in performing magical feats, remains accountable to Prospero in everything he does.

Nuttall's trump-card in demonstrating the magical properties of the island *ante* Prospero is Prospero's own speech at V.i.123, in which the

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.25.

⁶² *Ibid.*

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magician ascribes Alonso's and company's inability to "Believe things certain" (V.i.125) to their tasting of "Some subtleties o' the isle" (V.i.124).⁶³ But what explanation would we have Prospero give a party whose credulity has already been stretched beyond human bounds? "Gonzalo, be collected:/My Art your senses dull with haze does cloud" (or equally prosaic words to that effect)? It is not Prospero's intention to disclose the mystery surrounding the party's sojourn on the island and arrival before his cell until later, "at pick'd leisure" (V.i.247); therefore he allows the perplexed to believe that the "subtleties" are the property "o' the isle", when those in possession of fuller knowledge, we the audience, know the true source of the perplexity. Prospero's magic has accomplished far more than meets the eye of the bewildered castaway.

The Magus beyond the Haze

If the magic of Prospero accounts for the seemingly "gratuitous paranorma" in the play, it is not inconceivable that much of the remaining strangeness also may be attributed to the wand of the magician. Ferdinand's comment on hearing the music of Ariel - "Where should this music be? i' th' air or the 'arth?" (I.ii.390) epitomizes the kind of ambivalent response evinced by the castaways to the strangeness of the island. Recourse to divine agency becomes ironic in the light of a fuller knowledge, inaccessible to the marooned, which ascribes the supernatural to the magic of Prospero. Such conflation of the magical and the divine invests the characterization of Prospero with a dramatic poignancy the full import of which is realized only upon the abjuration of his magic, when the renunciation of magical power is seen to entail a simultaneous abnegation of god-like omnipotence.

⁶³ Nuttall, "An Answer to Mr Magarey", p.263.

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Prospero's magical workmanship is evident long before the castaways earn the appellation, in the raising of the tempest. The storm, dramatically though not chronologically the first manifestation of his Art,²² elicits from the mariners, Alonso, Ferdinand, and Gonzalo the appeal to prayers we have remarked above. The guilt-ridden responses of Trinculo and Alonso to the music of Ariel (III.ii.119ff.) and the thunder's pronouncement of Prospero's name (III.iii.99) respectively are similarly achieved through the magician's Art: Ariel's music and the thunder's pronouncement are further displays of magic. Gonzalo's evocation of a utopian dispensation (II.i.135-164), intended ostensibly as a sop to the repatee of Sebastian and Antonio and a diversion for Alonso, is asserted in the face of the awesome reality of Ferdinand's apparent drowning and Alonso's attendant grief; "the miracle [of their] preservation" (II.i.6-7) is itself attributable to Prospero's magic, as is the "theme of woe" (II.i.6) - the loss of Ferdinand - with which "miracle" is ironically juxtaposed (Ferdinand's preservation will later be accounted "A most high miracle!" by Sebastian - V.i.177).

Gonzalo's seeming caprice in desiring "some heavenly power" to deliver the king's party from "a fearful country" (V.i.105-6) and a short while later ascribing their arrival before Prospero's cell to the same power ("you gods" - V.i.201) is engendered by the magic of Prospero, which has effected not only the "torment, trouble, wonder and amazement" of the place (V.i.104-6) but the preservation of Ferdinand and hence the betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda. Gonzalo is not to know that it is Ariel's music, a product of Prospero's Art, which has led the party to Prospero's cell, and that the "maze" they have "trod" (III.iii.2) is an aspect of the magician's design.

²² The release of Ariel from the pine appears chronologically to constitute Prospero's first reported magical feat - see I.ii.291-3.

INTRODUCTION

The most innovative work on allegory in the last two-and-a-half decades appears to have been conducted by four persons: the studies by Fletcher (1964), De Man (1969), Quilligan (1979), and Van Dyke (1985)¹ into the theory of allegory indicate a departure from traditional approaches to the subject. Allegory has enjoyed varying support over the centuries in proportion to the perception of its usefulness as a rhetorical device. The valorization of symbol in the Romantic Period effected the virtual demise of allegory; recent theoretical discussion, however - the tone of which has been set by Fletcher, De Man, Quilligan, and Van Dyke - has registered a resurgence of support for allegory. Traditional allegorical notions have been dismissed or recast; the present dissertation continues this movement by endeavouring to evolve a concept of allegory comprehensive yet distinctive enough to describe the uniqueness of *The Tempest*.²

The extent of critical work on *The Tempest* itself is so vast that I make no apology for failing to provide a synopsis of relevant literature on the subject. Two discussions of the play seem to me particularly useful, however - the studies undertaken by Nuttall and Magarey.³ Nuttall's cri-

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Alonso's inability to resolve his perplexity before Prospero's call is similarly attributable to magic. What appears to Alonso to be supernatural⁶⁵ proves to be merely magical. The dramatic irony of Alonso's speech in V.i.242-4 ("This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod;/And there is in this business more than nature/ Was ever conduct of") arises from our attribution of the strangeness to Prospero's magic, an attribution beyond Alonso's knowledge. Within the world of the play, until Prospero actually abjures his magic, every seemingly supernatural event besides Prospero's arrival on the island is a product of that magic; even Prospero's *stated* resolution to forgive Sebastian and Antonio (V.i.71-9), whether part of his original design when he raised the tempest or not, is pronounced as the party stands "spell-stopped" (V.i.61) within the magic circle Prospero has made. Only, arguably, after Ariel has dressed Prospero in his ducal garments and Prospero has put off his magical trappings (though it is difficult to determine the precise moment at which Prospero abjures his magic)⁶⁶ does the magician become a 'mere mortal'. Not until the Epilogue does Prospero intimate that his magical powers are finally dispensed with: "*Now my charms are all o'erthrown*" (Epilogue, 1). Once Ariel has been released to the elements and "calm seas, auspicious gales" (V.i.314) have been promised the party - only then can Prospero renounce all claim to magical power.

If, then, the entire action of the play is worked out under a dispensation defined by magic, even Prospero's forgiveness of Antonio, which for Dobrée is Senecan in its priggishness,⁶⁷ and for Nuttall

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⁶⁷ B. Dobrée, *op. cit.*, p.15.

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tique of *The Tempest*, which owes a great deal to an essay by Dobrée,⁴ attempts to direct the reader's attention to the uniqueness of the play and address that uniqueness from an allegorical perspective at variance with traditional notions of allegory. Magarey's critique, written in response to Nuttall, attempts to expose the inadequacies of Nuttall's allegorical paradigm and consider the play from the perspective of *symbolic* allegory. Both studies have influenced considerably my thinking about the allegorical nature of *The Tempest*.

The Tempest has been designated "an extraordinarily delicate and dramatic play, which, until the Last Day makes all things clear, will never be anything but immensely suggestive."⁵ This pronouncement seems to me a useful starting point for a discussion of a play which appears to have impressed audiences and critics alike with its peculiar blend of ingenuousness and ingenuity. *The Tempest* is "delicate", certainly; poised between the familiar world of human experience and a world that transcends the familiar, it compels the spectator into a region negotiated by few. The 'otherness' of such a world is not easily addressed; linguistic description in the presence of the unknown appears to be limited to the making of such ineffectual interpretative sorties as "[The Tempest] will never be anything but immensely suggestive". Should we, besides, have to wait the illumination of the "Last Day" to enable us to discern the spectres lurking in the shadows and describe them in palpable terms?

However elusive the spectres of the play may appear, there must be a way to pin them down. Traditional notions of allegory, which posit a set of signs in a text representing a set of referents outside the text,⁶ appear

⁴ B. Dobrée, "The Tempest", in *Essays and Studies*, 1952, no 5: 13-25.

⁵ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.159.

⁶ For a full account of traditional notions of allegory, see Fletcher,

"forgiveness...unforgiving",⁶⁶ is achieved not by a *man* who feels little emotion as he forgives,⁶⁷ but by a *magician* who has spent twelve years on an island conquering his passions and learning how to forgive, as God forgives, in just this way:

Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
Do I take part: the rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance.

V.i.25-8

There is a supernatural quality in Prospero's forgiveness. The whole point about forgiveness, not a man-made but a divine disposition, is that it always contains the unforgiving element, or it would have neither power nor meaning. Forgiveness must cost something: there must be some sacrifice of *self* involved in the decision to forgive. Prospero has sacrificed twelve years of study in seclusion to attain a state morally attuned to the notion of forgiveness.

The overt separation of magic and religion in *The Tempest* is not fortuitous. There are intimations of the divine, but these are not posited in contradistinction to magic. It is only at the end of the play, in the Epilogue, that Prospero, divested of magical power, becomes a man with the same access to the divine, and the same need for forgiveness, as other men. His forgiveness of his enemies in Act V may seem Senecan, but it is a condition of the state he has attained that he forgive as a man who has conquered his passions, his "fury", who does not allow feelings of "vengeance" to colour his decisions.

⁶⁶ Nuttall, "An Answer to Mr Magarey", p.264.

⁶⁷ Dobreé's complaint against Prospero: Dobreé, *op. cit.*, p.15.

incapable of accounting for the 'otherness' of *The Tempest*. In the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius⁷ we know that Patientia 'stands for' *Long-suffering* and that Ira 'stands for' *Wrath*;⁸ but in *The Tempest* we do not know whether the characters represent immaterial passions,⁹ whether Shakespeare intends any such allegorical personification, or indeed whether allegorical interpretation should be confined to character.

Between the mutually exclusive notions that 'The *Tempest* resists neat classification' (Nuttall's contention) and 'Neat classification is imposed by allegory' (Nuttall's contention about traditional [rhetorical] notions of allegory) I believe it is possible to discover an allegorical language comprehensive yet distinctive enough to discern and expound Shakespeare's central concerns in the play. A substantial part of this study is devoted to the evolution of such a language.

A concept of allegory will be formulated to assist us in discerning the uniqueness of *The Tempest*. An equally substantial section therefore attempts to plumb the depths of strangeness which generate the uniqueness, and ascertain the extent to which the magic of Prospero exerts a controlling influence in the play. Valuable as Nuttall's critique of *The Tempest* is for the way in which it focuses our attention on the 'otherness' of the play - the "gratuitous paranorma" and the tensions established between images of remoteness and intimacy and between

op. cit., pp.113, 172, 323, and Van Dyke, *op. cit.*, pp.15-22, 25-63 (*passim*).

⁷ A.C. Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, in *Prudentius*, trans. H.G. Thomson (The Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), Vol. I.

⁸ In other respects the *Psychomachia* is not so easily interpreted as "pure" allegory: see Van Dyke, *op. cit.*, pp.25-63.

⁹ Lewis's notion of allegory: see C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp.44-5.

*

The knowledge that the magic of Prospero has engendered the strangeness which dogs all the characters in the play except Miranda and himself does not, however, detract from the very real mystery surrounding the island, or invalidate the responses of those characters to "paranorma" which for them remain "gratuitous". I have endeavoured to paint a picture from an audience' perspective; but even from that lofty vantage point the shading is deceptive. Indeed, the play relies on the mystification of cast and audience alike for the retention of dramatic interest so necessary to the success of the playwright's enterprise. We the audience may *know* in an omniscient kind of way that Prospero stands beyond the maze, but the meandering cast is yet to acquire this knowledge - and does so only after the play has ended, on the night before setting sail for Italy (V.1.302-6).

Since much of the strangeness in the play is subsumed by magic and therefore rebounds on the magician, Prospero, we must examine more closely the characterization of Prospero and Miranda before attempting to describe the play in terms of the notion of allegory we have evolved.

incapable of accounting for the 'otherness' of *The Tempest*. In the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius⁷ we know that Patientia 'stands for' *Long-suffering* and that Ira 'stands for' *Wrath*;⁸ but in *The Tempest* we do not know whether the characters represent immaterial passions,⁹ whether Shakespeare intends any such allegorical personification, or indeed whether allegorical interpretation should be confined to character.

Between the mutually exclusive notions that '*The Tempest* resists neat classification' (Nuttall's contention) and 'Neat classification is imposed by allegory' (Nuttall's contention about traditional [rhetorical] notions of allegory) I believe it is possible to discover an allegorical language comprehensive yet distinctive enough to discern and expound Shakespeare's central concerns in the play. A substantial part of this study is devoted to the evolution of such a language.

A concept of allegory will be formulated to assist us in discerning the uniqueness of *The Tempest*. An equally substantial section therefore attempts to plumb the depths of strangeness which generate the uniqueness, and ascertain the extent to which the magic of Prospero exerts a controlling influence in the play. Valuable as Nuttall's critique of *The Tempest* is for the way in which it focuses our attention on the 'otherness' of the play - the "gratuitous paranorma" and the tensions established between images of remoteness and intimacy and between

op. cit., pp.113, 172, 323, and Van Dyke, *op. cit.*, pp.15-22, 25-63 (*passim*).

⁷ A.C. Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, in *Prudentius*, trans. H.G. Thomson (The Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), Vol. I.

⁸ In other respects the *Psychomachia* is not so easily interpreted as "pure" allegory: see Van Dyke, *op. cit.*, pp.25-63.

⁹ Lewis's notion of allegory: see C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp.44-5.

CHAPTER III

THE DUALISTIC CONCEPTION OF PROSPERO AND MIRANDA

Between Two Worlds

We have alluded already to the tension between 'worldly' and 'spiritual' elements Nuttall perceives in the characterization of Prospero and Miranda.¹ The tension exists not merely at a rhetorical level, but underlies the narrative action, investing the play with a fundamental ambiguity that engenders its own poignancy.

The scene before Prospero's cell in which father and daughter are first revealed to us is characterized, declares Nuttall, by the "tranquil discourse of two angelic beings".² There is indeed a remarkable poignancy about dialogue in which characters reveal the very desires and anxieties of their hearts with both candidness and an air of authority that bespeaks superhuman origins. Miranda's allusions to heaven on learning of her father's erstwhile position in Milan (I.ii.59) and of Antonio's perfidy (I.ii.116) - "O the heavens!" - might be considered idiomatic or mere conversational quirks were they the only such references. In I.ii.175, however, Miranda thanks Prospero for his careful tutoring of her with the words "Heavens thank you for 't!", and Prospero himself declares that Miranda was a "cherubin" (I.ii.152) - an *angelic* being - whose "fortitude from heaven" (I.ii.154; my italics) saved him from despair when they were abandoned to the elements. If words mean what they say, and we do not subscribe to the kind of extreme nominalism of which Nuttall appears to

¹ See pp.44-5 above.

² Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.141.

'worldly' and 'spiritual' elements"¹⁰ - Nuttall is largely dismissive of the role of Prospero and his magic in a play dominated by both. This study endeavours not only to redress the balance but to pursue the ontological suggestiveness of both strangeness and magic to the limits of usefulness.

Strangeness and magic thus properly located in the scheme of *The Tempest*, the final section attempts to demonstrate that the dialectical tension at the heart of the play - the tension between the 'worldly' and the 'spiritual', between the natural and the supernatural - can best be understood in relation to the concept of allegory evolved earlier, and that the characterization of Prospero embodies quintessentially that dualism in terms of which the play may be allegorically interpreted.

¹⁰ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, pp.139-143.

be guilty,² then "heaven" exists for Prospero and Miranda as an independent reality. There is recourse in both speakers' conversation to an entity beyond themselves on which they appear to rely for "fortitude".

Miranda implies, moreover, that Prospero is a "god of power" (I.ii.10) who could, if he chose to, "alloy" the tempest (I.ii.2). The analogy with Jesus' calming of the storm in the New Testament, though not inescapable, is nonetheless significant. Miranda pleads with her father as the disciples pleaded with Jesus; and "[Jesus] rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39). Prospero's reply to Miranda - "Be collected;/No more amazement: tell your piteous heart/There's no harm done" (I.ii.15-15; my italics) - with the imperatives *Be* and *tell* echoes Jesus' speech of reassurance to his disciples when he walked on the sea: "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid" (Mark 6:50; my italics). Prospero speaks, like Jesus, with the voice of divine authority.

There are other linguistic analogies with Holy Scripture besides. Prospero's use of imperatives in I.ii.38 ("Obey, and be attentive") again bears the stamp of divine authority. In I.ii.18-21, moreover, Prospero alludes mysteriously to an unknown origin: "[Miranda] nought knowing/Of whence I am,⁴ nor that I am more better/Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,/And thy no greater father"; his words echo those of the once blind man to the Pharisees, "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He [Jesus] is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes" (John 9:30).⁵ The biblical parallel is present too in Prospero's resolve to tell Miranda the story of their ousting from Milan: "The hour's now

² See Magarey, *op. cit.*, p.103.

⁴ The time has come for Miranda to "now know farther" (I.ii.33), with the inescapable word-play on "farther" (*father*).

⁵ Cf. John 7:28: "Ye [in the temple] both know Me [Jesus], and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not."

CHAPTER I

A CONCEPT OF ALLEGORY

Though an overview of allegorical theory is not the chief object of this study, some account of the salient features of changing perspectives on allegory must be given if a concept of allegory which can account for the "strange salt-sweetness"¹ of *The Tempest* is to be formulated. To this end I propose to consider first the definitions of Nuttall and Magarey, the two critics whose critiques of *The Tempest* provide the foundation for this study, and then to fill those lacunae their definitions expose by drawing on a body of recent allegorical theory.

Inflation and Reduction

Nuttall defines allegory, "modestly and loosely, as a described set of things in narrative sequence standing for a different set of things in temporal or para-temporal sequences; in short, a complex narrative metaphor."² An analysis of this concept suggests the following features. Allegory operates within a sequential paradigm: a sequence of events forms the narrative code (a structuralist concept)³ involving a series of propositions in which an agent or group of agents performs an action which may be followed by another related action. This code forms the matrix within which the allegorical signs are embedded. A "set of things", a group of signs, is grounded in the narrative sequence, and this set stands for a different set of things in another sequence. Parallelism is thus

¹ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.141.

² *Ibid.*, p.48.

³ See Van Dyke, *op. cit.*, p.37.

come" (I.ii.36). His sense of timing is reminiscent of Jesus' concern with the proper time - "Mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4b) - leading to the eventual "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12:23).

Too much should not be made of biblical comparisons, for Shakespeare certainly never intended such *explicit* analogy. But the language itself - and Nuttall's claim that the language is "angelic" is the present object of inquiry - does *imply* the analogy. Prospero and Miranda are "angelic beings",⁶ and Prospero's Art is omnipotent in the context of the play. Prospero is lord of his domain as Jesus is Lord of His - Shakespeare cannot convey the power of Prospero's magic more tellingly.

The discourse of Prospero and Miranda suggests that they occupy a "spiritual" plane amongst other "spiritual" planes in the play, maintains Nuttall. He may with reason call the plane Prospero and Miranda occupy "spiritual", but his postulation of "vague *spiritual* hierarchies" (my italics)⁷ involving the entire cast of *The Tempest* is unfounded. There is nothing particularly spiritual about the crass swearing of the castaways, the pestilential curses of Caliban (see I.ii.323-6, 341-2; II.ii.1-3), or the indulgent idealism of Gonzalo (see II.ii.139-164).

Nuttall's observation of the angelic discourse of Prospero and Miranda is nevertheless suggestive. There is something heavenly about their conversation, but the divine element is offset by their very real fears for the safety of themselves and others. Miranda's desire to be "any god of power" (I.ii.10) comes in response to her anxiety over the plight of the drowned ("O, I have suffered/With those that I saw suffer!..." - I.ii.5ff.); her anxiety lest some might be drowned is answered by

⁶ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.141.

⁷ *Ibid.*

established: there is a one-to-one correspondence, or a system of correspondence, between a set of things in one sequence and a set of things in a parallel sequence.

Up to this point, Nuttall's definition approximates the "well-known" notion of allegory Fletcher cites in his *magnum opus* on allegory: "Allegories are based on parallels between two levels of being that correspond to each other..."⁴ However, Nuttall introduces the notion of "temporal or para-temporal sequences". What he means by the terms is not easily determined, but I would suggest the following. A temporal sequence is a sequence existing in or relating to time: thus the temporal sequence designates a sequence contemporaneous with the original narrative code. A para-temporal sequence is a sequence existing *alongside* or *beyond* (*para*) a temporal sequence, and designates a sequence either separated in time from the original narrative code but existing nevertheless in a world bound by the constraints of time (*alongside*), or belonging to another time-sphere, that of a world *beyond*. Nuttall's position may be illustrated by the following diagram:

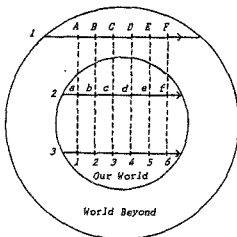


Figure 1. Nuttall's Parallel Sequence Notion of Allegory.

⁴ Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 113, 172, 323.

Prospero's reassurance, on perceiving her "compassion" (I.ii.27), that no castaway has perished.

A suspension is achieved in the balancing of opposites - in the tempering of the human with the divine. Prospero can consider his removal from Milan both "foul play" and "blessed" (I.ii.60-61), "foul play" because of the crime involved in his usurpation, "blessed" because of his later attribution of their safe arrival on the island to "Providencia divine" (I.ii.159). Desirous of asserting his link with the Eternal through this attribution he is simultaneously aware of the sense of anxiety he experiences in having to recall his (more palpable) link with the temporal - his brother Antonio, who supplanted him from Milan.

Both Miranda and Ferdinand are rendered paradoxical by their perceptions of each other. Miranda takes Ferdinand initially for a "spirit" (I.ii.412) before describing his "brave [splendid, excellent] form" (I.ii.413) and finally reverting to "But 'tis a spirit" (I.ii.413). Such vacillation is understandable in one to whom mankind is so new a phenomenon: Miranda later assures Ferdinand that he is only the second or third man she has seen (depending on which of her speeches we take to be more authoritative: in I.ii.448 Prospero and Caliban are the other two men, while in III.i.50-52 Caliban is excluded from the list). But small human (and especially male) acquaintance⁸ does not fully explain Miranda's hesitation. Ferdinand appears "divine" (I.ii.420-421), she says, "for nothing natural/I ever saw so noble" (I.ii.421-2); here is a hint of the Neo-platonic notion of beauty which Miranda is to evince on Prospero's accusing Ferdinand of attempted usurpation:

⁸ Miranda has but a dim memory of the "Four or five women" who tended her: I.ii.47.

The outer circle represents the invisible world or the world beyond, within which our world (the inner circle) resides. Sequences 1, 2 and 3 represent parallel lines: *sequence 2* with the allegorical signs a, b, c, d, e, f ("a described set of things in narrative sequence") refers to *sequence 3* with the allegorical referents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 ("temporal or para-temporal - [*alongside*] - sequences"), but refers also to *sequence 1* with the allegorical referents A, B, C, D, E, F ("para-temporal - [*beyond*] - [sequence]"). Nuttall's concept differs from traditional theory in this respect: where a critic like C.S. Lewis is content to confine the respective sequences (2 and 3) within this world - allegory's concern, he alleges in *The Allegory of Love*, is with the material *visibilia* invented to represent immaterial facts, and with *nothing else*⁵ - Nuttall insists on a necessary correlation between sequences in this world and the world beyond (*sequences 2 and 1*). Such correlation epitomizes the symbolist or sacramentalist position which Lewis sets in opposition to allegory: "If our passions, being immaterial, can be copied by material inventions, then it is possible that our material world . . . its turn is the copy of an invisible world."⁶

Nuttall's concept of corresponding parallel sequences, allegory as "a complex narrative metaphor", has affinities with the notion of allegory so devalued by Romantic literary theorists. I shall consider the Romantic opposition of allegory and symbol, and the supposed superiority of symbol over allegory, at a later stage. Briefly, however, the romantic view of allegory is epitomized by the hermeneutic theorist Gadamer as a sign that points to one specific meaning and thus exhausts its "suggestive[ness]" once the meaning has been determined; symbol, on the other hand, is

⁵ C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp.44-5.

⁶ *Ibid.*

There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple:⁹
If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
Good things will strive to dwell with 't. I.ii.460-462

Beauty is more than skin-deep: Ferdinand "carries a brave form", and "so fair a house" must necessarily contain a spirit "divine". As always, however, beauty is in the eye of the beholder: the mere fact of Miranda's perception of Ferdinand does not render him divine, and rebounds rather on her characterization than on his.

The same dichotomy between things pertaining to nature and things pertaining to the spirit is evident in Ferdinand's perception of Miranda. Ferdinand, his sense of the uncanny alerted already by the strangeness of Ariel's song (I.ii.377-407), readily assumes Miranda to be "the goddess/On whom these airs attend" (I.ii.424-5). Such instantaneous imaginative flight from strangeness to supernatural intimation does not surprise us: Ferdinand was the first man to escape the burning ship in the tempest, Ariel tells us (I.ii.214), crying as he leaped, "Hell is empty, // And all the devils are here" (I.ii.214-5). In I.ii.425-6 his language takes on a religious quality in the presence of what he perceives to be the supernatural: "Vouchsafe my prayer/May know if you remain upon this island...?" Struck by Miranda's singular beauty, he inadvertently plays on her name (which he discovers only later - see III.i.37) by declaring "O you wonder" (I.ii.429; my italics).

Nuttall underplays the importance of the names in *The Tempest*, conceding that "Prospero, Miranda, Ariel might be held to be faint hints towards allegorical significance" but nothing more.¹⁰ When we consider the deri-

⁹ The same temple-metaphor is found in the New Testament: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (I Corinthians 3:16-17).

¹⁰ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.151.

"endlessly suggestive in the indefiniteness of its meaning",⁷ representing a unity of image and the totality the image suggests.

Allegory, considered as a correspondence between parallel sequences, is reducible to Gadamer's paradigm: if, in the diagram depicting Nuttall's position, the signs a, b, c, d, e, f of *sequence 2* "stand for" the referents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 of *sequence 3*, it is possible that once the referents have been deciphered, the meaning of the signs is exhausted, since meaning has been transferred from sign to referent. Nor does Nuttall's introduction of another parallel sequence, *1*, entirely redeem the notion of allegory from the accusation of exhaustibility. Nuttall simply introduces another variable into the picture. If we can represent love, for instance, by a heart, then (in Nuttall's terms) that heart may also be a reflection of an essence of Heart representing Love: once the sign, *heart*, has led us to identify the referents, *love* and *Love*, the image of the heart is discarded because its 'true' meaning has been discovered.

Nuttall's concern, however, is with evolving a "lively"⁸ concept of allegory, and in this sense his heart is in the right (if not the romantic) place. His interest lies in Lewis's sacramentalism: because for Nuttall there exists the possibility that "this world is but a copy of the next",⁹ he must necessarily metaphysicize allegory to save the concept from Lewis's "petrifying formula"¹⁰ (the notion that allegory is the invention of material *visibilia* to represent immaterial facts). If we "de-metaphysicize" allegory, we "relegate it to the sphere of *static*

⁷ H.G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tubingen: n.p., 1960; 2nd ed., 1965), p.70; quoted in P. de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality", in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, ed. C.S. Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), p.174.

⁸ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.48.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.47.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.159.

vation of Miranda's name, however, and the use to which it is put in the play, we cannot but construe a deeper meaning in Shakespeare's nomenclature. "Miranda" (the gerundive form of the Latin verb *miror* - 'to wonder at, admire, have a regard for'),¹¹ means not only 'wonderful' but 'strange, singular'.¹² When Ferdinand proclaims Miranda a "wonder" (I.ii.429) and "Admir'd Miranda" (III.i.37), then, her name resonates with a significance deeper than mere 'wonder'. She is the incarnation of the spirit of wonder, strangeness, singularity, and it is this notion that leads us to associate her with the divine. Hence she may be considered as much an allegorical personification, in terms of Nuttall's parallel sequence definition of allegory,¹³ as is any character in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*;¹⁴ at a strictly rhetorical level Miranda signifies 'wonder', 'strangeness', 'singularity'. She may also, however, be considered to embody that peculiar combination of constituents which leads Ferdinand and Alonso to respond to her according to the particular perception (divine or human) they have of her at any one moment.

The distinction between human naivety and divine innocence is a fine one, yet we detect both qualities in Miranda. On the one hand she is ingenuously forthright and girlishly credulous: her ready acceptance of her situation (I.ii.21-2), her expression of the Neo-platonic conception of beauty (I.ii.460-462), and her insistence on taking Ferdinand at face value (I.ii.420-422, 470-471) betray human naivety. On the other hand she speaks with wisdom in tones of divine authority, full of righteous indignation for those who she considers have perpetrated injustice: her imperative to Prospero to "allay" the storm (I.ii.1-2), her desire to have preserved the ship's occupants had she been "any god of power"

¹¹ Lewis & Short, *op. cit.*, p.1149.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ See pp.5-8 above.

¹⁴ See Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.151.

personification" (my italics).¹¹ Non-metaphysical allegory is thus for Nuttall as static a concept as allegory is for Gadamer and the romantics. Nuttall's eye, as a metaphysician *manqué*, is "principally upon the figured"¹² rather than upon the figure, because he wants to see the metaphysical possibilities in the referent. If we are to salvage anything from Nuttall's concept of allegory, it is his desire to reinstate allegory as a lively vehicle for taking account of the metaphysical suggestiveness of certain works of literature, and in particular of the "strange salt-sweetness" of *The Tempest*. Nuttall's analysis of the play is perceptive (his identification of the play's unique qualities as ontologically suggestive is, as we shall see, illuminating), but in his eagerness to render allegory metaphysical he destroys the effectiveness of the device by limiting its suggestiveness to one specific kind of sequence. By the end of his discussion of *The Tempest*, the question of the importance of the play's allegorical nature is thus waived: the question, he says, should, if his quest to demonstrate a closer relationship between allegory and life than Lewis's formula allowed has been successful, "have shrunk in importance".¹³

The most concerted challenge put forward to Nuttall's theory of allegory has come from Magarey,¹⁴ who accounts for Nuttall's metaphysical obsession thus: "because allegory as a figure of speech offers a kind of working or systematic dualism it must [for Nuttall] suggest a cosmological dualism."¹⁵ In Nuttall we are concerned no longer with allegory merely as a *rhetorical device*, Magarey seems to say. Nuttall appears to have moved beyond the "figure of speech" level of sequential correspondence

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.48.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp.47-8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.159.

¹⁴ Magarey, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.105.

vation of Miranda's name, however, and the use to which it is put in the play, we cannot but construe a deeper meaning in Shakespeare's nomenclature. "Miranda" (the gerundive form of the Latin verb *miror* - 'to wonder at, admire, have a regard for'),¹¹ means not only 'wonderful' but 'strange, singular'.¹² When Ferdinand proclaims Miranda a "wonder" (I.ii.429) and "Admir'd Miranda" (III.i.37), then, her name resonates with a significance deeper than mere 'wonder'. She is the incarnation of the spirit of wonder, strangeness, singularity, and it is this notion that leads us to associate her with the divine. Hence she may be considered as much an allegorical personification, in terms of Nuttall's parallel sequence definition of allegory,¹³ as is any character in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*;¹⁴ at a strictly rhetorical level Miranda signifies 'wonder', 'strangeness', 'singularity'. She may also, however, be considered to embody that peculiar combination of constituents which leads Ferdinand and Alonso to respond to her according to the particular perception (divine or human) they have of her at any one moment.

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¹¹ Lewis & Short, *op. cit.*, p.1149.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ See pp.5-8 above.

¹⁴ See Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.151.

to consider allegory in terms of a dualistically-conceived world view. It is this shift from rhetorical to ontological perception, we observe, which enables him to dismiss the question of the play's allegorical nature: if allegory as a rhetorical device is indeed the "petrifying formula" Lewis's definition suggests to Nuttall, one can understand Nuttall's desire to shift the emphasis from the specificity of a precise linguistic apprehension of allegory towards a broader philosophical notion of allegory conceived in universal terms. In Nuttall's case the "working or systematic dualism" denotes the system of correspondence established between two sequential progressions: one set of things in narrative sequence standing for a different set of things in narrative sequence. If a paradigm of sequential correspondence exists in this world, the identical paradigm may exist in another world, if the notion is not rejected that this world is but a copy of the next. Magarey's contention, then, is that Nuttall appears to have conflated two paradigms to make the temporal dualism of this world - an essentially rhetorical system of sequential correspondence - signify another dualism in the world beyond, a dualism arising out of a kind of Platonic *Weltenscheidung* that perceives this world as a mere reflection of another.

Magarey offers in place of Nuttall's "reductive" notion of allegory - the restriction of allegory's sphere of operation to the metaphysical realm - what is in effect an extension of "the old, natural Aristotelian view of allegory as a continued metaphor".¹⁶ Metaphor by definition cannot in itself constitute allegory, since both the tenor and vehicle¹⁷ of metaphor are identified in the text (in allegory, only the vehicle appears in the text); however, the extension of an *implicit* metaphor, in which the tenor is implied by the (verbal) context rather than stated, may resemble al-

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ The terms coined by I.A. Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (n.p.: n.p., 1936), Chapters 5 & 6; quoted in M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1971), p.61.

(I.ii.10-13) and the implied criticism therein levelled against Prospero, her insight that "Good wombs have borne bad sons" (I.ii.120), and her (for Miranda) righteously indignant tirade against Caliban (I.ii.353-364) portray divine innocence.¹⁵ And in III.i.82 Miranda herself invokes the assistance of "plain and holy innocence" in addressing Ferdinand.

Ferdinand's readiness to "love, prize, honour" (III.i.73) a woman he has known for a couple of hours, moreover, is remarkable. Miranda's infatuation we can understand: Ferdinand is the first man with whom she might conceivably (*sic*) have fallen in love; in her case love "At...first sight" (I.ii.443) is most apt. But we must either think Ferdinand desperately insecure - enough to profess undying love for a relative stranger (III.i.87: "And I {Ferdinand, kneeling} thus humble *ever*" - my italics) - or ascribe to Miranda a quality rare enough to elicit from Ferdinand the praise he showers on her in III.i.37-48 (where she is extolled as "So perfect and so peerless,...created/Of every creature's best!" - 11.47-8). Miranda is indeed a singular woman, her singularity residing not least in the goddess-like aura of simplicity surrounding her. It is not surprising that because of Miranda "imagery of Eden" has attached itself to the play in so much criticism.¹⁶

¹⁵ If, indeed, we ascribe this speech to Miranda at all. Kermode's chief reason for not giving the speech to Prospero, it seems, is Caliban's use of "you" in I.ii.365 ("[Caliban] calls Prospero *thou* throughout" - Kermode [ed.], *op. cit.*, p.32 n.353). Caliban may well be addressing both Prospero and Miranda in I.ii.365-7, however, because he associates the language he has been taught with the persons who have usurped the island from him. Moreover Caliban uses "you" four times in I.ii.332-346, his speech addressed to Prospero (to contradict Kermode), and may be using *you* in place of *thou* out of anger, following Onions: "*thou* is replaced by *you* when the tone of speech becomes cold, serious, or angry" - C.T. Onions, *A Shakespeare Glossary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), p.225.

¹⁶ See Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.143.

legory. This notion of allegory as continued *implicit* metaphor presupposes the parallel sequence paradigm outlined above: a number of signs (vehicles) standing for a number of referents (tenors), sustained throughout a work, come to constitute a "set" which implies a further suggestiveness.

But Magarey's perception of allegory takes another form. "*The Tempest*," he maintains, "begins not as ex professo allegory but as romantic fiction," which is why "as it develops semantic overtones it moves towards myth or *symbolic allegory*".¹⁸ This displacement of allegory towards myth, and consequent conflation of allegory and symbol, is echoed by Don Cameron Allen: "To some extent, myth is allegory; or, perhaps, allegory is myth; but both modes of imaginative thought are little more than one or more symbols with positive or negative value attached to some natural object and provided with a predicate".¹⁹ The weakness of this approach is that it blurs the distinction between allegory and symbol; instead of valorizing symbol above allegory (the romantic endeavour, which I shall consider later), it obliterates the distinctiveness of allegory as a rhetorical device. Because the symbol is "endlessly suggestive",²⁰ Magarey's *symbolic allegory*, like symbol, is "capable of, precisely, inviting a variety of interpretations".²¹ Thus Magarey can posit a number of possible interpretations of *The Tempest*, Nuttall's "metaphysical" interpretation being but one. Magarey considers the play chiefly a "*biographical allegory*",²² taking for his starting point the play-within-a-play idea and positing an "ingress of actions"²³ through

¹⁸ Magarey, *op. cit.*, p.105.

¹⁹ D.C. Allen, *Mysteriously Meant* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1970), p.vii.

²⁰ Gadamer's contention: see pp.7-8 above.

²¹ Magarey, *op. cit.*, p.105.

²² *Ibid.*, p.122.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.121.

If a naivety-innocence dualism characterizes Miranda, a more fundamental dualism finds expression in the characterization of Prospero. Nuttall's claim for Prospero's divine status rests chiefly on Prospero's angelic conversation and near-omniscience in directing the course of the lovers' encounter.¹⁷ Such a claim is reinforced by the linguistic scriptural parallels between Prospero and Jesus.¹⁸ The lordship of Prospero resides not in divinity but in magic, however; Art masquerades as godhood but is never replaced by it, for magic, despite the seeming omnipotence it affords Prospero, comes ultimately to be renounced by the magician. One cannot cast off godhood.

Nevertheless, the spirit of Prospero is more pervasive than appears through his magic only; he is, to borrow from one of Shakespeare's sonnets, like love the "ever-fixed mark,/That looks on tempests [sic] and is never shaken" (Sonnet CXVI, 5-6),¹⁹ around whom hover the earthly satellites who people the play. The name of Prospero, like that of Miranda, resonates with a significance deeper than a superficial perusal might suggest. Alonso hints inadvertently at one meaning of the name when he calls Prospero "Prosper" (III.iii.99): the magician is 'fortunate', 'favourable', 'prosperous' (from the Latin adjective *prosper*).²⁰ When Prospero promises the royal fleet "calm seas, auspicious gales,/And sail so expeditious..." (V.1.314-315), then, the power to perform the feat emanates in part from his name. (The Vulgate uses the verb *prosperare* to mean 'to render favourable or propitious'.)²¹ More specifically, how-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.141-2.

¹⁸ See pp.70-71 above.

¹⁹ W. Shakespeare, *The Sonnets of William Shakespeare*, ed. L. Fox (Norwich: Jarrold & Sons Ltd., n.d.), n.pag.

²⁰ Lewis & Short, *op. cit.*, p.1476.

²¹ *Ibid.*

the work. Prospero as magician controls the action of the play, staging various 'shows' - the raising of the tempest (I.i.), the presentations of the banquet (III.iii.) and masque (IV.i.), the "frippery" display designed to ensnare his enemies (IV.i.), the revelation of Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess (V.1.) - which demonstrate his mastery. Not only does Prospero direct these plays within the framework of the larger play (*The Tempest*) he is directing, moreover; he is himself the protagonist of a play directed by Shakespeare. This play-within-a-play-within-a-play concept forms the basis of an allegorical interpretation central to an understanding of *The Tempest*: Antonio's and Alonso's "real" usurpation (recounted in I.ii.) leads to the actual "staging" of the play, and the subsequent attempts at usurpation (Sebastian's and Antonio's attempted usurpation of Alonso - II.i; Stephano's, Trinculo's, and Caliban's attempted usurpation of Prospero - III.ii) refer back to that original usurpation. An allegorical paradigm is established: allegorical sign (the attempt of the three conspirators to seize the island from Prospero) points to referent (the attempt by Antonio and Sebastian on Alonso's life), which in turn points to another referent, the source of the allegory (the original ousting of Prospero from Milan).²⁴ Thus an "ingress of actions" is achieved, successive actions - like stones - being constructed upon one another to create an allegorical structure whose cornerstone is the original action.

This method of tracing an action back to its archetype, or considered from another perspective, of tracing the extension of an action through a work, constitutes, in fact, Magarey's perception of "continued metaphor": allegory or allegorical interpretation extending or continuing itself.²⁵ In a very different way, this approach is as reductive as Nuttall's *metaphysical* allegory, since it confines allegorical reference, and

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.122.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

ever, "Prospero" derives from the Latin *pro spero*, 'in place of hope, answering to hope', and it is in this sense that Shakespeare plays on in *The Tempest*. In the course of the hatching of the conspiracy against Prospero in II.i Sebastian remarks, "I have no *hope*/That he's [Ferdinand's] undrown'd" (II.233-4; my italics). Under different circumstances Ferdinand might well have drowned had Prospero not ordained his survival: Prospero represents the 'hope' held out to Ferdinand of which Sebastian and Antonio are ignorant. Antonio's reply in the light of this knowledge becomes dramatically ironic on two counts: his words "O, out of that 'no hope'/What great hope have you!" (II.i.234-5) are hollow not only because the audience knows Ferdinand lives but because Prospero represents hope to the man whose father Antonio futilely wishes Sebastian to supplant. Similarly, Alonso's only hope that Ferdinand lives lies unwittingly in Prospero. Alonso, his spirits dulled after much meandering, declares "Even here I will put off *my hope*...he [Ferdinand] is drown'd" (III.iii.7-8; my italics), to which Antonio retorts in an aside to Sebastian, "I am right glad that he's so *out of hope*" (III.iii.11; my italics). Prospero is the personification of hope from whom Ferdinand has received a "second life" (V.i.195).

Prospero may represent hope to others (Alonso, Ferdinand, and Miranda) in the play, since as magician he appears to embody the power capable of such representation. But the hope extended to others does not necessarily extend always to himself. Prospero's magic, we have seen, accounts for much of the "strangeness" of *The Tempest*, but certain things remain strange even to him. There are chinks in the magician's armour which point to his *essential humanity*.

Prospero's conception of strangeness is bound up with Fortune on the one hand and Providence on the other. It is to "bountiful Fortune" (I.ii.178) that Prospero is indebted for the deliverance of his enemies into his hands. Having described to Miranda his fall from fortune (I.ii.1-151),

meaning, within the given parameters of the play. Were it not for the fact that Magarey also equates allegory with the Elizabethan doctrine of correspondences (which entitles us to equate the island in *The Tempest* with an island in the Bermudas, with the stage, with the world, with the commonwealth, with Eden also),²⁶ we might emerge from his critique of Nuttall and of *The Tempest* with some misgivings about the usefulness of allegory. As things stand, nevertheless, Magarey, by equating allegory with symbolism, himself inflates allegory into a notion too broad to account for the peculiar "ontological suspension"²⁷ Shakespeare creates in *The Tempest*. What is needed is a concept of allegory suggestive yet *distinctive* enough to elucidate Shakespeare's central concerns in the play.

A Divided Heritage: Allegory in History

A brief examination of allegory's supposed sphere of reference seems to detract from the usefulness of the term. Fletcher designates as allegorical an extraordinarily wide range of literature: everything from chivalric romance to apocalyptic vision to detective story may be considered allegorical.²⁸ This extension of allegory is so broad as virtually to encompass all means of achieving meaning in literature. In Fletcher the term seems to have lost all distinctiveness it may have had; his position approaches Frye's notion that all commentary on literature is allegorical, involving a change of one kind of meaning into another.²⁹

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.116.

²⁷ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.158.

²⁸ Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp.3-4.

²⁹ N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), p.89.

he proceeds to ascribe the approach of his "zenith" (I.ii.181) to the perfectly timed halting of the Wheel of Fortune before his door. One aspect Prospero finds "most strange" (I.ii.178): not the fact of the approach of his zenith but the timing of its approach holds for him the strangeness. Prospero knows that the Wheel of Fortune must disclose his zenith at some time or another, but the moment of that disclosure and hence the reason behind that choice of moment remains a mystery. His adoption of a 'seize the moment' attitude is inevitable: if he neglects to "court" the "influence" of the "most auspicious star" at once, his "fortune/Will ev after droop" (I.ii.182-4). That is all he knows. Whether Prospero conceives of Fortune as smiling but fickle (his description of Fortune as "my dear lady" in I.ii.179 would appear to support this view)²² or whether he recognizes a more constant power behind the dear lady's seeming inconstancy is difficult to determine. His perception of his and Miranda's arrival on the island may assist us in resolving this issue.

Prospero states quite unequivocally that he and Miranda came ashore "By Providence divine" (I.ii.159). He attributes their preservation in part to the *kindness* of Gonzalo (who, paronomasiatically speaking, acts not only 'sympathetically' but 'in accordance with his *kind*, which is human');²³ the "noble Neapolitan" (I.ii.161) provided them with food, fresh water, clothing, and magical works from Prospero's library (I.ii.160-168). But the "divine" element in the attribution is not so readily addressed. "Thank God we came ashore. *How* we did so God alone knows," Prospero seems to intimate. "Gonzalo assisted us by providing necessities out of *human* kindness...." There is an intimation of the divine, but the intimation is left at that; not even Prospero's magic, his nearest pretension to omniscience, can account for their preservation. Later, when the king's

²² See Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.21. n.179.

²³ Shakespeare plays on the word *kind* in V.i.24: Prospero assures Ariel that he (Prospero) will be "kindlier mov'd" than Ariel is.

The traditional starting point for rehabilitative works on allegory seems to be Quintilian's rhetorical definition, that *allegoria* is the alienation of words from meaning.²⁰ As Fletcher puts it, "allegory says one thing and means another".²¹ Allegory has commonly come to be recognized as "the particular method of saying one thing in terms of another in which the two levels of meaning are sustained and in which the two levels correspond in pattern of relationship . . . and details".²² Poststructuralists reinforce the view that allegory operates on parallel levels (the 'literal' level is called the "signifier", the implicit level the "signified"), and assert that allegory bases itself on the disruption of signifier and signified.²³ Disjunction of sign and referent is thus maintained by poststructuralist allegorical criticism.

But the logical endpoint of all such conceptions of allegory is *allegoresis*, the theory that the identification of authentic referents is the proper goal of reading.²⁴ Once the referent has been deciphered - once the 'meaning' of the allegorical term has been gleaned - the sign is no longer important, and can safely be discarded. To see how *allegory* for this reason came to be supplanted by the symbol in ontological suggestiveness, we must turn to a consideration of the distinction between allegory and symbol drawn by Coleridge and his German contemporaries in the Romantic Period, a distinction which was to have far-reaching conse-

²⁰ M.F. Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoris of Quintilian*, ed. and trans. H.E. Butler (The Loeb Classical Library; New York: Putnam, 1922), VIII, vi, 44; quoted in Van Dyke, *op. cit.*, p.25.

²¹ Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p.2.

²² E.D. Leyburn, *Satiric Allegory: Mirror of Man* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p.6.

²³ J. Fineman, "The Structure of Allegorical Desire", in *Allegory and Representation*, ed. S. Greenblatt (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), p.27.

²⁴ Discussed by M. Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp.29-31.

party is assembled before his cell, Prospero assures Alonso that he is that same duke ousted from Milan, "who most *strangely*/Upon this shore...was landed" (V.i.160-161; my italics). Prospero would like to ascribe their safe landing to divine intervention - the assured tone of "By Providence divine" suggests this. His audience in Act V may ascribe the preservation of father and daughter to Prospero's magic, such abundant evidence has it had of that magic's power, but Prospero knows he *doesn't know*, and in the absence of fuller knowledge he hesitates to speculate. With confidence he can promise to explain to the audience before his cell "The strangeness of this business" (V.i.247) because the strangeness is of his own making; he will simply be narrating the list of those his magical accomplishments which have led the shipwrecked parties to the space before his cell. But there remains a profound dubiety surrounding magical endeavour, and Prospero, like every man, must realize that "no man reaches with real power into outerness".²⁴

The first chink in Prospero's armour, then, is limited knowledge; any claim to omniscience is invalidated by his hesitation over whether to accord "Providence divine" full credit for his and Miranda's preservation and his present hold over his enemies.

To nascent, moreover, must be added the charge of cynicism. Rejoice as he does in the love of Ferdinand and Miranda (III.i.93-4), Prospero yet displays a world-weariness that can connote only a cloying surfeit of human intercourse (his devotion to the "liberal Arts" - I.ii.73 - more than twelve years previously suggests a cynicism of some longevity): "So glad of this as they I cannot be,/Who are surpris'd with all" (III.i.92-3) is his jaded remark on observing the lovers' exchange. The suggestion that Prospero is merely stating the obvious - that as a third person he cannot possibly share the gladness of the lovers themselves - must be

²⁴ R.H. West, *Shakespeare and the Outer Mystery* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), p.93.

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³⁰ M.F. Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, ed. and trans. H.E. Butler (The Loeb Classical Library; New York: Putnam, 1922), VIII, vi, 44; quoted in Van Dyke, *op. cit.*, p.25.

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³⁴ Discussed by M. Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp.29-31.

discounted on the strength of its own specious logic; since it would be truisitic purely for Prospero to assert his relative want of gladness, he must, we have to concede, be revealing a deep-seated cynicism - an awareness that the innocent love of two young persons, and of Miranda in particular, may in time be soured by bitter experience of an unloving world. A twelve-year exile on a deserted island has not endeared Prospero to the world that sent him there.

The same world-weary undercurrent is present in Prospero's retort upon Miranda's perception of the king's party. "O brave new world,/That has such people in 't!" (V.i.183-4), proclaims Miranda, to which Prospero replies, "'Tis new to thee" (V.i.184). In one sense he speaks for all humanity exposed naturally to its own kind from an early age; Miranda's case - her solitary upbringing - is exceptional. But her remark provides the perfect opportunity for Prospero to express his cynicism on the tedium of excessive human intercourse, especially the kind of intercourse to which Miranda is now exposed: amongst the king's party, ironically, are two practised usurpers and one would-be usurper, two of whom (Sebastian and Antonio) are guilty, at least in theory, of fratricide and regicide.²⁵ Anyone might be cynical about the 'newness' of a world peopled by such as these. The "falsehood" (I.ii.95) of Prospero's own brother, his (Prospero's) consequent usurpation, and the equally painful knowledge of Sebastian's and Antonio's treachery constitute Prospero's most recent experience of the world; small wonder then that Miranda's innocent perception should evoke in him so bitter a response.²⁶

²⁵ Since Christ does not distinguish between culpability in thought and deed, Sebastian and Antonio would in Christian terms be guilty *per se*: cf. Matthew 5, *passim*.

²⁶ Aldous Huxley's borrowing of Miranda's words for the title of his savagely (*sic*) anti-utopian novel *Brave New World* is not fortuitous: the world is new neither for Huxley nor for Prospero. See A. Huxley, *Brave New World* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1932).

quences for the survival and subsequent development of allegory in the 19th and 20th century.

The Valorization of Symbol over Allegory

The supremacy of symbol over allegory is first asserted among English literary theorists in the writings of Coleridge, but the origins of the ascendancy of symbol and corresponding decline of allegory can be traced to early 18th century Germany. It is, however, to Kant, Goethe (according to whom the romantic revival originated in discussions between himself and Schiller),³⁵ and the Schlegels (Friedrich and August) - the main forces of the German romantic movement proper - that Coleridge is indebted for the foundation of his concept of organic versus mechanistic thinking, with the corresponding dialectical scheme of Imagination versus fancy and symbol versus allegory.

Although Coleridge borrowed much of his material from Germany, a debt he acknowledges in his *Biographia Literaria*,³⁶ he was responsible for organizing a body of material into a unified whole, and the importance of his work lies in this attempt at the unification of seemingly irreconcilable theories and opposites. Thus, although the formula for the organic-mechanistic opposition was translated, in places transliterated, from Schlegel,³⁷ Coleridge developed the plant-machine analogy to the point of extending it to embrace the Imagination-fancy and symbol-allegory dialectics. The development of Coleridge's thought can be traced

³⁵ See C. Gillie, *Longman Companion to English Literature* (London: Longman, 1962), p.753.

³⁶ S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), I, 104: Coleridge's debt is convincingly demonstrated by R. Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism, 1750-1950* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), Vol 2, pp.151-187.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.153.

Shakespeare's use of irony in *The Tempest* indicates a departure from the usual conception of romance. According to Frye's *mythos* schema in "Theory of Myths",²⁷ the romantic mode portrays an idealized world: "in romance heroes are brave, heroines beautiful, villains villainous, and the frustrations, ambiguities, and embarrassments of ordinary life are made little of".²⁸ Whilst we cannot negate the first half of his proposition - brave hero, beautiful heroine, and villainous villain are features of *The Tempest* - we are not certain that, to some extent, "ordinary life" is not what is depicted in the play; certainly the action is fraught with frustration, ambiguity, and embarrassment. There is a movement away from the purely heroic towards the human: the *humanity* of the hero is stressed, and the ideal gives way to the actual.²⁹

The kind of ironic vision expressed in Prospero's "'Tis new to the-" remark finds further expression in the banquet scene in Act III. Prospero is the director of this the second show of the play (the first was his engineering of the storm in I.i), designed to deceive the players. The first act of the show, we observe, is disarmingly pleasant: music begins, a banquet is brought in, and the king's party is invited to eat (III.iii.17: s.d.). Both Alonso and Gonzalo comment on the extraordinary

²⁷ Frye, *op. cit.*, pp.131-239.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.151.

²⁹ In terms of the traditional conception of 'hero', Prospero must be the hero of *The Tempest*. He is certainly the 'principal male character' (*Longman Dictionary of the English Language*, p.687), yet he is to some extent unique among Shakespearean characters in that he seems to be in control of his own destiny. This almost god-like status elevates him above the action of the play; he plays the role as much of director - of the characters' destinies and thus of the entire action - as of actor. Ferdinand might conceivably be mistaken for the hero in terms of Frye's comic structure theory (Frye, *op. cit.*, pp.163-4). Ferdinand's initial desire to find his father is superseded, when he accepts that his father is dead, by his desire to make Miranda his wife. In comedy the obstacles to the hero's desire are usually parental, maintains Frye, often involving a clash of wills of father and son. In *The Tempest* Ferdinand encounters the obstacle to his desire in the form of his father-to-be, Prospero: he can win Miranda's hand only by removing and piling up thousands of logs, since Prospero fears "lest too light winning/make the prize light" (I.ii.454-5).

from the opposition of organicism and mechanicism to the link between organicism and the Imagination, to the opposition of Imagination and fancy to the link between Imagination and symbol, to the opposition of symbol and allegory. Hence we shall be led to consider the demise of allegory and the later resurgence of this mode, which in the minds of many recent theorists has supplanted the symbol in ontological suggestiveness and usefulness.³²

Coleridge's reaction against the empiricism and the mechanical associative theory of his predecessors (Hume, Hartley, Newton, Locke, and their followers)³³ led to his adoption of the organic approach to literature and to life developed by Herder, Goethe, and Schlegel.³⁴ He uses the plant analogy to distinguish organic from mechanical theory. There are, suggests Coleridge, five properties of a plant which together illustrate the principle of organicism he is intent on propounding. In the first place, the plant originates in a *seed*: the "antecedent Power or Principle in the Seed"³⁵ ensures that the whole is primary, the parts (root, stem, leaves, etc.) secondary and derived. In a mechanistic or non-organic body, the whole is merely the sum of its parts; in an organic body the whole is not merely *more than* the sum of its parts, but "prior to the parts".³⁶

Secondly, the plant *grows*. Coleridge's interest is in the process of growth as much as in the finished product - in evolution and extension. (In poetry, the poetic process is as important as the poem on the page;

³² See Van Dyke, Quilligan, Fletcher, *opera citata, passim*.

³³ See M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1958), pp.159ff.

³⁴ See Wellek, *op. cit.*, p.3.

³⁵ S.T. Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* (London: n.p., 1913), pp.40-41: quoted in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p.171.

³⁶ S.T. Coleridge, *Philosophical Lectures* (New York: n.p., 1949), p.196: quoted in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p.171.

beauty of the music (which is "harmony" to Alonso - 1.18, and "Marvellous sweet music" to Gonzalo - 1.19), Gonzalo notices the "gentle" manners of the Shapes (11.32-4) and Alonso their seeming expression of "excellent dumb discourse" (11.37-9), and the credulous Gonzalo allays Alonso's fears about feasting on the food (11.43-9). Had Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio not been the "three men of sin" (III.iii.53) convicted of Prospero's usurpation, the eating might have been allowed to continue. The dancing of the Shapes around the banquet and their invitation to Alonso and company to eat, moreover, suggests the analogy of Holy Communion: the officiators bless the bread and wine²¹ and then invite the communicants to "Draw near and receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ..."²¹

Such benison is not to be extended to "three men of sin", however. The banquet vanishes to the accompaniment of "*Thunder and lightning*" and the clapping of the Harpy's (Ariel's) wings upon the table (III.iii.52: s.d.), for Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio are unworthy to partake of it. The entire spectacle is reminiscent of two biblical temptation scenes - the temptation of Eve with an apple, and the temptation of Christ with bread. Eve succumbed to the serpent's temptation, and was deluded into eating the apple²² (the fruit did not, as the serpent said it would, empower Eve to distinguish good from evil,²³ and thus the substance of the temptation was illusory). Christ resisted the devil's temptation to turn stones into bread²⁴ (the illusory substance of the temptation), and, able to distinguish reality from illusion, avoided the pitfall of sin intended for him. Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio, being sinners, succumb like Eve to temp-

²⁰ See *Liturgy 1975* (Johannesburg: Church of the Province of South Africa, 1975), p.16; and I Corinthians 11:23-26.

²¹ *Liturgy 1975*, p.22.

²² Genesis 3:1-6.

²³ Genesis 3:5.

²⁴ Matthew 4:3-4.

the meaning of the poem is determined by the union of process and product. But this is to anticipate what follows.) Thirdly, the growing plant *assimilates* alien elements - earth, air, light, water - into itself. Applied to the mind, this property suggests that images of sense are simply materials on which the mind feeds, materials which lose their identity on being assimilated into a new whole. There is a connection between "living and life-producing ideas" - ideas of reason and imagination - and "the germinal causes in nature".⁴³ The fourth property of a plant is its ability to evolve spontaneously from *an internal source of energy*. Whereas an artefact has to be made, a plant makes itself. In life, says Coleridge, the unity is produced from within ("*ab intra*"); in a mechanism, from without ("*ab extra*").⁴⁴

This fourth property, however, presents a problem: the very purposefulness of a plant's growth suggests a determinism which, when the theory is linked to the imagination, is irreconcilable with the modifying work of the imagination (whereas the seed is fated to grow into a predestined form, the imagination can have no such deterministic foundation: imagination is defined by freedom from determinism).⁴⁵ The logical conclusion of such a determinism is the fateful concept that artistic creation is chiefly an *unconscious* process of mind, which contradicts Coleridge's notion that Shakespeare, his exemplar of the imaginative poet, wrote everything by design.⁴⁶

⁴³ Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, II, 258-9: quoted in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p.172.

⁴⁴ S.T. Coleridge, *Theory of Life* (London: n.p., 1848), p.42: quoted in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p.172.

⁴⁵ The difficulty is discussed by Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p.173, and by J.A. Appleyard in "Coleridge and Criticism: I. Critical Theory", in *S.T. Coleridge* ("Writers and their Background" series), ed. R.L. Brett (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1971), p.132.

⁴⁶ See Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, pp.173, 201ff.

tation since they fail to perceive the illusory nature of the banquet intended to deceive them. Gonzalo too, ironically, fails to recognize illusion, encouraging Alonso to eat; but being innocent in so far as his kindness towards Prospero and Miranda mitigated his culpability in ousting the magician from Milan, he is in a position to decry the three men's guilt (III.iii.104-6).

The irony of this scene, then, is achieved through the illusory nature of the banquet: the illusion of prosperity (*Prosper*) dupes the three men into accepting at face value what is patently deceptive. It is the knowledge of Prospero's usurpation, the painful realization that his world is populated in part by traitors, that reminds him of the essential earthliness of the human order to which he belongs. The suggestion of cynicism present in the banquet scene is not to find fuller expression until the masque, when the remembrance of Caliban's conspiracy threatens for the only time in the play to unseat Prospero from his throne of self-control.

We have considered Caliban's part in the disruption of the masque in Act V,²⁵ but the implications of the disruption for Prospero must be assessed more fully in the context of the manifestation of his growing cynicism in the play. Prospero has created his third show, the masque, as a betrothal gift for Ferdinand and Miranda, and it is clear from the response of Ferdinand to the performance that the masque is beautiful and magically perfect. "This is a most majestic vision, and/Harmonious charmingly" asserts Ferdinand in the middle of the performance (IV.i.118-119); the splendour of such a spectacle created by "So rare a wonder'd father and a wise/Makes this place Paradise" (IV.i.123-4). The perfection of the masque, however, is illusory; like the banquet scene, the masque cannot be allowed a perfect conclusion. The force of

²⁵ See pp.59-61 above.

The fifth property of a plant is its organic unity: the parts of a plant are intimately related to one another and to the whole. If a leaf is removed from the plant, the leaf dies: the existence of the whole is a necessary condition to the survival of the parts. Moreover, there is a necessary connection between the dependence of parts on the whole and the dependence of the whole on its parts.

It is but a simple step for Coleridge from this final property of a plant, organic unity, to the Imagination, which is "that synthetic and magical power" which "reveals itself in the *balance* or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities" (my italics).³⁷ Organic unity and the Imagination are thus identified: imaginative unity is organic unity. Moreover, since every statement suggests its opposite, and because Coleridge is anxious to demonstrate the unity at the heart of his literary theory, he incorporates organicism's antithesis, mechanism, into his philosophy. This syncretization is invaluable, because it allows Coleridge to distinguish between mechanical and organic works of literature, the former characterized by a contrived aggregation of essentially disparate elements, the latter by an interdependence of parts.

Coleridge's distinction between Imagination and fancy is derived from a combination of the Scottish psychological tradition and the German dialectical tradition.³⁸ The Scottish philosopher Stewart held that fancy constitutes a faculty inferior to Imagination; fancy "proffers sensible materials upon which the imagination operates by its complex powers of 'apprehension', 'abstraction', and 'taste'".³⁹ The fancy, according to Coleridge, is "indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the

³⁷ Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (n.v., n.pag.): quoted in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p.175.

³⁸ See Wellak, *op. cit.*, p.165.

³⁹ D. Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (London: n.p., 1792), pp.475-9: quoted in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p.161.

Prospero's remembrance of Caliban's "foul conspiracy" (IV.i.139) compels the magician to destroy his own spell: there is no place in so beautiful a creation (the masque) for so monstrous a beast as Caliban. As the Garden of Eden could not accommodate a sinful Adam and Eve, the masque cannot accommodate a "born devil" (IV.i.188). Caliban cannot be so easily expelled from Prospero's mind, however, for the imminence of the plot against Prospero's life (IV.i.141-2) makes postponement impossible. The patently less palpable masque must be expelled instead.

The twin themes of Prospero's 'explanation' speech on the disruption of the masque (in which, says Nuttall, "nothing is explained")²⁴ are insubstantiality and transience. Let us investigate the unfolding of these themes through the speech:

You do look, my son, in a mov'd sort,
As if you were dismay'd; be cheerful, sir.
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vex'd;
Bear with my weakness; my old brain is troubled:
Be not disturb'd with my infirmity:
If you be pleas'd, retire into my cell,
And there repose: a turn or two I'll walk,
To still my beating mind. IV.i.146-163

There is at the outset an attempt to reassure with the voice of authority characteristic of the early Prospero appeasing his daughter (I.i.13-15): Prospero's words to Ferdinand, "You do look.../As if you were dismay'd: be cheerful" recall those of Jesus to his disciples on perceiving their dismay: "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid" (Mark 6:50). Prospero's tone bespeaks divine authority. But the intimate "my son" soon

²⁴ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.150.

order of time and space", and receives its materials "from the law of association". Fancy denotes the mere linking of objects and their moral or spiritual significance; it is "passive", merely "mirrorment".⁵¹ Imagination, on the other hand, is the perception of each thing as having a life of its own, and yet being part of the one life (i.e., organic). The imagination "recreates" its elements; it is "synthetic" (see above), "permeative", a "blending, fusing power", an "assimilative power", the "coordinating faculty", "essentially vital", its rules "the very powers of growth and production".⁵² The German dialectical tradition gave Coleridge the notion of balance, the idea that Imagination is the reconciliation of opposites, the power of unification.⁵³ Ultimately, the opposition of Imagination and fancy is akin to the distinction between plant and machine: living Imagination versus mechanical fancy. In the literary sphere this distinction allowed Coleridge to separate wheat from chaff, the products of Imagination (the literature of Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, and Wordsworth) from the products of fancy (the works of Jonson, Pope, Beaumont, and Fletcher).⁵³

Thence we proceed to the identification, in Coleridge's theory, of Imagination and symbol. In *The Statesman's Manual* (V, 35-7) Coleridge argues that the symbol is the characteristic product of the Imagination. A symbol

is characterized by a transluence of the Special in the Individual or of the General in the Especial or of the Universal in the General. Above all by the transluence of the Eternal through and in the Temporal. It always partakes of the Reality which it renders

⁵¹ Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, I, 73, 93; quoted in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, pp.168-9.

⁵² Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, I, 163, 202; II, 12-13, 19, 65, 123, 264n.; quoted in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p.169.

⁵³ See Wellek, *op. cit.*, pp.163-5.

⁵⁴ Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p.176.

gives way to the polite "sir": Prospero distances himself from Ferdinand. This distancing is followed immediately by the steely "Our revels now are ended"; there is a sense of startling transition from the illusion of the masque to the sobering reality of a world without illusion - a movement from festivity (signified in particular by the dance of the reapers and nymphs) to solemnity.

There follows a logical exposition of the reasons for the ending of the revels. The actors, Ferdinand is reminded, are "all spirits": this much we know from IV.i.120-122, in which Prospero alluded to their magical emanation. There may be a touch of paternalism in Prospero's "As I foretold you", which is unnecessarily patronizing unless Ferdinand has actually forgotten the lesson; certainly Prospero is reminding *himself* of the insubstantiality of the actors, and since his magic is contingent upon spiritual access, his words foreshadow the sense of deep regret with which he abjures his magic in Act V.

The actor-spirits, moreover, have "melted into air"; the cry of insubstantiality is poignantly brought home in the repetitive "into thin air". With this echo Prospero's sense of dejection grows: if actor-spirits melt "into thin air", then every inanimate object occupying the air ("it inherit" - l.154) will fade away, leaving no record of existence. The displacement from the ideal to the actual, we notice, is gradual: the transition is from the fantastic "cloud-capp'd towers" to the romantic "gorgeous palaces" to the more palpable "solemn temples" and "great globe" (not only the earth, paronomastically, but the Globe Theatre so vital a part of Shakespeare's world).²⁷ And all the time the dissolution is suggested by the insubstantiality of the "pageant" (the masque) recently witnessed: using simile, Prospero compares the fading of towers, palaces, temples,

²⁷ This observation lends credence to the idea that Prospero's abjuration of his magic signifies Shakespeare's farewell to the theatre.

intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that Unity, of which it is the representative.**

We might represent Coleridge's notion of transluence diagrammatically as follows:

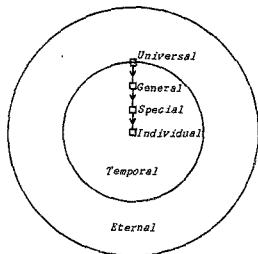


Figure 2. Coleridge's Notion of "Transluence".

Our time-bound existence is represented by the inner circle, wherein transluence is diffused from Universal into General into Special into Individual; most importantly, maintains Coleridge, from the Eternal (represented by the outer circle) "through and in the Temporal" (the Universal, General, Special, and Individual).

The symbol, moreover, has a synecdochic structure: the symbol is a part of the totality it represents - it "always partakes of the reality which

** S.T. Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual*: reprinted in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Lay Sermons*, ed. R.J. White (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p.30.

and globe to the fading of the masque ("like the baseless fabric of this vision"; "like this insubstantial pageant faded"). The aerial imagery introduced at the beginning of his momentous sentence (11.148-156) - "air...into thin air" - is sustained through "cloud-capp'd towers... it [the air] inherit" to the end: "not a rack" will remain. Here "rack" denotes not only a 'framework' (which strengthens the analogy between the fading of towers, *et cetera*, and the fading of the masque, the "fabric" - *framework* - of which is "baseless") but a "wind-driven mass of high often broken clouds".²⁸

If actor-spirits and inanimate objects are to dissolve, the logic unfolds, so too are the animate beings which inhabit the "globe". "We" ourselves, declares Prospero, are made of the same stuff as the most elusive and illusory of phenomena, "dreams". Creation more insubstantial than a dream one cannot conceive of; yet Prospero appears to accord corporeality the substantiality of a mere figment of the imagination.

The concomitant to insubstantiality is transience. We exist substantially neither in space nor in time: "our little life/Is rounded with a sleep", asserts Prospero. Both Wright's suggestion that "rounded" means "crowned" and Kermode's that it abbreviates "rounded off"²⁹ are plausible: the general sense is that some form of sleep - perpetual sleep, oblivion, a state of nothingness - follows life. The bleakness of Prospero's vision recalls the famous *Isaiah* passage on life's transitoriness:

All flesh *is* grass, - and all the goodness thereof *is* as the
flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because
the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: - surely the people *is*
grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our
God shall stand for ever. Isaiah 40:6-8

²⁸ *Longman Dictionary of the English Language*, p.1219.

²⁹ See Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.104 n.158.

it renders intelligible". In *Appendix C of The Statesman's Manual* Coleridge holds: "by a symbol I mean, not a metaphor or allegory or any other figure of speech or form of fancy, but an actual and essential part of that, the whole of which it represents" (my italics).⁵⁵ As in Nuttall we detected a movement away from rhetorical towards ontological perception, so in Coleridge we find a similar shift: each theorist in his own way asserts the supremacy of an organic over a mechanical conception of universal forces, Nuttall by conflating allegorical correspondence in this world and an identical correspondence in a world beyond, Coleridge by emphasizing the synechdochic structure of the symbol, always a part of the totality it represents. Both Nuttall and Coleridge assert the priority of a holistic *Weltanschauung* over the lifeless conception afforded by the "figure of speech" notion of allegory, which for Nuttall is a "petrifying formula", for Coleridge a "form of fancy". Both hold to a dualistic notion of the universe which in Coleridge takes on a synechdochic form. With symbol, maintains Coleridge, there is no disjunction of the constituents: Universal, General, Special, and Individual are united in an organic whole, and any one may at any time proclaim the whole of which it is a living part.

In contrast, declares Coleridge, allegory is

but a translation of abstract notions into a picture-language which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the senses; the principal being more worthless even than its phantom proxy, both alike unsubstantial, and the former shapeless to boot.⁵⁶

The chief accusation levelled against allegory is that of insubstantiality: the source of the allegory, the referent, is "abstract", and the sign itself, the picture language into which the source is translated, is itself an "abstraction". The referent ("principal")

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.30.

Prospero's sentiment bespeaks a kind of stoical indifference to the vicissitudinal nature of life: it matters little whether one's days are composed of "gorgeous palaces" or "solemn temples", festivities or solemnities, Calibans or Mirandas - all will pass away with an inevitability not to be balked.

The anxiety Prospero feels at the prospect of having to counter the surge of Calibanish earthliness within him is voiced with some rancour towards the end of his speech. Self-control prevails, we observe: Prospero is careful to display courtesy towards Ferdinand, addressing him again as "Sir" (1.156). Advancement in years is offered as an excuse for Prospero's present behaviour: his "old brain is troubled", and his inability to conceal his distress is designated a "weakness", an "infirmity" - a feebleness born of old age. (The youthfulness of Ferdinand and Miranda must heighten the sense of Prospero's supposed decline.) Yet age is not the crux: the reassuringly authoritative tone of "Bear with my weakness.../Be not disturb'd" (the imperatives are intended to placate) does not belie the deep-seated resentment Prospero bears not only Caliban for his part in the present conspiracy against him (Prospero), but Antonio, whose treachery led to Prospero's expulsion from Milan. A "beating mind" is the consequence of twelve years' pulsating with the memory of his usurpation and the incorrigibility of Caliban, both painful reminders of temporality. Prospero's anxiety derives from his remembrance of things past and his consequent prognostication of a future plagued with Antonios and Calibans from which the only escape is the "sleep" of death.

Prospero's recovery from his "infirmity" is swift; his "beating mind" is stilled not only by his walking "a turn or two", as he intimated it might be, but by his addressing promptly the problem of how to ensnare Caliban and his confederates. Gone is every trace of irresolution his feebleness appeared to have produced; his determination to thwart Caliban is his

is not only "unsubstantial", moreover, but "shapeless"; small wonder then that the allegorical sign, the source's representative ("proxy"), should be "unsubstantial". Coleridge's choice of "phantom" to describe the sign is singularly apt, resonating with its own peculiar logic: the allegorical sign is not only "an abstraction from objects of the senses" (my italics) but, being phantomlike, is "apparent to the senses" only.⁵⁷ An aura of unreality therefore surrounds the sign.

So much for the denotational meaning of Coleridge's perception of allegory. When we come to assess the implications of his theory, however, we discover certain inadequacies. What Coleridge values in the symbol and fails to detect in allegory is a concreteness apparently indispensable to the formulation of an organic, unified concept of the universe. But insubstantiality of the allegorical source need not imply insubstantiality of the sign, nor need both referent and sign be material for continuousness of the two to exist. If, for example, we decide to depict the "abstract notior." *Love* by *heart*, using the "picture-language" emblem ♡ to signify the seat of the emotion we want to depict, we are guilty on one level of abstracting "from objects of the senses"; but on another level, since *heart* is an actual, material object that exists (albeit in manifold forms) in the 'real' world, it requires only an imaginative act, no more imaginative an act than is required to conceptualize the operation of a symbol, to conceive of the continuousness of *love* and *heart*. Nor need one discard the sign, *heart*, once the referent, *Love*, has been deciphered; the kind of 'for *heart* read *love*' approach epitomized by Gadamer⁵⁸ cannot really be true of the way one reads a text. The meaning of the sign is not necessarily exhausted once the referent has been identified. I cannot endorse too strongly Van Dyke's pertinent comment: "If a text says one thing it also means that thing: we cannot

⁵⁷ The primary meaning of "phantom": see *Longman Dictionary of the English Language* (Essex: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1984), p.1100.

⁵⁸ See pp.7-8 above.

separate speech from meaning. Thus if it says one thing and means another, it both says and means two things. And unless we are linguistic schizophrenics or are willing to ignore half of what we read, a text that says and means two things must say and mean one complex thing."⁵⁰ More cogent an argument for the 'organicism' of allegory one cannot find.

Coleridge himself, moreover, reveals a certain ambivalence towards allegory. On the level of language, he maintains, allegory can "combine [the parts] to form a consistent whole".⁵¹ This approximation towards organic unity suggests a conflation of ideas and hints at the difficulty of maintaining rigorous distinctions between the terms *symbol* and *allegory*. Nor does Coleridge entirely reject the charms of allegory's practical application: he records his appreciation of Spenser and Bunyan,⁵² and considers *Don Quixote* a "substantial living allegory"⁵³ (my italicization is intended to illustrate the organic, non-mechanistic - *symbolic* - nature of Coleridge's description of allegory here).

The nice distinction Coleridge appears to have drawn between *allegory* and *symbol* is not easily sustained either theoretically or in practice. By appraising de Man's critique of Coleridge's theory of symbol vis-a-vis allegory⁵⁴ we shall come to see how Coleridge's valorization of symbol over allegory can be falsified to the point where allegory emerges as the device best suited to describing the kind of holistic universe Coleridge posits.

⁵⁰ Van Dyke, *op. cit.*, p.42.

⁵¹ S.T. Coleridge, *Miscellaneous Criticism* (London: n.p., 1936), p.30: quoted in Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p.19.

⁵² Coleridge, *Miscellaneous Criticism*, p.150: quoted in Wellek, *op. cit.*, p.175.

⁵³ Coleridge, *Miscellaneous Criticism*, p.102: quoted in Wellek, *op. cit.*, p.175.

⁵⁴ De Man, *op. cit.*

*The Triumph of Allegorical Diction in Romanticism*⁴⁴

De Man's chief concern in *"The Rhetoric of Temporality"*⁴⁵ is to demonstrate that the subject-object dialectic adopted by Coleridge does not designate the main romantic experience. In a consideration of Coleridge's definition of symbol and distinction between symbol and allegory, which provides the foundation for later discussion, de Man questions the validity of Coleridge's notion of "translucence", claiming that Coleridge destroys his own argument for the valorization of symbol over allegory by introducing this term, which detracts from the very point upon which his distinction between symbol and allegory depends: the material substantiality of the sign. The consequence of using the term "translucence" to describe the manifestation of the Eternal in the Temporal is to place the source in the transcendental realm: the material substantiality of the symbol is thereby dissolved, and becomes "a mere reflection of a more original unity that does not exist in the material world".⁴⁶ Because Coleridge's notion of translucence implies a diffusion from the Universal to the Particular, the Individual becomes a pale reflection of the transcendental source, which is now considered to be more important than the relationship between reflection and source (the unity which ought to designate symbol). Arguments for the organicism of symbol and the mechanicism of allegory pale into relative insignificance in the light of the priority assigned to their common reference to a transcendental source.

De Man's criticism of the "translucence" idea is that ontological priority is shifted from sign to referent: there is a movement away from the In-

⁴⁴ The extreme conciseness of de Man's argument necessitates a fairly strict adherence to the language in which his theory is couched; when we come to assess the practicability of his thesis, the usefulness of so faithful an adherence will become apparent.

⁴⁵ De Man, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[Prospero's] purpose doth extend/Not a frown further" (V.i.29-30): Prospero's "virtue" has conquered his "vengeance" (V.i.28), and magic, which has helped him to achieve this mastery, has run its course. Caliban remains incorrigible (though he promises to "seek for grace" - V.i.295), and Antonio remains unrepentant: magic has no power to change men's hearts - at most it is a catalyst in the process of reform. It is the knowledge that magical power merely masquerades as omnipotence, that magic is illusory, that leads Prospero to abjure it.

The speech in which Prospero abjures his magic is delicately poised; a perfect balance is maintained between nostalgia for past magical accomplishments and the roughness of a magic that necessitates its renunciation.

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves;
And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
When he comes back; you demi-puppets that
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid -
Weak masters though ye be - I have bedimm'd
The noontide sun, call'd forth the moutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault
Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt; the strong-bas'd promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up
The pine and cedar: graves at my command
Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth
By my so potent Art. But this rough magic
I here abjure; and, when I have requir'd
Some heavenly music, - which even now I do, -
To work mine end upon their senses, that
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
Bury it with fadoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.

V.i.33-57

Two thirds of the speech, we observe, is devoted to apostrophization - or invocation -⁴¹ of the "Weak masters" Prospero has employed to perform

⁴¹ Prospero would be invoking more than apostrophizing, since the spir-

dividual, grounded in the Temporal, towards the Universal and the Eternal, and the symbol's function consequently becomes deictic rather than unifying. The force of de Man's argument, however, lies in his apparent demonstration of the blurring of the distinction between symbol and allegory, a distinction Coleridge is anxious to delineate; for if both symbol and allegory play down the importance of the signifier's material existence, there is no reason to elevate symbol above allegory. Both terms simply refer in a very similar way to a transcendental source.

What de Man impales in Coleridge's theory, however, may simply be Coleridge's semantic predilection for a term that designates diffusion from one category to another, and yet is intended to retain the imaginative unity suggested by the interdependence of categories. The concept "translucence" is defined as "the action of shining through"⁴⁷ (from the Latin *translucere*, to shine across or through; to be transparent);⁴⁸ in Coleridgean language, then, the Universal shines through the General through the Special through the Individual. The Individual is not merely a pale reflection of the Universal, since translucence suggests an *unimpeded flow* across categories, a transparency ensuring the continuousness of Universal, General, Special, and Individual. Perhaps de Man's objection is more to the direction of the flow suggested by the notion of translucence; a diffusion of General in Universal, Special in General, and Individual in Special would reverse the direction and maintain ontological priority in the Temporal, the domain to which de Man appears to confine the romantic experience - as I shall proceed to demonstrate. Translucence need not preclude synthesis; nevertheless, it is the falseness of the idea that Coleridge's synthesis of subject and object describes the romantic moment which de Man wants to expose.

⁴⁷ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.2347.

⁴⁸ C.T. Lewis & C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.1692.

his magical feats (ll.33-40) and to the listing of those accomplishments (ll.44-50). Though Shakespeare's debt to a passage in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (VII:197-209)⁴² and to Golding's translation of that passage⁴³ for some of the substance of Prospero's speech is generally acknowledged,⁴⁴ Shakespeare embellishes the original through the poignancy of his imagery. Ovid's "*ripis mirantibus omnes/in fontes rediere suos*" ("the streams have run back to their fountain-heads, while the banks wondered") becomes in Shakespeare "And ye that on the sands with printless foot/Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him/When he comes back". Prospero's poetry resonates with imaginative vitality: the images "printless foot" and "chase the ebbing Neptune" far outstrip in power Golding's pallid translation ("Through helpe of whom [the crooked bankes wuch wondring at/the thing]/I have compelled streames to run cleane backward to their/spring").⁴⁵ The poignancy of Prospero's imagery - and herein lies the purpose of the digressive comparison - suggests a degree of nostalgia: he will be loathe to forsake the spirit world he has grown to love. Entirely original are Prospero's invocation of the "demi-puppets" who make "green sour ringlets" ("Fairy rings")⁴⁶ and his allusion to the making of "midnight mushrooms"; his wistful depiction of the spirit world bespeaks a piquant affection for the magical sphere.

Prospero's list of magical accomplishments is related with the same piquancy. The great power suggested by the calling forth of the winds (1.42), the setting of war (1.43), the giving of fire (1.45), the riving

its so inseparable from his magic need to be summoned in full force in preparation for the abjuration to follow.

⁴² P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses*, trans. F.J. Miller (The Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann, 1916), pp.356-7.

⁴³ See Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.148.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.147-150.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.148.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.113 n.37.

Having, as he feels, demonstrated Coleridge's own confusion in attempting to distinguish between seemingly slippery terms (*symbol* and *allegory*) and the consequent falseness of the valorization of symbol at the expense of allegory, de Man proceeds to challenge the idea that the subject-object dialectic lies supposedly at the heart of romantic thought. The central problem with the dialectic emerges from his analysis of both poetical praxis and theory. He draws on Wimsatt's demonstration⁶⁹ that Coleridge's poetry reveals a greater specificity of detail than the poetry of his predecessors; specificity of detail indicates greater faithfulness of observation of the natural object. Yet, paradoxically, there is a greater inwardness in Coleridge's poetry, evidence of experiences of memory and reverie that arise out of regions of subjectivity deeper than those of his predecessors.⁷⁰ The problem with the paradox is the accommodation of this greater depth with a closer attention to surfaces.

De Man shows farther how, in the romantic period, terms like "affinity" and "sympathy" tend to supersede "analogy" in describing the "formal resemblance between entities" in the subject-object dialectic.⁷¹ The subjectivity of the new terms suggests a shift from the "congruence between two poles" (subject and object) to the "ontological priority of the one over the other": "affinity" and "sympathy" imply a relationship between subjects, not between subject and object. Thus the relationship with nature is replaced by a new relationship, ultimately, as de Man sees it, of the subject with itself.⁷² (Coleridge himself seems to equate object with subject: the object *becomes* the subject if complete identifi-

⁶⁹ W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., "The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery", in *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington: n.p., 1954), pp.106-110: see de Man, *op. cit.*, p.178.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ De Man, *op. cit.*, p.180.

⁷² *Ibid.*

of Jove's oak (1.45), the shaking of the promontory (11.46-7), the plucking up of the trees (11.47-8), and the raising of the dead (11.48-9) intoxicates with its seductiveness: his "Art" is indeed so "potent", his attachment to it so strong, that abjuration seems attainable only through supreme sacrifice. Prospero's desire to retain magical potency, to aspire to a kind of godhood through the possession of god-like powers, reaches its acme in V.i.50: the words "my so potent Art" epitomize the degree of magical proficiency he has achieved.

Yet renunciation of magical power is ineluctable, and in the next breath Prospero declares his intention to abjure his "rough magic" (1.50). His magic is "potent", but it is "rough": he must renounce his Art not only because it is illusory, as I have already suggested,⁴⁷ not only because it has achieved its purpose, but because it is "rough". Prospero's magic has been used to manipulate "material forces", as Kermode expresses it;⁴⁸ such magic does not become a mage who must ascend to the next stage of learning, a more refined stage of enlightenment, if he is to attain the ultimate aim of the theurgist - oneness with the gods.⁴⁹ Prospero finds himself in a dilemma: he must either ascend to the next stage of learning and achieve that union with the gods wherefrom there is no return to the world of humanity, or descend farther to the natural world to apply the wisdom he has acquired, as urged by the Renaissance magician John Dee.⁵⁰ Control of the natural world has largely been realized by Prospero; his "rough magic" has achieved that for which he has laboured for the past twelve years - amongst which, chiefly, is the penitence of his enemies (V.i.28). Caliban and Antonio remain unaffected by magic, but their incorrigibility does not signify magic's failure. More importantly

⁴⁷ See pp.83, 89 above.

⁴⁸ Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.115 n.50.

⁴⁹ See W.C. Curry, *op. cit.*, pp.182, 196.

⁵⁰ See B. Traister, *op. cit.*, p.143.

cation of the two is to take place.)⁷³ Again the problem arises: how do we equate this shift from object to subject with the great importance which is, in the actual poetry of the romantics, ascribed to the presence of nature?

Hence de Man is driven to pose the crucial question: "Is romanticism a subjective idealism....Or is it instead a return to a certain form of naturalism...?"⁷⁴ Is priority located in the natural world, as much of the poetry would suggest, or in the self, as both Wordsworth and Coleridge seem to indicate in their literary theory?⁷⁵ Or is there simply a discrepancy between theory and practice?

De Man's solution to the problem takes for its starting point two opposing views of the subject-object dialectic. Coleridge, he maintains, sees the dialectic essentially in *spatial* terms (Coleridge speaks of the infinite self in relation to the "necessarily finite" character of natural objects),⁷⁶ while Wordsworth sees the same dialectic in *temporal* terms. De Man quotes lines from *The Prelude* -

These forests unapproachable by death
That shall endure as long as man endures...;

and

The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed
The stationary blast of waterfalls...

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.182.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ See de Man, *op. cit.*, pp.180, 182.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.181.

Prospero has effected through magic the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda, union with Alonso, and restoration of his dukedom; there is no need for him to aspire to the next stage of the mage's enlightenment, particularly since oneness with the gods would preclude enjoyment of that for which he has laboured.

It has been suggested, with some authority,¹¹ that Prospero abjures his magic because the last of his stated accomplishments, the raising of spirits from the dead, constitutes the roughness of the magic necessitating its renunciation - that Prospero renounces his Art, finally, because of the *guilt* he experiences upon remembering this feat. Raising spirits from the dead is tantamount to usurping divine prerogative; precluded, perhaps, from aspiring to greater magical heights because of his infringement, Prospero must necessarily abjure his magic and descend to the natural world. Certainly the inclusion of his final feat, the opening of the graves, seems incongruous in the context of the preceding list of accomplishments, all of which Prospero has performed; the only precedent for its inclusion appears to be Shakespeare's indebtedness to Ovid, whose *Hedea* passage contains the words "*manesque exire sepulcris*" ("[I bid] the ghosts to come forth from their tombs").¹² The contention that the raising of spirits from the dead signifies the importation of 'black' magic into the essentially 'white' magic of the theurgist Prospero¹³ may be dismissed on the grounds that Shakespeare's borrowings from Ovid are all significantly rephrased and that "[*manes*]" suggests good as opposed to evil spirits (from the root of *manes*: *manus* - 'good').¹⁴ (In Renaissance magic, moreover, the raising of spirits from the dead performed by Christ and

¹¹ See R.H. West, *Shakespeare and the Outer Mystery*, pp.91ff.

¹² Naso, *op. cit.*, pp.356-7.

¹³ See West, *Shakespeare and the Outer Mystery*, p.92.

¹⁴ Lewis & Short, *op. cit.*, p.1108.

- which evoke a "striking temporal paradox". This "eternity in motion" is applicable to nature, but not to a changeable self. The self is tempted, therefore, to transfer the temporal stability it lacks from nature to itself; nature is thereby reduced to the human, temporal, level, but remains eternal, impervious to the ravages of time.⁷⁷

Wordsworth, like Coleridge, is guilty of shifting the subject-object dialectic from the sphere of nature to the mind, of creating an inter-subjective tension. (Elsewhere Wordsworth says: "I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature").⁷⁸ However, it is not this transference masquerading as immanence which interests de Man so much as Wordsworth's conception of temporal disjunction.

In order to exemplify the way in which this temporal disjunction operates, de Man shifts our attention to French literature, to Rousseau's novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. On the allegorical level, Julie's garden in Rousseau's novel is the landscape representative of the 'beautiful soul'. But a spatial conception of the subject-object dialectic has no validity here, for the garden, though it may appear to be natural, is actually the result of extreme artifice. Julie herself says: "Il est vrai que la nature a tout fait [dans ce jardin] mais sous ma direction, et il n'y a rien là que je n'aie ordonné" ("It is true that nature has made everything [in this garden] only under my direction, and there is nothing there which I have not ordered").⁷⁹ De Man illustrates Rousseau's reliance on the *Roman*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ See E. Wasserman, "The English Romantics, The Grounds of Knowledge", in *Essays in Romanticism*, Autumn, 1964, 4: 26; quoted in de Man, *op. cit.*, p.180.

⁷⁹ J.J. Rousseau, *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, pt.4, letter 17, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. E. Gagnebin & M. Raymond (Paris: n.p., 1961), p.472; quoted in de Man, *op. cit.*, p.186; my translation.

St Peter are deemed "divine magic".)⁵⁵ Rather we may accept Kermode's more holistic reading of the final feat's inclusion, which emphasizes the dramatic function of the entire record of Prospero's magical accomplishments: Prospero musters every resource he possibly can to evoke the full power of his magic before abjuring it,⁵⁶ and no resource suggests more convincingly the potency of his magic than the raising of spirits from the dead.

The notion that magic can be renounced once its usefulness has been exhausted is strongly asserted in V.i.51-7, where the syntax indicates a causal relationship between the manipulation of the senses of Alonso *et al* and the abjuration of magic. The idea was first mooted in V.i.31-2: "My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore,/And they shall be themselves." The sense of the present passage is this: "When I have procured music 'To work mine end upon their senses' I'll renounce magic", as though all Prospero's magic has had this one end in view - the restoration of the characters' senses in the restoration scene to follow. (Gonzalo asserts later in his *felix culpa* speech that all have found themselves "When no man was his own" - V.i.213, as though in fulfilment of Prospero's prophecy.) The abjuration of magic, moreover, is to be final: "deeper than did ever plummet sound" (my italics) Prospero will "drown [his] book" (V.i.56-7). It is only fitting that his book, the *sine qua non* of his magic, should be buried in the sea from which the supposedly drowned castaways were resurrected. Prospero has decided to renounce his magic conclusively and irrevocably.

The abjuration of magic is not, however, achieved with the facility the above interpretation may suggest. Prospero's choice to remain human and renounce the seductiveness of union with the gods is complicated by time,

⁵⁵ West, *Shakespeare and the Outer Mystery*, p.92.

⁵⁶ Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.115 n.48.

de la Rose and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* for the description of the garden in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*; Rousseau's details are borrowed quite deliberately from his medieval source - Guillaume de Lorris - who employs the traditional *topos* of the erotic garden. Rousseau's language, moreover, is purely figural, not based on perception or on the nature-consciousness dialectic. However, there is an element in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* not found in the *Roman de la Rose* but present in *Robinson Crusoe*: the postlapsarian Crusoe has to cultivate his land into full abundance, and the same emphasis on toil characterizes Julie's garden. Defoe's gardens are stylized, serving "primarily a redemptive, ethical function"; similarly, a moral climate is established in Rousseau's depiction of Julie's garden: an "ethic of renunciation" is created.³⁰

The essence of de Man's thesis begins to emerge: the romantic experience is defined not by the relationship of subject and object - in Rousseau, self and garden - but by the relationship of object with a previous object - in Rousseau, the reliance on de Lorris and Defoe for the description of the garden. In allegorical terminology, the emphasis for de Man is shifted from the relationship of sign and referent, which now assumes a secondary importance, to that of sign with a *previous* sign from which it is separated in time.³¹

De Man now reverts to the English romantics, and focuses our attention on Wordsworth. The role of the geographical *place* assumes a new importance in Wordsworth, since the place can be a *typical* scene or object, and can include a meaning not prescribed by the *literal* horizon of the place. Wordsworth too, then, acknowledges the possibility of a disjunction of the poem's *locus* and the *actual* place upon which the *locus* is based. The presence of a river, for example, in a poem by Wordsworth

³⁰ De Man, *op. cit.*, p.187.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.190.

the omnipresent constitutive factor in all his deliberations. The success of his magical enterprise depends upon the proper utilization of time,⁵⁷ but upon relinquishing his magical powers he will remain bound by the constraints of time: there is a sense of urgency in his preoccupation with completing the business at hand within a certain time (cf. V.i.1-6), yet as man stripped of magical power a third of his entire life, if we take him at his word, will be spent in contemplation of his essentially *temporal* existence (in Milan, "Every third thought shall be [his] grave" - V.i.311). This paradox captures the irony of Prospero's predicament: by hastening the denouement he is hastening also that period of time when, no longer in a position to have access to magic, he can only wait for death (the "grave"). Magic's power appears god-like and creates the illusion of life everlasting; but both as magus and as man Prospero is subject to the temporal influences which define his human condition. However strong his desire to achieve oneness with the gods, the reality of his situation compels acceptance of finitude: he can only abjure his magic and, however reluctantly, accept parity with the human beings, good and evil, who populate his world.

In the Epilogue Prospero appears largely to have come to terms with his finite situation, so much so that several critics attribute the speech not to Prospero but to some well-meaning misguided theatrical interpolator. In the Variorum edition of *The Tempest*⁵⁸ Furness cites the view of one such critic, Grant White, who maintains that, as anyone familiar with the history of English drama will know, Prologues and Epilogues are usually written by persons other than the playwrights themselves.⁵⁹ This conclusion is drawn as much on the strength of inferior versification as on historical precedent: Shakespeare could not have

⁵⁷ See Traister, *op. cit.*, p.135.

⁵⁸ W. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. N.H. Furness (The Variorum Shakespeare; Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1892), p.267.

⁵⁹ Quoted in The Variorum Shakespeare, pp.267-8.

denotes not necessarily a *literal* river but the spirit of a river whose *topos* is an actual river recalled from previous experience and conjured up by the imagination.⁸²

Romantic poets often made use, then, of a "traditional and inherited typology"⁸³ for the specific locale; but because the *locus* is only a *type* of the original *locus* - there must necessarily be a discrepancy between the actual place and the place called up by the poet's imagination, since the two places are temporally disjoined - the poet had to "renounce the seductiveness and the poetic resources of a symbolical diction" often after a "long and difficult inner struggle". The assertion of a symbolical diction would therefore have been possible only had the romantic poet not relied on an "inherited typology" - if the place or object he was describing were literally before his eyes and not recalled from memory or borrowed from literature (both of which would constitute a disjunction in time of sign and previous sign). Both the ethical conflict in Rousseau and the allegorization of the geographical site in Wordsworth denote the presence of allegory, which always, maintains de Man, corresponds to "the unveiling of an authentically temporal destiny."⁸⁴ Try as he might to assert the validity of a symbolical diction - the kind of organic conception of universal forces Coleridge advocated - the poet had to accept the transience of such a vision and the painful realization of his forever temporal existence, the possibility of escape from which never existed. The romantic experience is grounded in the temporal domain - the painful realization to which the poet had to come notwithstanding all attempts to assert the contrary. De Man epitomizes the romantic experience as a conflict between "a conception of the self seen in its authentically

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp.189-190.

⁸³ M.H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric", in *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays presented to F.A. Pottle*, ed. F.W. Hillis & H. Bloom (New York: n.p., 1965), p.356: quoted in de Man, *op. cit.*, p.190.

⁸⁴ De Man, *op. cit.*, p.190.

written "*Which is most faint*" (Epilogue, 3) and "*Which was to please*" (Epilogue, 13) - such "clumsy verse" is inconsonant both poetically and referentially with the poetry of the play which precedes it. White's sentiment merits an extensive quotation:

It is not necessary to dwell upon the poor and commonplace thoughts of which the Epilogue is entirely composed, though these confirm the judgement which the miserably and eminently un-Shakespearean rhythm compels.... Will anyone familiar with his works believe, that after writing such a play, he would write an Epilogue in which the feeble, trite ideas are confined within stiff couplets, or else carried into the middle of a third line, and there left in helpless consternation, like an awkward booby who suddenly finds himself alone in the centre of a ballroom? [The speaker's request for applause to free him from his "bands" (1.9) and prayers to save him from despair] puts the commentators to the trouble of [an explanation].⁸⁸

The Epilogue can stand on its own beside such unprecedented contumely:

*How my charms are all o'erthrown,
And that strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint: now, 'tis true,
I must be here confin'd by you,
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
Since I have my dukedom got,
And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
In this bare island by your spell;
But release me from my bands
With the help of your good hands:
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please. Now I want
Spirits to enforce, Art to enchant;
And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relief'd by prayer,
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
Let your indulgence set me free.*

The "feeble, trite ideas" White disparages are necessary to the comic structure of the drama. On one level the Epilogue can be read as a traditional request for applause. "With the help of your good hands" echoes

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* Cf. Stoll's similar view, "One hopes that these sorry lines are not by Shakespeare..." (*P.M.L.A.*, n.d., XLVII: 704); quoted in Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.134.

temporal predicament and a defensive strategy that tries to hide from this negative self-knowledge".⁵⁵ The "defensive strategy" of the romantic poet involved an attempt to conceal even from himself the reality of his temporality by wilfully asserting his place in a holistic universe delineated by the symbolical diction posited by Coleridge. The attempt was futile, and the poet knew it; but the desire to escape certain fate drove him to assert that link with the Eternal he knew rather to be momentary or not to exist at all.

The distinction between symbol and allegory can now be drawn by de Man with greater accuracy. With symbol, there is the possibility of identification: image can coincide with substance, and the relationship is one of simultaneity, which is essentially a *spatial* conception. With allegory, there is a relationship between signs in which reference to their meanings is of secondary importance. The allegorical sign refers to a previous sign; meaning consists only in the repetition of the previous sign, with which the sign can never coincide, being separated from it in time. The consequence of this *temporal* disjunction of signs is the self's recognition of its eternally temporal dislocation from the non-self, the discountenancing of the possibility of asserting its link with the eternal.⁵⁶

This somewhat laboured analysis of de Man's argument may seem to have little bearing on the evolution of a concept of allegory destined for application to a Shakespearean text. However, the implications of the use of the theory of allegory outlined above need not describe the romantic experience only. If the tension between awareness of temporal destiny and a reluctance to come to terms with that awareness does indeed characterize the romantic moment, as de Man appears to suggest, it seems

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.190-191.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

the closing appeal of Roman comedians to the audience: Plautus ends his comedies with, for example, "*nobis clare adplaudite*" ("applaud us distinctly") and "*nunc, spectatores, clare plaudite*" ("now, spectators, applaud distinctly").⁴¹ Prospero has stepped out of the world of *The Tempest* having abjured his magic within that world. More significantly, however, the play has ended, and the erstwhile magician and actor finds himself adrift in a theatrical no-man's-land between island and mainland, between illusion and reality; hence his plea to be "sent to Naples". Prospero may have appeared omnipotent within the confines of the play, but stripped of all magical power (his own strength is "most faint") his only recourse is to the audience, which, ironically, now has the power to decide his fate. Magical potency has been transferred from Prospero to audience: the former magician is now under the "spell" of those who have until recently themselves been spellbound by his performance in the play. Shakespeare's ingenious conflation of magician and actor in *The Tempest* turns the traditional request for applause into an ironic appeal for release: just as in the world of the play a spell would be marred by the interference of noise (cf. Prospero's injunction to Ferdinand to remain silent during the performance of the masque - IV.1.126-7), so now the spell under which the audience holds Prospero would be broken by the noise of applause; and since Prospero's role in the play is over, he needs must elicit audience participation to break the spell to obtain his release.

The foundation upon which Prospero bases his appeal to the audience is reciprocity. He has received not only the *material* reward of his "dukedom", suggesting one reason for the play's conclusion, but also the *spiritual* reward of the pardoner, which he trusts will incline his audience towards clemency: as he has "pardon'd the deceiver", he prays that his spectators will absolve him of his debt (the apology he owes them for

⁴¹ Respectively, in *Pseudolus* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 5, 2, 33, and *Amphitruo* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 5, 3, 3: quoted in Lewis and Short, *op. cit.*, pp. 142 & 1737-8 respectively.

to me that such a tension may well epitomize the human moment. That such a tension found freer expression in romantic literature is testimony to the strong reaction against empiricism experienced by a theorist like Coleridge who, seeking greater freedom of expression, an assertion of "the one life within us and abroad",²⁷ happened to reveal not his personal experience of an imaginative unity he wanted so desperately to believe in, but the *desire* to assert that unity, and the sobering awareness of his essentially temporal condition.

The dialectic de Man creates still involves a tension between symbol and allegory, but the mechanics of the tension differ from those which Coleridge used to describe the dialectic. Whereas Coleridge based the tension on the opposition between organicism and mechanism, Imagination and fancy, de Man distinguishes between spatial and temporal conceptions of universal forces. There are two ways of perceiving the world, he seems to say: one is to delude ourselves into believing in the existence of a unifying principle of the Coleridgean type bridging the chasm between the Eternal and the Temporal; the other is to realize our incarceration in the temporal prison of this world, and our ultimate separation from a world beyond. The former conception is symbolical, the latter allegorical. A simple graph will illustrate the dialectic:

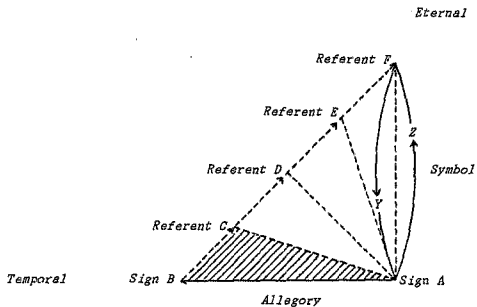
²⁷ Quoted by Wimsatt, *op. cit.*, p.110; quoted in de Man, *op. cit.*, p.179.

whatever inadequacies his performance, and the play, may have revealed), release him from the "bands" which confine him to the island, as they would like to be absolved of their debts. The theme is a New Testament commonplace ("trite [idea]"), we might say. In the "Lord's Prayer" Jesus exhorts his disciples to pray "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12), and adds: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). Prospero bolsters his claim to acquittal through his allusion to intention: the aim of his "project" was "to please", and if he has pleased through his performance then the least the audience can do is show its appreciation through applause, which will secure his release.

In the absence of magic ("Spirits...Art") Prospero's only hope of being released from the "bands" that fetter him and of gaining access to the normal world lies in "prayer". Shakespeare's juxtaposition and seeming polarization of "despair" and "prayer" has led critics like Nuttall to discern in Prospero's vision for the future a far-reaching scepticism. The Epilogue, maintains Nuttall, "is a frightening mixture of the conventional plea for applause with a spiritual appeal for prayers to save him from *despair*....[Prospero] is going home...to die, and nothing in the play gives us any confidence about *his* undiscovered country".⁶² How "spiritual" Prospero's appeal for prayer is can be ascertained from the context of the speech in which the appeal occurs. Prayer in the Epilogue is not "an address to God"⁶³ but a petition to the audience *couched in spiritual terms*. Prospero's request to the audience for applause is merely *likened* to a prayer to God for release: as prayer has the power to free "all faults", Prospero's request, if successful, will have the

⁶² Nuttall, "An Answer to Mr Magarey", p.264.

⁶³ *Longman Dictionary of the English Language*, p.1157.



\overline{AB} = temporal disjunction of signs

\overline{BF} = path of self's struggle towards dissociation
from constraints of temporality

$AZFY$ = self's illusory identification of its temporality
with the Eternal

Figure 3. De Man's Notion of the Allegory-Symbol Dialectic.

power to free him from any faults his performance may have contained and through the breaking of the spell that keeps him bound to the island release him to the world of reality. If we put too literal an interpretation on "prayer", taking it in a purely religious sense, we run the risk of imputing to Prospero goetistic intentions of which he is so obviously free: Warburton's remark that "Unless I be reliev'd by prayer" refers to "the old stories told of the despair of necromancers in their last moments, and of the efficacy of the prayers of their friends for them",⁶⁴ plausible as it may sound, is inconsonant with the theurgistic image of Prospero that emerges from the play. Prayer is simply the catalyst whereby Prospero may gain access to the normal world.

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The tension between 'worldly' and 'spiritual' elements is most poignantly expressed in the characterization of Prospero. Much of Prospero's seeming divinity is subsumed by magic, but there remain aspects of his character so suggestive of other-worldly association that one cannot accord him merely a magical status. His "angelic" conversation and Christ-likeness in I.ii bespeak supernatural origins no magical attribution can belie. Prospero appears indeed to inhabit a spiritual plane above the common rung of humanity, and if he is not God in reality he is certainly god of the play: the slightest "willing suspension of disbelief"⁶⁵ - if dramatic enchantment does not actually preclude the need for such a ploy - enables us to recognize Prospero as the god of illusion and hence of the world of the play.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.134 n.16.

⁶⁵ The usefulness of the term is questioned by Tolkien: see J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-stories", in *Tree and Leaf* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964).

In de Man's terms, *B* is the previous sign to which *sign A* refers; allegorical meaning is established "in the void of [the] temporal difference"¹¹ between the two (the shaded area). The co-ordinate *C*, the referent to which *sign A* refers through *sign B*, establishes together with *A* and *B* an allegorical meaning in which the self has come to terms with the implications of its separation from the non-self (an awareness of temporal destiny) *without such struggle*; the triangle defined by co-ordinates *A*, *B*, and referent *D* denotes the resolution of a more difficult struggle (a greater reluctance on the part of the self to accept the limitations of its temporal predicament), and so forth. It follows that the nearer the *sign A*-referent line approaches the vertical axis *A-F*, the more reluctance the self has shown to surrender "an illusory identification with the non-self".¹² The farther the referent is shifted along the *B-F* axis towards the Eternal - the greater the degree to which the resulting triangle's surface area is increased - the more difficult a struggle the self will have had to undergo in coming to terms with its temporal predicament.

The symbolical relationship of sign and referent condemned by de Man as illusory necessarily denotes not a linear but a cyclical notion of time: the diagram depicts the unity of object and the totality the object represents in arcs *Y* and *Z*, which delineates a cyclical operation mediating between the Temporal and the Eternal.

Allegory's concern, then, is with the horizontal axis, the relation of temporal signs; symbol's concern is with the vertical axis, the relation of Temporal and Eternal. Couched in these terms, it requires little ingenuity to see the analogy between de Man's dialectic of allegory-symbol and Lewis's opposition of allegory and symbolism: for de Man allegory is

¹¹ De Man, *op. cit.*, p.191.

¹² *Ibid.*

Such godhood is matched, however, not only by a material worldliness in search of a lost dukedom, but by an essential humanity which manifests itself in a variety of forms in the play. Prospero betrays a perfectly understandable nescience (imperfect knowledge defines the human condition) and an equally understandable cynicism (maltreatment at the hands of a brother bespeaks a treachery tantamount to fratricide which twelve solitary years can learn to forgive but never forget). An ironic vision allows both the banquet scene and the masque no perfect conclusion: "three men of sin" (III.iii.53) cannot be allowed to partake of the bounty⁶ of the feast, nor can an unregenerate Caliban be allowed to coexist in the mind of Prospero with the bounty of the masque. Moreover, the magic which simulates divinity and invests Prospero with god-like power is eventually abjured: magic has its limitations in a world of incorrigible Calibans and Antonios. Finally, Prospero feels his humanity nowhere more palpably than in the Epilogue; human strength is indeed "most faint" (Epilogue, 3) after god-like potency.

⁶ For a superbly holistic discussion of bounty in the play, see B.D. Cheadle, "Prospero and the Dream of Bounty", in *English Studies in Africa*, March 1977, 20 (1): 53-61.

concerned with the temporal disjunction of signs; for Lewis allegory is concerned with the expression of the immaterial within a temporal paradigm. Allegory, for Lewis, is the invention of *visibilia* to express immaterial facts: "This is allegory," he maintains, "and it is with this alone that we have to deal."¹⁰ Lewis, one suspects, would happily have accepted as *one* type of allegory the *sign-previous sign* paradigm insisted upon by de Man - without at the same time negating the reality of symbolism.

De Man's contention that the temporal disjunction of signs designates the main romantic experience amounts to little more than a suggestive supposition, however, for recourse to two romantic writers (Rousseau and Wordsworth) scarcely clinches the argument, especially when, in the same article, de Man asserts the validity of the subject-object dialectic as a description of the "Maillerie episode" in Rousseau's novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*¹¹ and in the Marquis de Girardin's depiction of a landscape in *De la composition des paysages sur le terrain*.¹² However, the very existence of two such passages as the Maillerie episode and the description of Julie's garden in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* provides the foundation upon which the claim for allegory's superiority over symbol will be based. The dialectic is established between "the allegorical language of...Julie's Elysium and the symbolic language of...the Maillerie episode"; the tension between the two "is ultimately resolved in the triumph of a controlled and lucid renunciation of the values associated with a cult of the moment, and this renunciation establishes the priority of an allegorical over a symbolical diction."¹³ How many romantic works exemplify both allegorical and symbolical diction remains problematic; for,

¹⁰ C.S. Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp.44-5.

¹¹ De Man, *op. cit.*, pp.134-5.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.183.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.188.

CHAPTER IV

AN ALLEGORICAL READING OF *THE TEMPEST*

The expression of worldly-spiritual tension reaches its acme, we have established, in the characterization of Prospero. But dualism, reflected in his characterization, informs the action of the play at a number of levels. This dualism, I would suggest, is most effectively perceived in terms of the dialectical nature of the concept of allegory evolved in Chapter I.¹ The antiphonal movement of the soul between states of *desire* and *anxiety* fundamental to that concept is mirrored in the dualism underlying the perceptions not only of the characters of *The Tempest* but of the audience to the manifestations of ontologically assertive *strangeness* in the play.

Three levels of perception reflect the operation of the dialectic: the castaways' perceptions of *strangeness*, the castaways' and audience's perceptions of the *strangeness* of Prospero and Miranda, and Prospero's and Miranda's perceptions of *strangeness*. Clearly each group conceives of *strangeness* differently: the degree to which *strangeness* is ontologically assertive is contingent upon the knowledge each group possesses both of itself in relation to the world and of the nature of the dualism underlying the *strangeness*. Such a classification creates a hierarchy of levels of perception. Instead of classifying characters as Nuttall does in terms of "vague spiritual hierarchies" (my italics),² however, I wish to posit a hierarchical classification of levels of perception according to the degree to which each level manifests the

¹ See pp.36-9 above.

² Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.141.

maintains de Man, the triumph of allegory over symbol can take place only in the presence of both modes within the same work.

Antiphony of Allegorical and Symbolic Dictions

However inconclusive de Man's account of the status of allegory in romantic literature may be on the basis of partial evidence, there remains nevertheless a profound suggestiveness in his notion of a dialectical tension between allegory and symbol. At the rhetorical level allegory by its very nature involves matching *sequences* of signs - establishing a *syntax* of experience. The process is conceptual rather than experiential. Symbolism, on the other hand, involves a *lyrical* singleness of experience which, valid enough in itself, cannot be sustained in the face of the more imposing allegorical identification of signs. The two modes, *symbol* and *allegory*, might well be taken to correspond to the two states around which, arguably, our temporal existence revolves: desire and anxiety. It is ultimately our *desire* as human beings, I would suggest, to assert our link with the Eternal through a *symbolical paradigm* like the one envisaged by Coleridge, to be part of a cosmic unity embracing everything we know and are and everything we want to know and become - an organic unity fusing Creator and created. It is our *anxiety*, however, to realize the momentariness of this vision, and to accept the finite nature of an existence we long to render infinite - the painful awareness that we may be eternally precluded from what we so earnestly desire. Both terms, moreover, suggest a movement away from voluntarism towards impulsion: desire is an "impulse towards an object or experience that promises enjoyment or satisfaction; appetite",³⁴ anxiety a "brooding apprehension over an impending or anticipated ill".³⁵

³⁴ *Longman Dictionary of the English Language*, p.395.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.65.

dualistically-conceived operation of the notion of allegory we have evolved.

Expressions of the Anxiety-Desire Dialectic

The first level comprises the perceptions of the castaways to the manifestations of *strangeness* in the play. Since the castaways' perceptions are formulated without the knowledge that Prospero's magic has generated the "paranorma" to which the castaways are exposed, such perceptions will necessarily be naive, and the "paranorma" will to them understandably appear "gratuitous". The responses of the mariners, Alonso, Ferdinand, and Gonzalo to the tempest, for example, reflect a primitive oscillation between fear and recourse to divine agency: fear of drowning gives rise "to prayers" (I.i.51). At this basic level we may posit a fluctuation between states of *anxiety* (recourse to divine agency = awareness of temporality) and *desire* (recourse to divine agency = desire to assert link with Eternal). The analogy is imperfect, however: there is no real desire on the part of the characters to assert that link with the Eternal, only a primitive fear which paints prayer - the access to the divine - in the blinding colours of a last resort. Notwithstanding the weakness of the analogy, however, we do perceive at some level, albeit 'instinctive', an oscillation between the *anxiety* and the *desire* for preservation.

Ferdinand's response to the music of Ariel ("Where should this music be? i' th' air or the 'arth?" - J.ii.390) is determined in part by Ferdinand's immediate situation: presuming his father dead, he is quite ready to ascribe the music to "Some god o' th' island" (I.ii.392). Grief, a sure sign of temporality, gives rise to divine attribution. Again, however, the analogy is not wholly convincing. There is no obvious oscillation between states of *anxiety* (grief) and *desire* (divine attribution), for grief entails a loss which seeks to be replaced by *anything*. Nor is there

At a certain point the two terms blend into each other: *anxiety* may denote not only a "brooding apprehension over an impending or anticipated ill" but "a strong *desire*, mixed with doubt and fear, for some event or issue"¹⁶ (my italics). To be 'anxious for' is to desire. As human beings confined to a time-bound world, then, we are torn at best between apprehension and the *desire* to assert our link with the Eternal, at worst between apprehension and the desire which contains an element of doubt and fear.

The somewhat animalistic notion of being torn between alternate states of desire and anxiety, of wanting and fearing, is not endemic specifically to humanity, but constitutes nevertheless a substantial part of human behaviour. This is neither to negate volitional operation nor to assert some kind of predestinate dispensation, but rather to recognize that much of what we call 'freedom of choice' is located within certain parameters contingent upon our temporal existence. In so far as we can *choose* not to succumb to the 'impulsions' of desire or anxiety, we do exercise free will, but always in our finite capacity as human beings.

However, the problem of volition (as equally, perhaps, the possibility of grace) is obviated if we confine the argument to de Man's scheme: freedom of choice is exercised through the self's recognition that reality consists in renouncing the attractiveness of a symbolical paradigm and accepting the finitude of humanity.

What I am propounding is not a naive equation of allegory and anxiety on the one hand, and symbol and desire on the other. De Man does not define allegory in isolation from symbol. Allegory, he maintains, denotes the victory of an allegorical- over a symbolic diction, as we have seen above; it is the eventual valorization of allegory above symbol that epitomizes

¹⁶ Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1976), p.97.

a clear assertion here of a link with the Eternal - only a hasty ascription of strange music to "Some god" whose very existence is nebulously conceived.

Nevertheless, Ferdinand's recourse to godhood is not fortuitous, betokening once again a movement from a state of *anxiety* (produced by grief and a general sense of disquiet effected by Ariel's strange music) to a state of *desire* (to replace the insecurity born of disquietude and loss with a new sense of security,³ if only that located in some unknown god).

The same desire for security is evident in Gonzalo's advocacy of a utopia the existence of which, despite any protestations to the contrary (notions of conjuring up the picture "to minister occasion" to Sebastian and Antonio - I.i.167-8 - and the like), he must to some extent really believe possible: since the pillars of that world are innocence (II.i.151, 161), purity (II.i.151), and perfection (II.i.163) - qualities associated with *Christian* godhood at least - we may suppose that Gonzalo desires at however subconscious a level the advent of such a dispensation, and that this desire connotes a movement away from the general sense of bewilderment and anxiety surrounding the king's party and Alonso in particular.

Gonzalo's appeal to "some heavenly power" to lead the king's party out of a "fearful country" (V.i.105-6) is governed by a more palpable fear: the notion that "All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement/[inhabit]" the place (V.i.104-5; my italics) instills in Gonzalo an anxiety of overwhelming proportions. Fear compels recourse to "some heavenly power". Gonzalo's *desire* for deliverance becomes conflated with an assertion of divinity.

³ I am using "security" in the sense of 'freedom from fear or anxiety': *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, p.1045.

the romantic moment. What I perceive as designating not only the romantic moment but the *human* moment is not the ultimate triumph of one "diction" over another, but the *suspension* of two dictions and two states of perception (desire and anxiety) in a world of possibilities. Judgement is suspended: the triumph of one diction over another depends upon the acquisition of fuller knowledge, a knowledge which, finally, because of our temporal predicament, can be made complete only through some form of divine intervention. We are reduced to seeing "through a glass darkly",²⁷ to a state of perpetual oscillation between (relative) states of desire and anxiety, until we are provided with the light of perfect knowledge, the means for assessing our predicament in universal terms

De Man's concern, as the title of his article suggests,²⁸ is with the "Rhetoric of Temporality": what *language* shall we use to describe the romantic experience? Because our human state is temporal, we are limited in our range of linguistic apparatus. If language is all we have to describe our *sitz-im-leben*, with what words shall we describe that symbolical paradigm connoting the union of Temporal and Eternal? In other words, *de Man seems to say, we can describe only that which we know; because that which we can only surmise eludes description, we should confine ourselves to the known and the knowable. The logical conclusion of such a rationale is a kind of blind empiricism which ascribes the acquisition of all knowledge to experience.*

Such an extreme view, however, is untenable. Between the notions of 'language is all we have' and 'what we have eludes linguistic description' we must discover a language which recognizes both the limitations of our temporal existence and our yearning to be identified with the Eternal. The concept of allegory I am positing does not connote an identification,

²⁷ *The Holy Bible* (This and all subsequent biblical quotations from the Authorized Version): 1 Cor. I. thians 13.

²⁸ *De Man, op. cit.*

a clear assertion here of a link with the Eternal - only a hasty ascription of strange music to "Some god" whose very existence is nebulously conceived.

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³ I am using "security" in the sense of 'freedom from fear or anxiety': *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, p.1045.

a conflation, of symbol and allegory. Magarey's concern, as we have seen, is with "symbolic allegory";⁹⁹ ours is with the way in which allegory can point us to the antiphonal movement between temporal and Temporal-Eternal conceptions of universal forces. We might compare the mechanics of this movement to the workings of a pendulum whose impetus derives not from the force of gravity but from the fluctuation of human states of emotion which push the soul from one position to another, never quite allowing it to succumb to the extremes either of total desire or of total anxiety.

Hence the soul's position in relatively close proximity to the pole of total anxiety signifies a conception of the universe in which the possibility of asserting a Temporal-Eternal relationship is remote; however, no sooner does the soul become aware of this predicament than the awareness of its proximity to the pole of anxiety pushes it towards the pole of desire, the antithetical belief in the possibility of being united with the Eternal. The situation of the soul's perfect suspension between anxiety and desire falls midway between the two poles, the optimum state for the exercise of volition. (In psychopathic terms, the swing of the pendulum would signify a manic fluctuation between emotional states of jubilation and despair.)

The notion of allegory I have attempted to describe has limited value in itself; it is only in applying it to *The Tempest* that I trust we shall come to see its validity as a mode suited *per excellence* to discerning the essence of the play's concerns.

⁹⁹ Magarey, *op. cit.*, p.105.

Alonso's apprehension of strangeness before Prospero's call (Act V) engenders in the king a sense of insecurity similar to that experienced by Ferdinand and Gonzalo: The strangeness creates an atmosphere of *anxiety*: Alonso is initially dismayed by the 'apparition' of Prospero (V.i.111-113), likening his position to being trapped in a maze (V.i.242) from which there seems no escape. Significantly he solicits the aid of "some oracle" (V.i.244) to supplement their partial knowledge of their situation. Alonso too, then, oscillates between the *anxiety* of insecurity and nescience and the *desire* for perfect knowledge (and hence security) a deity through "some oracle" must provide.

At a more basic level, even the jester's 'instinctive' recourse to divine agency in the face of the fear generated by Ariel's unearthly music may be taken to signify a movement from *anxiety* to *desire*: Trinculo's "O, forgive me my sins!" (III.ii.129), the typically nominal Christian response in the midst of fear,⁴ suggests nevertheless a *desire* - the nominal Christian 'birthright' - to lay claim to the promise of access to heaven.

The allegorical paradigm operates, however unassertively, even at the elementary, earthly level of Caliban's perceptions. Caliban's primitive fear - his *anxiety* lest Prospero's punitive spirits punish him for "bringing wood in slowly" (II.ii.15-16) - impels him towards an exchange of masters, and hence of gods: cursing the "tyrant that [he] serve[s]" (II.ii.162), Caliban places his trust in Stephano ("be my god" - II.ii.149) in the hope that the butler will come to supplant Prospero. And if godhood for Caliban rests upon the unearthliness of the liquor Stephano bears (II.ii.127), this reflects merely the rudimentariness of the level upon which Caliban operates; Caliban's *desire* is yet to assert his link with one who appears to embody godhood. Realizing his error when brought face to face with Prospero in Act V (255 ff.), Caliban conven-

* A speculative comment, I am aware. The response need not be the prerogative of the *nominal* Christian, moreover.

CHAPTER II

STRANGENESS NOT OF NATURE'S MAKING

The Uniqueness of The Tempest

If, leaving aside for the moment De Man and our foregoing discussion, allegory as perceived by C.S. Lewis (the invention of *visibilia* to express immaterial facts)¹ is indeed, as Nuttall suggests, "the most ostentatiously fictitious of all literary forms...directly opposed to a serious occupation with the real universe",² one can understand Nuttall's reluctance to call *The Tempest* an allegory, and his dismissal of the question "'Is this work allegorical?'" in the face of the many ambiguities in the play. Nuttall's equivocation about the usefulness of the term *allegory* in relation to *The Tempest* in no way detracts from his identification of the unique flavour of the play, however; indeed, such identification may be said to have arisen out of the equivocation. The uniqueness, for Nuttall, consists in the extension of "gratuitous paranorms"⁴ throughout the play and in the establishment of two sets of paradoxes which inform the action, the one involving the tension between images of intimacy and remoteness, the other involving the tension between 'worldly' and 'spiritual' elements. These "paranorms" and two sets of paradoxes together account for the substratum of ambiguity underlying the action, and invest the play with a haunting quality that defies the kind

¹ Lewis, *op. cit.*, p.44.

² Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.159.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.139.

iently exchanges masters once again, and implies still that for him service, whoever the master, entails "worship" (V.i.297).

The ambiguous characterization of Caliban observed by Nuttall⁵ itself reflects at a crude level an oscillation between *anxiety* and *desire*. Monster that he is, Caliban yet reveals an intimate response to nature, delighting at first to show Prospero "all the qualities o' th' isle" (I.ii.339) and later to show Stephano "every fertile inch o' th' island" (II.ii.148), and speaking with relish of "crabs...pig-nuts...jay's nest...nisible marmoset...filberts, and...scasels" (II.ii.167-172). Living in fear of Prospero's tormenting spirits (cf. I.ii.374-6; II.ii.3-17, 57, 65, 73-4, 81-3) - in a continual state of *anxiety* - Caliban rises above this fear to manifest a loving attachment to the island and its denizens. Nowhere is this wistfulness more evident than in Caliban's 'nature speech' (III.iii.133-141), where "sweet airs, that give delight" (1.34), "riches/Ready to drop on [him]" (11.139-140), and the longing "to dream again" (1.141) reflect an innocent, pristine *desire* to be one with the god of nature.⁶

*

The castaways' and audience's perceptions of the *strangeness* of Prospero and Miranda constitute the second level upon which we detect the allegorical operation of the *anxiety-desire* dialectic. Here we are concerned chiefly with the perceptions of Alonso, Ferdinand, and the audience.

Both Ferdinand and Alonso, we observe, mistake Miranda for a goddess. Ferdinand's proclamation - "Most sure the goddess/On whom these airs at-

⁵ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.140

⁶ Caliban's identification with nature is essentially pantheistic.

of neat classification Lewis's "petrifying formula" (the definition above) seeks to impose.

In considering Nuttall's identification of those elements in *The Tempest* which make it a unique play, we shall be attempting to account for his obvious *penchant* for the term "strange" (with variations "strangeness" and "strangely") in his discussion of it,⁶ and his insistence on designating the entire play "queer".⁷ Magarey deems Nuttall's excessive doting on strangeness unwarranted,⁸ with some justification as we shall see. Indeed, some of the strangeness is either of Nuttall's own making or conceived of differently, less enigmatic - and resolved - within the context of the play.

The Tempest is a strange play, maintains Nuttall, partly because it is filled with "gratuitous paranorms" - phenomena empirically unverifiable and therefore unwarranted - which are not accounted for by the magic of Prospero. Such phenomena as the drowsiness of Miranda (I.ii.186: s.d.); the lassitude which overcomes other characters (Gonzalo and company in II.i.185: s.d., Alonso in II.i.193: s.d., Caliban in III.ii.138, 141); the strange sounds filling the air (the music and voices which strike Caliban's ear in III.ii.133-141, the strange noise which wakens the sailors in V.i.232, the voice which convicts Alonso and company in III.iii.96ff. of supplanting Prospero, the "strange, hollow, and confused noise" - IV.i.138: s.d. - to the accompaniment of which the spirits vanish at the end of the masque); the strangeness of the Shapes in the banquet scene (III.iii.62); the unpredictability of Ariel (V.i.21) and the

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.159.

⁷ Nuttall uses "strange", "strangeness", and "strangely" at least ten times in *Two Concepts of Allegory*: see pp.139, 141, 142, 143, 146.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.138.

⁹ Magarey thus: "'uneasy speculation' is certainly baggage on which [Nuttall] himself dotes": Magarey, *op. cit.*, p.118.

tend" (I.ii.424-5) - follows upon his attribution of the strange music to "Some god o' th' island" (I.ii.392), just as Alonso's question, "Is she the goddess that hath sever'd us,/And brought us thus together" (V.i.187-8), seeks to explain the manifestations of strangeness that have beleaguered his party. But the desire for satisfactory explanation does not detract from the goddess-like aura surrounding Miranda. Ferdinand's reply to his father, "Sir, she is mortal;/But by immortal Providence she's mine" (V.i.188-9), embodies a nice antithesis. "Like you I mistook this maid for a goddess," Ferdinand appears to say, "but she is mortal. The only immortal aspect of this business is the manner in which she was bequeathed to me" - which to an omniscient audience is as much a reflection on Prospero's god-like powers as on Miranda's seeming divinity.

We cannot, however, separate Ferdinand's perception of Miranda from the allegorical significance her name imparts to her character. It is precisely Miranda's embodiment of the spirit of wonder, strangeness, and singularity⁷ which invites association with the divine. Ferdinand perceives Miranda as a goddess, then, not only because he must ascribe Ariel's unearthly music to *something*, but because Miranda herself radiates strangeness, 'otherness'. His desire to assert a link with the Eternal, however, may merely be the concomitant to Miranda's association with the divine; there is no real desire to make that assertion over and above a more earthly desire to make the goddess-like Miranda his wife, we might argue. Nevertheless, Ferdinand's desire to be united with Miranda may be motivated not despite but subconsciously *because of* her divine aura; indeed, we cannot easily separate desire for Miranda and desire for divine association, so closely does Ferdinand's "prime request" (I.ii.428) - whether Miranda is "maid or no" (I.ii.430) - follow upon his assertion of her divinity ("Most sure the goddess/On whom these airs attend!" - I.ii.424-5). In desiring Miranda, Ferdinand evinces no

⁷ See p.74 above.

strangeness of the island ("subtleties o' the isle" - V.i.124) elude satisfactory explanation, and as Nuttall expresses it "abandon [the sensibility] to uneasy speculation".⁹

Nuttall's second claim for the play's uniqueness is made on the evidence of two sets of paradoxes informing the action. The savoury phrase "strange salt-sweetness"¹⁰ epitomizes one set of paradoxes he identifies in *The Tempest*, that involving the tension between images of remoteness and intimacy. The "causeless and capricious portents" outlined above are, maintains Nuttall, essentially remote from our experience. But on another level those same "sporia" (perplexities) are not entirely foreign to us: we have all heard strange unidentifiable sounds, or reclined in the grip of unaccountable fear in the moments between sleeping and waking.¹¹ Whether we ascribe such phenomena to magic or (as Nuttall does) to some unidentifiable source, his contention that the simultaneous proximity of such portents to our experience compels an awareness that 'otherness' can impinge on our existence remains valid. Portents like strange noises filling the air cannot be ignored simply because their source cannot be identified, or discounted because it can. Their very remoteness is all the more disconcerting because at once so palpably intimate and so improbably classifiable. The same appalling sense of apprehension is felt in all slow dawnings of consciousness: in waking from sleep,¹² in emerging from anaesthesia, in imagining without perceiving - intervals when the mind is suspended between two worlds, "conscious, but conscious of nothing".¹³

⁹ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.139.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.141.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.139.

¹² Cf. II.i.308-316 (Gonzalo's and Alonso's different responses on waking), V.i.230-235 (the waking of the sailors), and III.ii.136-8 (Caliban's response on waking).

¹³ T.S.Eliot, *Four Quartets* (London: Faber & Faber, 1944), p.19 ("East Coker": III).

ontologically suggestive desire to assert a link with the Eternal, we may say, and there is certainly no suggestion of *anxiety* for himself in his assertion of her mortality (V.i.188). But his *desire* to be associated with a maid who embodies divine innocence is at once the desire to escape his *anxiety* over the loss of his father: in this shift we may perceive a movement from *anxiety* to *desire*.

The audience perceives the *strangeness* of Prospero and Miranda initially through the opening dialogue of two "angelic beings"² in I.i, and later through the gradual revelation of the manifestations of Prospero's Art in the play. From the opening dialogue certain characteristics emerge: Prospero and Miranda are engaged in seemingly "angelic" discourse, they appear to affirm the existence of "heaven" (I.ii.154) as an independent reality, and Prospero is portrayed as a "god of power" (I.ii.10) whose words resonate with divine authority. But the analogy remains an analogy: Art is omnipotent in so far as it simulates divine omnipotence, and nothing more suggestive than this is implied. The potency of Prospero's magic continues to be revealed to the audience through the play, but the audience has the benefit of double vision: one eye describes the castaways' perceptions of the *strangeness* of Prospero and Miranda while the other discerns the magic behind that *strangeness*. Audience perception, then, appears to fluctuate between the assertion of the divinity of Prospero's and Miranda's *strangeness* and the knowledge that such *strangeness* is merely magical. The fluctuation is between states of *desire* and *anxiety* only in so far as the audience is torn antiphanally between perceptions of the *humanity* and the *divinity* of Prospero's *strangeness*. To the extent that the audience may wish to identify itself with Prospero, the movement is from the *desire* to assert a link with the Eternal *vicariously* through the possibility of Prospero's divine association and the acceptance of the *essential humanity* of the magician and therefore of all men ("All

² Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.141.

Nuttall holds that the nature imagery of *The Tempest* reflects a similar ambiguity, with its combination of "minute observations and gigantic distances", and he provides a useful list of examples.¹⁴ Shakespeare juxtaposes, for instance, Prospero's images of remoteness ("the ooze/Of the salt deep...the veins o' th' earth/When it is bak'd with frost" - I.ii.252-6) with Caliban's images of intimacy ("unwholesome fen" - I.ii.324; "barries...fresh springs, brine pits" - I.ii.336-340). Caliban's natural world we are familiar with, but the world of "salt deep" and "veins o' th' earth" is less familiar. Between a world we know and a world that is foreign to us lies the world the characters of the play inhabit.

Caliban, that "salvage and deformed slave"¹⁵ whom Trinculo takes initially for a fish (II.ii.25) and later for an islander on the strength of warm-bloodedness (II.ii.35-7) is not the easily classifiable monster we might think him. Not only do different characters' perceptions of Caliban vary (Miranda thinks him a "villain" - I.ii.311; Prospero thinks him a "poisonous slave" - I.ii.321; Trinculo thinks him a fish, then an islander; Stephano thinks him a four-legged monster - II.ii.66; Antonio thinks him a "plain fish, and, no doubt, marketable" - V.i.266; Alonso thinks him a "strange thing as e'er [he] look'd on" - V.i.289); we the audience are compelled to view him in an ambiguous light. In his shape and manners Caliban is grossly unchildlike, unquestionably monstrous (in V.i.290-291 Prospero comments: "He is as disproportion'd in his manners/As in his shape"), yet with his intimate response to nature he belongs to a world "most of us have known as children".¹⁶ The same creature who can reassure Stephano and Trinculo with the words "Be not afraid; the isle is full of noises..." (Caliban's celebrated 'nature speech' in

¹⁴ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.141.

¹⁵ See "Names of the Actors": Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.2.

¹⁶ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.140.

flesh", finally, "is grass" - Isaiah 40:6). The terms *anxiety* and *desire* assume full ontological assertiveness only in relation to Prospero and Miranda, whose own perceptions of *strangeness* - the third level of perception - we must now consider.

The Quintessential Expression of the Dialectic

Miranda's perception of *strangeness*, because it is filtered through the eyes of Prospero as he relates the story of their expulsion from Milan and arrival on the island, is vicarious; her responses are conditioned by Prospero's own responses to *strangeness*. Our attention must focus, then, on the way in which *Prospero* perceives the operation of *strangeness* in the world.

The substance of Prospero's conception of *strangeness* we have already ascertained:⁹ Prospero attributes his and Miranda's arrival on the island to "Providence divine" (I.ii.159), and recognizes the need to court the influence of "bountiful Fortune" (I.ii.178) to secure a hold over his enemies. But the implications of this conception are yet to be elucidated.

Prospero is anxious, we notice, to demonstrate the care with which he has devised his magical feats: "I have done nothing", he tells Miranda in I.ii.16-17, "but in care of thee,/Of thee, my dear one"; and later he assures her that he ordered the "spectacle of the wreck...with such provision in [his] Art" that none perished (I.ii.26-32). His care is evident also in his tutoring of Miranda (I.ii.174) and in his treatment of Caliban (I.ii.348) (though the extent of his beneficence towards Caliban is mitigated by Caliban's capacity for goodness). This concern with solicitude

⁹ See pp.77-9 above.

III.ii.133-141) is the brutal plotter who promises to arrange for Stephano to "knock a nail into [Prospero's] head" (III.ii.60), "Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake,/Or cut his wezand with [a] knife" (III.ii.88-9).

The point requires no further elaboration: the paradoxes created by opposing images of intimacy and remoteness render the perceptions of characters and audience alike equivocal.¹⁷ Such equivocation is intensified when we come to consider Shakespeare's characterization of Prospero and Miranda in the play. *The Tempest*, like its main character, inhabits a region neither wholly spiritual nor wholly worldly, but hovers between the two. Prospero's near-omniscience (Nuttall calls him "a little less than omniscient")¹⁸ is balanced by his extreme worldliness (his highest ambition is to be seen to be reinstated as Duke of Milan - cf. V.i.132-4 - to have justice seen to be done). Nuttall appears to equate omniscience with divinity: both Prospero and Miranda, he claims, are "half-dipped in another world" (my italics).¹⁹ The operative word is "half-dipped": father and daughter are neither immersed nor fully "dipped" in "another world", but "half-dipped", as though in their case the Achilles' heel legend had been inverted to render only a small part of them invulnerable (and, in the context of the play, heavenly). There is about Prospero and Miranda, then, a smack of the divine, but both characters remain firmly entrenched in the material world.

The conversation of Prospero and Miranda in I.ii. after the violent discourse of the storm-ravaged mariners and passengers in I.i. is described by Nuttall as "angelic". Father and daughter talk "as no human beings ever talked," says Nuttall, "and yet seem all the closer to our humanity

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.142.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

is extended to embrace the castaways too: Prospero asks Ariel whether Alonso and company are "safe" (I.ii.217), elicits from Ariel that the mariners are "safely in harbour" (I.ii.226), and ensures through the ministrations of Ariel that Alonso is preserved from the treacherous swords of Sebastian and Antonio and may "go safely on to seek [his] son" (II.i.322).

A man so solicitous for the well-being of his daughter and the preservation of the castaways will be sensible of the provision bestowed upon himself. When Prospero ascribes his and Miranda's preservation to "Providence divine", then, the attribution is charged with meaning. The *human* provision of Gonzalo achieved much; *divine* provision ensured the *ultimate* preservation of the pair. The link with the Eternal is positively asserted: Prospero's *desire* is to record that, for however brief a moment, he felt himself one with some divine Force bent on securing their salvation. A symbolic diction enjoys a brief moment of triumph.

But the moment of triumph is quickly over. What appeared to be an immutable assertion of divine association becomes a mere *intimation* of the divine, for Prospero proceeds to ascribe their survival of the voyage to the (human) kindness of Gonzalo (I.ii.160-168) without further reference to Providence. The same ambivalence was reflected earlier in Prospero's conversation with Miranda: "By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heav'd thence [from Milan],/But blessedly help hither" (I.ii.62-3). The providential nature of his exile may well be "fundamental to Prospero's view of the total situation", as Kermode contends;¹⁸ but such a contention does not negate the element of "foul play" equally fundamental to Prospero's perspective. Prospero's *desire* may be to assert his link with the Eternal through the attribution of their preservation to "Providence divine", but his sense of *anxiety* at having to recall his link with the

¹⁸ Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.xviii.

for it".²⁰ This curious paradox of human superhuman conversation exemplifies the nature of the dichotomy to which Nuttall wishes to draw our attention: Prospero and Miranda are to be distinguished from the other (purely human) characters of the play in that they occupy a "spiritual" plane²¹ above the common run of humanity while remaining human.

What we perceive in Nuttall's criticism of *The Tempest*, then, is the emergence of a dualistic notion of opposing forces at work in the play, a notion which precludes the application of so rigid a definition of allegory as Lewis's²² to the central concerns of the author (what these concerns are is tentatively and nebulously suggested).²³ The ambiguity surrounding the island and the perceptions of the characters who traverse it renders allegorical interpretation at a rhetorical level impossible, Nuttall seems to argue. Since *The Tempest* cannot be considered an "explicit allegory" but rather a form of personification allegory exemplified by Prudentius' *Psychomachia* in which "strident labels [are] pasted on the brows of all [the] characters",²⁴ rhetorical notions of allegory are impracticable. Nuttall's shift towards an ontological perspective arises out of the seeming inability of such rhetorical notions to account for the play's metaphysical suggestiveness (the concomitant, it would appear, to ambiguity).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.141-2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.141.

²² Lewis, *op. cit.*, p.44: see p.40 above.

²³ See Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, pp.159-160.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.151.

temporal (the "foul play" which led to his expulsion from Milan) asserts itself as compellingly. Prospero knows, moreover, that his association with his brother, Antonio - the author of that "foul play" - is not over: he and Antonio must meet again within a few hours. A *desire-anxiety* triangle is established: to look up (to *desire*) is at once to look back (to experience *anxiety* through recalling the *past*) and to look forward (to experience *anxiety* through contemplating the *future*); the *present* is defined, quite naturally, by the point of intersection of past and future.

Clearly Prospero's perception of *strangeness* cannot be considered in isolation from his perception of the world and his situation in it. Our knowledge of Prospero's world is derived from the erstwhile duke's account of his expulsion from Milan and from our own perspective of the operation of magic in the play. The two hemispheres of that world are geographically and temporally disjoined: Italy represents the sphere to which Prospero "grew stranger" (I.ii.76), the island the sphere in which the source of that estrangement could be indulged. A poignant irony emerges: the "secret studies" (I.ii.77) in pursuit of which Prospero neglected his dukedom and was expelled from Milan become the means for recovering that dukedom and inflicting the punishment of bewilderment upon, and achieving the penitence of, his unsuspecting enemies. It may perhaps be considered poetic justice that Prospero regains through magic the dukedom he lost because of magic.

The worldly-spiritual tension is manifested, then, in a mainland-island tension and a dukedom-magic tension, both of which reflect the operation of the *anxiety-desire* dialectic in the mind of Prospero. Broadly speaking, the mainland (= Italy = Milan) is associated with the treachery of Antonio, the loss of a dukedom, and eventual expulsion, the island with magic and its ability to achieve a reversal of fortune (the penitence of enemies, the recovery of a dukedom, the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda). One world represents *anxiety* - the world of treachery, loss,

"From Strange to Stranger"²⁵

Before assessing Nuttall's contention that the "paranorma" pervading *The Tempest* are "gratuitous", and that the presence of these "paranorma" together with the ambiguity arising out of the paradoxical nature of various elements in the play invests the drama with "its peculiar atmosphere of ontological suspension",²⁶ we should consider further possible evidence of a fundamental dualism underlying the action. Nuttall's identification of a tension between 'worldly' and 'spiritual' elements in the characterization of Prospero and Miranda may well account for part of the ambiguity in the play; an investigation of the validity of such a claim will follow. Nevertheless, Prospero and Miranda are not the only characters equivocally drawn; every castaway finds himself in a predicament for which previous experience cannot account, and evinces some degree of uncertainty in attempting to resolve his situation. Ferdinand, confronted (as it were) with the music of Ariel, must decide on its source: is the music "'i th' air or the 'arth?" (I.ii.390). This, finally, is the question toward which each character in the play (excepting Caliban, as we shall see) is, at some time or another, led: is there a human explanation for the phenomenon in question, or does the 'otherness' of the phenomenon connote the presence of the divine?

The pattern, entailing an oscillation between fear in the face of impending doom and (often automatic) recourse to divine agency, is established at the outset of the play, in the midst of the storm. The mariners, their situation perilous and seemingly irrevocable, resort in their despair "to prayers" (I.i.51): fear of drowning drives them to place their trust in the only apparent security - divine agency, which becomes a certainty in an uncertain world. Alonso, Ferdinand, and Gonzalo too seek

²⁵ Alonso, on the appearance of the Naster and Boatswain (V.i.228): Kermode (ed.), *op cit.*, p.126.

²⁶ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.158.

and expulsion which reminds Prospero so tangibly of his essentially temporal predicament, of death and separation. The other world represents *desire* - the world of forgiveness, recovery, and marriage which manifests the operation of divine grace, betokening life and reconciliation. (Caliban, intractable beast and would-be usurper of the island, is a painful reminder to Prospero of the world he has left behind, the world of treacherous brothers and collaborating kings; yet even Caliban becomes the recipient of "grace" [V.i.295] at the end of the play.)

Prospero's "so potent Art" (V.i.50), we have established,¹¹ holds out to him the possibility of aspiring to divinity through the possession of god-like powers. If magical potency simulates divine omnipotence in the play - Prospero the magician is god of the island - then Art represents Prospero's *desire* to be united with the Eternal. Prospero is not, however, "an *Island*, intire of it self"; like "every man" he is "a peeces of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*".¹² However strongly he may wish to assert a symbolic union with the divine, the island of *desire* is full of palpable reminders of *anxiety*, of the temporal world of erring humanity. Caliban is only one such reminder.

Two of the reminders of *anxiety* are engendered, ironically enough, by the responses of Miranda - the very person whose disposition epitomizes *desire* itself. It is in response to Miranda's and Ferdinand's love for each other that Prospero declares: "So glad of this as they I cannot be,/Who are surpris'd with all" (III.i.92-3). His cynicism is evoked once again by Miranda's beautifully innocent response ("O brave new world,/That has such people in 't!" - V.i.183-4) to the spectacle of the king's party: "'Tis new to thee" (V.i.184). Prospero cannot escape the irony that

¹¹ See p.91 above.

¹² From Donne's Seventeenth Meditation: J. Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. A. Rasia (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975), p.87.

divine intervention (I.i.53-4), while Sebastian and Antonio merely bewail their own fate (I.i.54-7). Gonzalo desires "a dry death" (I.i.67) but fears the "wills above" (I.i.66) may have decreed otherwise.

If the mariners and certain members of the king's party have recourse to prayers, to what can Caliban resort, incorrigible devil²⁷ that he is? Caliban's fear of Prospero's punitive spirits (II.ii.15) leads to his desire not only to exchange masters (II.ii.162-4) but to make Stephano his god: "That's a brave god, and bears celestial liquor:/I will kneel to him" (II.ii.118-119). The element of burlesque is strong, however: not only does Caliban worship Stephano on the strength (*sic*) of the butler's liquor (the causal relationship between "liquor" and "god" in I.ii.118 is clear), but all three - Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban - proceed to send up the notion of lordship through their speech and behaviour. Stephano urges Caliban to "kiss the book" (II.ii.131, 142), kneel and swear himself his (Stephano's) subject (II.ii.152-3); Caliban "adore[s]" Stephano (II.ii.140) and asks the butler to "be [his] god" (II.ii.149); and Stephano declares pompously that all three "will inherit" the island (II.ii.173). Caliban's fear, we conclude, is nothing more than a primitive apprehension motivated by a primitive desire to escape punishment.

Caliban's resolve to "seek for grace" (V.i.295) reflects merely his primitive fear of retribution: if he has learned one thing in the course of the play, it is the prudence of playing the suppliant slave to Prospero. His request will be for mercy, pardon, favour ("grace" in the context of I.295) from his master, and only in so far as his master is God within the confines of his world does Caliban look upon Prospero as a dispenser of grace, as the one who holds his (Caliban's) fate in his hands. Having *foolishly* exchanged masters before (II.ii.163-4), Caliban

²⁷ In IV.i.188-189 Prospero calls Caliban "a born devil, on whose nature/Nurture can never stick".

perfidy should be deemed "new", for to him the erstwhile treachery of Antonio, Sebastian, and Alonso - notwithstanding Alonso's subsequent repentance - is a constant reminder of the *anxiety* surrounding his expulsion from Milan.

Awareness of the same treachery does not allow the banquet a successful conclusion, and arouses in Prospero the same sense of *anxiety*. The bounty of the banquet might have found perfect expression in the act of partaking of the "viands" (III.iii.61) - an act analogous to the partaking of Holy Communion expressive of the symbolic unity of God and man. But "three men of sin" (III.iii.53), rendered so through their treachery, are unworthy to participate in such a rich symbolic feast. *Desire* is accordingly displaced by *anxiety*, the recollection of temporality. The beauty of magical illusion is marred by the sordidness of human reality.

The same oscillation between states of *desire* and *anxiety* is evident in Prospero's perception of the masque - another beautiful spectacle destroyed by the intrusion of earthly reality. This time it is Prospero's remembrance of Caliban's "foul conspiracy" (IV.i.139) which fills the magus with *anxiety*. The masque is the supreme expression in the play of the symbolic relationship between God and man: the advent of Iris, Juno, and Ceres (IV.i.60-138) appears almost to transcend mere magical invocation, symbolizing the perfect union of human and divine. Again, however, the assertion of a symbolic diction - that moment of epiphany - gives way to the reluctant admission of an allegorical diction, the awareness of temporality.

The sudden evanescence of the masque is in turn a reminder of the insubstantiality and transience of inanimate and animate creation alike;¹³ Prospero's marring of the spell signifies his nearest approxi-

¹³ See pp.84-7 above.

wisely exchanges masters now; no longer will he "take this drunkard [Stephano] for a god" (V.i.296): Prospero will become his god once more.

A character's sense of *sporia* ("utter helplessness")²² when confronted with the seemingly supernatural one can comprehend, but the mystery is compounded when even the most patently earth-bound phenomena are apprehended with the same perplexity. Both Trinculo and Alonso, for example, are struck by the strangeness of Caliban. Trinculo, stumbling upon the monster before the breaking of another storm, takes him for a "strange fish" (II.i.27-8) and finds himself compelled to creep under Caliban's cloak. The very real humour the irony of the scene affords (Caliban thinks Trinculo a spirit of Prospero come to torment him, and Stephano thinks the apparition a four-legged monster) should not blind us to the monstrous 'otherness' of Caliban, whom Alonso declares "a strange thing as e'er [he] look'd on" (V.i.289). The strangeness of the island is for different characters both in the air and in the earth.

Both Trinculo and Alonso are held in the grip of a fear motivated by guilt. When Ariel plays the tune of "Flout 'em and cout 'em..." (III.ii.119ff.) on his tabor and pipe, Trinculo's instinctive response is the guilt-ridden "O, forgive me my sins" (III.ii.129), the 'instinctive' recourse to divine agency. Alonso's immediate response upon the performance of the Harpy in III.iii. takes the form of self-incrimination: the thunder's pronouncement of the name of Prospero "did bass my trespass" (III.iii.99), he declares. Half his punishment - the death of Ferdinand - has already supposedly been exacted (III.iii.100); the other half - Alonso's own watery death - is yet to be implemented (III.iii.101-2). Guilt has imbedded itself so deeply in Alonso's soul that recourse to divine agency is precluded by the direct acceptance of retribution to be meted out, quite appropriately (since Ferdinand's supposed death, the

²² Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.145.

mation in the play to a total surrender to *anxiety*. No sooner does Prospero appreciate the danger of his position, however, than the awareness of having "to counter the surge of Calibanish earthliness within him"¹⁴ evokes a reassertion of self-control through the resolve to oppose Caliban. This reaction constitutes a further oscillation of the pendulum, from *anxiety* back to *desire*: his equilibrium restored, Prospero can reassert his magical mastery and, as originally intended, achieve the reconciliation scene - a manifestation of cosmic unity - before his cell.

Once Caliban and his confederates have been thwarted in their attempt to usurp the island from Prospero, however, and the magician has reasserted his link with the Eternal by regaining control over himself and the island through his magic (plotting with Ariel the demise of Caliban - IV.i.165ff.), the wisdom of retaining that magical link with the divine must be reviewed. Prospero's dilemma¹⁵ epitomizes the oscillation between *desire* and *anxiety*: he must either ascend to the next, more refined, stage of enlightenment and reaffirm his *desire* to assert oneness with the gods, or descend to the natural world in the knowledge that "rough magic", however "potent" (V.i.50), has achieved that for which it was intended.

Prospero's abjuration of his magic constitutes an acceptance not only of the limitations of Art but of the finitude of a humanity which, though it may posit moments of symbolic union with godhood, seeks in vain to assert immortality (in his case) through the possession of god-like magical powers. Prospero's *final* destiny is to accept the limitations which define the human condition, and renounce the seductiveness of Art.

Thus stripped of magical power, Prospero the man addresses the audience in the Epilogue. Nowhere in the play is the balance between *desire* and

¹⁴ P.87 above.

¹⁵ See pp.91-2 above.

result of Alonso's sin, is by drowning), by the elements - the instruments of divine justice.

Gonzalo reveals in his perception of the island and his situation on it a more subtle oscillation between fear and recourse to divine agency. In the face of Alonso's grief over the loss of Ferdinand and the plight in which the members of the king's party find themselves, he conjures up a fantastic utopian world devoid of boundaries and restrictions, a world without "traffic...magistrate; Letters...riches, poverty...use of service...contract, succession,/Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard...occupation..." (II.i.143-150). The picture he depicts is naively antiquated by dint of its pre-lapsarian focus: the women are to be "innocent and pure" (II.ii.151), all his people "innocent" (II.i.160), and Nature is to produce everything "Without sweat or endeavour" (II.i.156) - recalling Genesis 3:19, in which God informs Adam that he is to be reduced to labouring "in the sweat of [his] face". Gonzalo's assertion that he conjured up the utopian picture "to minister occasion to these gentlemen [Sebastian and Antonio]" (II.i.167-8) does not excuse his celebration of excess, since the very men to whom the visionary speech is addressed are themselves guilty of one of the worst excesses - treason (ironically, one of the very injustices of which Gonzalo's kingdom will be free - II.i.156).

Gonzalo experiences a more palpable fear also. Immediately before Prospero's revelation of himself as the wronged Duke of Milan in V.i.106, a distraught Gonzalo proclaims: "All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement/Inhabits here" (V.i.104-5); his prayer is for "some heavenly power" to lead the party "Out of this fearful country" (V.i.105-6). Fear compels Gonzalo too to seek divine intervention. But his fear disappears once Prospero has begun to unravel the mystery in Act V. The same naive Gonzalo who could posit a utopian paradise (II.i.139ff.) is equally ready to ascribe to divine agency not only the preservation of Ferdinand and

anxiety, between the assertion of union with the Eternal and the acceptance of the limitations of humanity, more keenly expressed. Prospero finds himself suspended between two worlds, the island of *desire* and the mainland of *anxiety*. He has dabbled a portion of his life in the *desire* of the "Island", and he has known oneness with the gods through the possession of magical powers; now he must immerse himself in the *anxiety* of the "maine", and accept parity with those whose lives his magic has had no power to change. Without magic his ending will be "*despair*" (Epilogue, 15) unless his "*prayer*" (Epilogue, 16) to the audience to release him from the "*bands*" (Epilogue, 9) which fetter him to the island is successful. Prospero has accepted the limitations of his humanity; all he requires is the "*indulgence*" (Epilogue, 20) of the audience to return him to the world to which he really belongs.

the betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda but the entire course of events that has led the king's party to Prospero's cell. Gonzalo pronounces God's blessing upon the couple ("on this couple drop a blessed crown" - V.i.202) and declares, "For it is you [gods] that have chalk'd forth the way/Which brought us hither" (V.i.203-4). Gonzalo may attribute the chalking forth of the way to the gods, but this hasty conclusion negates the equally hasty zeal with which he desired "some heavenly power" to lead them out of a "fearful country". An element of inadvertent caprice is apparent. We find Gonzalo's change of mind remarkable in the face of the very real and daunting mystery that has surrounded the castaways' sojourn on the island. No less remarkable is Alonso's concurrence - "I say, Amen, Gonzalo!" (V.i.204) - which appears also to make light of the bewilderment he has experienced since the tempest.

Gonzalo's seeming caprice forms part of a more holistic conception of the denouement, however. In his penultimate speech (V.i.205-213) in the play the *felix culpa* theme is strong: Prospero was thrust from Milan so that Miranda might become queen of Naples (ll.205-6). Prospero's fall is akin to Adam's: as Adam's thirst for knowledge led to his eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:3-6) and his subsequent expulsion from the garden of Eden, Prospero's thirst for knowledge ("the liberal Arts...being all [his] study" - I.ii.73-4) led to neglect of his dukedom and his subsequent expulsion from Milan. The Fall (of Adam) represents mankind's fall into sin: as Milton expresses it in *Paradise Lost* 1.3, "[the taste of the fruit] brought death into the world, and all our woe".²³ Deplorable as sin is, however, the Incarnation and Redemption of Christ are cause for eternal rejoicing, and outweigh, finally, the evil of sin. This *felix culpa* paradox is succinctly expressed in the "Exultet" on Holy Saturday from the Roman liturgy: "O certe necessarium Adae peccatum, quod Christi morte deletum est! O felix culpa,

²³ J. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. A. Fowler (London: Longman Group Limited, 1968), p.40.

CONCLUSION

It might appear from my final observations on the Epilogue that Prospero's renunciation of magic and acceptance of finitude signifies the triumph of an allegorical over a symbolic diction - that de Man's contention about romantic poetry is true for *The Tempest* also, and that the possibility of positing that the two dictions might be held in suspension is a myth to be dispelled. The play may move towards this end - Prospero's return to Italy may betoken the final victory of allegorical diction; but such a displacement never occurs in the play, where the antiphonal movement between states of *desire* and *anxiety*, between assertion of godhood and acceptance of finitude, is continually registered.

On one level the very structure of the play embodies the antiphony. An analysis of the scene design discloses a movement from "a ship at sea" (I.i) to "The island. Before Prospero's Cell" (I.ii) to "Another part of the Island" (II.i: Alonso and company) to yet "Another part of the Island" (II.ii: Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo) back to "Before Prospero's Cell" (III.i) to "Another part of the Island" (III.ii: Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo) to "Another part of the Island" (III.iii: Alonso and company) back to "Before Prospero's Cell" (IV.i) and "Before the cell of Prospero" (V.i) back to the sea (post Epilogue). The oscillation between *anxiety* and *desire* is ingeniously incorporated into this cyclical design, as the following diagram illustrates:

quae casum ac tantum meruit habere redemptorem!" ("O certainly necessary sin of Adam, which is blotted out by the death of Christ! O happy fault, which has deserved to have so remarkable and so great a Redeemer!").³⁰ Prospero's twelve-year exile on a deserted island, his single-minded application to the perfection of his studies, is the price he must pay for his fault. But the reward more than compensates for the suffering, which, like Christ's death, blots out the original transgression: Miranda is to become Queen of Naples, and, more importantly, the forces of Prospero and Alonso are thereby to be united. "O, rejoice," says Gonzalo, "Beyond a common joy!" (V.i.206-7). The rejoicing outweighs all past suffering.

Rejoice as we might with Gonzalo and Alonso in the impending marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda, however, we the audience are not so easily satisfied. The facility with which Gonzalo and Alonso appear to have resolved the strangeness that has perplexed them until only some one hundred lines before V.i.200 does not blind us to the enduring power of strangeness in the play. Alonso may delight in the betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda, but that delight does not detract from the mystery surrounding the denouement. His amazement before Prospero's cell as the various pieces of the puzzle fall into place is poignantly depicted. Having been embraced by Prospero (V.i.109), Alonso cannot yet assert the reality of the situation: Prospero *seems* "flesh and blood" (V.i.114), but the range of unrealities to which Alonso has been exposed renders him dubious. The entire story, if what he is now experiencing is really happening, is "most strange" (V.i.117).

The force of the 'otherness' is intensified by Alonso's juxtapositioning of strangeness and unnaturalness. Once Ferdinand and Miranda have been revealed to the company and the Master and Boatswain have told their tale, Alonso declares: "These are not natural events; they strengthen/From

³⁰ F.H. Dickinson (ed.), *Missale Sarum* (London: Gregg International Publishers Limited, 1969), p.340; my translation.

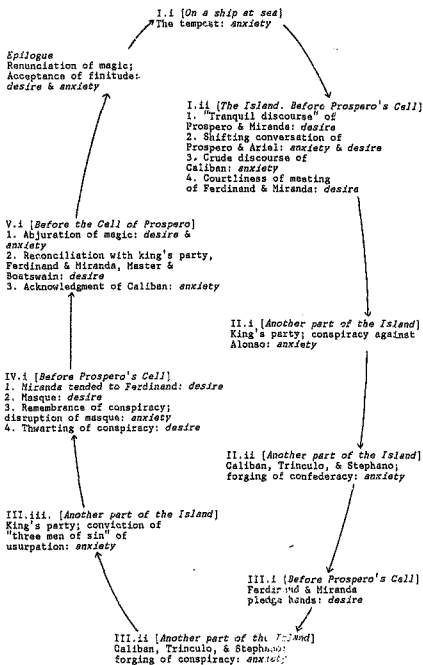


Figure 4. The Operation of the Anxiety-Desire Dialectic in The Tempest.

strange to stranger" (V.i.227-8). This intensification of strangeness seems ironically to reverse the usual conception of denouement: in one sense the reconciliation scene *unties* (denouement: from *denouer*, 'to untie') the complex sequence of events which has led the shipwrecked characters to Prospero's cell, but in another sense what should be disclosed by the untying is itself shrouded in mystery. Alonso employs Gonzalo's image of the maze (III.iii.2-3) to convey a sense of the intricate network of paths both he and others have travelled, literally and figuratively, to this point:

This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod;
And there is in this business more than nature
Was ever conduct of: some oracle
Must rectify our knowledge.

V.i.242-5

The terms "strange" and "nature" are again juxtaposed. And as in V.i.227 Alonso used "natural" as the antithesis of 'supernatural', so here "nature" is used in opposition to 'supernature': hidden knowledge must be revealed by some deity through an "oracle". There is, for Alonso, something supernatural in the strangeness of the business (a strangeness enhanced by the run-on effect achieved in the juxtaposition of *strange* and *a + maze*: word-play produces the phrase *strange amaze*).

Ambiguity surrounds not only the sensuous nature of the characterization of Prospero and Miranda, then, but other characters too as, confronted with manifestations of 'otherness', they find themselves called upon to distinguish nature from supernature. Much of the strangeness experienced by these characters as 'otherness' is resolved, however, if we accord Prospero and his magic their rightful place in the play. It is the magic of Prospero, we shall discover, which accounts for the seeming gratuitousness of those "paranorma" Nuttall identifies, and for many of the *aporis* which beset the hapless castaways.

Whatever the inadequacies of so simplistic a schema, the notion of a pendular swing between states of *anxiety* and *desire* remains valid. From the diagram it is *Prospero's* perception of the world, we observe, that establishes the allegorical pattern; since Prospero as director of the play controls the action, it is fitting that to a large extent our perception of the action be determined allegorically through his eyes. But the oscillation between *anxiety* and *desire* is registered not only at the level of *Prospero's* perception of strangeness. We have monitored the swing of the pendulum at the level of the castaways' perceptions of strangeness and at the level of the castaways' and audience's perceptions of the strangeness of Prospero and Miranda. Strangeness becomes fully ontologically assertive only in relation to Prospero's perception of the world, but this does not invalidate the perceptions of the castaways and audience, for whom strangeness is equally compelling. Indeed, it is the operation of the *anxiety-desire* dialectic at all three levels - establishing an allegorical matrix - which leads us to deem the play by its very nature *allegorical*.

Nevertheless, the characterization of Prospero suggests most powerfully the operation of the *anxiety-desire* dialectic in the play. The allegorical paradigm I have propounded attempts to accommodate both the traditional notion of personification allegory and the *Weltanschauung* notion of a dualistic conception of universal forces. Prospero 'stands for' *hope*, the possibility of salvation held out to Ferdinand, Alonso, and Miranda, and as such he embodies that link with the Eternal which connotes divinity; but this divinity is offset by his *anxiety* over the incorrigibility of Caliban and Antonio - over the inability of magic to change them and the consequent temporality he shares with them. (Similarly, Miranda 'stands for' *wonder* and *singularity*, the *desire* which for Ferdinand and Alonso connotes oneness with the gods; but she is mortal, merely mixing innocent *desire* and naive *anxiety* in her perception of the world.) This superimposition of characterization and perception,

Nuttall cites the somnolence of Miranda in I.ii.186: s.d. as his first piece of evidence of the presence of "gratuitous paranorma" in *The Tempest*.³¹ Such strangeness is easily accounted for, however, if not by the magic of Prospero then by the requirements of dramatic convention; or, by both: Miranda is quite conceivably put to sleep by Prospero's magic³² and because of Shakespeare's dramatic requirements to enable Prospero immediately to demonstrate his control over Ariel, without whom his powers are severely limited. An equally conceivable alternative is that Prospero senses Miranda's drowsiness ("Thou art inclin'd to sleep" - I.ii.185) and may impart nothing more cryptic in his final words to her before she falls asleep - "I know thou canst not choose" (I.ii.186) - than a reassuring fatherly knowledge that, since sleep has the power to render freedom of choice ineffectual, Miranda should take advantage of sleep's timely visitation by procuring rest for her body and mind. Moreover, Miranda claims upon waking that the "strangeness of [Prospero's] story" (I.ii.308) proved weightily soporific (it put "heaviness" upon her - I.ii.309); if we accept the denotational meaning of her words, she is asserting quite plainly that the surprise, even shock, she felt at learning of the strange chain of events which led to Prospero's and her landing on the island put her to sleep, as shocking news often does. That a perfectly natural inclination to sleep should prove so timeous may simply be considered an "accident" (I.ii.178), a concomitant to the run of good fortune Prospero at present enjoys (I.ii.178ff.).

³¹ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.139.

³² Whether we attribute Miranda's somnolence to Shakespeare's hypnotic powers, as Allen does (see Kermode [ed.], *Op. cit.*, p.21 n.85.), or to some other magical soporific agent is not the issue: Prospero needs to have Miranda asleep so that he can converse with Ariel. Nor do I accept Nuttall's contention that the somnolence reveals caprice on the part of Shakespeare or of Prospero (see Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.139).

personification allegory and dualistically-conceived *Weltanschauung*, allows us to assert that 'Prospero is what he sees, and sees what he is': he oscillates in his perception of the world between the *anxiety* and *desire* his characterization embodies. The oscillation between states of *anxiety* and *desire* which characterizes the notion of allegory evolved in Chapter I merely finds quintessential expression in the conception of Prospero; the *uniqueness* of the play lies in the establishment of a matrix of different levels according to which strangeness is variously perceived by *all* the characters of *The Tempest*.

Since it is from an allegorical perspective, then, that we discern most poignantly the uniqueness of *The Tempest*, we may affirm that the play is, by its very nature, allegorical. Allegory is neither the rigid, "empty" rhetorical device denigrated by Nuttall¹ nor the imprecise protean device advocated by Magarey,² but a mode appositely suited to exploring the tensional nature of reality and human perception depicted in *The Tempest*. The tension, I have attempted to demonstrate, is dialectical: the dualistic forces at work in the play - the 'worldly' and the 'spiritual', the natural and the supernatural - are held in suspension through the continual oscillation between states of *anxiety* and *desire* in the perceptions of the cast. If, as Nuttall expresses it, a "peculiar atmosphere of ontological suspension"³ pervades *The Tempest*, the allegorical mode accommodates and manifests more usefully than any other that dialectical tension of forces which creates the suspension in the play.

¹ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, pp.46-8, *passim*.

² Magarey, *op. cit.*, p.105.

³ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.158.

The interval during which Miranda sleeps (I.ii.187-306) fulfils an important dramatic function. We learn from Ariel, while she sleeps, of the effects of the tempest upon the crew and passengers (I.ii.195-237), of his premature desire for liberty (I.ii.242-5), and of the history of his incarceration in a pine and his subsequent release (I.ii.250-293). Nor is the satisfying of dramatic requirement only Shakespeare's concern. Almost the entire play is Prospero's production, from the opening tempest to the final promise of "calm seas, auspicious gales" (V.i.314). As controller of the action, and hence as director of the play, Prospero is only too conscious of the need for careful stage management, of the economy of having Miranda on stage while he converses with Ariel (Prospero and Miranda must visit Caliban next - I.ii.310) without Miranda entering into the magical deliberations of Ariel and himself. A sleeping Miranda, a feat easily accomplished by Prospero and by no means dramatically "gratuitous", solves the problem of stage management.

Similarly "gratuitous", maintains Nuttall, is the "unnatural languor that intermittently envelops the characters".²³ The languor which overcomes Gonzalo, Alonso, and company, however, serves a dramatic function as important as that of Miranda's somnolence. Ariel's "solemn music", we observe, is the soporific agent in II.i.(179: S.D.), and Ariel departs once the drug has taken effect (II.i.193: S.D.). The purpose of the dialogue that follows is to inform both Prospero and the audience of the conspiracy of Sebastian and Antonio, which unfolds ingeniously through a series of *sleep*-metaphors before our eyes (most apt in the context of the nearby sleeping party). At such moments Prospero appears most nearly omniscient, so potent is his magic: foreseeing "through his Art" ((II.i.292) the danger Alonso and Gonzalo face, he sends Ariel to waken them. By now attuned to the unearthly strangeness of Ariel's music (the song with which he draws Ferdinand in I.ii.377-407, for example), we are not startled by

²³ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.139.

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Gonzalo's comment that a "humming...strange" (II.i.312-313) awoke him. Just as Ariel's music is Gonzalo's rouser here, so the music produced by the "twangling instruments" which "hum about [Caliban's] ears" (III.iii.135-6) is the work of Ariel. Caliban reassures Trinculo and Stephano with the words "Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises" (III.ii.133) in response to the sound of the tune *Ariel* is playing on a tabor and pipe (III.ii.122). Caliban may think of the strange music as a property of the isle, but this conception and the fact of his prior occupation of the place³⁴ hardly entail the coexistence of Caliban and the music before Prospero's arrival.

Ariel's music accounts for much of the seeming strangeness Nuttall detects in the play. The boatswain tells how the sailors were awakened by "strange and several noises" (V.i.232), and Nuttall declares, "we are never told what made them".³⁵ In his subsequent article³⁶ Nuttall concedes that Prospero sanctioned the making of the "horrid noises", which were executed by Ariel or some other property, but the question "what made the noise?" is tenaciously repositied.³⁷ Behind Nuttall's question must lie another: did Prospero and Ariel *create* the noises, or were the noises always there and simply *harnessed* by them? It is not inconceivable that the isle became enchanted through Prospero's occupation of it, once his magic had established itself as the more dominant power,³⁸ so whether we attribute the noises to Ariel or to "some property of the magic isle",³⁹ Prospero's magic remains the source. Ariel certainly made the noise;

³⁴ See A.D. Nuttall, "An Answer to Mr Magarey", in *Southern Review*, 1971, 4 (3): 263.

³⁵ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.139.

³⁶ "An Answer to Mr Magarey".

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.263.

³⁸ The other (inferior) power is Sycorax's: see I.ii.290-291, where we learn that Sycorax had not the power to release Ariel from the pine.

³⁹ Nuttall, "An Answer to Mr Magarey", p.263.

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directly after the Boatswain's speech Ariel seeks reassurance from Prospero in an aside: "Was't well done?" (V.i.240). This explanation, granted, answers the question "Who made the noise?"; such quibbling, however, should not obscure the point that Prospero's magic, finally, is behind the production of the noise.

Another of Nuttall's enigmas which "abandon [the sensibility] to uneasy speculation" is "the voice crying in the wave",⁴⁰ the voice which convicts Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio of the sin of supplanting Prospero from Milan (III.iii.96ff.) Alonso has a sense of the whole of nature charging him with the misdeed: the billows (1.96), the winds, and the "thunder (1.97) respectively speak, sing, and pronounce Prospero's name, and the thunder "bass[es his] trespass" (III.iii.99) - it infuses all of nature, as with a resounding bass pedal, with a sense of the enormity of his crime. There is no mystery for us in Alonso's words "Methought the billows spoke, and told me of it" (III.iii.96): Prospero has instructed Ariel to perform the figure of the Harpy expressly to confront the three men with their sin (III.iii.85-6), which makes it quite clear that his *magic* has achieved the desired effect ("My high charms work" - III.iii.88). Prospero's "meaner ministers/Their several kinds have done" (III.iii.87-8): each of Ariel's fellow-spirits has performed that part best suited to his or her nature,⁴¹ and the speaking of the waves, the singing of the winds, and the pronouncing of Prospero's name by the thunder are merely three of the parts played by spirits. The "voice crying in the wave", we conclude, is yet another manifestation of Prospero's magic.

Nuttall's xenomania, one is tempted to call his obsession with strangeness, reaches its peak in his apprehension of the Shapes which "carry out

⁴⁰ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.139.

⁴¹ See Kermode (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.91 n.88.

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the banquet [sic] 'with mops [sic] and mows'" (III.iii.82: S.D.) and of the "'strange, hollow and confused noise' which accompanies the vanishing of the reapers and nymphs at the end of the masque".⁴² Part of the strangeness, certainly, is not imagined by Nuttall, but written into the stage directions by the author himself. The banquet in III.iii is brought in by "*strange Shapes*" to the accompaniment of "*Solemn and strange music*" (III.iii.17: S.D.1-2) - little wonder then that Francisco comments upon the Shapes' departure, "They vanished *strangely*" (III.iii.40), or that the "three men of sin" (III.iii.53) condemned by Ariel to "Ling'ring perdition" (III.iii.77) should stand in a "*strange stare*" (III.iii.95; *my italics*). Nuttall might seem to have some justification for asking "what [the Shapes] are".⁴³ We are not totally dependent on the stage directions for information, however; the perceptions of various characters in response to the performance give us much insight into the Shapes' appearance and function. Sebastian calls the show a "living drollery" (III.iii.21) with more perception than he owns: the Shapes are indeed putting on a puppet-show designed to mock their audience,⁴⁴ tempting Alonso and company with food and imposing on the party's credulity (Antonio, for instance, declares that he, like Sebastian, will believe in the existence of unicorns and the phoenix, and in any other improbable spectacle he sees - III.iii.24-6). Gonzalo calls the shapes "people of the island" (III.iii.30), which suggests at least a human resemblance even if their shape is "monstrous" (III.iii.31), and proclaims their manners "more gentle" (III.iii.32) than those of most human beings. Alonso likens the Shapes' silent conversing to "a kind/Of excellent dumb discourse" (III.iii.38-9).

⁴² Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.139.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ A "drollery" is defined both as a "puppet-show" and as "the act or instance of burlesquing" in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, p.693.

- Nuttall, A.D. "An Answer to Mr Magarey." *Southern Review* 3. 4 (1971): 255-264.
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Far from being shapeless enigmas, then, the Shapes resemble misshapen puppet-like gentle-mannered privately-conversing people. "Why," asks Nuttall, "does the s.d. call them, just, 'Shapes'?"⁴³ The answer is simply this: Shakespeare, for dramatic effect, allows the characters themselves (Alonso and company) merely through the power of description to 'flesh out' the Shapes into palpable forms. In the "living drollery", moreover, the Shapes are puppets in the hands of the puppeteer, Prospero, whose magic gives them life. Their function is made explicit in the stage directions: they are to bring in the banquet, enticingly invite the king's party to eat, and carry out the empty table (*sic*: Ariel has already removed the banquet in III.iii.52: S.D.) after the performance of the Harpy (III.iii.17: S.D. and III.iii.82: S.D.). Their dance is designed to mock the duped party, to display the power of the spirit world over the "swords" (III.iii.60: S.D.) representing the might of the material world whose denizens Alonso and company are.

The spirits (reapers and nymphs) summoned to entertain Ferdinand and Miranda with a dance in the betrothal masque arranged for the couple by Prospero vanish to the accompaniment of "a *strange*, hollow, and confused noise" (IV.i.138: S.D.3-4; my italics) upon Prospero's sudden starting and speaking. Nuttall cites this example as further evidence of the presence of "gratuitous paranorma" in the play.⁴⁴ But how else should spirits interrupted in the course of their dance vanish, other than "to a strange, hollow, and confused noise"? The noise is "strange" because the spirits are not human, "hollow" because their performance is cut short, "confused" because they are disconcerted at having to vanish. The spell has been spoiled by the very person who demanded silence for its duration (IV.i.54, 124-7): Prospero, by speaking, mars his own spell. Such a dislocation destroys the unity of the dance, and the spirits can

⁴³ Nuttall, "An Answer to Mr Magarey", p.26

⁴⁴ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p. . .

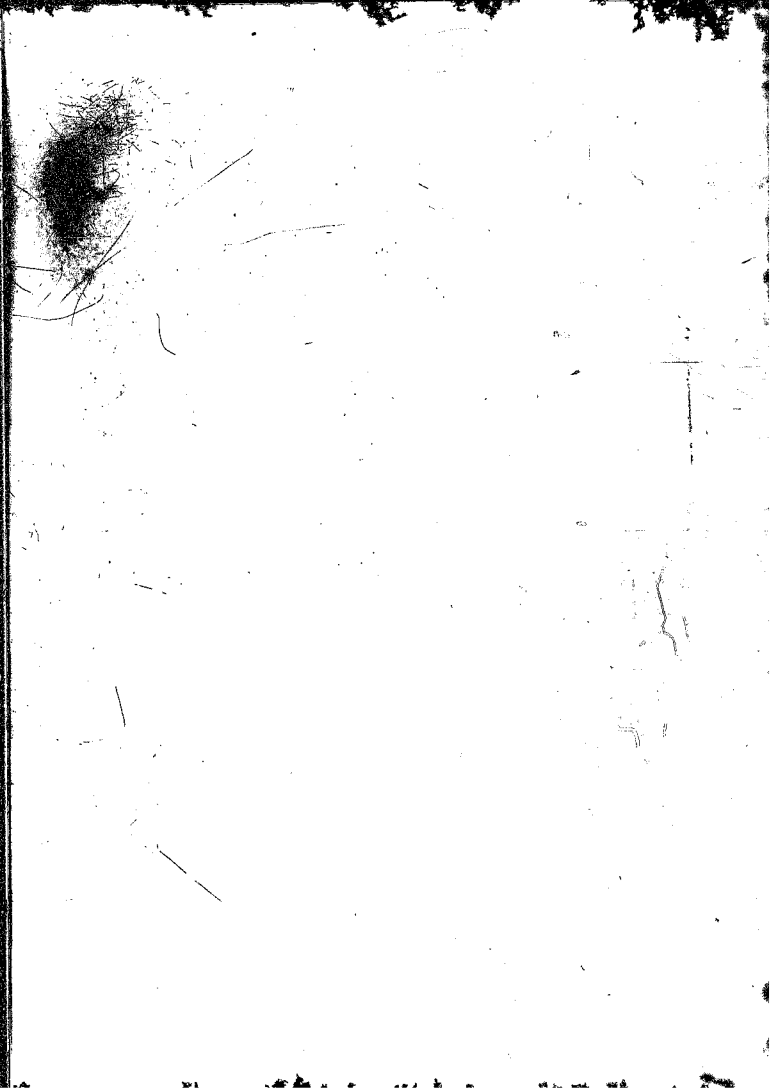
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⁴³ Nuttall, "An Answer to Mr Nagarey", p.262.

⁴⁴ Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory*, p.139.



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