

THE MYTHIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SHAKESPEARE'S THE TEMPEST
AS EVIDENCED BY ITS MYTHIC QUALITY AND ITS
ADHERENCE TO MODELS OF ESTABLISHED MYTHS

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by

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INTRODUCTION

"One of the most distinctive trends in contemporary literary study is that of myth criticism."¹ So states John B. Vickery, editor of Myth and Literature. He states further that myth "provides concepts and patterns which the critic may use to interpret specific works of literature."² Francis Fergusson contends that myth criticism addresses itself to these concepts and patterns of a poetic work on two levels: those modelled upon established myths, and those which contain a "mythic quality."³

This paper will attempt to demonstrate that The Tempest functions effectively on both levels. That the play is a work containing a mythic quality is evidenced by the operation of three archetypes within the play: the archetype of royalty, the archetype of the poet, and the New World archetype.

That The Tempest can be approached as a work modelled upon established myth is supported by K. M. Abenheimer's psychoanalytic study in which the play's action functions to break down Prospero's psychological isolation.⁴ It is supported also by Colin Still's theory that the play re-enacts ancient initiation rites, the upward study in Virgil's Aeneid, and the theme of Dante's Divinia Commedia.

A DISSENTING VIEW

Before considering the main points of this paper, one dissenting opinion should be noted. Harry Slochower, a critic zealously supporting myth criticism, asserts that The Tempest is merely a "magic fairy tale."⁵

If the play is merely a fairy tale, it would only function, as Susanne Langer has observed, "to supply vicarious experience" rather than "to understand actual experience."⁶ However, by following the myth patterns of ancient initiation rites, or the pattern of psychological isolation; or by providing insights into archetypal truths, The Tempest would seem to be more than just "an escape from actual frustration and conflict,"⁷ to quote Langer again.

Why, then, does Dr. Slochower discount the mythic significance of The Tempest? Speaking boldly in the journal which Dr. Slochower himself edits, John E. Gedo contends that "there may be more things in mythopoesis than are dreamt of in this philosophy. The functional unity that Dr. Slochower has forged seems to me to be an artificial one."⁸

This artificiality arises from the preconceptions which Dr. Slochower imposes upon his study of myth in classic works. He cannot recognize any mythical significance in The Tempest because it is Hamlet which best personifies his "idealization of opposition to authority, and his emphasis on issues of

social class, all typical of progressive-democratic circles of the entre-deux guerres."⁹

Dr. Slochower's primary concern in his book, Mythopoesis: Mythic Patterns in the Literary Classics, is heroic revolt against authority. This fact is particularly well illustrated by his opposition to religious interpretations of the "Book of Job" because "it ignores Job's revolutionary indictment."¹⁰

It is not surprising, therefore, that Dr. Slochower chooses to revere Shakespeare's Hamlet. This play provides, he states, "the first hero which stands alone," whereas previously, "the revolt of the heroic character takes place within (emphasis Slochower's) the framework of tradition."¹¹ In addition, Dr. Slochower determines that: "Hamlet's difficulty consists in his inability to be a specialist (emphasis Slochower's) in an age of developing specialization."¹²

In view of this orientation, it is not difficult to understand why The Tempest is discarded as a mere fairy tale. The Tempest does not provide an historical environment into which Dr. Slochower can project his theory of the revolutionary hero. "The happy ending," he contends, "becomes possible only by being set in a fairy world in which life is 'such stuff as dreams are made on.'"¹³

It has been necessary to consider Dr. Slochower's book for two reasons. First, its topic is "mythopoesis," which he defines as those myths which have "seized the imagination of our classical writers who then transformed the various mythological accounts into a single, unified work of art."

This definition correlates directly with the approach to poetic works modelled upon established myth to which Fergusson refers and which provides a main consideration in this paper. Second, the fact that Dr. Slochower rejects The Tempest as not being significant in this context would seem to invalidate this paper if it were not pointed out that he is operating within a restricted frame of reference.

THE PASSIVE ARCHETYPES

Having dealt with Dr. Slochower's dissenting opinion, it is now possible to proceed with the first consideration in this study of The Tempest's mythic significance: namely, its mythic quality.

To possess a mythic quality, a poetic work must contain some mythic component, whether or not the work functions as a mythic whole with each element contributing to an overall mythic statement or model.

James E. Miller, Jr. distinguishes between two terms: myth and archetype. He states that myth can be considered synonymous with archetype; however, it is possibly more convenient to say "myth" when referring to narrative and "archetype" when referring to significance.¹⁵

In this paper, it is most convenient to refer to the single mythical components as "archetypes." They are individual mythic concepts which should be differentiated from established myths such as those inherent in the ancient initiation rites and the narratives of Virgil's Aeneid and Dante's Divinia Commedia, as well as the psychoanalytic framework. These myths provide the second major consideration in this paper.

A distinction within the archetypes themselves should be made also. The first two archetypes, the archetype of

royalty and the archetype of the poet, can best be described as "passive archetypes." They remain relatively constant in meaning and are complete in their original context. The third archetype, that of the New World, can best be understood as an "active archetype." It is active because it is a protean concept which assumes various meanings beyond its original context.

Archetype of Royalty

The first of the passive archetypes to be analyzed is the archetype of royalty. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch believes that the great impact of The Tempest results from this archetype: "the sense is royal: we feel that we are greater than we know."¹⁶ This inner potential is symbolized by the vestiges of regal status. D. J. James, in his article, "The Failure of the Ballad Makers," believes that this image is assigned a nearly impossible task:

But this complication was inevitable. It was inevitable because the symbol of royalty was inadequate to embody all that was present in Shakespeare's imagination. So external a symbol could not hope to express the spiritual supremacy with which he wished to endow his heroes and heroines, though no doubt it was the most appropriate he could find.¹⁷

But it is this very difficulty which gives the concept its mythic significance. According to Jung, the purpose of myth is to create "the best possible expression of some insight for which no more rational formulation has yet been found."¹⁸

One evidence of the symbol's appropriateness is its

integral role in the plot. Immediately following the initial scene of the shipwreck, Prospero states:

I have done nothing but in care of thee,
Of thee, my dear one, thee my daughter who
Art ignorant of what thou art, naught knowing
Of whence I am, nor that I am more better¹⁹
Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell.

Prospero is ever conscious of his royal status which he expects and works to re-assume. He wishes to awaken in Miranda a comprehension of his external royal status. But, more importantly, as James notes, the inner spiritual ascendancy is present even if the accident of fate has removed the outer trappings:

The heros and heroines are princes and princesses who, whether or not they bear the robes of royalty, are royal; who in poverty and suffering take on a divine bearing and so, far from suffering death and disaster, are given at the end the full attributes of royalty.²⁰

The personifications of the archetype of royalty are Miranda and Ferdinand. They are the hero and heroine to which James alludes. Their natural admiration for each other exists apart from Prospero's powers, as Quiller-Couch realizes: "We shall not understand this play lacking to understand how young impulse forestalls and takes charge, outrunning the magician's deliberate contrivance."²¹

Miranda, having grown up with only a dim recollection of her past status, is the truest personification of the archetype. Her estrangement from society and from her past role of princess causes her meeting with Ferdinand to seem all the more improbable, if read literally. E. M. W. Tillyard comments upon the literal interpretation: "Since Miranda

had never seen a young man, it might reasonably be doubted whether she would behave herself with entire propriety when she did."²²

Miranda's absolute purity in itself is of questionable credence to other critics as well. Tillyard refers to a passage from Schucking's Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays:

In depicting her with talk of "modesty, the jewel in my dower" and her protests that if Ferdinand will not marry her, "I'll die your maid," and in making Prospero so insistent that she should not lose her maidenhead before marriage, Shakespeare, according to Schucking, is yielding to the demands of his age against his better judgement.²³

However, it can be demonstrated that Shakespeare was drawing directly from the attitudes of his time to create the archetypal symbol of royalty, attitudes which have persisted, particularly in England, well into the twentieth century. Tillyard, writing in the late 1930's, states:

What most strikingly emerged from the abdication of our late King was the strong anthropological feeling of the masses of the people concerning the importance of virginity in a King's consort. The Elizabethans were not less superstitious than ourselves and would have sympathised with Prospero's anxiety that the future Queen of Naples should keep her maidenhead till marriage: otherwise ill luck would be sure to follow.²⁴

Furthermore, Quiller-Couch points out that

We may take it almost for a certainty that--in whatever previous form or forms presented--this play as we have it was the play enacted at the court to grace the Princess Elizabeth's betrothal.²⁵

And according to historical accounts, he notes also that:

It would seem that no "gentleman" could come with the aura

but he knelt to Elizabeth of Bohemia, her sworn knight: that either he followed thenceforth to the last extremity, proud only to serve, or, called away, he departed as one who had looked upon a vision which changed all the values of life, who had beheld a kingdom of the soul in which self and this world were well lost for a dream.²⁶

Thus, this transfiguring inner beauty which Shakespeare observed in Princess Elizabeth and sought to idealize in his dramaturgical tribute to her nuptials, contributed to the archetypal symbol of inner royalty. The contribution to the creation of the archetype of royalty exists whether or not Shakespeare felt himself a sell-out to popular values. The natural awe and idealization of the British people for kingship makes the symbol appropriate at its conception and much later.

It is not an active archetype; it does not emerge except through analysis which brings it forth. But as has been shown, complexity at first glance does not preclude its single import. Shakespeare has touched upon an archetypal truth intrinsic to every healthy human mind. Just as, even without their regal robes, Shakespeare's prince and princess sense their greater worth, so must each individual, however subject to the accidents of fate, be ever hopeful that "we are greater than we know."²⁷

Archetype of the Poet

Prospero personifies an archetype which overreaches the archetype of royalty. He loses the robes of royalty; but he dons a mantle of magic, carries a charmed staff, and studies a book of spells, all of which constitute the vestiges of what

he calls "mine art." Rose Zimbardo expands upon the meaning of the term "art:"

Prospero is an artist of a kind. He uses music, the very symbol of order, in creating his effects, he attempts to manipulate the other characters to the end of creating or preserving order and form. We can say that for Prospero, as for the poet who is creating the play, all time is present and all the action fore-known to and controlled by him. However, to counterbalance this image, which by itself might well cause a critic to mistake him for God, Prospero is also at times irascible, at times a bit ridiculous, and always under necessity to combat those forces of disorder which he cannot control.²⁸

Such a character and function exceeds the requirements of a mere fairy tale magician in a work plagued with what Lytton Strachy calls "an excessive reliance upon fanciful effect."²⁹ Leslie Fiedler states, in fact, that Prospero "is a self portrait only the most obtuse scholars can fail to see."³⁰

Northrop Frye notes that:

His (Prospero's) talents are evidently dramatic rather than political, and he seems less of a practical magician plotting the discomfiture of his enemies than a creative artist calling spirits from their confines to enact his present fancies. It has often been thought that Prospero is a self-portrait of Shakespeare, and there may well be something in him of a harassed, overworked actor-manager. . . .³¹

If it is the case that Prospero is a self-portrait of Shakespeare, the poet, then the effect would be similar to the play within a play effect of Hamlet. Leslie Fiedler, in fact, draws a comparison between Hamlet and Prospero as they relate to the figure of the poet:

Hamlet is an actor who desires to become a playwright trapped inside a tragedy, at last, a patcher of an old play, an emender of a pattern given like fate. Prospero, the artist as magician, is not within a play at all; but the play, become a dream, is within him. Not necessity, but

wish controls the action, and the protagonist does not die to his situation, but wakes from it.³²

When Prospero awakens from his "dream," he must return to the larger action, or real-life play from which his dream was but a momentary departure. The Tempest, then, contains what Fiedler calls a "metaphor in infinite extension."³³ There is the cosmic reality in which God or Fate works its will upon Shakespeare; who leaves other tasks to write a play to thereby work his will upon the audience or reader; who leaves other tasks to interpret Prospero; who escapes his duties in Milan to work his will upon Ariel; who then escapes the cloven pine to work his will upon the other characters, such as Caliban, who leaves his tasks to work his will upon Stephano and Trinculo; all of these actions being subject to varying successes or effectiveness according to the superior or inferior faculties of those involved.

The archetype of the poet emerges as the agent which attempts to impose an ordering influence into the scheme of "infinite extension." Niela Jaffe refers to Jung's observation that archetypes exert an ordering influence "to the extent that the archetypes intervene in the shaping of the conscious contents by regulating, modifying, and motivating them."³⁴ This is the idealistic goal of the playwright in creating symbolic images; it is Prospero's role within the play as he personifies this power to become an embodiment of the archetype.

Thus Shakespeare creates a work with a mythic quality,

containing archetypes to be identified and understood. Likewise, Prospero groups his subjects and casts spells and controls them so that they can realize his intent for them. For, if the function of the poet figure in Hamlet is to revenge disaster, and of the poet figure in Measure for Measure to prevent disaster, the function of Prospero is to forgive it and make it right. Prospero states:

Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
 Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
 Do take part. The rarer action is
 In virtue than in vengeance.³⁵

Prospero is able, aided by his vestiges of magic, especially his book ("I'll to my book /For yet ere supertime must I perform /Much business appertaining"³⁶), to work his magic powers upon his subjects.

Consistent with the problems of a poet, he is limited on two fronts, however. First, like an artist shunned by a vulgar public, he is unable to effectively influence Caliban: "A devil, a born devil, on whose nature /Nurture can never stick, on whom my pains, /Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost."³⁷

Second, once the specific problem to which the art addresses itself is solved, the revels must, momentarily at least, be over, so that "all which it (the Globe) inherit-- shall dissolve /And, like this insubstantial pageant faded, / Leave not a rack behind."³⁸ Both limitations confront Prospero directly in the fourth act because the masque which he has conjured up, with all its lyric sublimity, is interrupted when "the beast Caliban and his confederates" are about to execute

their "foul conspiracy."

Prospero must abjure his magic and return to more worldly tasks, accepting the minimal loss of Caliban's non-compliance, even as must Shakespeare, the actor-manager-playwright. As Fiedler observes: "His is the failure of success," as Hamlet's is the "success of failure."³⁹

Fiedler proceeds further to suggest that Prospero's isolated island symbolizes an integral element of the archetype of the poet: "Only the disinherited, or, as we say now, the 'alienated' controls the means of art: the magic of dreams is given in exile and loneliness."⁴⁰

The initial expulsion of Prospero from Milan by his brother correlates with Fiedler's theory of why the poet becomes isolated:

The mass mind, dimly resentful as the Vates becomes Poeta, the Seer a Maker, the Persona a Personality, composes a new archetype, an image to punish the poet for detaching himself from the collective id--and the Poet, amused and baffled, accepts and elaborates the new image.⁴¹

In like fashion, Prospero states: "And to my state grew stranger, being transported and rapt in secret studies."⁴² His "neglecting of worldly ends, all dedicated /To closeness and bettering of my mind . . . in my false brother /Awakened an evil nature."⁴³

So Prospero loses his position within society, "elaborates the new image," and finally compensates by "submitting himself to the dark powers of inspiration for the sake of the whole people," as symbolized by the cross section of personages he brings to the isle and subjects to his powers.

Fiedler traces his concept of the poet as "Scape-Hero" back to the legend of Euripides' brutal death and to the ritually dismembered Orpheus.⁴⁴ The correlation to Prospero is revealed in Clifford Leach's observation that:

The abandonment of magic power is, indeed, a kind of death for Prospero . . . we cannot feel a sense of true completion in Prospero's story: what Antonios will intrigue against him yet in Milan, what Calibans will resist his teaching, remain unidentified yet ever potential.⁴⁵

This understanding of the archetype of the poet precludes any superficially happy ending of a fairy tale. Prospero's powers prevade the play in explication of Shakespeare's own dilemma. It is a single archetype, yet Prospero's dominance comes close to creating a mythic model in itself. Few plays could hope to create, not only the archetype of the poet, but also the magical mood in which he creates. A. D. Nuttall reflects: "That property of the imagination which makes possible the instantial 'universal' is the same property which gives The Tempest its peculiar atmosphere of ontological suspension."⁴⁶ Kenneth Rexroth states the case in its extremity: "The Tempest is itself a myth, a source of power."⁴⁷

THE ACTIVE ARCHETYPE

Even with its capacity to exude an all-encompassing mood, the archetype of the poet remains stationary within the context of the artist and his powers just as the archetype of royalty refers consistently to the best of inner values. With the archetype of the New World, however, Shakespeare produces a mythic image with a protean quality which adapts to new problems of colonization and the American consciousness. It is a mythic quality which originates with literary criticism but supercedes it as conditions change.

The active archetype is best described by those critics who approach myths from the framework of philosophy and social science. This is true because often myth, as Langer states, "does not exhaust its function in the telling."⁴⁸

So the archetype of the New World begins with the image of that first colonizer, Prospero, who, for all his advanced powers, cannot tame that archetypal image of primitive impulse, Caliban.

The father of structural anthropology, Claude Levi-Strauss, believes that "the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a real contradiction."⁴⁹ The contradiction between the colonizer's "mission" and the native's "freedom": the conflict between master-slave; new world and old, persists to the present day and is as little

understood by those directly involved as it was on Shakespeare's mystical isle. Thus K. M. Abenheimer contends that "Shakespeare was the creator of a mythology of modern man."⁵⁰

To neglect the New World archetype in The Tempest, however outside the realm of traditional literary criticism it might at first glance appear to be, would be to minimize the mythic significance of the play, particularly in the twentieth century. Shakespeare was thinking the New World of America when he wrote The Tempest; he had obviously read the accounts of explorations to the Bermudas.⁵¹ He also owned a copy of Montaigne's essay, "Of the Cannibals." John Wain, in addition, states:

During his (Prospero's) years on the island, he has used his knowledge in the service of power. He has, as we should say, "colonized" it. And here the story links up with the contemporary world of the strange deliverance of the "Sea Adventure", the colony in Virginia, and the argument over Nature and Nurture.⁵²

Three major commentators should be considered in order to cover adequately the range of the New World archetype as it is believed to function in the twentieth century. Leslie Fiedler treats the colonial history of America in general and contends that the American consciousness is reverting back to the Caliban image of primitivism; T. S. Eliot comments upon the transitional stage in which he believes the Caliban image of the New World still, in the early twenties, carries over from the original revolution from the old master, Europe; Frances FitzGerald believes that The Tempest provides the best portrayal of relations

between colonial and native in the even newer world of emerging underdeveloped countries specifically Vietnam.

New World Primitivism and American Consciousness

Leslie Fiedler states that in The Tempest, the whole history of imperialist America has been prophetically revealed to us in brief parable: from the initial act of expropriation through the Indian wars to the setting up of reservations and from the beginnings of black slavery to the first revolts and evasions.⁵³

The parable is set forth by the arrival of Prospero to the island with his advanced power, the enslavement of Caliban when Caliban cannot abide by Prospero's moral standard, and finally the foredoomed revolt of Caliban and the drunken sailors Stephano and Trinculo.

Caliban desires desperately to destroy Prospero and his powers: "with a log /Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake /or cut his wisand with thy knife."⁵⁴ But it is Caliban's assertion of primitive standards against the literate archetype of the poet which recurs in his obsessive dictate to destroy Prospero's books: "Having first seized his books . . . Remember /First to possess his books, for without them /He's but a sot . . . burn but his books."⁵⁵ Fiedler equates these tools of the poet with "a literate technology with which the ruling classes of Europe controlled the subliterates of two world."⁵⁶

Fiedler finds American literature itself reverting to a pre-literate, Caliban level reminiscent of the Poundian cry: "break the iambic."⁵⁷ Caliban spoke the first beat poem with the verse ending, "Freedom, heyday! Heyday, freedom!

Freedom, /Heyday, freedom."⁵⁸

This reversion becomes a sociological issue, moreover, because of the racial element implicit in the New World archetype. Even though Caliban's heritage can be more accurately described as nonhuman, rather than nonwhite, the correlation with minority and "inferior" races remains popular with critics such as Fiedler.

Before considering Fiedler's correlation of the Caliban image with the blacks of America, another correlation of the racial element inherent in the Caliban image should be noted. It is no mistake that when Aldous Huxley in his novel, Brave New World, catapulted the New World archetype into the future, his Caliban figure is Bernard Marx, genetically defective. Ira Grushow notes that:

The resemblance is unmistakable. Like Caliban's Marx's questionable birth, or decanting, is against him, his physical deformity breeds discontent and rebellion, and his education or conditioning has failed to produce its desired effects.⁵⁹

But for Fiedler, Bernard Marx would seem peripheral to the Caliban image compared to the blacks of America:

How much more the Negroes (and following their example, the Negro-isers, Beat and Hip) tend in the 'sixties to create for us--and reflect from us--a desire to re-establish our culture on a denial of that Western cosmopolitanism whose political face is White Imperialism. Once we have granted that the nationalist-nativist-primitivist strain in our life and art is our most authentic expression, we are compelled to see the Negro as the ultimate, the absolute American--rivalled only by the Indian, to whose image he is assimilated in our classic works. Certainly, he is no transplanted European, but no more is he a displaced African after 300 years.⁶⁰

The natural, soul music implicit in the negro

primitive's image, is often observed to be present in Caliban. Bonamy Dobree notes that "It is curious, by the way, that Ariel uses some of the coarsest imagery in the play, Caliban some of the most ethereal."⁶¹ The most outstanding example of Caliban's lyricism is the passage:

Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,
 Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
 Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
 Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices
 That; if I then had waked after long sleep,
 Will make me sleep again. And then, in dreaming,
 The clouds me thought would open and show riches
 Ready to drop upon me, and when I waked,
 I cried to dream again.⁶²

But he seems to be reflecting, actually, the magic of the island infused by Prospero's magic. The humming about his ears is more apt to be the capriciousness of Ariel than the manifestation of Caliban's own mind. His own song to the sailors is:

No more dams I'll make for fish
 Nor fetch in firing
 At requiring
 Nor scrape trencher, nor wash dish
 'Ban, 'Ban, Cacaliban
 Has a new master - Get a new man
 Freedom, heyday! Heyday, freedom! Freedom
 Heyday, freedom!⁶³

Although Montaigne's essay also praises native poetry,⁶⁴ it is not to be confused with Prospero's image as the archetype of the poet. As has been shown in the two passages just quoted, Caliban's own poetry is in the service of social revolt, identifiable with the New World primitive's discontent.

The New World primitive stands antithetical to the archetype of the poet. Derek Traversi observes that:

The problem with which Prospero is wrestling is simply that the natural, animal man is a complete anarchist. For the burden of Caliban's grievance is that Prospero has deprived him of his freedom, subjected his physical individuality to the pre-eminence of spiritual rule.⁶⁵

Also, John Wain states that "he (Caliban) is an indirect argument for Prospero's art and against the policy of leaving everything to nature."⁶⁶

The New World primitive, as personified by Caliban, exists also in contrast to the royalty archetype, if it is not a gruesome parody. Caliban had been pre-eminent on the island and claimed it as his kingdom: "This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother, /which thou takest from me."⁶⁷ He states, in addition: "For I am all the subjects that you have, /which first was my own kind."⁶⁸

Caliban is a prince, of sorts, just as Miranda is a princess and Ferdinand a prince. But just as Caliban is "not honored with human shape,"⁶⁹ so he lacks the spiritual supremacy possible for Mankind. Whereas the personifications of the royalty archetype maintain an inner purity and forbearance even without the status of royalty, Caliban projects the opposite character traits: "I have used thee," Prospero laments, "filth as thou art, with human care, and lodg'd thee /In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate / The honour of my child."⁷⁰

Rose Zimbardo refers to Caliban as "the incarnation of chaos, the two agents of which are sexual intemperance and the refusal to submit to political authority."⁷¹

Along with the personification of the primitive, which

stands antithetical to the royalty and poet archetypes, the New World archetype also includes the image of the wilderness, which Fiedler calls "the maze."⁷² Shakespeare puns on the term when Gonzalo exclaims, "All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement . . ."⁷³ Later in the play, Alonzo says: "This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod."⁷⁴

What emerges from this element of the New World archetype is a structural equation worthy, if not surpassing, the anthropological equations of Levi-Strauss. Fiedler discovers that "the maze seems as central to the mythology of the West in The Tempest as the riddle is to the mythology of the East."⁷⁵

In Oedipus Rex, which represents the Old World, the following formula is operable: East = the past = incest = the riddle. In The Tempest, which represents the New World, the following formula is operable: West = the future = rape and miscegenation = the maze.⁷⁶

Whether or not the two formulae exist simultaneously in The Tempest (Fiedler's contention) is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it should be obvious from the foregoing analysis of the primitive image as personified by Caliban, with its ongoing grip upon the American consciousness, that the latter formula is well suited to the New World archetype.

New World Archetype in Vietnam

This brings the discussion to the second major commentator on the New World archetype because a worse maze has

never seemed to have arisen for Americans than the jungles of Vietnam. Whether or not the archetype is wholly applicable in this eastern setting of War, Frances FitzGerald calls upon it to explain two chapters of her Pulitzer Prize winning book, Fire in the Lake. Her use of the archetype to explain the relationship between Americans and Vietnamese does provide, to quote Jungian theory again, "an insight for which no more rational explanation has yet been found."⁷⁷ In FitzGerald's framework, the New World Americans play the role of imperialist colonizer to an even newer world: an underdeveloped country which is a part of what has been called "the third world."

FitzGerald considers the Vietnam experience to be an extension of the American imperialist tradition. If this be true, it is but an extension of Fiedler's argument, as noted previously, that "the whole history of imperialist America has been prophetically revealed to us in brief parable"⁷⁸ by Shakespeare in The Tempest.

For FitzGerald, the racial element is the pre-eminent issue. She discloses that:

In Vietnam the American officers like to call area outside GVN control "Indian Country" . . . it put the Vietnamese War into a definite historical and mythological perspective: the Americans were once again embarked upon a heroic and (for themselves) almost painless conquest of an inferior race.⁷⁹

In order to emphasize this racial element, FitzGerald prefaces her chapter entitled "Prospero" by juxtaposing two speeches from the fourth act, scene one, which are not so juxtaposed in the play at all.⁸⁰ Miranda's speech, "Never

till this day /Saw I him touched with anger so distempered,"⁸¹
 is incorrectly followed by Prospero's speech referring to
 Caliban as "a devil, a born devil, on whose nature /Nurture
 can never stick."⁸²

This sequence discounts the "revels now are ended" speech which actually follows Miranda's speech and which reveals Prospero to be disturbed as much or more by the passing of his powers as poet as by the revolt of Caliban. In fact, according to FitzGerald, the primitive figure is entirely victimized and has no evil intentions whatever. Such may have been the case in Vietnam, but not in the case of Caliban in The Tempest.

What actually seems true in the context of the New World archetype is that the Americans assume the image of both Prospero and Caliban. Armed with the power and status of the Prospero image, they confront the wilderness maze in the conditions of war where, as FitzGerald concedes, "all the laws of civilization are suspended,"⁸³ However, if a true image of Prospero were actually present, representing the archetype of the poet, the primitive impulses would be restricted, even as Prospero restricted Caliban in The Tempest.

FitzGerald's parallels ring truer in her chapter "Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel." She projects the image of the imperialist as a "Prospero figure fleeing his homeland where he is ineffectual in order to dominate in a new, primitive world via his 'magical powers.'"⁸⁴ She also projects the image of "the native as Caliban with an ambivalent feeling

towards authority, seeking not independence, but a new and better master."⁸⁵ Finally, FitzGerald invokes Ariel into this New World milieu:

The houseboy as Ariel, the intermediary between the colonial and the native Calibans. He desires independence, but he cannot take it for himself, for in exchange for his master's "magical powers" he has relinquished his independence of spirit and bound himself to servitude.⁸⁶

Although FitzGerald's analogies demonstrate that the New World archetype extends conveniently into the area of American foreign policy, they are used more in the service of a journalistic indictment against America's foreign policy rather than as literary criticism of The Tempest. Because of this fact, the archetype suffers some distortions. Prospero is portrayed as a totally tyrannical figure, personified by bureaucratic expediency and American atrocities. Ariel is placed between the primitive and the Prospero figure in order to project the dilemma of the Vietnamese houseboy when, in fact, Ariel is an element of the Archetype of the poet; he is not a New World primitive.

New World of America and Old World of Europe

Returning again to America itself, it is interesting to note that the third major commentator, D. H. Lawrence, believed that Americans have never freed themselves from their New World relationship to Europe. Leslie Fiedler points out that:

With even more astonishing prescience, The Tempest foreshadows the emergence of that democracy of fugitive white slaves, deprived and cultureless refugees from a Europe they never owned, which D. H. Lawrence was so bitterly to describe.⁸⁷

Lawrence speculates that "somewhere deep in every American heart lies a rebellion against the old parenthood of Europe."⁸⁸ He correlates this feeling with the lines in The Tempest, "Ca Ca Cacaliban /Get a new master, be a new man."⁸⁹ Americans can never really be free, Lawrence contends, until the bonds of the Old World are fully cast off: America must "first break the spell of the old mastery" before the "American whole soul can be realized."⁹⁰

The New World archetype, then, reasserts itself from the origin in The Tempest in an attempt to cope with the American scene, past, present and future. What arises from this effort is a kaleidoscope image of Americans passing from being Europe's New World with the vestiges of this experience still impinging upon the American consciousness. The primitive elements have arisen within the culture, rebelling against the literate consciousness; and it is yet to be seen if it will receive the same fate as Caliban's own rebellion, or if it represents the Spenglerian death-note of the Western culture as a whole.

Also, America assumes the role of master to the even newer world of the underdeveloped countries. And beyond, there looms the spectre of the Huxleyan vision of Prospero transformed into Mustapha Mond, towards which America leads the way via its technological wizardry.

All of these phenomena are brought into focus and explained in terms of the original New World archetype which Shakespeare created. The archetype has become more active

as new contradictions arise between the controlling, ordering impulse of the Prospero image and the drive towards uninhibited freedom by the Caliban image of primitivism. In the twentieth century, clear lines of demarcation no longer exist, but the extension of the New World archetype persists.

THE DIALECTICAL DESIGN

The mythic significance of The Tempest assumes, at this point, a dialectical dimension. In approaching The Tempest on the level of its mythic quality, three archetypes have been established, that of royalty, the poet, and the New World.

The first two archetypes interact to form the thesis: the royalty archetype provides an image of mankind's positive potential which the archetype of the poet attempts to promote and protect. The archetype of the New World is the antithesis: it contains the primitive factor which seeks total freedom irrespective of moral standards.

The first two archetypes, the thesis, are passive. Their images are relatively constant and project approximately the same significance today as they did in Elizabethan England. The third archetype, the antithesis, is an active archetype. Its protean images reflect the shifting scene of a New World grown powerful but still haunted by its relatively recent primitive origin.

The synthesis of the passive and active archetypes is the approach to The Tempest as a work modelled upon established myths. The archetypes become incorporated in the larger structure of an established myth. They interrelate in a framework which provides a resolution for their conflicting

meanings.

Professor Alan Dundes, in his article, "Theories of Myth," states that established myths each contain their own symbolic code.⁹¹ He also notes that the major symbolic codes established in the twentieth century is provided by psychoanalytic theory.⁹² Freud, therefore, created a set of symbols which can be called a modern established myth. That The Tempest can be approached as a work which follows the symbolic code of psychoanalytic theory is substantiated by K. M. Abenheimer's study of The Tempest.

Another symbolic code comprises the much older established myth of initiation. Colin Still asserts that The Tempest is modelled upon this myth and that the myth itself originates from a matrix of religious and semi-religious beliefs found in the pagan initiation rites, Virgil's Aeneid, Dante's Divinia Commedia, and the Bible.

Although Professor Dundes states that "The principal difficulty is that each school of symbolism claims the one and only correct key to interpreting the symbolic code," the interaction between the archetypes in both theories cited leads to the same synthesis in The Tempest: regeneration. The archetypes may have different code names and interact towards a different type of regeneration, but the dialectical pattern is strikingly similar.

The remainder of this paper will consider how the archetypes figure in each of these two mythic frameworks and will thus attempt to demonstrate that The Tempest, as

well as possessing a mythic quality, is also modelled upon established myths.

ESTABLISHED MYTHS

Psychoanalytic Code

Talcott Parsons states that: "There can be no doubt about the tremendous impact of psychoanalytic theory on the culture of the twentieth century, nor about Freud's perponderant creative role in establishing it as part of our culture."⁹³ That The Tempest can be approached as being modelled upon this established myth is supported by K. M. Abenheimer's psychological study of the play. The study also reveals that the passive and active archetypes function dialectically to create the psychoanalytic pattern.

The archetype of royalty, which represents the best of human potential, becomes, in the psychoanalytic context, Prospero's anima ideal. In relation to this ideal, he assumes the role of omnipotent and omniscient father. In this role, he submerges his personality and becomes isolated. Abenheimer states that "such identification with archetypal images leads inevitably to isolation, for no longer can such a person react to events as his heart and feelings would demand." The result of this syndrome is that "he has to hide his own personality and play the part of being nothing but good and protective parent."⁹⁴

By devoting himself to the enactment of his magical powers in this role, "Prospero the magician patronizes others

and rules over them and orders them about, but does not expose his own personality to reactions and the influences of others and thus is isolated." This state of being correlates with Jung's analysis of the artistic character: "He is objective and impersonal--even inhuman--for as an artist he is his work, and not a human being."⁹⁵ These traits contribute to the isolation inherent in the archetype of the poet.

Abenheimer contends that "the breaking down of this isolation is the central dramatic theme of The Tempest."⁹⁶

Before revealing how the active archetype of New World primitivism interacts with the passive archetypes to effect the fulfillment of the dramatic theme, the interrelationship of the passive archetypes must be considered. The archetype of royalty, represented by the anima ideal, contains a double image in Abenheimer's analysis. It is personified by Ariel as well as by Miranda:

Ariel and Miranda are very much akin, particularly in the time before Miranda meets Ferdinand. She is an image of "Woman" how Prospero desires women to be, all pleasing, all obedient, all submissive. In consequence she is as unsubstantial and impersonal as Ariel himself. Prospero's relationship to her is also cleansed of physical aspects through the incest taboo. Thus she is as childlike, pure and immaterial an anima as Ariel. Yet she, as a human being, has the potentiality of transformation into something completely human which is lacking in Ariel. This is probably the deeper reason for the duplication of the anima in the play.⁹⁷

Abenheimer contends that Ariel "represents Prospero's spiritual love, cleansed and divorced from material and physical aspects."⁹⁸ This spiritual essence corresponds to the phenomenon which Leslie Fiedler links directly to the

archetype of the poet: the Muse. Fiedler states that when the poet begins to create literature, "it is the Muse who is mythically bodied forth, the unconscious, collective source of the archetypes, imagined as more than human, and, of course, female."⁹⁹

Donald A. Stauffer also links Ariel with the function of the poet:

Prospero exercises his power through Ariel, just as any artist uses as his instrument the creative imagination. Prospero's moral wisdom has been attained through the imagination, or in interaction with the imagination. It fulfills itself through the imagination, which for Shakespeare no less than for Shelley is the supreme instrument for moral good.¹⁰⁰

And it is important to Abenheimer that Ariel's femininity be substantiated in order to establish Ariel's role as anima ideal. He observes:

We come nearer the understanding of this figure if we remember that this male spirit has to appear in a female disguise (as a nymph, or as Ceres) several times. Thus he is reminiscent of many ambisexual girls and sweethearts in Shakespeare's other plays. (It is not by chance that Ariel is often played by actresses on the modern stage.)¹⁰¹

Abenheimer also notes Prospero's endearments to Ariel, such as "Dearly, my delicate Ariel."¹⁰²

The important element of the relationship between Prospero and his two anima ideals is that the mutual support contributes to his isolation. The obedience which Prospero demands and receives from the instrument of his art and the object of his paternal protection encloses him in his own artificially complete world: "Not only is love impossible as long as the anima is enslaved, one also deceives oneself about one's isolation by imagining that the domination over

the anima is something in the nature of a relationship."¹⁰³

The archetype of royalty, then, assumes a super-ego function for the poet as omniscient father figure:

She (the anima) is not an independent being outside Prospero's ego but the image of the immaterial spirituality, justness and goodness to which he aspires himself.¹⁰⁴

The result of this syndrome is that: "Instead of creating a relationship with independent beings, they (people like Prospero) try to submit them to the same super-ego figures by which they themselves are enslaved."¹⁰⁵

Abenheimer confers this psychological problem leading to paranoia upon the archetype of the poet and thereby refutes "the romantic prejudice that a genius is different from all other human beings in this respect that he is not troubled with the common human difficulties and problems."¹⁰⁶ However, he eschews any value judgement by stating: "Mentally healthy people may be absolute dullards whilst a paranoid person may have great moral strength, an outstandingly rich imaginative power to express this, intellect, and whatever else makes a 'generally superior' man."¹⁰⁷

Abenheimer's view of Prospero and his anima objects is not supported by Norman N. Holland. Whereas Abenheimer asserts that Prospero's psychic development is incomplete: "after the world had refused to shelter him like a child, he jumped the gap between the small child and the outsized father,"¹⁰⁸ Holland believes unequivocally that Prospero is a mature man."¹⁰⁹

Holland places Prospero at the top of Erikson's

hierarchy of psychological development, having met the crisis of old age successfully:

If Perspero speaks for Shakespeare, he speaks for a man writing of himself at the last of the psychosocial stages, accepting the fact his life is lived, giving up to the next generation the power and the woman he has achieved.¹¹⁰

Maladjusted initially or not, Abenheimer does contend that by the end of the play, Prospero has reached a degree of maturity, or resocialization. Miranda is given to Ferdinand, Ariel is emancipated, and Prospero drowns his magic book. Thus, in his Eiplogue speech, "Now my charms are all o'erthrown, / And what strength I have's mine own, / Which is most faint," Abenheimer contends that "Prospero really describes here Shakespeare's last ideal and aim of personal development, an aim which found similar expression again and again in the history of the human mind."¹¹¹

But Prospero does not achieve this final maturity without opposition from the New World primitive, who, in the symbolic code of psychoanalytic theory, personifies the unleashed passions of the Id. Holland concurs with Frank Kermode's contention that "the main opposition is between the worlds of Prospero's Art, and Caliban's Nature."¹¹² Just as the archetype of the poet becomes one with the omniscient, omnipotent father image, so the New World primitive's rebellion becomes one with "the archetypal oedipal crime: killing the father and taking his woman."¹¹³

Caliban is, according to Abenheimer, "Prospero's shadow, the personification of all those qualities which Prospero in his identification with the kind and omnipotent parental

images and with the spiritual anima excludes from his ego."¹¹⁴

It is for this reason that "Prospero despises him so utterly."¹¹⁵

Aside from the overt rebellion, with which Prospero is able to deal and which demonstrates his control over the Id, the New World archetype poses two psychic threats. First, Abenheimer asserts that Caliban's "arch-crime is that he does not repay kindness with kindness and unfaltering goodness."¹¹⁶ Because Caliban, as New World primitive, cannot function on Prospero's level of super-ego morality, "This seems to Prospero to justify every form of abuse and contempt."¹¹⁷

The second threat arises from what Abenheimer calls a "curious paradox in Prospero's character." The problem is that "If one tries to protect oneself against disappointments by absolute superiority and control of everything, one just cannot help assimilating and using some of those hated, aggressive qualities which one wanted to ward off."¹¹⁸ Abenheimer continues this argument by proposing that "If one starts to play the role of God, one cannot avoid playing the role of the Devil as well."¹¹⁹

At this juncture, the critic seems to lose touch with Prospero's role as archetypal poet. Even if Prospero occasionally threatens Ariel with the fate which Sycorax imposed on him, Prospero does not effect such punishment, nor does he extend his servitude (not the same as imprisonment in a cloven pine) indefinitely. When Abenheimer states that "as little as Apuleius could Prospero remain unaffected by such an excursion into the country of the witch (Sycorax' island),"¹²⁰

he should be alluding to the psychic isolation to which Fiedler refers. Or, he should mean the submergence into "the belly of the whale" which Arthur Koestler depicts as the trial to which the artist must submit himself in order to assimilate the full range of psychic experience.¹²¹

But The Tempest does effectively follow the psycho-analytic pattern. Prospero can be seen as wielding his art in the image of the omnipotent and omniscient father, manifesting subsequent demands of an over-inflated ego. Caliban and his cohorts march towards enactment of the classic oedipal crime which Prospero's super-ego morality prevents. Thus the New World primitive contradicts the wishes of the archetypal father who must dominate his anima ideals least they elude him (Ariel, his Muse) or be corrupted (the inner purity of his royal daughter).

The synthesis value of this psychoanalytic view of The Tempest is not only that the archetypes function within the framework of an established myth, but that through the action of the play in which the passive and active archetypes conflict, the poet emerges from his isolation. He gains a degree of freedom from the super-ego imperatives; hence, the symbolic drowning of the book:

But this rough magic
I here abjure, and When I have required
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 certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.¹²²

The Tempest in the psychoanalytic framework, then, represents a dialectic progression "ending the inflation caused by the identification with the omnipotent, omniscient father."¹²³ The father image is countered by Caliban's plot to commit the oedipal crime and the father image is reinforced by the obedience of the anima ideals, as personified by Ariel and Miranda.

Thus, even if the previous plays of Shakespeare's "last plays" treat a similar problem, Abenheimer observes that "in the previous plays he only states the problem, yet does not see through it with psychological understanding."¹²⁴ The archetype of the poet attains the psychoanalytic goal of resocialization in The Tempest: "Only in The Tempest does Shakespeare find a most artful way of making the hero's transformation from an isolated magician to a humble human being within the social world the center of the play."¹²⁵

Initiation Code

With the following consideration of Colin Still's study of The Tempest in terms of the initiation myth, in addition to the psychoanalytic approach to the play, this paper comes close to considering what Levi-Strauss calls the "whole matrix" of myth.¹²⁶ He states that "we always deal with a kind of material that becomes meaningful only when it is put back into a whole group of myths, whether they are similar to it or different."¹²⁷

Colin Still refers primarily to the pagan initiation

rites, Virgil's Aeneid, Dante's Divinia Commedia, and the Bible, but he believes that the mythical model which The Tempest follows is "immemorial, changeless, and universal."¹²⁸ He observes that it "underlies all authentic myth and ritual; and it is undoubtedly the subject of numerous works of art and literature."¹²⁹ The archetypal "upward struggle of the human spirit, individual or collective, out of the darkness of sin and error, into the light of wisdom and truth," as it exists in The Tempest finds points of reference, according to Still, in Biblical scenes of the wanderings of Israel and in such literary works as Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and Milton's Paradise Regained.¹³⁰

The moving force for the "upward struggle" is the interaction between good and evil. The opposition between passive archetypes and images of innocence, purity, and artistic powers; and the active archetype with the images of primitivism and the maze, effect the synthesis of regeneration.

That regeneration is the ultimate import of the play's meaning is the general consensus among critics. Rose Zimbardo states that besides the fact that Shakespeare's last plays provide a unit in themselves, "the second point of agreement is that all of the last plays are concerned with the theme of regeneration, and that The Tempest realizes this theme most perfectly."¹³¹

In psychoanalytic terms, regeneration is effected through resocialization, whereas in the established matrix of myth to which Colin Still refers, regeneration is effected through

the process of initiation.

The archetype of the poet plays the pivotal role in Still's analysis, even as in Abenheimer's. However, the excessive super-ego commitment is significant as it relates to the initiates, rather than as it relates to Prospero as human being. Still states that:

In so far as the Play corresponds to the pagan rites, Prospero may be regarded as the counterpart of the hierophant, or initiating priest. But in the wider scheme he figures the prototypical Supreme Being, whom indeed the pagan hierophant was deemed to represent.¹³²

The matrix of established myth upon which Still contends The Tempest is modelled, then, encompasses the

one universal tradition underlying all religious and semi-religious concepts. It tells the story of man's upward struggle partly in Biblical terms and partly in terms of pagan myth and ritual.¹³³

The initial immersion of the travelers in the storm raised by Prospero represents a baptismal purification. This experience prepares the potential initiates for a reversal of the Fall of Man. That the storm should not be interpreted literally, but symbolically, is supported by the text of the play. Gonzalo states: "Our garments, being, as they were, drenched in the sea, /hold, notwithstanding, their freshness and glosses; being rather new-dyed, than stained with salt water."¹³⁴ He continues to emphasize the garments' freshness: "fresh as when we put them on first in Afric . . . our garments seem now as fresh as when we were at Tunis . . . Is not, sir, my doublet as fresh as the first day I wore it?"¹³⁵ In addition, Ariel remarks to Prospero: "On their sustaining garments not a blemish, /But fresher than before."¹³⁶

Still asserts that:

The fact is, the immersion in the water is not to be understood in a strictly physical sense. Like baptism in the Christian Church and the "washings" in the pagan rites, it is represented as a physical occurrence; but its significance is entirely subjective. It corresponds to the first definite stage of initiation--namely, the preliminary purification, whereby the aspirant is cleansed of the grosser kinds of sin. Hence the improvement referred to by Gonzalo and Ariel--which is otherwise totally inexplicable.¹³⁷

Professor Still is not the only critic to declare this significance in the storm. Kenneth Rexroth also affirms that "men go under the storm and are born again as in a Gnostic baptism."¹³⁸

Another point of interest before considering the actual interaction of the archetypes is the pattern of progression from the Fall. According to Professor Still:

Formal or ritual initiation was a ceremony designed as a reversal of the process implied in the Fall of Man. It consisted, therefore, of an ascent through the elements. As such, it could--and probably did to some extent--comprise an ostensible crossing of the River Styx (WATER), a passage through Purgatory (MIST), to Elysium (AIR), and finally an ascent into the Empyrean (AETHER).¹³⁹

He states further that these realms also have a mythical significance which relates directly to psychological states of mind:

But, since these mythical abodes of the dead have their counterparts in the planes or states of consciousness, ritual initiation may be interpreted as a purely psychological experience. It figures the ascent of the consciousness from the material or physical plane of EARTH, through the passional WATER and the MIST of error, to the AIR of pure reason, which is the plane of inspiration; and finally the ascent--during a death to this world--to the intuitional AETHER which is the plane of revelation.¹⁴⁰

This progression corresponds to Dante's Divinia Commedia in which, as Still notes,

Dante describes what is ostensibly a journey through the realms of the dead. The regions visited include a Celestial Paradise which is in the pure air. This journey is made by Dante while he is still alive and in the physical body . . . it is immediately evident that Dante, notwithstanding that he depicts these places as regions beyond the grave, conceives them in what may be called an ante-mortem sense.¹⁴¹

The progression through the elements is also reminiscent of Virgil's Aeneid:

Thus the sensual MIRE must connote the mythical Cocytus--the river of boiling mud which Aeneas passes after quitting the place of mortal existence (EARTH) and before reaching the River Styx (WATER). Similarly, the MIST of erroneous thinking must connote that dark purgatorial region traversed by Aeneas after he had crossed the River Styx (WATER) and before he reaches Elysium (AIR). The RING OF FIRE is not included in the scope of Virgil's narrative, for Aeneas does not go beyond Elysium. But Dante describes great circles of fire or light which he saw while ascending out of the Lower Paradise into the Empyrean.¹⁴²

Northrop Frye alludes to the specific elements of the classic myths which relate The Tempest directly to their pattern of progression and which Professor Still notes in profuse detail:

The scene of the play, an island somewhere between Tunis and Naples, suggests the journey of Aeneas from Carthage to Rome. Gonzalo's identification of Tunis to Carthage, and the otherwise tedious business about "Widow Dido" in the second act, seem almost to be emphasizing the parallel. Like The Tempest, The Aeneid begins with a terrible storm and goes on to tell a story of wanderings in which a banquet with harpies figures prominently. Near the route of Aeneas' journey, according to Virgil, was the abode of Circe, of whom Sycorax is a close relative. Circe suggests Medea, whose speech in Ovid's Metamorphoses is the model for Prospero's renunciation speech.¹⁴³

Frye also notes the Biblical allusions:

Echoes from the shipwreck of St. Paul (Ariel's phrase "Not a hair perished" recalls Acts 27:34) from St. Augustine, who also had associations with Carthage, and from Apuleius, with his interest in magic and initiation, are appropriate enough in such a place. Most of the

traditional magical names of elemental spirits were of Hebrew origin, and "Ariel," a name occurring in the Bible (Isaiah 29:1) was among them.¹⁴⁴

These allusions, mentioning only a few, to religious and semi-religious myths, may well testify, as Professor Still contends, that Shakespeare was attempting, consciously or unconsciously, to reiterate the upward struggle of regeneration implicit in these myths. This conclusion does seem preferable to C. J. Sisson's statement that "here, indeed, and not for the first time, we may truly say that Shakespeare had too much education, and not too little."¹⁴⁵

It is now appropriate to analyze the role of the archetypes in the upward progression through the Elements. The personifications of the archetype of royalty, Miranda and Ferdinand, represent the progress of the Greater Initiation. Stephano and Trinculo do not possess the inner qualities to advance towards initiation at all. Still states that:

In the Play, Stephano and Trinculo do not show such firmness (as did Aeneas) when the "spirits in the shape of hounds" appear. They flee incontinently, and are ignominiously hunted about. Stephano and Trinculo, indeed, are not aspirants. They have neither the mind nor the heart to achieve initiation. They fail at every test¹⁴⁶

The members of the Court Party, also, do not achieve Greater Initiation. Professor Still explains this phenomenon by quoting Dr. Warburton's commentary in Divine Legation on the pagan initiate:

These trials were of two sorts: the encountering of real labours and difficulties, and the being exposed to imaginary and false terror. This latter was objected to all the initiates in general; the other was reserved for chiefs and leaders.¹⁴⁷

Only Ferdinand, of the travelers, engages in real labors and difficulties. Ferdinand must perform the real task of log carrying¹⁴⁸ whereas the remainder of the Court Party are subject only to strange visions evoked by Ariel. Also, they are subject to wanderings, which Dr. Warburton also associates with the first stage of initiation.¹⁴⁹

Ferdinand, in contrast, is significantly separate from the rest of the Court Party throughout. His progress during the play is from the Elysium, the plane of reason (AIR) to Celestial Paradise, the plane of intuitional perception (AETHER)¹⁵⁰ Professor Still, apparently, is referring to the progression from his hearing the music to the vision of the Masque. That Ferdinand has already passed through the Hellish passional realm of water is exemplified by Ariel's report to Prospero:

The King's son, Ferdinand,
With hair up-staring (then like reeds, not hair)
Was the first man that leapt; cried, "Hell is empty
And all devils are here."¹⁵¹

At his first appearance, Ferdinand has "already passed through emotional tumult to that tranquility which is the subjective Elysium":

Sitting on a bank,
Weeping again the king my father's wreck,
This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury, and my passion,
With its sweet air.¹⁵²

This leads directly to Miranda, the other personification of the archetype of royalty. For, just as Dante meets Beatrice in Eden, so Ferdinand meets Miranda in Elysium. Similar to the abstract anima object which the character of Miranda assumes in the psychoanalytic framework, she becomes the aspirant's ideal in the initiation progression. According

to Professor Still, she is synonymous with the wisdom and truth sought by the aspirants in the pagan rites, she equates with Dante's Beatrice, and she is also a version of the Celestial Bride.¹⁵³

Ferdinand's first words upon sight of her are a plea for guidance:

Vouchsafe, my prayer May know if you remain upon this island,
And that you will some good instructions give How I may
bear me here.¹⁵⁴

Professor Still's Biblical references are profuse to demonstrate the correlation between Miranda and the Celestial Bride:

In the Widsom of Solomon we read that Solomon determined to take Wisdom as his bride--as his bride--as Ferdinand resolves to take Miranda; that Wisdom is "Initiated into the knowledge of God"--as Miranda must be, for she shares with Ferdinand the supreme privilege of the celestial vision (the Masque); and that Wisdom "will toil with me"--as Miranda offers to toil with Ferdinand.¹⁵⁵

In addition to her obvious role as the idealized goal (Celestial Bride) of the aspirant, Still also correlates Miranda with Persephone, daughter of Zeus, the personification of Spring. Persephone's abduction by Pluto represents the descent of the Soul which sleeps through winter and emerges in the Spring.¹⁵⁶ Professor Still observes that "like Persephone, she is a lost maiden, fallen from high degree."¹⁵⁷ Thus, Miranda's sleepiness, so baffling for most critics, is not to be literally, but symbolically interpreted:

If Miranda is intended to correspond to Persephone of the Mysteries, it is obvious that at an early stage in the Play the Poet must somehow contrive to show her as plunged in deep sleep.¹⁵⁸

So Prospero states:

Here cease more questions. Thou art inclined to sleep; 'tis a good dullness, And give it way--I know thou canst not choose.

[Miranda sleeps]¹⁵⁹

Professor Still further contends that:

Like persephone in the psychological aspect of the Pagan Mysteries, she figures the Wisdom which the initiate seeks and ultimately weds; and like Persephone in the eschatological aspect of the Mysteries, she figures the fallen and sleeping Soul which it is the object of initiation to awaken and restore.¹⁶⁰

The awakening can be seen to elevate the initiate to the intuitive plane of AETHER in the platonic sense. Thus, Prospero's speech: "Our revels now are ended . . . We are such stuff /As dreams are made on, and our little life /Is rounded with a sleep."¹⁶¹

It remains to discuss the archetype of the New World in the mythic matrix of initiation. The pre-rational domains of the Elements exist in The Tempest as the maze of confusion and the passional realm as personified and promoted by Caliban. The maze is implicit in the wandering and confusion of all the travelers shipwrecked on Prospero's island. The maze environment is also promoted by Prospero's minister, Ariel, who leads them thither and yon. It is the concept of the New World primitive which requires special clarification in the established myth of initiation.

Before the Renaissance explorations and the advent of American progressivism, the New World primitive as exemplified by Caliban, is, according to Professor Still, "the personification on mythological lines of the Tempter who is Desire."¹⁶²

Professor Still confirms that Caliban has four points of resemblance with the monsters of mythological tradition and initiation ritual, as well as with the serpent in Genesis: "(a) he is a native to water (b) he resides, or is encountered out of water (c) he is of mixed species (d) he figures as the Tempter."¹⁶³

References to Caliban's serpent qualities are many. Trinculo exclaims: "What have we here? A man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish, he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fishlike smell . . . A strange fish!"¹⁶⁴ Trinculo states later: "Why, thou deboshed fish thou . . . Wilt thou tell a monstrous lie, being but half a fish and half a monster."¹⁶⁵ And at the end of the play, Antonio states, referring to Caliban, "One of them /Is a plain fish."¹⁶⁶

Caliban is thus on the plane between earth and water of the Elements, that plane being the MIRE of "those grosser and carnal lusts,"¹⁶⁷ as Professor Still observes. Caliban is, therefore, an integral figure in the concept of the Fall.

Professor Still equates Prospero's cell from which Caliban had been expelled with a holy inner sanctum:

No one is allowed to enter the Cell except Ferdinand after the Masque. The Court Party is invited only to "look in" when Prospero throws open the entrance. Moreover, the Cell is the abode of Prospero and Miranda (the Celestial Bride). It therefore appears to be the "sanctum sanctorum," in which case its archetype is heaven.¹⁶⁸

This leads Professor Still to conclude that "The expulsion of Caliban from the Cell is thus a version of the Fall of Satan from heaven. Caliban's sensuously lyrical

speech, "The isle is full of noises . . ." represents the seductive tones of the Tempter. Caliban's role as fallen angel also accounts for his much discussed use of iambic pentameter.

Stephano and Trinculo are easily led astray, possessing none of the ascendent inner qualities of the archetype of royalty. They are brought down to the level of the MIRE, as Ariel indicates: "At last I left them /I' the filthy mantled pool beyond your cell, /There dancing up to the chins, that foul lake /O'erstunk their feet."¹⁶⁹ Professor Still contends that "this filthy pool corresponds to the filth-laden Cocytus described by Virgil."¹⁷⁰

It should be observed that Ariel plays an instrumental role in effecting the synthesis of regeneration in the mythical matrix of initiation. He is the instrument of the archetypal poet's powers. Therefore, as "the chief messenger and minister of Prospero," Still correlates him with "the Old Testament Angel of the Lord, in the New Testament 'the Spirit', and in pagan mythology to Hermes."¹⁷¹ It is Ariel who leads the travelers through the maze of the New World, leads Ferdinand up into Elysium, and brings about his union with Miranda (the Celestial Bride).¹⁷²

Ariel, being as mercurial in character as the "multitudinous winds," executes the reasoning powers of the Poet and is explicitly stated to belong to the element of air: yet he assumes during the wreck the form of a flaming fire:"¹⁷³

I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,

Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
 I flamed amazement: sometime I'd divide,
 And burn in many places; on the topmast
 The yards and bowsprit would I flame distinctly,
 Then meet and join.¹⁷⁴

Professor Still links Ariel to the Biblical symbolic code by stating: "So, likewise, it is said in Psalms that the messengers (angels) of God are winds (spirits), and His ministers a flaming Fire."¹⁷⁵

But it is the archetypal poet figure who performs the transforming act of art for the truly royal personages; and it is also he who effects repentance from the lesser initiates who have at least felt some catharsis from the wild imaginary terrors effected by Ariel, the minister of his fanciful creations.

CONCLUSION

The mythic significance of The Tempest exists in its portrayal of two types of archetypes which interact to effect the synthesis of regeneration within the larger framework of established myths. The archetype of royalty projects the best of human potential with which the archetype of the poet interacts positively.

Within the psychoanalytic code, this interaction represents the submergence of the ego into supero-ego ideals which causes isolation. The primitivism implicit in the archetype of the New World represents the amoral, anarchistic drives of the Id. This is the "active archetype" which counters the "passive archetypes" of royalty and the poet.

Regeneration is effected by Prospero's breaking the super-ego domination which led him to sublimate his magical powers into the role of omniscient and omnipotent father. Thus, he no longer feels threatened by the antithetical Id forces personified by the New World primitive Caliban. He is able to assume a human role in society; hence his resocialization (see diagram on page 52).

Within the mythical matrix of the initiation symbolic code, the archetype of the poet becomes a hierophant and God-like figure consistent with religious and semi-religious myths. The archetype of royalty symbolizes those who are

able to reach the highest level of regeneration, called Greater Initiation. Ferdinand becomes the Greater Initiate with Miranda as his ideal of Truth and Wisdom, or the Celestial Bride. Miranda figures also as a Greater Initiate, being awakened from the sleep of her fallen estate even as Persephone, the daughter of Zeus, is sought by pagan initiates to supply the fruitfulness of Spring. The New World maze represents the ordeals and tasks of the initiates; and the New World primitive, personified by Caliban, represents the passional qualities implicit in the Fall of Man.

The struggle upward from the Fall and through the trials of initiation effected by Prospero as hierophant promotes an initiation on the intuitional plane of the Elements, which is revelation and is symbolized by the Masque. It is also symbolized by the entrance of the Greater Initiates into Prospero's Cell.

In the symbolic code of psychoanalytic theory (myth 1 in the diagram), the archetype of the poet is the object of regeneration. The archetype of royalty contains the personification of his anima ideal. It is a modern, twentieth century code of symbols which promotes an egalitarian, rational premise which does not sanction the supernatural. Hence, its process in The Tempest is the "de-supernaturalization" of Prospero so that he may re-enter human society without withdrawing into his magic.

In the matrix of the initiation myth (myth 2 in the diagram), it is the archetype of royalty which is the object

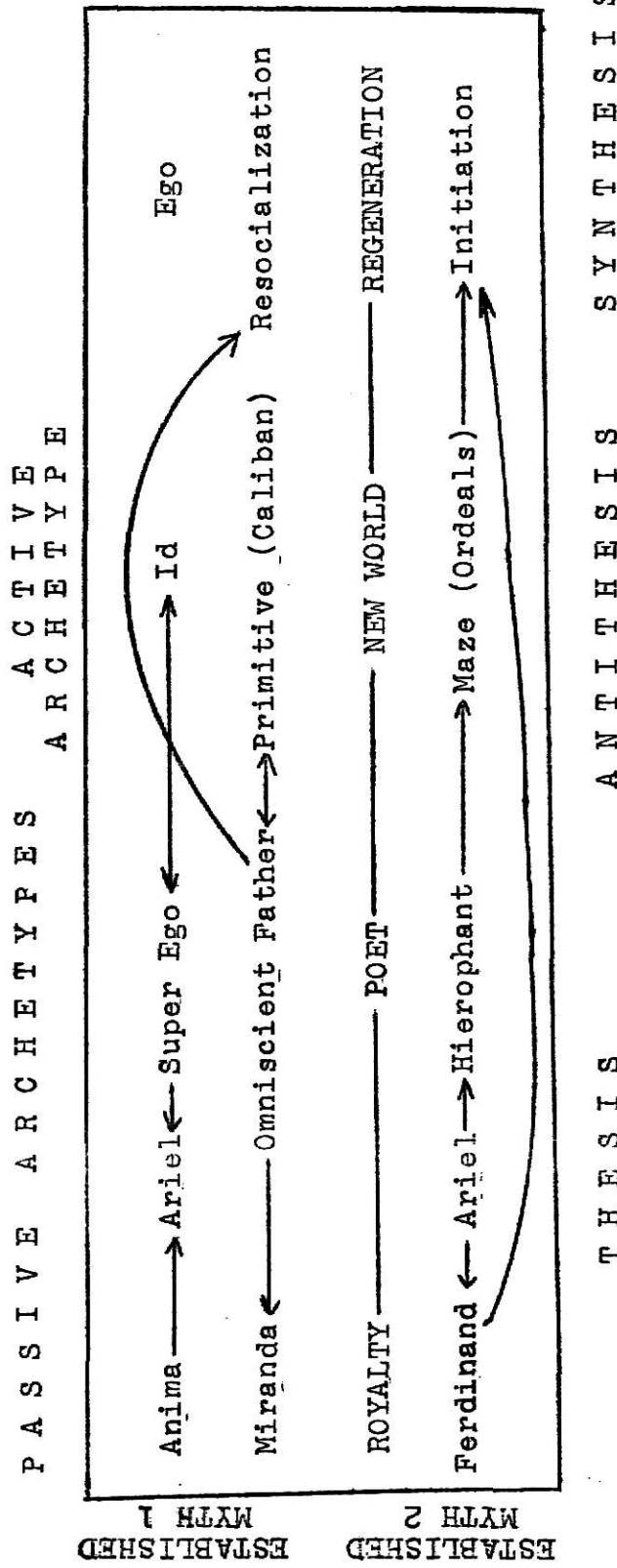
of regeneration. Ariel does not exist as a result of Prospero's endearment and dependence upon him as a rarefied anima ideal, but as an instrument to effect the initiates' progress towards initiation. It is a much older, even ancient, established myth which still deifies the mystical, magical powers then assumed to be implicit in the archetype of the poet.

Which established symbolic code of myth is most valid is outside the scope of this paper, if, in fact, it could be determined. The important fact is that The Tempest clearly follows a mythical pattern of progression towards regeneration, and this regeneration is the concern of both mythical codes.

It is implicit in the archetype of royalty and the archetype of the poet that Mankind must seek an upward course even as life seeks to sustain and perpetuate itself. But it is also implicit in the archetype of the New World that this ultimate concern of mankind to progress will be contested by the natural, entropic, i.e., primitive forces.

That The Tempest contains these archetypes which interact to effect the synthesis of regeneration, testifies to its manifest mythic significance. For, as Paul Tillich states, "Myth is the combination of symbols of our ultimate concern."¹⁷⁶ and "Nothing less than symbols and myths can express our ultimate concern."¹⁷⁷

DIALECTICAL DESIGN



FOOTNOTES

¹John B. Vickery (ed.), Myth and Literature; Contemporary Theory and Practice (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), p. ix.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 139.

⁴K. M. Abenheimer, "Shakespeare's Tempest: A Psychological Analysis," Psychoanalytic Review, XXXIII (October, 1946), p. 401.

⁵Harry Slochower, Mythopoesis: Mythic Patterns in the Literary Classics (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1970), p. 173.

⁶Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art (New York: New American Library, 1942), p. 153.

⁷Ibid., p. 152.

⁸John E. Gedo, "Mythopoesis and Psychoanalysis," American Imago, XXVII (Winter, 1970), p. 334.

⁹Ibid., p. 333.

¹⁰Slochower, op. cit., p. 48.

¹¹Ibid., p. 154.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 172.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁵James E. Miller, Jr. (ed.), Myth and Method: Modern Theories of Fiction (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), p. 155.

¹⁶Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, "The Tempest," Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Tempest, ed. Hallett Smith (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 19.

¹⁷D. G. James, Scepticism and Poetry; An essay on the Poetic Imagination (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1937), p. 220.

¹⁸Abenheimer, op. cit., p. 415.

¹⁹William Shakespeare, The Tempest in G. B. Harrison (ed.), Shakespeare: The Complete Works (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1948), I. ii. 16-20.

²⁰James, op. cit., p. 222.

²¹Quiller-Couch, op. cit., p. 16.

²²E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Last Plays (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), p. 56.

²³Ibid., p. 55.

²⁴Ibid., p. 56.

²⁵Quiller-Couch, op. cit., p. 13.

²⁶Ibid., p. 14.

²⁷Ibid., p. 19.

²⁸Rose Abdelnour Zimbardo, "Form and Disorder in The Tempest," Shakespeare Quarterly, XIV (Winter, 1963), p. 51.

²⁹Lytton Strachy, "Viewpoints," Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Tempest, ed. Hallett Smith (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 89.

³⁰Leslie A. Fiedler, No! in Thunder: Essays on Myth in Literature (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 52.

³¹Northrop Frye, "Introduction to The Tempest," Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Tempest, ed. Hallett Smith (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 64.

³²Fiedler, op. cit., p. 59.

³³Ibid., p. 56.

³⁴Aniela Jaffe, The Myth of Meaning (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1971), p. 19.

³⁵Shakespeare, op. cit., V. i. 24-27.

³⁶Ibid., III. i. 94-96.

³⁷Ibid., IV. i. 188-190.

- ³⁸Ibid., 154-156.
- ³⁹Fiedler, op. cit.
- ⁴⁰Ibid.
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 42.
- ⁴²Shakespeare, op. cit., I. ii. 76-77.
- ⁴³Ibid., 89-93.
- ⁴⁴Fiedler, op. cit., p. 324.
- ⁴⁵Clifford Leach, "Viewpoints," Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Tempest, ed. Hallett Smith (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 102.
- ⁴⁶A. D. Nuttall, "The Tempest," Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Tempest, ed. Hallett Smith (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 83.
- ⁴⁷Kenneth Rexroth, "'The Tempest'," Saturday Review, XLIX (September 24, 1966), p. 5.
- ⁴⁸Langer, op. cit.
- ⁴⁹Edmund Leach (ed.), The Structural Study of Myth (London: Tavistock Publications, 1964), p. 102.
- ⁵⁰Abenheimer, op. cit., p. 415.
- ⁵¹Leslie Fiedler, "Caliban or Hamlet," Encounter, April, 1966, p. 20.
- ⁵²Smith, op. cit., p. 103.
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- ⁵⁴Shakespeare, op. cit., III. ii. 97-99.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., 97-104.
- ⁵⁶Fiedler, op. cit., p. 238.
- ⁵⁷Fiedler, "Caliban or Hamlet," op. cit., p. 24.
- ⁵⁸Ibid.
- ⁵⁹Ira Grushow, "Brave New World and The Tempest," College English, XXIV (October, 1962), p. 43.

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- 61 Bonamy Dobrée, "The Tempest," Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Tempest, ed. Hallett Smith (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 55.
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- 63 Ibid., II. ii. 184-191.
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- 66 John Wain, "Viewpoints," Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Tempest, ed. Hallett Smith (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 104.
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- 69 Ibid., V. i. 268-271
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- 73 Shakespeare, op. cit., V. i. 104
- 74 Ibid., v. i.
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- 80 Ibid., p. 481.
- 81 Shakespeare, op. cit., IV. i. 144-145.

- ⁸²Ibid., 188-189.
- ⁸³FitzGerald, op. cit., p. 496.
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- ⁸⁶Ibid., p. 397.
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- ⁸⁹Ibid., p. 302.
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- ⁹¹Alan Dundes, "Theories of Myth," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1973), XV, p. 1140.
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- ⁹³Talcott Parsons, "The Interpretation of Dreams, by Sigmund Freud," Daedalus, CIII (Winter, 1974), p. 92.
- ⁹⁴Abenheimer, op. cit., p. 401.
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- ¹⁵⁹Shakespeare, op. cit., 184-186.
- ¹⁶⁰Still, op. cit., p. 221.
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- ¹⁷²Ibid., p. 212.
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THE MYTHIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SHAKESPEARE'S THE TEMPEST
AS EVIDENCED BY ITS MYTHIC QUALITY AND ITS
ADHERENCE TO MODELS OF ESTABLISHED MYTHS

by

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Myth criticism, as Francis Fergusson has stated, addresses itself to poetic works on two levels: those works which contain a mythic quality and those modelled upon established myths. This paper attempts to establish that The Tempest functions effectively on both levels.

The dissenting opinion of Harry Slochower must be contested before proceeding to these main points. It is necessary to confront Dr. Slochower's opinion because he deals directly with poetic works modelled upon established myths in his recent book Mythopoesis: Mythic Patterns in the Literary Classics. He states, however, that The Tempest is a mere fairy tale and does not, therefore, merit analysis in his book.

By identifying Dr. Slochower's fundamental premise, it becomes obvious that he is operating within a restricted framework. His premise is that mythical models exist in the classics only as they reflect heroic revolt against authority. For this reason, John E. Gedo asserts that "the - Functional unity that Dr. Slochower has forged seems to be to be an artificial one."

With the realization that Dr. Slochower's restricted view does not discredit the mythic significance of The Tempest, it is possible to proceed with the paper's main points.

As a poetic work with a mythic quality, The Tempest

includes three archetypes: the archetype of royalty, the archetype of the poet, and the archetype of the New World. The archetype of royalty is personified by Miranda and Ferdinand. Their royal birth symbolizes an inner goodness and purity which can sustain hardship and temptation. The archetype of the poet is personified by Prospero. Like Shakespeare, Prospero attempts to promote and protect mankind's best potential by wielding the power of his art to impose order upon natural chaos. These two archetypes are mutually supportive and comprise the thesis in this paper's dialectical design.

The New World archetype provides the antithesis. It includes the image of primitivism and anarchy as personified by Caliban. The previous two archetypes remain relatively constant in meaning; they are complete in their original context and can therefore best be understood as "passive archetypes." The New World archetype, however, arises out of the Elizabethan explorations, colonizing attempts, Montaigne's essay, and Bacon's New Atlantis. It thereby relates to the New World of America which has changed over the centuries.

That the New World archetype continues to adapt and relate to these changes is evidenced by the studies of D. H. Lawrence, Leslie Fiedler, Frances FitzGerald, and Aldous Huxley. These studies relate the archetype, respectively, to America's relationship to its old master, Europe; its cultural reversion to the primitive Caliban image; its evolution into a colonial image to the even newer world of emerging, underdeveloped countries, specifically Vietnam;

and the technological New World towards which America leads the way.

Thus, the New World archetype possesses a protean quality which extends beyond its original context. It can best be described, therefore, as an "active archetype."

That The Tempest contains these archetypes establishes that the play has a mythic quality: that is, it contains some elements of myth. But it can also be approached as a poetic work modelled upon established myths. Colin Still and K. M. Abenheimer synthesize the mythic elements into two established models. Colin Still interrelates the archetypes into the forces of good and evil in the model of ancient initiation rites. Virgil's Aeneid, and Dante's Divinia Comedia which effects the "upward struggle of the human spirit out of the darkness of sin and error, into the light of wisdom and truth." K. M. Abenheimer refers to the psychoanalytic model. In his study, the archetypes function to effect Prospero's ascendance out of psychic isolation.

By thus demonstrating that The Tempest contains a mythic quality and also follows the models of two established myths, The Tempest is revealed to possess a mythic significance of multiple import. It cannot be doubted that the play functions beyond the fairy tale level which, as Susanne Langer states, merely "supplies vicarious experience." The Tempest functions, as all myth must according to Langer, towards an understanding of actual experience.

The passive archetypes establish fundamental human

potentialities; the active archetype projects the challenge of environmental conflict, and the mythic models provide frameworks in which these contesting forces can be resolved.