TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

General Editor: Michael Scott

The series is designed to introduce sixth-form and undergraduate students to the themes, continuing vitality and performance of major dramatic works. The attention given to production aspects is an element of special importance, responding to the invigoration given to literary study by the work of leading contemporary critics.

The prime aim is to present each play as a vital experience in the mind of the reader – achieved by analysis of the text in relation to its themes and theatricality. Emphasis is accordingly placed on the relevance of the work to the modern reader and the world of today. At the same time, traditional views are presented and appraised, forming the basis from which a creative response to the text can develop.

In each volume, Part One: *Text* discusses key themes or problems, the reader being encouraged to gain a stronger perception both of the inherent character of the work and also of variations in interpreting it. Part Two: *Performance* examines the ways in which these themes or problems have been handled in modern productions, and the approaches and techniques employed to enhance the play's accessibility to modern audiences.

A synopsis of the play is given and an outline of its major sources, and a concluding Reading List offers guidance to the student's independent study of the work.

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THE TEMPEST

Text and Performance

DAVID L. HIRST

M
MACMILLAN

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Source details for the illustrations are given with the relevant captions to the photographs.

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

For many years a mutual suspicion existed between the theatre director and the literary critic of drama. Although in the first half of the century there were important exceptions, such was the rule. A radical change of attitude, however, has taken place over the last thirty years. Critics and directors now increasingly recognise the significance of each other's work and acknowledge their growing awareness of interdependence. Both interpret the same text, but do so according to their different situations and functions. Without the director, the designer and the actor, a play's existence is only partial. They revitalise the text with action, enabling the drama to live fully at each performance. The academic critic investigates the script to elucidate its textual problems, understand its conventions and discover how it operates. He may also propose his view of the work, expounding what he considers to be its significance.

Dramatic texts belong therefore to theatre and to literature. The aim of the 'Text and Performance' series is to achieve a fuller recognition of how both enhance our enjoyment of the play. Each volume follows the same basic pattern. Part One provides a critical introduction to the play under discussion, using the techniques and criteria of the literary critic in examining the manner in which the work operates through language, imagery and action. Part Two takes the enquiry further into the play's theatricality by focusing on selected productions of recent times so as to illustrate points of contrast and comparison in the interpretation of different directors and actors, and to demonstrate how the drama has worked on the modern stage. In this way the series seeks to provide a lively and informative introduction to major plays in their text and performance.

MICHAEL SCOTT

PLOT SYNOPSIS AND SOURCES

The banished Duke of Milan, Prospero, conjures up a storm to shipwreck old enemies on his island of exile. Twelve years previously his brother Antonio had conspired with Alonzo, King of Naples, to seize the dukedom. Prospero's sole friend at court, Gonzalo, had provided supplies for his enforced flight and his valuable collection of occult books.

Ariel, his spirit-servant, assures him the ship is intact, its crew and passengers safe, with Ferdinand (Alonzo's son and heir) separated from the others. The young prince is brought to Miranda, Prospero's daughter, and they fall in love. Prospero must act quickly before his magical power declines. He enforces hard labour on Ferdinand to test him, and spell-binds the court party into deep slumber through Ariel's magical music. But Antonio and Alonzo's brother, Sebastian, do not succumb, and they plot to murder the sleeping king. Ariel foils their plan at the last moment.

Meanwhile two other survivors, Trinculo, a jester, and Stephano, a drunken butler, fall in with Prospero's credulous native slave Caliban, who offers to exchange masters if Stephano will kill Prospero.

Prospero presents the guilty courtiers with a banquet which disappears to present Ariel as a vengeful harpy. Alonzo, believing that his own crime against the exiled duke has been punished through the death of Ferdinand, is deeply affected. Prospero rewards the constancy of the lovers with a celebratory betrothal masque.

At its climax, suddenly recalling Caliban's conspiracy, he transforms the spirit-actors into dogs who hound the miscreants. The sense of danger narrowly averted, and Ariel's suggestion that his further harshness in paralysing the court party is excessive, prompt Prospero to renounce his magic. He brings everyone together, thanks Gonzalo for his fidelity, and confronts his enemies. Ferdinand is reunited with his grateful father, who breaks the pact with Antonio and obliges him to restore the dukedom to Prospero. Caliban regrets his misplaced confidence in Stephano. As the royal and ducal groups prepare for Italy, Ariel is given his freedom, and Caliban regains the island.

SOURCES

The play has no direct narrative source. Three different influences (discussed in detail in section 2 of Part One, below) have left their mark on it: contemporary accounts of voyages to the Bermudas; Medea's incantation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (book VII); and Montaigne's essay, *Of Cannibals*.