

# A Comparative Analysis between Measure for Measure and The Tempest

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## Abstract

*The present study is a qualitative one that exploits the textual analysis method to make a comparison between Shakespeare's Measure for Measure and his The Tempest from the perspective of the Aristotelian concept of a play expressed in Poetics. According to Aristotle, a play must have six constituent elements: Plot, Character, Thought, Diction, Music, and Spectacle. The presence of the first and the second element in the aforesaid plays are quite extensively sought in this study; the third and the fourth are slightly touched because of the limited scope of this Article, and the fifth and the sixth are excluded simply because this study deals with the written texts of the aforesaid comedies, not with their dramatic presentations on stage.*

*The study finds that neither of the plays maintains the "purity of genre." Both plays mix tragic elements with comic elements. There is a similarity between them in respect of using sub-plots. Neither of them follows a single line of action. The main plot of Measure for Measure depicts Angelo's enforcement of the law. The subplot of this play makes mimicry of the main plot; it shows Elbow's enforcement of the laws on Pompey and Froth. In The Tempest, the main plot mainly shows the regain of Prospero's dukedom. The subplots deal with Antonio and Sebastian's desire to kill Alonso; the desire of Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban to kill Prospero, and the development of Ferdinand-Miranda's relationship.*

*The major characters found in Measure for Measure are the Duke, Angelo, Claudio, Lucio, Isabella, Juliet, and Mariana. On the other hand, the major characters in The Tempest are Prospero, Miranda, Ariel, Caliban, Ferdinand, Antonio, and Alonso. All the characters are not only individualized by Shakespeare but also presented with both local and universal traits. Shakespeare has given equal treatment to the minor characters in both plays also.*

*Measure for Measure expresses Shakespeare's thoughts on justice, mercy, love, sex, and marriage. On the other hand, The Tempest expresses his thoughts on justice and mercy, the superiority of human beings, colonization, power and exploitation, magic, the power of language, etc. Shakespeare used a wide variety of diction in these plays. The speeches of the characters – both in the forms of dialogues and monologues – are marked by this variety.*

*Shakespeare's use of diction is inseparable from the plots, the characters, and the thoughts expressed in the plays.*

*This study has excluded Music and Spectacle from the discussion, hoping that future researchers will include them in their studies.*

**Keywords:** *enforcement of the law, Regain Dukedom, Colonization, Marcy, and Justice*

## Chapter One

### 1. Introduction

Written in 1604(?) and published in 1623, *Measure for Measure* is generally classified as one of the three dark comedies by Shakespeare; the other two being *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Troilus and Cressida*. *Measure for Measure* was printed as a comedy in the folio and continues to be classified in this way. Though it shares features of other Shakespearean comedies, such as the use of wordplay and irony, the employment of disguise, and substitution as plot devices, it also possesses tragic elements. It “examines the complex interplay of mercy and justice.”<sup>1</sup> It is adapted by Shakespeare from at least two sources: *Epitia* by Giambattista Giraldi and *Promo and Cassandra* by George Whetstone.<sup>2</sup> *The Tempest*, on the other hand, probably written and performed in 1611, is one of the last plays by Shakespeare. It is a comedy that was published in 1623, the year when *Measure for Measure* was also published.<sup>3</sup> Both these plays – *Measure for Measure* and *The Tempest* – contain such elements as are part of Shakespearean diversity and invite multiple perspectives for making a comparison between them.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

So far as the genre is concerned, *Measure for Measure* is a dark comedy but *The Tempest* is generally considered a regular comedy. The difference between a regular comedy and a dark comedy is well-known. A regular comedy gives the message that life is good though people always face different problems in life, a dark comedy gives the message that life is beamingless.<sup>4</sup>

A regular comedy possesses limited aspects of high drama. The number of odd moments of suspense, surprise, or upset is generally limited in a regular comedy.

<sup>1</sup> David Bevington, “Measure for Measure: work by Shakespeare,” *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Measure-for-Measure>, accessed November 11, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Nathan, “What is the difference between comedies and dark comedies?” *Quora*, <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-comedies-and-dark-comedies>, accessed November 19, 2021.

These elements are “usually cushioned by further gags or humor.”<sup>5</sup> As for dark comedies, these elements are greater in number. In addition, they contain more adult, horrible, and gloomy elements and expose the darker side of life.

The problem arises when the question of comparing two generically different dramas comes. The first and foremost question is how to compare these dramas? Then comes to the question of selecting the variables by which these dramas can be compared. A probable solution to these questions may lead us back to the classical period when Aristotle stated the about different elements of “poetry” which is known as “literature” in modern times.

### 1.2 Literature Review

During the last four hundred years or so, numerous studies are conducted on all the plays composed by Shakespeare. The plays *Measure for Measure* and *The Tempest* have also gone through magnifying glasses of the researchers. Studies have also been conducted even on the titles of the plays. According to Oscar James Campbell, the title of *Measure for Measure* is very significant; “Measure” is a judicial term used in the title to mean “justice for justice.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, it is synonymous with “an eye for an eye” or “a tooth for a tooth.” It is not perfectly calculated poetic justice that is measured out to Angelo, but it is justice tempered by mercy and forgiveness.<sup>7</sup> As for the difficulty of performing the play, Halimah Mohamed Ali observes,

*Measure for Measure* is a difficult play to perform because it has problematic themes, especially the theme

of sexuality, that clash with the way of life and thinking of contemporary society. Therefore, any director who chooses to stage it must consider these difficulties and how to present them naturally without making the audience feel that the whole production is contrived.<sup>8</sup>

*The Tempest* is generally seen as Shakespeare's advocacy for setting up colonies but its opposite narratives are also found. According to James E. McGlinn and Jeanne M. McGlinn, it is Shakespeare's commentary on the exploration of new lands by the Europeans. They say,

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<sup>5</sup>Jonathan Weatherill-Hunt, "What is the difference between comedies and dark comedies?" *Quora*, <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-comedies-and-dark-comedies>, accessed November 19, 2021.

<sup>6</sup>Paul N. Siegel, "Measure for Measure: The Significance of the Title," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (1953), 317-320.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Halimah Mohamed Ali, "Measure for Measure: A Thrice Told Tale," *KEMANUSIAAN* 16 (2009), 13-33.

Prospero lands on an island with a native inhabitant, Caliban, a being he considers savage and uncivilized. He teaches this "native" his language and customs, but this nurturing does not affect the creature's nature, at least from Prospero's point of view. But Prospero does not drive Caliban away, rather he enslaves him, forcing him to do work he considers beneath himself and his noble daughter.<sup>9</sup>

According to Kabir and Awal, *The Tempest* provides the readers with some real as to why the play should not be termed a blanket comedy or romantic comedy. They say,

A re-visiting of the pages of this play by Shakespeare can offer the readers excellent chances of viewing the play as being infinitely more than just comedic or serio-comic or romantic. While the readers are aware of its nature as both a comedy and a romance, they also understand that it is something more, since it readily ties us with the apocalypse of a diplomatic killing, a killing without blood-shed, without violence, a cerebral „killing“ of the free speech of the political „other“. Re-reading all the deeds done in the play at the sleight of hand and beckoning of Prospero may provide us with clues to this intimate psychological and political killing.<sup>10</sup>

Lawrence E. Bowling searches the theme of the natural order in the *Tempest*. He says that almost all the characters in this play are more or less responsible for breaking the natural order. He says,

The first person guilty of interference, and the one therefore responsible for the later guilt of the others, is none other than Prospero himself. In the opinion of the Elizabethans, the first duty of a ruler was to rule. Prospero commits a serious infraction by forsaking his primary duty as a ruler and putting his younger brother into his position. In terms of the chain of being, Prospero was attempting to remove one of the prime links from the chain and shift a secondary link into that position.<sup>11</sup>

Scientific studies on different aspects of both *Measures for Measure* and *The Tempest* are quite available in the existing literature but none of these studies compares these plays from the perspective of Aristotelian concepts of the elements of plays. The present study is an endeavor to fill the research gap.

<sup>9</sup>James E. McGlinn and Jeanne M. McGlinn, "William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, DOI: 10.1001/archpsyc.64.1.11, accessed November 22, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Md. Shahjahan Kabir and Md. Mehandi Awal, "Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: Meaning of Politics and Diplomatic Killing," *Khulna University Studies*, 10, no. 1&2 (2010), 73-82.

<sup>11</sup> Lawrence E. Bowling, "The Theme of Natural Order in *The Tempest*," *College English*, 12, no. 4. (1951), 203-209. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0010-0994%28195101%2912%3A4%3C203%3ATTONOI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-I>, accessed November 22, 2021.

### 1.3 Objective

The general objective of this study is to make a comparative analysis between two Shakespearean plays, namely *Measure for Measure* and *The Tempest*.

### 1.4 Theoretical Framework

The present study employs Aristotle's ideas of drama expressed in his *Poetics* as the theoretical framework of this study. It discusses how the Aristotelian features of drama are maintained in *Measure for Measure* and *The Tempest*. According to Aristotle, the basic elements of a drama are Plot, Character, Thought, Diction, Song/Music, and Spectacle.<sup>12</sup> Aristotle says, "The plot, then, is the first essential of tragedy, its life-blood, so to speak, and character takes the second place."<sup>13</sup> As for the Character, Aristotle says, "Character is that which reveals personal choice, that kinds of thing a man chooses or rejects when that is not obvious."<sup>14</sup> Regarding Thought, Aristotle says, "The third property of tragedy is thought. This is the ability to say what is possible and appropriate in any given circumstances; it is what, in the speeches in the play, is related to the arts of politics and rhetoric."<sup>15</sup> The fourth element that Aristotle mentions is Diction or the arrangement of the verses. Regarding Diction, Aristotle says, "By diction I mean, as I have already explained, the expressive use of words, and this has the same force in verse and prose."<sup>16</sup> He also says,

"As for diction, one branch of study is the various forms of expression, an understanding of which belongs to the art of elocution and is necessary to the practitioner of this art: I refer to such things as a command, a prayer, a statement, a threat, a question, an answer, and so on."

The element that comes after Diction is Music which according to Aristotle is "...the most important of the pleasurable additions to the play."<sup>17</sup> The last element is the Spectacle which Aristotle says, "Spectacle, or stage-effect, is an attraction, of course, but it has the least to do with the playwright's craft or with the art of poetry."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. T. S. Dorsch (London: Penguin Books, 1965), 39. <sup>13</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 40

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Among the six elements mentioned by Aristotle, Plot, the first element, requires in detail discussion. The elements of the plot, according to Aristotle, include completeness, magnitude, unity, determinate structure, and universality. Completeness refers to the necessity of a tragedy to have a beginning, middle, and end. A "beginning" is defined as an origin, by which something naturally comes to be. It does not come after something. An "end" follows another

incident by necessity but has nothing necessarily following it. The “middle” follows something just as something must follow it. That means the middle is what comes in between the beginning and the end. “Magnitude” refers simply to the length of the plots, the lengths that “must be of a reasonable length, so that they may be easily held in the memory.”<sup>19</sup> Aristotle believes that the longer a tragedy, the more beautiful it can be, provided it maintains its beginning, middle, and end. According to Aristotle, a plot may be simple or complex depending on the absence or presence of discovery or reversal in it.<sup>20</sup> “Unity” refers to the centering of all action around a common theme or idea. “Determinate structure” refers to the fact that the plot all hinges on a sequence of causal, imitative events, so if one were to remove even one part of the plot, the entire age will be disjointed and disturbed. More simply, every part of a good plot is necessary. “Universality” refers to the necessity of a given character to speak or act according to how all or most humans would react in a given situation, according to the law of probability or necessity. Aristotle disliked “episodic” plots – plots in which episodes succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence. These episodic dramas stretch the plot “beyond their capacity,” and hence are inorganic.

However, the present study being especially focused on comparing the textual versions of the dramas *Measure for Measure* and *The Tempest*, it will be inappropriate to compare these comedies based on the last two elements – Music and Spectacle – mentioned by Aristotle because these two elements can be considered only when the dramas are staged and presented not for the readers but for the audience or spectators.

### 1.5 Rationale of the Study

This study will evaluate two Shakespearean comedies from the perspective of the Aristotelian canon and bring out different features of these comedies. It will not only

<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. T. S. Dorsch, 41.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 45.

clarify how the basic elements of plays, be they tragedies or comedies, are treated by Shakespeare but also elucidate what those elements mentioned by Aristotle are. This study will provide the students with the guidelines required for evaluating any literary text from a particular perspective or multiple perspectives combined.

### 1.6 Research Methodology

The present study is a qualitative one. Both primary and secondary sources are used in this study for collecting necessary data. The plays *Measure for Measure* and *The Tempest* – both written by Shakespeare – are used in this study as the primary sources of data; and relevant books, essays, and critical analyses published in newspapers, journals, and websites are used as the secondary sources. The textual Analysis method is applied in this study for collecting data from both primary and secondary sources. The data are collected through the method of comparison. Findings are accompanied by brief analyses where necessary. For source citation, the Notes-Bibliography style prescribed in the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian is consulted. For spelling,

British English is followed.

### 1.7 Study Outline

There are three sections in this study including the introductory and the concluding ones and excluding the Bibliography. This introductory section is followed by the second section which constitutes the main body of this study. In the main body, the comparison is made between *Measure for Measure* and *The Tempest* based on Plot, Character, Thought, and Diction. The third section titled “Conclusion” summarizes the key findings of this study, gives their implications, states the limitation of this study, and provides indications for future research endeavors. The bibliography follows the concluding section.

## Chapter Two

### 2. Comparison between Measure for Measure and The Tempest

Measure for Measure and The Tempest are compared in this section. At first, the plot of the plays is compared. Then comparisons are made on the basis of the characters portrayed in them, the thoughts the two plays express, and the dictions they employ.

#### 2.1 The Plots of the Two Plays

The plots of the two plays are marked by Shakespeare's diversity. To show how his diversity is expressed, at first the plot of *Measure for Measure* is presented. Then presented is the plot of *The Tempest*.

##### 2.1.1 The Plot of *Measure for Measure*

The setting of *Measure for Measure* is the city of Vienna where vice is widespread and the Law situation is quite degraded. Duke is too kind to tackle the situation. He is now going to set out on a mysterious business leaving the responsibilities of running the state to Angelo, his trusted minister. Vincentio instructs Angelo to enforce the law during his absence and to develop the Law situation of the state.

The first action Angelo takes is the revival of an old law that condemns the seducers to death. To make the law an exemplary one in the eyes of the people, Angelo gets Claudio arrested for having sex with Juliet, his fiancée. While Claudio was being taken to prison, he happens to meet his friend Lucio. He asks Lucio to inform them of his present condition with his sister, Isabella, so that she can rescue him from this danger. Hearing the news, Isabella instantly comes to meet her brother.

Meanwhile, instead of going for any business enterprise, Duke Vincentio disguised himself as a friar and roams about the city to watch how Angelo rules the city which he failed to control because of his excessive kindness. His excessive kindness has only increased criminal activities among the citizens. Now, Vincentio hopes that Angelo's rule can restore the law situation of the city and bring the city-dwellers back to the paths of virtue.

Isabella pleads with Angelo for the life of her brother. Her beauty rouses a passion in Angelo. He asks Isabella for a second interview with him. In the second interview, Angelo suggests that she can easily save her brother's life simply by making a sexual relationship with Angelo. This offer makes Isabella extremely shocked. She denies Angelo and rushes away. In the meantime, Duke Vincentio visits Claudio in his cell and learns that Claudio's love for Juliet is true in nature. He also learns that they have the plan to marry as soon as a dowry can be arranged.

Going to Claudio, Isabella tells him about the lustful and illegal offer made by Angelo. She tells him that she would pray for his death but she will not commit any sin for securing his life. The duke who was still in the disguise of a friar was secretly listening to the conversation between Isabella and her brother. Afterward, he tells Isabella that he can fabricate a plan through which she can save Claudio without surrendering herself to Angelo. He also tells her that Angelo had a love affair with Mariana. They were almost going to marry but Angelo jilted her. He did not marry her because the dowry she could afford was very small. Now he keeps a skeleton in his room in the person of Mariana. The duke in disguise then proposes to Isabella the plan that she sends Mariana to Angelo's bed without Angelo's knowledge.

Isabella and Mariana implement the plan. As per the plan, Mariana shares Angelo's bed but Angelo thinks that he is with Isabella. Even after the supposed sexual union with Isabella, Angelo breaks his promise. He demands to have Claudio's head. The friar acts quickly in this regard to tackle the situation. He manages a head from another corpse as a substitute for the head of Claudio. Even he convinces both Angelo and Isabella that Claudio is dead. The next day, the duke comes back to the city without any disguise. He meets Angelo and other officials outside the city gates. At that time Isabella accuses Angelo of seduction and murder. The duke then leaves the place and comes again in the guise of the friar to act as a witness for the women. He then reveals the story and exposes himself. He then sentences Angelo to death. But before the implementation of the death sentence, he orders a real friar to

arrange Angelo's marriage with Mariana. After the marriage ceremony, Mariana and Isabella, again and again, request him to spare Angelo's life. Vincentio's kindheartedness makes him yield to the pleadings of Mariana and Isabella and spares Angelo's life. He then brings Claudio forth and orders him to marry Juliet and make up for the suffering she has undergone. The duke then submits himself to Isabella saying:

Dear Isabel,

I have a motion much imports your good;

Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,

What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine:--

So, bring us to our palace; where we'll show

What's yet behind that's meet you all should know.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, (San Diego: ICON Group International, Inc., 2005), act V, scene I, p.136.

It is found that the main plot in *Measure for Measure* certainly deals with Angelo's enforcement of the law in the case of Claudio. This main plot is accompanied by a subplot in which Elbow enforces the laws in the case of Pompey and Froth. So, the plot of this play, if judged by the Aristotelian concept, does not conform to a single line of action. Besides, it mixes tragic elements with comic elements. This mixing results in the violation of "the purity of genre" which was suggested by Aristotle.

### 2.1.2 The Plot of *The Tempest*

Prospero was the Duke of Milan some twelve years ago. He was fond of reading books. Most of the time he used to keep himself engaged in his studies and remained aloof from the administration of the state. He left the management of his state to be performed by his brother Antonio. Antonio eventually fabricated a plan to usurp the dukedom with the help of Alonso and Sebastian. Alonso was the King of Naples and Sebastian was his brother. Both Alonso and Sebastian were the inveterate enemies of Prospero. Antonio one day succeeded in usurping the dukedom. He did not kill Prospero and his baby daughter Miranda; rather he put them to sea in a rotten boat with the prospect of facing death by water. Prospero eventually landed on a distant island that was once ruled by a witch known as Sycorax. When Prospero reached the island was inhabited only by Caliban and Ariel. Caliban is the son of Sycorax and Ariel is a spirit.

Prospero's continuous reading made him capable of exercising the power of magic over other objects and beings. With the help of that magic, Prospero starts ruling the island and its two inhabitants. His daughter Miranda grows up without seeing any human beings. The only creatures she has ever seen are Prospero, Ariel, and Caliban. One day fortune brings Prospero's enemies close to his island. He gets an opportunity to take his revenge. He uses his magic powers to raise a storm in the sea. The storm wrecks the ship of his enemies and brings the ship along with the passengers close to his island.

Prospero makes the passengers of the wrecked ship get scattered on the island. The task of scattering the passengers is done by the invisible Ariel at the bidding of Prospero. Ariel leads Ferdinand to Prospero's cell. Ferdinand was the son of the King of Naples. In Prospero's cell, he and Miranda fall in love at first sight. To test his intensity and sincerity of Ferdinand, Prospero provides him with heavy tasks. The difficulty of the tasks makes Miranda heartache. Although the King thinks that his son is drowned, he does not stop searching for him. On the other hand, his brother

Sebastian starts fabricating the plot of killing the King and seizing the crown. In another part of the island, Stephano and Trinculo meet Caliban. Stephano was the drunken butler and Trinculo was the jester. Caliban persuades them to kill Prospero so that they can collectively rule the island. However, their plan is spoiled by Ariel who rates quarrels among them and keeps them engaged in arguing among themselves.

Ferdinand successfully meets all his challenges given by Prospero. Ferdinand's success satisfies him. He then shows the young couple a betrothal masque to celebrate chastity and to perform the blessings of marriage.

As Prospero's plan comes close to its climax, he promises that once his plan is materialized, he will forsake his power of magic. Ariel then brings Alonso along with his followers to the cell. Prospero then confronts his enemies and ultimately forgives them. With the engagement of Ferdinand and Miranda, the rivalry between Naples and Milan is resolved. Finally, Prospero keeps his promise of granting freedom to Ariel and prepares to leave the island for Milan to get his Dukedom restored.

It is found that the main plot that deals with the loss of Prospero's dukedom and his ultimate revenge is accompanied by at least three subplots in *The Tempest*. In the first subplot, Antonio and Sebastian try to kill Alonso. In the second subplot, Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban try to kill Prospero. The third subplot deals with the development of the love relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda. If judged by Aristotelian standards, this play, like *Measure for Measure*, does not follow "a single line of action." It even follows *Measure for Measure* in mixing tragic elements with comic elements and violating "the purity of genre."

## 2.2 Portrayal of Characters

The characters, like the plots, of the two plays are also marked by Shakespearean diversity. To show how the characters of a play vary from those of the other play, at first the characters of *Measure for Measure* are discussed. After that, the characters as portrayed by Shakespeare in *The Tempest* are discussed.

### 2.2.1 Character Portrayal in *Measure for Measure*

The Duke, Angelo, Escalus, Claudio, Lucio, Isabella, Juliet, and Mariana are the major characters while Elbow, Froth, Pompey, Abhorson, Barnardine, Mistress Overdone, and Francesca are the minor characters in *Measure for Measure*. All these characters are discussed below:

The most important character in the play *Measure for Measure* is Vincentio. He is the Duke of Vienna. At the beginning of the play, he decides to pretend to leave the city of Vienna. Accordingly, he passes his power to Angelo who is well-known as a man of very strict principles. Duke does not go outside the city; rather he disguises himself as a friar and stays in Vienna to see how Angelo manages the state affairs in his absence of him. Vincentio believes that human nature is weak and vulnerable to corruption. He also believes that a ruler must not punish anybody for any fault that the ruler himself is not free from. The next important character is Angelo. He is the deputy of the Duke. At first, he seems to be a perfect character but, as the story progresses, Angelo himself discovers that he too is also vulnerable to temptation. He knows that he is supposed to resist sin but cannot.

A character who works as a foil to Angelo is Escalus. He is a government employee. As a true government service holder, he pledges to uphold the law of the state and support anybody who rules Vienna. But, being a man of principles, he disagrees with Angelo in his attempt to punish Claudio. He gives his sincere support to the state as long as the actions of the state are fair.

Claudio is a young gentleman. He loves Juliet and wants to marry her. He makes physical relations with her before their marriage. As a result, Juliet becomes pregnant and they both get into trouble. Angelo imprisons him and sentences him to death as an example of his strict adherence to laws. The crime committed by Claudio and Juliet was very common in Vienna. So, his death sentence was not accepted by many who tried to persuade Angelo to show mercy and withdraw the death sentence.



One of the most important characters in *Measure for Measure* is Isabella. She is the sister of Claudio. At the beginning of the play, she remains in a convent. She tries to save Claudio's life by pleading with Angelo. Angelo suggests that he can spare her brother's life if she agrees to go to bed with him. The proud and pious nature of her character does not allow her to agree to his terms. She is ready to sacrifice her brother's life but is not ready to spoil her chastity.

All the major characters are well-developed by Shakespeare. They are an integral part of the plot. Mariana, Provost, Elbow, Froth, Pompey the clown, Abhorson, Barnardine, Mistress Overdone, and Francesca being minor characters in this play, are excluded from the discussion. These characters are also skillfully developed by Shakespeare. They have their contributions to developing the plot of the play. All the characters – both major and minor – are also instrumental in expressing Shakespeare's thoughts.

### 2.2.2 Character Portrayal in *The Tempest*

All the characters of *The Tempest* are more or less controlled by Prospero. But Prospero's control does not deprive them of their traits. The common feature that binds most of the characters is their claim to power. The major characters are discussed below:

Prospero is the main character in *The Tempest*. He was the former Duke of Milan but now he rules the island. He is well-versed in magic texts. The time when he accuses Miranda of not paying proper attention to his story, he immediately appears before the readers as a dominant personality who demands attention, loyalty, and respect. He shows his affection only to those persons who accept his dominance. For example, he praises Ariel's performance and promises to free him from freedom because Ariel obeys him. Besides, he forgives his enemies only when he finds them under his total control. Whenever he finds that his authority is endangered in any way, he uses terms, wrecks the ship, and sets hunting dogs to tackle the threat.

Caliban is the symbol of the indigenous people who are colonized at different times in different parts of the globe. He is a complicated character. Prospero teaches him English and allows him to stay in his house but Prospero's teachings do not succeed in making him civilized. He still retains his savage and monstrous nature. He even attempts to rape Miranda. On another occasion, he offers Miranda's body to Stephano. Quite interestingly, he uses the language taught by Prospero to express his hatred and anger toward Prospero himself. However, his desire to free the island from Prospero's control is parallel to Prospero's desire for regaining his dukedom.

Ariel is a spirit. He is a fairy servant of Prospero. He was imprisoned by Sycorax, but Prospero freed him and engaged him in serving to get freedom from Prospero's service, Ariel willingly performs his tasks according to Prospero's commands. Like Caliban, Ariel is also a victim of Prospero's colonialism. Caliban does not cooperate with Prospero willingly but Ariel does. He develops a relationship of cooperation and negotiation with Prospero. This cooperation ultimately brings freedom to Ariel.

Miranda is the daughter of Prospero and the lover of Ferdinand. She is the only woman on the island. She falls in love at first sight with Ferdinand. She is under the control of her father. She has accepted the patriarchal structure of the society she lives in. She encourages Ferdinand to propose without wasting time. She even wants to help Ferdinand perform the tasks given by Prospero.

Antonio is the Duke of Milan and the brother of Prospero. Prospero was the rightful heir to the throne but Antonio schemed to usurp his brother and banish him from the state. When he was wandering in Prospero's Island, he convinced Sebastian to kill his brother Alonso the king. It shows that his ambition is quite ruthless and he lacks brotherly love.

Gonzalo, Sebastian, Stephano, and Trinculo are minor characters in this play. They are also carefully developed by Shakespeare but they are excluded from the discussion made in this study due to the limited scope of the study.

**2.3 Thought Expressed in *Measure for Measure* and *The Tempest*** The major themes of the plays in the discussion are considered for bringing out what thoughts they express. At first, the themes of *Measure for Measure* are discussed. The themes of *The Tempest* come next.

### 2.3.1 Thought Expressed in *Measure for Measure*

*Measure for Measure* expresses Shakespeare's thoughts on justice and mercy, sex, marriage, the role of women, etc. These thoughts are discussed below: The main thought expressed in *Measure for Measure* is the idea of tempering justice with mercy. Merciful justice is juxtaposed throughout the play with strict enforcement of the law. Mercy is advocated by the duke, Isabella, Escalus, Mariana, and the provost. It is only Angelo who demands strict adherence to the law. He even demands his execution as a sign of his strict adherence to the law when he is found guilty. Shakespeare has shown that when treated with mercy, criminals show repentance for the sins committed by them. It may or may not happen if they are treated strictly.

Shakespeare also expressed his thoughts on illicit sex in *Measure for Measure*. Sex is the main driving force in this play. Illicit sex and prostitution were the major social problems not only in Vienna but also in Shakespeare's London. Illicit sex and prostitution resulted in illegitimacy and disease like a plague. Illicit sex is presented in this play through the portrayal of the character of Mistress Overdone.

Shakespeare also expressed his thought that marriage is a tool that saves the reputation of women and gives them a prestigious position they may or may not deserve. For characters like Juliet, Mariana, and Mistress Overdone, marriage is the best option.

All the women characters in this play are more or less controlled by patriarchy. Though there are many differences between them, their social grounds are limited. These limitations are set by the male characters that surround them in their lives. For example, a nun may be blackmailed, a prostitute may be arrested for running a brothel, and the love of Mariana may not be materialized because of the small size of her dowry.

*Measure for Measure* well accommodates Shakespeare's thoughts on diverse issues like justice, mercy, love, sex, and marriage. Shakespeare used both the main plot and the subplot to express his ideas through this play. All the characters – both major and minor ones – more or less express Shakespeare's thoughts through their speeches and activities.

### 2.3.2 Thought Expressed in *The Tempest*

The thoughts expressed in *The Tempest* are diverse in nature. They include the illusion of justice, the superiority of human beings, colonization, slavery, power and exploitation, magic, revenge, the power of language, etc. These thoughts are discussed below:

The most important thought expressed by Shakespeare in *The Tempest* is the illusory nature of justice from the perspective of Prospero, he is initially deprived of justice. He was expelled from his state by his elder brother who usurps the powers. To get the proper justice, Prospero must regain his dukedom. Accordingly, Prospero performs different activities in the play so that he can get the powers back from Alonso. His activities initially seem justified. But when his treatment of Ariel and Caliban is considered, his erroneous concept of justice is exposed. He keeps Caliban and Ariel as his slaves and does not release Ariel despite the promises he made. Prospero exploits and manipulates different situations in his favor. It is contrary to the idea of justice he possesses.

The play also shows Shakespeare's idea about the superiority of human beings. After being stranded on the island, Prospero and his daughter Miranda live there for almost twelve years. They struggle to survive on that island. Prospero exploits other human beings and creatures for his survival. He utilizes Ariel for performing different tasks. Miranda, on the other hand, deals with Caliban who tries to attack her and even rape them. Ariel remains faithful to Prospero but Prospero never trusts him completely. He exploits Ariel until he gets the opportunity to leave the island. In the entire play, Shakespeare has established the superiority of human beings and presented creatures like

Ariel and Caliban under the control of human beings.

Shakespeare's ideas about power and exploitation are also expressed in *The Tempest*. At first, Antonio exploits the power given by Prospero. Prospero gave his powers to his brother who used that power to expel Prospero from Milan. Prospero does into exile to an island to save his life. the island, Prospero who was a victim of illegal power exercise starts exercising his power over Ariel. Besides, his power of magic allows him to take revenge on his enemies. Prospero also exercises his power over Caliban and becomes his master. Prospero keeps exploiting both Ariel and Caliban until the play ends.

Shakespeare has also shown the power of language in this play. Most of the characters in the play use the power of language to seize power, confuse or convince others, and manipulate different incidents. The power of language is mostly shown by Prospero. His speaking skill is enriched by his studies. Using his superior control over language, he exploits Ariel for material ulterior motives. This power is also shown by Caliban who has not only learned English but is capable of using this language against Prospero.

Shakespeare has expressed his thoughts on colonization also. When Prospero and Miranda reached the island, Caliban and Ariel were the real inhabitants of that island. Prospero uses his power and knowledge to colonize the original inhabitants, the "others." This colonization ultimately results in Ariel's freedom and Caliban's partial civil especially in the case of learning the language of the "we." Prospero does not think that Caliban is fit to rule the island. In this play, Shakespeare has shown the negative aspects of the indigenous people and seems to have advocated for colonizing their lands to give them the taste of civilization.

Like Measure for Measure, Shakespeare's thoughts are well-accommodated in *The Tempest*. All the characters and incidents are expressive of Shakespeare's thoughts on diverse issues. The speeches of the characters also serve the same purpose.

#### **2.4 Use of Diction in Measure for Measure and The Tempest**

Shakespeare's plays show a complete variety and perfect utilization of diction. The arrangement of all things about a play – characters, combination of words, sequence of dramatic events, sentence structure, rhythm, characters' relationship with each other or their moods in particular moments – are the reflection of his successful use of diction.

##### **2.4.1 Diction in Measure for Measure**

Angelo is "[a] man of stricture and firm abstinence."<sup>22</sup> He has a wide reputation as a person who is "straight in virtue"<sup>23</sup> From the very beginning of the play, he shows his close adherence to law and order. He does not tolerate the lawbreakers and argues severely against the lawbreakers to punish them to make examples of his law enforcement. The diction he uses at these times is quite befitting for anybody strict to the law. However, his strict words transform dramatically after he met with Isabella in Act 2 Scene 2. Angelo is shocked by Isabella's power of attraction. Angelo fails to avoid her temptation and starts going through inner conflict which is revealed in the following soliloquy:

O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,

With saints, dost bait thy hook! Most Dangerous

Is that temptation that doth goad us on

To sin in loving virtue: never could the strumpet,

With all her double vigor, art, and nature,

Once stir my temper, but this virtuous maid

Subdues me quite.<sup>24</sup>

Shakespeare's use of the words „saint“ and „saints“ draws the attention of the readers to the words and makes them think about the meaning of those words. The words mean that Angelo regards himself as a saint tempted by another saint. This temptation, according to Angelo, is nothing but a cruel trick of the devil and therefore he cannot be blamed for this temptation. Shakespeare's use of the imagery of a baited hook also suggests that Angelo thinks of himself as a faultless victim who is caught by the hook like a fish.

The comparison of “strumpet” to “virtuous maid” shows Angelo's limitation in measuring women, either as whores or virgins. Then, Shakespeare's use of the word „subdues“ is meaningful. It could mean that “Isabella has quietened or suppressed him but it could also mean she conquered and defeated him.”<sup>25</sup>

While the duke is in disguise, he talks to different types of people including political and religious figures, thieves, and murderers. He also expresses his innermost

<sup>22</sup> Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, act I, scene IV, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, act II, scene I, p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, act I, scene II, p. 47.

<sup>25</sup> Royal Shakespeare Company, *Measure for Measure* Analysis, <https://www.rsc.org/UK/Shakespeare-learning-zone/measure-for-measure/language/analysis>, accessed November 22, 2021.

thoughts and feelings in his soliloquies. His use of language changes with the change of the situation he is exposed to. In Act 3 Scene 1, he disguises himself as a friar and visits Claudio to advise him to prepare himself for death. On this occasion, his speech is friar-like. He is also very intelligent and capable of communicating complicated thoughts. This claim can be proved through the following lines uttered by him:

Reason thus with life,--

If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing

That none but fools would keep a breath thou art,

Servile to all the skiey influences,

That dost this habitation, where thou keep'

Hourly afflict.<sup>26</sup>

Shakespeare uses words like “thing” and “breath” and coins a new word, “skyeey,” to show how insignificant human life is. His comparison of human life to “a breath” that is lost in the huge sky also shows the insignificance of human life.<sup>27</sup>

#### 2.4.2 Diction in *The Tempest*

There are many moments in *The Tempest* where Prospero and Ariel talk alone together in duologues. These dialogues are examples of Shakespeare's diverse use of diction in this play. Prospero and Ariel have a very close relationship. Of all the characters, only Prospero can see and speak to Ariel, and only Ariel shares in Prospero's

plans. Though Ariel does not directly question Prospero, “his comments seem to make Prospero think and question himself.”<sup>28</sup> The following is an example of how Ariel makes Prospero think:

ARIEL: Your spell is so strong

That if you now saw them,

Your feelings would be touched.

PROSPERO: Do you think so, spirit?

ARIEL: Mine would be, sir, if I were human.<sup>29</sup>

According to Ariel, if Prospero saw how deeply the nobles were suffering because of Prospero’s exercise of magic, the latter would express his sorrow for them. Ariel’s utterance “Mine would, sir, were I human” makes Prospero think about his treatment of the nobles. Prospero can perceive that “he should behave in a more human and

<sup>26</sup> Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, act I, scene II, p. 61.

<sup>27</sup> Measure for Measure Analysis, accessed November 22, 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Royal Shakespeare Company, The Tempest Analysis, <https://www.RSC.org.UK/Shakespeare-learning-zone/the-tempest/language/analysis>, accessed November 22, 2021.

<sup>29</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, adapted by Brady Timone, Saddleback Educational Publishing, 2004, e-book, act v, scene I, p. 83.

humane way than Ariel who is just a “spirit.”<sup>30</sup> *The Tempest* is replete with such examples through which Shakespeare has used skillfully selected diction to heighten a particular effect.<sup>30</sup> Royal Shakespeare Company, The Tempest Analysis, accessed November 22, 2021.

## Chapter Three

### 3. Conclusion

The findings are the first summary and then their implications are stated in this section. The summary of the findings and their implications are also accompanied by what the limitations of this study and how those limitations can be exploited by other researchers in future studies.

#### 3.1 Summary of the Findings

*The Tempest* is governed by magic. Every important event in this play is the result of Prospero’s exercise of his magical powers. It is romantic in its theme but classical in form. It is romantic because its action takes place on a remote, unknown island and the dramatist has used the free flow of his imagination without caring for the laws of probability. It used both comic and tragic elements. From this perspective, “the Aristotelian concept of the “purity of genre” is not maintained in *The Tempest*. The same thing happened in the case of *Measure for Measure*. “Purity of genre” is not maintained in this play also.

As for the plots, both these plays use subplot(s). In both these plays, the main plot is accompanied by sub-plot(s). The main plot of *Measure for Measure* certainly deals with Angelo’s enforcement of the law. In the subplot, Elbow enforces the laws on Pompey and Froth. In *The Tempest*, the main plot deals with the loss and regain of Prospero’s dukedom. There are three subplots in this play. The first subplot deals with Antonio and Sebastian’s desire to kill Alonso; the second subplot deals with the desire of Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban to kill Prospero. The third

subplot deals with Ferdinand-Miranda's relationship.

The major characters portrayed in *Measure for Measure* are the Duke, Angelo, Escalus, Claudio, Lucio, Isabella, Juliet, and Mariana. The minor characters in this play are Elbow, Froth, Pompey, Abhorson, Barnardine, Mistress Overdone, and Francesca. All the characters are individualized by Shakespeare. They are both local and universal. Similar results are also found in *The Tempest*. The major characters in this play are Prospero, Miranda, Ariel, Caliban, Ferdinand, Antonio, and Alonso. The minor characters are Gonzalo, Sebastian, Stephano, and Trinculo.

As for the thoughts expressed by Shakespeare in the plays, *Measure for Measure* accommodates his thoughts on justice, mercy, love, sex, and marriage. On the other hand, *The Tempest* expresses his thoughts on the illusion of justice, the

The superiority of human beings, colonization, slavery, power and exploitation, magic, revenge, power of language, etc. Both the main plot and the subplot(s) of the plays are utilized by Shakespeare to express his thoughts. He has also used his characters for this purpose.

Shakespeare used a wide variety of diction in these plays. This variety is expressed through the characters of the plays, their combination of words, the portrayal of dramatic events, the rhythm the characters create, their relationship with others, and the change of their moods with the change of situations. Shakespeare used skillfully selected diction to create a particular effect.

### 3.2 Implication of the Findings

Both plays do not conform to a single line of action. There are subplots in them. But these sub-plots do not disturb the main actions of the plays; rather they strengthen the main plots. The actions in the sub-plots work as a foil to heighten the main plot. They deal with the possible alternative sides of an issue that the main plot deals with. From this perspective, they are supplementary to the main plot. Shakespeare certainly has violated the classical standard in this regard but his violations do not cause harm to the play.

The characters that Shakespeare has portrayed are befitting to the plots concerned. They are both local and universal. In Jonson's words, they are not kings or queens but they are human beings. Shakespeare has also portrayed both flat and round characters in these plays. He has also portrayed both individual and type characters therein. There is Chaucerian "God's plenty" in the characters portrayed by Shakespeare in these plays.

The thoughts expressed in these plays are his thoughts but they are capable of making the readers think. Shakespeare has expressed diverse thoughts in these plays. Similar diversity is seen in his use of diction also.

### 3.3 Limitations of the Study

Considering the narrow scope of a term paper, this study makes limited discussion on the thought expressed in the plays and the diction employed therein. Besides, it also excludes discussions on the music and the spectacle that could be used while staging these plays.

### 3.7 Future Research Endeavors

Future researchers can include music and spectacle in their studies. They can also make comprehensive discussions on the thought and diction of these plays.

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