

# The tempest and adam and eve

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Nature of Man In order to connect with his Christian dominated audience, all of Shakespeare's plays contain important allusions to the bible. The Tempest is no exception. Throughout the play various allusions to the Genesis story of Adam & Eve are made. This serves to portray men in a state of nature which plants the question of whether men are intrinsically evil or good. In the play the island is described as a Utopia. This can be seen in Gonzalo's speech in Act 2, Scene 1 " No kind of traffic would I admit; no name of magistrate; Letters should not be known, riches, poverty and use of service, bound of land none...

No occupation, all men idle, all, And women too, but innocent and pure (Shakespeare)". Here Gonzalo describes the type of world he would create for himself if he was ruler of the island. The Utopia he ends up describing has many similarities to the Bible's Garden of Eden. Gonzalo would reject from the island earthly possessions and inventions such as metal, wine and weapons. This would create a world with no possessions and weapons which would keep people in a state of nature where greediness and jealousy would not exist. When Gonzalo says " Letters" he really means " Learning".

Banning learning is something very similar to what happened in the Garden of Eden where Adam & Eve were not allowed to eat from the Tree of Knowledge and share God's wisdom. Having knowledge makes men independent as they will start to do things by themselves which distances them from God and make their own order. Here Shakespeare suggests that just as this was the downfall of Adam & Eve, it will also be the downfall of man. Sebastian comments that marriage would also not be allowed in

Gonzalo's Utopia. In the story of Adam & Eve, they don't get married until after they had been banished from the Garden of Eve.

This suggests that marriage also distracts men and women from God as it makes them dependent on their partner rather than God. Marriage would also give people a sense of possession on another human which would not be in accordance to Gonzalo's Utopia. Gonzalo also states that in his Utopia all men and women would be idle. This alludes to the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve did not have to work for food because the land was fruitful. It was not until Adam was expelled from Eden that God cursed the ground so Adam would have to work hard to eat.

Also while in the Garden of Eden, Eve was innocent and pure just as Gonzalo describes the women in his Utopia. Adam and Eve were innocent people fed by the abundance brought forth by nature in the Garden of Eve. This is exactly as how Gonzalo describes how he would feed the people in his Utopia. The story of Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban also portrays commentary on the nature of men. When Stephano and Trinculo arrive at the island they are not portrayed as evil but instead as drunken comic characters. While it would be inaccurate to describe them as good and innocent men, they definitely suffer a fall in character as the play progresses.

Their downfall is in direct correlation to Caliban's bad influence. In the play, Caliban is portrayed as the devil who is a savage and deformed slave. In the time of Shakespeare, people believed there was a correlation between the outward appearance and someone inner self. In the play Caliban represents man's worse nature and is the source temptation to Stephano and Trinculo.

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In the play, Caliban plants evil thoughts in the minds of the unsuspecting Stephano and Trinculo to kill Prospero; Caliban's real master. This has resemblance to the serpent in the story of Adam & Eve.

In the story of the bible Adam & Eve were fooled by a serpent to eat from the Tree of Knowledge so they could gain the knowledge of God. In both The Tempest and the Bible, plan of the tempters (Caliban and the serpent) was only to undermine and overthrow their real masters. However, in both instances neither the serpent nor Caliban wanted to rule themselves. In the bible, Satan does not eat of the fruit himself and instead seems to want Adam & Eve to rule instead. By giving Adam & Eve power he wanted to cause disorder between humans and God so that he could rule indirectly.

Similarly, Caliban wanted Stephano to be ruler of the island as Act 3, Scene 2 says " Thou shalt be lord of it and I'll serve thee (Shakespeare). " Caliban only wanted to kill Prospero and not to rule himself. Here the dark side of the state of nature is shown. Caliban represents man's greediness and want for power. Just as the serpent was the cause of the downfall of Adam & Eve, so will Caliban be the cause of downfall of Stephano and Trinculo. Shakespeare is portraying a state of nature of man similar to Hobbes view were humans are inherently evil. In both the story of Adam & Eve and The Tempest knowledge is the source of Godly power.

In The Tempest Caliban says that the only way to defeat Prospero is to take away his books as he says in Act 3 Scene 2 " Remember first to possess his books, for without them He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not one spirit to command. They all do hate him as rootedly as I. Burn but his books (Shakespeare). " In the story of Adam & Eve, the serpent tells Eve that the

only reason God is all powerful is because of his knowledge. Therefore, the serpent tells Eve that if she wants to be like God she simply has to eat from the Tree of Knowledge; Genesis 3: 4 " You will not surely die.

For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil. " Here Shakespeare is suggesting that it is human nature to want to be like God. With every invention and scientific breakthrough humans will feel more powerful and therefore more God like. This will make humans less dependent on God and will therefore cause men to distance themselves from God. However, over time humans will get a false feeling of power and will try to overthrow God just like the drunk Stephano and Trinculo tried to do to Prospero.

In The Tempest Shakespeare explores human nature and its relation to religion. In the end he comes to a conclusion similar to that of Hobbes theory. Shakespeare suggests that as long as humans stay faithful to God they will do fine. However, Shakespeare states that human nature is to distance himself from God and this will in the end be its downfall. In today's society the distancing from God is fairly obvious; however it still remains to be seen if this will be the downfall of the human race.