

# Women on the Margin: a Critical Analysis of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Riyad Abdurahman Manqoush\*

## Abstract

Although many scholarly writings investigated William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), a large number of these studies analyzed the play from the perspective of the colonial power, especially the relationship between the European colonizers and the colonized natives. In other words, the play was normally analyzed along with the postcolonial theory. In case, a few scholars investigated the play from the feminist approach, their coverage is insufficient because they mostly focus on one female character. This paper is intended to examine the marginalization of women in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, paying attention to the whole female characters in the text: Miranda, Sycorax and Claribel. Since the analysis is supposed to uncover the patriarchal ideology that dominates the text, I have appropriated the feminist theory to frame my discussions. The paper concludes that though *The Tempest* is about knowledge, power and usurpation, its context possesses an obvious patriarchal ideology as seen in the author's portrayals of the three female characters: Miranda, Sycorax and Claribel. For instance, those women are depicted as body, emotional, naïve, foul witch and sometimes as a political commodity. In other words, the research confirms that *The Tempest* is loaded with misogyny which stands beyond marginalizing the female characters. This marginalization uncovers Shakespeare's viewpoint of women and it might reflect the English society's attitude towards women at the Elizabethan era.

**Keywords:** *The Tempest*, feminist criticism, Miranda, Sycorax and Claribel.

## Introduction:

Although many scholarly writings investigated William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), a large number of these studies analyzed the play from the perspective of the colonial power, especially the relationship between the European colonizers and the colonized natives. In other words, the play was normally analyzed along with the postcolonial theory. In case, a few research papers investigated the play from the feminist approach, their coverage is insufficient because they mostly focus on one female character. This paper is intended to examine the marginalization of women in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, paying attention to the whole female characters in the text i.e. Miranda, Sycorax and Claribel. Since the analysis is supposed to uncover the patriarchal ideology that dominates the text, I will appropriate the feminist theory to frame my discussions. The essay is structured in five sections: introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, analysis and conclusion.

## Literature Review:

Like Shakespeare's other plays, *The Tempest* has been discussed in various scholarly studies. However, as mentioned earlier, the majority of these studies analyzed the play as a colonial text and subsequently they used the postcolonial theory to frame their analyses of the play. Due to

the limitation of space in this research, I will merely review the most relevant of these critical writings.

Yuehua Guo (2008: 13) "makes a comparative study" between the "French playwright Aime Cesaire's *A Tempest* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*". The comparison is intended "to present the conflicts between two important characters in both plays, Prospero and Caliban" (Guo 2008: 13). Based on the comparison between the two plays, and "by analyzing the relationship between the two characters [Prospero and Caliban], it is easily acknowledged that the relationship between the two characters is that of the colonizer and the colonized, which is the main theme of the two plays" (Guo 2008: 13, words in brackets mine). This quotation indicates that Guo was consciously or unconsciously preoccupied by the postcolonial theory in his analysis of the two plays. This can also be clearly seen in Guo's conclusion below in which he claims that:

Cesaire's Caliban is different from Shakespeare's Caliban in that Cesaire's Caliban incarnates the rebellious image of the colonized people in a more vivid way and proves to be more powerful than Shakespeare's Caliban in their struggle against colonization for liberty, freedom, and equality (Guo 2008: 13).

As quoted above, Guo illustrates that the character of Caliban in both plays is different. In

\* Riyad Abdurahman Manqoush, PhD Assistant professor of English literature Faculty of Education – Seiyun Hadhramout University

Cesaire's *A Tempest*, Caliban is strong and "rebellious" for he kept resisting Prospero until the end of the play. On the contrary, Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is very weak and he does resist Prospero remarkably and he believes the promise of Prospero that he may set him free. In general, though Guo's emphasis is on the similarities and differences between the character of Caliban in both plays, his scrutiny goes along with identifying the relationship between the colonized people and their colonizers i.e. Guo treated the two plays as colonial texts. This confirms my argument discussed earlier that many scholars analyzed Shakespeare's *The Tempest* from the perspective of the postcolonial theory.

By the same token, Moslem Zolfagharkhani & Zahra Heshmatifar (2012: 7) explore "the relationship between pedagogy and colonial power as discourse instances in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* which dates back to the early seventeenth century." Zolfagharkhani & Heshmatifar (2012: 7) claim that *The Tempest* can be seen "as a model of colonial relationship and as a metaphor of educational history". In addition to that, they argue that "the concept of power discussed in *The Tempest*, is not shaped just by supreme authority of the kingdom, but is influenced by its relationship with knowledge as an instrument of power in Foucaultian eye" (Zolfagharkhani & Heshmatifar 2012: 7). Since the colonial "power" is connected with "knowledge" as argued above, it is necessary for Zolfagharkhani & Heshmatifar (2012: 7) "to investigate how Prospero, the master of the colonial prison of his island, makes use of his magical books, the symbols of knowledge, so as to teach all the characters dramatized in the story as all classes of the society, from aristocrats to commoners." From the previous review, I can claim that Zolfagharkhani & Heshmatifar's investigation "focus on Prospero's reliance on his colonized power presented by verbal and physical punishment toward Caliban, the colonized misshapen creature on the one hand, and homeschooling of Miranda, Prospero's daughter, on the other hand" (Zolfagharkhani & Heshmatifar 2012: 7). To summarize their findings, Zolfagharkhani & Heshmatifar's "article ends by resembling Prospero's magical power and his god-like control into a Foucaultian reading of history" (2012: 7). Since Foucault alleges that "power will inevitably result in some form of resistance", Zolfagharkhani & Heshmatifar (2012: 7) conclude that "The

*Tempest* suggests an expanding threat of disruption, treason and rebellion as the reaction to the power."

Even though some researchers have utilized the feminist approach in their analysis of the play, their discussions do not concentrate on the whole female characters, but they stress on one. For instance, Irene Lara (2007: 79) investigates "the literary figure Sycorax, the racialized, sexualized and witched mother of Caliban, because the celebration of Caliban as a symbol of subaltern resistance in Latin American/Latino studies has led to her discursive erasure or marginalization." Lara's research concludes that "the literacy of Sycorax speaks to a third space beyond the oppositional cursing tongues of Caliban and Prospero. Here lies the prospect of healing internalized fear and loathing about feminine and racialized spirituality within ourselves and others" (Lara 2007: 79).

Unlike the scholarly studies discussed in this section, the present research utilizes the feminist approach as a theoretical background for analyzing the three female characters in *The Tempest*.

#### **Theoretical Framework: Feminist Criticism:**

Although feminism appeared widely in the 1960s, it has its origin in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Peter Barry (2002: 121) mentions some "classic books which had diagnosed the problem of women's inequality in society... These books include Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), which discusses male writers like Milton, Pope, and Rousseau." In addition to that, other books of the early twentieth century, such as Olive Schreiner's *Women and Labour* (1911) and Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), examined "the unequal treatment given to women seeking education and alternatives to marriage and brotherhood" (Barry 2002: 121). In fact, analyzing these issues can be seen as a real beginning of the feminist movement. This movement developed to include literature. For instance, Barry (2002: 121) argues that Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) is one of the famous classic books of feminism because it "has an important section on the portrayal of women in the novels of D. H. Lawrence." In other words, Beauvoir's study can be categorized as a feminist literary criticism for it centers on the depictions of women in literature.

It might be amazing that some men contributed to the "tradition of feminist writing." Among

those male authors, as Barry (2002: 121) asserts, were John Stuart Mill, who wrote *The Subjection of Women* (1869) and also Friedrich Engels, who wrote *The Origin of the Family* (1884). However, this runs contrary to what Ann Dobie believes. In her book of literary criticism, Dobie utilizes classic quotations in which famous men deform the image of women as quoted below:

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) asserted, 'Most women have no character at all,' and John Keats (1795-1821) explained, 'The opinion I have of the generality of women—who appear to me as children to whom I would rather give a sugar plum than any time, forms a barrier against matrimony which I rejoice in' (Dobie 2002: 98, commas and brackets original).

Comparing Dobie's argument above with Barry's claim discussed earlier, I can deduce that although some male writers contributed to the feminist criticism, their contribution is modest. However, there is no doubt that male writers and their misrepresentations of women were the foremost reason that led to the configuration of feminist criticism.

Feminist theorists reveal that feminist criticism has passed through a number of stages. According to Elaine Showalter, who detects in the history of women's writings, feminism has three phases. Showalter's three phases are explained by Guerin et al. (2005: 224-5) in the quotation below:

The feminine phase (1840-1880), during which women writers imitated the dominant male traditions; the feminist phase (1880-1920), when women advocated for their rights; and the female phase (1920-present), when dependency upon opposition - that is, on uncovering misogyny in male texts - is replaced by rediscovery of women's texts and women.

The first phase, "the feminine phase", is embodied in the style of Charlotte Bronte and Mary Ann Evan who imitated famous male writers. In her analysis of this phase, Dobie (2002: 99, brackets original) adds that "sometimes female writers even used men's names (Currer Brll and George Eliot, for example) to hide their female authorship." This shows how oppressed and marginalized women were at that time. In the second phase, "the feminine phase", female writers protested against their inequality with male writers. They also "decried the unjust depictions of women by male writers" (Dobie 2002: 99). In other words, women began to have a voice and agency. They started to defend their rights. In the third phase,

"female phase", female critics began to "look at the depictions of women in male texts in an effort to reveal the misogyny (negative attitudes towards women) lurking there" (Dobie 2002: 99, brackets original). In this phase, they began to analyze the representation of women in literature and their portrayal in other aspects of culture.

Feminist criticism examines the distortions of women in literature. This is because, as Booker (1996: 89) states, "many feminist critics have persuasively argued that literature plays a central role in the development of social attitudes towards women and women's attitudes towards themselves." In addition to that, Ashcroft et al. (1995: 249) argues that "women, like colonised subjects, have been relegated to the position of 'Other', colonised by various forms of patriarchal dominations. They thus share with colonized races an intimate experience the politics of oppression and repression." Thus, due to the patriarchal ideology, which consider men superior to women, women are oppressed and marginalized in their societies and subsequently in literature. This misogyny, which means men's "negative attitudes toward women" (Dobie 2002: 99), led to forbidding women from acting on stage even when performing the role of female characters. This kind of forbiddance existed in the British theatre in the medieval era in which Shakespeare's plays were acted. As an alternative of the actresses, actors wore female clothes and played the role of women, and those actors were called the "King's Men" (Rozakis 1999: 9). Hence, the misogyny and the biasness that is practised against women is an important factor that led to the appearance of the feminist criticism.

From the previous discussion, I can aver that feminist criticism appeared to defend the women's position in literature and in the society in general. This claim coincides with Booker's argument that feminist criticism "focuses on the relationship between literature and patriarchal biases in society" (1996: 89). In other words, it analyzes the representation of women as a product of the patriarchal ideology that tends to label some images and stereotypes to women. Homi Bhabha (1994: 67) scrutinizes that there are "two forms of representation...sexual or racial." The former one emphasizes on the body and the behavior of women. This kind of depiction seems to be exotic. In contrast, the latter form focuses on labeling stereotypes such as stereotyping women as witches, weak, stupid, mad, troublesome, and dependent to men.

Due to the significance of the concept "stereotype" in studying the feminist theory, I need to explain its meaning. Narmeen El-Farra (1996) defines the word "stereotype" as "the creation of a biased opinion or view". Even though El-Farra's definition is too short, words such as "creation", "biased", "opinion", and "view" connote the whole meaning of the term "stereotype." Accordingly, the stereotype is not a reality it is just created or invented. People who are biased or obsessed by specific opinions and views about women can stereotype women in a negative way. However, in response to some people who may think that the stereotype is just a simplification of the reality, Bhabha (1994: 75) illustrates that "the stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality."

Briefly, feminist criticism is a critical approach that is more concerned with the representation of women in patriarchal societies. In other words, it emphasizes on the images of women in the text and in culture outside the text. It deals with the women's oppression by men as well as women's resistance to such oppression. For instance, despite the traditional images of women such as weak, voiceless, and mad, women may sometimes be portrayed, in some texts, as powerful characters. In this paper, I will utilize various types of representations with a special emphasis on the marginalization of women in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

#### **Marginalization of Women in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*:**

*The Tempest* centers mainly on Prospero, the Duke of Milan. Antonio, Prospero's brother, was encouraged by the King of Naples, Alonso, to usurp his brother's Dukedom. Since Prospero was engaged in knowledge or properly magic affairs, Antonio has successfully become the Duke of Milan. Therefore, Prospero, with Lord Gonzalo's assistance, leaves Milan with his three-year daughter to live in an island. After freeing the Spirit Ariel, whom was imprisoned in a tree by Sycorax, Prospero forces Ariel to serve him. During the twelve years that Prospero stays in the island, he enslaves Caliban, Sycorax' son. One day, Ariel creates a tempest and draws a royal ship to the shore of the island. The ship is inhabited by his brother—the Duke of Milan, Antonio—the King of Naples, and some other characters. They are on their way home from Tunis where they celebrated the wedding ceremony of Alonso's daughter, Claribel, whom was married to the King of Tunis in Africa.

Prospero shows them his power as a way of punishment but, later on, he forgives all of them and releases Ariel as well. At the end of the play, he goes back home to be the Duke of Milan again.

The most significant female character in *The Tempest* is Miranda, Prospero's daughter. While the narrator portrays Miranda, he stresses on her body, not her personality nor her way of thinking. This can be deduced from Ferdinand's speech to Miranda in which he says: "O, if a virgin, / And your affection not gone forth, / I'll make you / The queen of Naples" (1.2.445-9). The quotation shows that Ferdinand falls in love with her at first sight. Her beauty attracts him and urges him to ask her for marriage in case she is a "virgin". He also promises that he will make her the "queen of Naples". This kind of love is apparently fascinating but Ferdinand indeed degenerates Miranda because he stresses on her body. This description reflects the traditional image of women in which women are seen as the man's other whose duty is to accommodate her lover. Ignoring her mind and spirit and accentuating on her virginity is harmful for Miranda; because the word "virgin" connotes no more than a physical portrayal of her sexual part. However, Miranda disparages herself and conversely she amplifies the superiority of Ferdinand as quoted below:

I am your wife if you will marry me;  
If not, I'll die your maid. To be your fellow  
You may deny me, but I'll be your servant  
Whether you will or no.  
(3.1.83-6)

In this quotation, Miranda expresses her love toward Ferdinand to the extent that she demeans herself and accepts to be Ferdinand's "maid" or "servant" if he does not like to marry her. This kind of self-subjugation designates that Miranda is an emotional woman and, through this characterization, Shakespeare perhaps covets to give a sign of the notion that women are emotional. This is because Ferdinand is only the third man she has ever met in her life, including her father and Caliban. Nevertheless, she falls in arousing love with him and unexpectedly she offers to be his "maid" and "servant". This loss of composure is not practised by men against women; but it appears because some women accept the patriarchal ideology and believe in the priority of men to women. This verifies what has been discussed earlier about the impact of the patriarchal ideology on "social attitudes towards women and women's attitudes towards

themselves" (Booker 1996: 89). Hence, Miranda is not oppressed by Ferdinand but she makes herself lower than him or, in other words, she expresses her love toward him in a way that makes Ferdinand superior to her.

Unlike her father, who is absolutely shown as intellectual and intelligent in the play, Miranda is indirectly depicted as unaware of what occurs around her. For instance, after her father completed his story about Antonio's usurpation of his dukedom and then how they came to the island, he makes her sleep for a while so as to talk to his spirit, Ariel, about the storm. However, after Prospero and Ariel finished their conversation, Ariel disappears and Prospero awakes his daughter. Consequently, she thinks that her father's story has made her sleep. In response to this event, she utters: "The strangeness of your story put / Heaviness in me" (1.2.305-6). This shows how Miranda is naive and controlled by her father. Highlighting this idea, Zolfagharkhani & Heshmatifar (2012: 10) note that "Miranda is typically viewed as being completely deprived of freedom by the father." Prospero's depriving Miranda of her "freedom" gives the notion that she is not intelligent enough to understand what happens around her. And this is another form of distorting Miranda in the play. In spite of the negative images that are labeled to Miranda, she is given a voice as well as a power. For instance, she is harsh to Caliban, whom is accused of attempting to rape her, as discerned in her speech below:

I pitied thee,  
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour  
One thing or another. When thou didst not, savage,  
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like  
A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes  
With words that made them known. But thy vile  
Race---  
(1.2.352-357)

The utilization of words such as "savage", "brutish", and "vile race" reflects the colonial ideology that Miranda adopts against Caliban, the native of the island. Even if Miranda is given an agency, voice and power in the text, her force is merely used over the native i.e. Caliban. This reinforces Jessica Slight's argument that "Miranda is treated merely as an emblem of a colonialist ruling class rather than understood as an active agent in the life-world of the play" (2001: 357). This is because, as seen in the

previous example, Miranda as a colonial female character whose authority only allows her to frighten the native i.e. Caliban

In fact, it is not obvious in the play that Caliban has really tried to rape Miranda or not. This is because, on one hand, Caliban denies this claim and responds to Miranda and her father by saying: "O ho, o ho! Wouldn't had been done!" (1.2.348). On the other hand, the ambiguity in knowing who is right and who is wrong is a result of the inability of Caliban to express himself for what he knows from the language is merely "how to curse" (1.2.363). This can be seen in Caliban's speech with Prospero: "You taught me language; / and my profit on't is, / I know how to curse" (1.2.361-3). Since Caliban is incapable to defend his stance that he is innocent due to his lack of vocabulary, Miranda believes her father that Caliban has intended to rape her; and consequently she shouts at him and calls him "savage", "brutish", and "vile race" as discussed earlier.

Some scholars such as Zolfagharkhani & Heshmatifar, whom were mentioned earlier, argue that "The Tempest has only one female character, Miranda. Other women, such as Caliban's mother Sycorax, Miranda's mother and Alonso's daughter Claribel, are only mentioned" (2012: 10). In fact, there is no doubt that Miranda is a major character and the foremost woman in the play. Yet, the other female women—Sycorax and Claribel—must not be neglected. This is because their portrayals in the text is apparent and it uncovers the patriarchal ideology that dominates The Tempest. For instance, the play's description of Sycorax—Caliban's mother—is questionable because "Prospero has never met Sycorax", nevertheless, all what is mentioned about her "is said by Prospero" (Zolfagharkhani & Heshmatifar 2012: 10). According to Brittney Blystone (2012: 74-5), "Sycorax's absence gives Prospero the opportunity to construct her fully into a symbol of the evil woman, the opposite of himself; however, this construction also makes her an antagonist to Prospero and the patriarchy he represents." This can be seen in the play when Ariel requests for his "liberty" from Prospero, and then Prospero narrates Sycorax's story to him to remind him of his last miserable life:

PROSPERO  
Thou dost, and think'st it much to tread the ooze  
Of the salt deep,  
To run upon the sharp wind of the north,  
To do me business in the veins o' the earth

When it is baked with frost.

ARIEL

I do not, sir.

PROSPERO

Thou liest, malignant thing! Hast thou forgot  
The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy  
Was grown into a hoop? hast thou forgot her?

ARIEL

No, sir.

PROSPERO

Thou hast. Where was she born? speak; tell me.

ARIEL

Sir, in Argier.

PROSPERO

O, was she so? I must

Once in a month recount what thou hast been,  
Which thou forget'st. This damn'd witch  
Sycorax,

For mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible

To enter human hearing, from Argier,

Thou know'st, was banish'd: for one thing she  
did

They would not take her life. Is not this true?

ARIEL

Ay, sir.

(1. 2. 253-268)

The conversation between Prospero and Ariel indicates that Sycorax was a "foul witch" who came to the island before Prospero and his daughter. The dialogue also highlights that the "foul witch" came from "Argier". Argier is an old-fashioned word for Algiers which is known nowadays as Algeria. In the same quotation, it is obvious that Ariel's request leads Prospero to remind Ariel of the time when he was a servant for Sycorax. In fact, Prospero's portrayal seems to be excessive because as discussed earlier, he has never met her. This argument coincides with Blystone's elaboration that "Prospero constructs Sycorax as evil by projecting his anxieties about women and power onto her. ... When describing the men who betrayed him, his words never reach this extreme, but he uses such language to describe a woman he never met" (2012: 77). By reminding Ariel of that time, Prospero wants to make Ariel grateful for him because, as he claims, he saved him from Sycorax that had had a very strong magic.

By the same token, Prospero attempts to brag his own supernatural power and at the same time he degenerates Sycorax's magic. While Prospero's intellectual knowledge is shown in the play as benevolent, Sycorax' magic is exposed as malevolent. For instance, in his description of Sycorax, Prospero tells Ariel that:

This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child  
And here was left by the sailors. Thou, my slave,  
As thou report'st thyself, wast then her servant;  
And, for thou wast a spirit too delicate  
To act her earthy and abhorr'd commands,  
Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee,  
By help of her more potent ministers  
And in her most unmitigable rage,  
Into a cloven pine; within which rift  
Imprison'd thou didst painfully remain  
A dozen years; within which space she died  
And left thee there; where thou didst vent thy  
groans  
As fast as mill-wheels strike. Then was this  
island—  
Save for the son that she did litter here,  
A freckled whelp hag-born--not honour'd with  
A human shape.

(1. 2. 269-284)

Prospero in the quotation above portrays Sycorax as a "blue-eyed hag" who came to the island "with a child." The word "hag" is intended by Prospero to show the satanic power of Sycorax. This satanic power can construe her deed of imprisoning "her servant", Ariel, for he had refused to obey her "commands". Prospero's negative description of Sycorax reaches its peak when he deforms her "son", Caliban. Caliban is depicted as "freckled whelp hag-born" whose figure is different from the "human shape". This representation might have historical background in Shakespeare's society. According to Todd Andrew Borlik (2013: 26), "in Shakespeare's era many believed prodigious births to be the preternatural result of a witch's fornication with a devil, or incubus ... Prospero informs us that Caliban's mother was a 'witch' (5.1.272) and his father a 'devil' (1.2.321), and the other characters never miss an opportunity to comment on his monstrosity." In addition to that, Borlik (2013: 34) adds that "Prospero demonizes the black magic of Sycorax while performing some of same magic feats himself — controlling the moon and seas, threatening to pen Ariel inside an oak, etc." Thus, Prospero's unfair characterization of Sycorax elucidates that Sycorax is doubly oppressed for she is colonized as a native and subjugated by the patriarchal ideology as a woman. Prospero colonizes the island and enslaves the natives such as Sycorax's son, Caliban, and the spirit, Ariel. This perhaps occurs because both the playwright, William Shakespeare, and the protagonist of the play, Prospero are influenced by the colonial discourse and patriarchal ideology that dominated England

and the West in general at that era.

The third woman discussed in this essay is Claribel, Alonso's daughter. Her father—the King of Naples—married her off to the King of Tunis. The setting of the play occurs after her marriage, especially when a ship inhabited by her father and Antonio, the Duke of Milan, was on its way home from Tunis. The idea of wedding can easily be deduced from the conversation below between Gonzalo i.e. Alonso's advisor, Sebastian i.e. Alonso's untrustworthy brother, and Adrian i.e. Alonso's companion:

GONZALO

Methinks our garments are now as fresh as when we put them on first in Afric, at the marriage of the king's

fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis.

SEBASTIAN

'Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well in our return.

ADRIAN

Tunis is never graced before with such a paragon to their queen.

(2. 1. 68-75)

All the men above describe Claribel's "marriage" in a positive way. It was portrayed as "sweet" and she was depicted as "fair". Yet, one can claim that Claribel herself and her opinion are marginalized and oppressed in the play. She is not given a voice in the text and the audients know about her from the other characters only. In addition to that, when her father—the King of Naples—marries her off to the King of Tunis, he indeed intends to reinforce the political relationships between his Kingdom and the Kingdom of Tunis i.e. she is used as a political commodity.

Alonso's marginalization of Claribel as well as Prospero's godlike control of Miranda, discussed earlier might have historical origins in England. Cheryl (2011) explicates that "during the Elizabethan era, women were treated

subserviently; during their childhood, they were considered property of their father, and after marriage they were considered property of their husband." Cheryl's use of the term "property of their father" seems to be an appropriate description for Claribel whom was used as apolitical commodity by her father. Thus, I can claim that Shakespeare's treatment of women in this play reflects the British society's viewpoint of women at that time. According to Cheryl (2011), "women had little to no choice in determining who she would make her husband. Marriages were arranged as if they were business contracts; the marriage serves to both families in the form of wealth or acclaim."

#### **Conclusion:**

Though Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611) centers on knowledge, power, usurpation and colonization, the context possesses an obvious patriarchal ideology as seen in the author's portrayal of the three female characters. For instance, Miranda is depicted as a body, emotional and unaware of the knowledge that her father possesses. In contrast, Miranda now and then is given a power and voice in the text but her strength is merely used over the native, Caliban. Furthermore, Sycorax is doubly colonized. On one hand, she is deformed in the text as a native and, on the other hand, she is misrepresented as a women. She loses her land and son when Prospero comes to inhabit in the island and, at the same time, she is misrepresented by Prospero who depicts her as a foul witch. Similarly, the third female character, Claribel, is marginalized in the text and she is merely exposed as a political commodity. In short, this research confirms that *The Tempest* is loaded with misogyny which stands beyond marginalizing the female characters. This marginalization uncovers Shakespeare's viewpoint of women and it might reflect the English society's attitude towards women at the Elizabethan era.

**References:**

- 1- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (1995). *Post-colonial studies reader*. New York: Routledge.
- 2- Barry, P. (2002). *Beginning theory: an introduction to literary and cultural theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- 3- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- 4- Blystone, B. (2012). Extremes of gender and power: Sycorax's absence in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, *Extremes of Gender and Power*, **5**: 73-83
- 5- Booker, M. K. (1996). *A Practical Introduction to Literary Theory and Criticism*. New York: Longman Publishers.
- 6- Borlik, T. A. (2013). Caliban and the fen demons of Lincolnshire: the Englishness of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. *Shakespeare*, **9**(1): 21-51.
- 7- Cheryl. (2011). Claribel, the king's daughter. November 26. (online) <http://womenandshakespeare.blogspot.com/2011/11/claribel-kingsdaughter.html> [accessed in February 4 2016].
- 8- Dobie, A. B. (2002). *Theory in practice: an introduction to literary criticism*. Boston: Heinle.
- 9- El-Farra, N. (1996). The Arabs and the media. *Journal of Media Psychology* **1**(2). <http://www.calstatela.edu/faculty/sfischo/Arabs.html> [accessed in February 8 2016].
- 10- Guerin, W., Labor, E., Morgan, L., Reesman, J. & Willingham, J. (2005). (ed.). *A handbook of critical approaches to literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 11- Guo, Y. (2008). A rebel against colonization: a comparative study of Cesaire's Caliban in *A Tempest* with Shakespeare's Caliban in the *Tempest*. *Asian Social Science*, **4**(2): 13-16.
- 12- Lara, I. (2007). Beyond Caliban's curses: the decolonial feminist literacy of Sycorax. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, **9**(1): 79-98.
- 13- Manqoush, R. M. (2014). Comparative literature: historical and critical study of its schools, approaches and concepts. *Hadhramout University Journal of Humanities*, **11**(1): 303-311.
- 14- Manqoush, R. A. (2015). The cultural dilemma of the Yemeni and Chinese migrants: Mohammad Abdulwali's *They Die Strangers* vs. Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*. *Asian Journal Humanities & Social studies*, **3**(6):461-471.
- 15- Rozakis, L. (1999). *The complete idiot's guide to Shakespeare*. New York: Alpha Books.
- 16- Shakespeare, W. (2004). *The Tempest*. CENGAGE Learning.
- 17- Slights, J. (2001). Rape and the romanticization of Shakespeare's *Miranda*. *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, **41**(2): 357-379 .
- 18- Zolfagharkhani, M. & Heshmatifar, Z. (2012). Pedagogical and colonial power discourses in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, **8**(2): 7-14.

## نساء على الهامش: دراسة نقدية لمسرحية العاصفة لويليام شكسبير

رياض عبدالرحمن منقوش

### الملخص

على الرغم من تناول كتابات نقدية كثيرة لمسرحية العاصفة لويليام شكسبير إلا أن تلك الدراسات حلت المسرحية من منظور القوى الاستعمارية، لاسيما العلاقة بين المستعمر الأوروبي والسكان الأصليين، أي إنه عادة ما يتم دراسة المسرحية وفقاً لمنهجية نظرية ما بعد الكولونيالية، والباحثون القلائل الذين استخدموا النظرية النسوية كان تحليلهم جزئياً بسبب تركيزهم على شخصية واحدة فقط. تستهدف هذه الورقة البحثية دراسة تهميش المرأة في مسرحية العاصفة لشكسبير مع تسليط الضوء على النساء الثلاث: ميراندا، سيكوراكس وكلاريبيل. وبما أن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو كشف الخطاب والأيديولوجية الذكورية المهيمنة على النص فقد قام الباحث بإعادة صياغة النظرية النسوية لتكون الإطار المنهجي والنظرية للتحليل. في نهاية البحث توصل الباحث إلى نتيجة مفادها أنه بالرغم من تركيز مسرحية العاصفة على المعرفة والقوة والسيطرة على الحكم إلا أن متنها احتوى على أيديولوجية ذكورية وقد ظهر ذلك جلياً في وصف الكاتب للنساء الثلاث: ميراندا، سيكوراكس وكلاريبيل. فعلى سبيل المثال، تم التركيز في وصف الشخصيات الثلاث على الجسد أو إظهارهن عاطفيات وجاهلات وساحرات بل وصل الحال في بعض المشاهد إلى إظهار المرأة سلعة تباع وتشتري لأهداف اجتماعية وسياسية. وبهذا يؤكد البحث أن المسرحية غلب عليها الخطاب المعادي للمرأة ولعل هذا الخطاب هو السبب الذي أدى إلى تهميش المرأة داخل المسرحية، وهذا التهميش كشف وجهة نظر ويليام شكسبير عن المرأة، بل ربما عكس موقف المجتمع الإنجليزي من المرأة في العصور الوسطى.

Shakespeare is thought to have based his play *The Tempest* on a real-life shipwreck. William Strachey's *A True Reportory of the Wracke and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Knight*, an account of his experience during the wreck of the ship *Sea Venture* on the island of Bermuda, was written in 1609, and many scholars believe that the Bard read this account and used it as inspiration for *The Tempest*. This isn't as clear-cut as all that, because the account of the *Sea Venture* was only published later, but it's possible Shakespeare heard something of the account before it was printed. Analysis of *The T...* In *"The Tempest"*, William Shakespeare draws the character of Caliban in dubious shades. Critics down the ages have responded differently to the portrayal of Caliban. While some have downright dismissed him as a lowly savage, others (especially the post colonial critics) have focused on Caliban as the subjugated victim of colonial domination. Nonetheless, the portrayal of Caliban has interesting shades which have baffled and interested Shakespearean critics and audience. "The character of Caliban," as Hazlitt has put it, "is generally thought (and justly so) to be one of the author's masterpieces. *The Tempest*, composed toward the end of William Shakespeare's profession, is a work of imagination and dignified sentiment, the narrative of an astute old mystical performer, his lovely, unworldly little girl, a heroic youthful ruler, and an unfeeling, plotting sibling. It contains every one of the components of a fantasy wherein antiquated wrongs are corrected and genuine darlings live cheerfully ever after. The play is likewise one of graceful air and purposeful anecdote. Starting with a tempest and danger adrift, it finishes on a note of quietness and satisfaction. *The Tempest*, None of Shak...