

**Conversing' with Shakespeare:
Rewriting/Appropriating *The Tempest* (1611) from Twenty-
first Century Eyes in Katharine Duckett's *Miranda in Milan*
(2019)**

Ahcene CHERIFI^{*1} ; Arezki KHELIFA²

¹ - University of Mouloud Mammeri, Tizi Ouzou, Algeria,
ahcene.cherifi@ummto.dz

² - University of Mouloud Mammeri, Tizi Ouzou, Algeria,
arezki.khelifa@ummto.dz

Submission: 05/03/2023

Acceptance: 27/05/2023

Publication: 10/12/2023

Abstract: This article seeks to examine the wide range of ways Katharine Duckett's *Miranda in Milan* (2019) has rewritten and readjusted William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611). The latter has been remodelled through the former to suit a quite different background and, most importantly, an era with a divergent readership which is sensitive to political correctness issues. With our bearings grounded in Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism, precisely borrowing his concept 'overt polemic,' we argue that Duckett has appealed to Shakespeare's play, for inspiration, while writing her sequel that has launched an overt polemic towards its source. She has adapted, thereby, the seventeenth century masterpiece to the twenty-first

^{*}Corresponding author.

century by not only altering and revising it, but also by appropriating almost every single aspect of its entire story. The ultra corrosive and aggressive process of the novel has resulted in a text that has been caught in a dialogue with *The Tempest* against which visible discontent has been voiced. This clash might be apparent through the novel's treatment of the self/other, coloniser/colonised and Prospero/Caliban dualities; in addition to the narrative perspective, characters, plot, civilising mission, racial dimension and colonialism which have all been cast from a new outlook. Duckett's text has even brought into light the issue of women's marginal role to which they have been confined in the play; it has, on a similar vein, pondered other questions in relation to the second decade of the current century.

Key words: Shakespeare's *The Tempest*; Duckett's *Miranda in Milan*; dialogism; overt polemic; aggressive appropriation

1-Introduction :

"*The Tempest* [1611] is arguably the most global play of a truly transnational playwright" (Voigts, 2014, p. 39). Such is the claim Eckart Voigts has made referring to the worldwide appeal Shakespeare's play has generated and enjoyed following its publication; his words, although they might seem, at first glance, exaggerated, are not unwarranted or devoid of truth. *The Tempest*, generally considered as the bard's ultimate and outstanding adieu to theatre, has achieved timelessness since it has been, in the course of more than four centuries, universally translated, revised, adapted, rewritten and rearranged under the forms of prequels, sequels, films and adaptations to fit in strikingly different cultural, historical, economic and political realities. It has been deployed, for instance, by innumerable

postcolonial erudite writers who have associated its themes, characters, plot and language with the colonial discourse and ideology that was emergent in early modern England and entire Europe by extension. These thinkers, most often outside the Western intellectual circles, have seen in *The Tempest*, especially through the Prospero/Caliban duality, a literary illustration or representation of the white man's wildest colonial fantasies which precisely pertain to what the encounter between a European/coloniser and a non-European/colonised would 'actually' look like. They have, therefore, centred their approach towards the bard's play on a vision that championed it as "an unmistakable embodiment of colonialist presumption" (Cartelli, 1999, p. 89), which contributed a great deal to the construction and promotion of a powerful colonial discourse that was intended, all over the colonies, to subjugate native populations.

Western scholars and authors, on the other hand, have resorted to *The Tempest* for other intentions and significantly distinct ends. Its usage to consolidate the colonial discourse, during high time colonialism, has reached a deadlock with the traditional imperial forces, mainly Britain and France, being dismantled with the unprecedented decolonisation wave of the 1950s and 1960s. The advancement of the feminist movement, all over Europe and America, with the second half of the twentieth century has almost instantly eclipsed the Prospero/Caliban connection that has remained, until then a focal point, bringing into light women's problematic status since their translucent existence, either through Miranda's fleeting passages or Claribel's insubstantial presence, has been monitored by 'relentless' patriarchal protagonists such as Prospero and King Alonso of Naples respectively. The feminists have voiced, thereby, the constant oppression to

which the two females have been subjected with every single decision about their lives, even marriage, already being taken and arranged for them in a fashion that would only satisfy the dominant male figures. Four hundred years after Shakespeare's death (1616-2016), the enduring legacy of *The Tempest* seems very much sturdy, spirited and alive in full possession of all its charms and sway with the production, to mention but only two examples, of Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed* (2016) and Katharine Duckett's *Miranda in Milan* (2019). These modern-day texts have, in a way or another, perpetuated the bard's heritage from the twenty-first century viewpoint.

This research paper, in accordance with what has so far been said, is designed with the prime concern of exploring the polemical link binding Duckett's contemporary novel/sequel to Shakespeare's Jacobean masterpiece, *The Tempest*. We have pillared, to this specific end, our theoretical paradigm on Bakhtin's dialogism, which has been summoned as an umbrella concept, by making use of his notion 'overt polemic'. The Russian thinker has delineated the limits of this category as belonging to the realm of what he has dubbed as the "double-voiced" discourse (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 196), asserting that this type of polemic is "quite simply directed at another's discourse, which it refutes [...] directly striking a blow at [its purport while], clashing with it" (Ibid). It has been pointed at with the significant term 'overt' because it stands for an outright or explicit blow that the second author's text, Duckett's in this case, vehicles or voices towards its source, that is to say Shakespeare's final work. To our best knowledge, and while bearing this approach in mind, we feel compelled to emphasise the fact that no previous study, book-length or article, has ever undertaken the task this work has proposed herein. One of our key arguments, thus, is that

Miranda in Milan has initiated a dialogue by means of which it has expressed a candid attack on *The Tempest* by altering the story's kernel and subverting nearly all that it originally stood for at the level of plot, perspective, characters and religious/historical/cultural/political values. The novel's truculent approach towards the play has subsequently kneaded a literary text which has pertained to address a seventeenth century account; nevertheless, it has been conscious, if we might conceptualise it as such, of its being produced, written and intended to be served to fit in the demanding mould of the second and thirds decades of the third millennium. Women, Caliban and every outsider who would have 'normally' been perceived as the inferior 'other,' from England's early modern standards, have been depicted and refashioned from modern-day politically correct criteria and tolerant norms. The discussion that would follow, likewise, is an attempt to shed light on a multitude of issues and aspects, formally and thematically, which have been, in a straightforward manner, polemically handled throughout Duckett's novel which has been juxtaposed with Shakespeare's source text.

2-The Plot and Narrative Perspective:

The end of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* with myriad joyful occurrences might suggest quite brilliant future prospects to nearly all the white heroes. Prospero has re-established his birthright to an absolute control over his dukedom in Milan particularly with the reunion of his daughter, Miranda, and Ferdinand which has sealed them as a solid couple. He has, on a similar vein, forgiven his old enemies, his brother the usurper, Antonio, together with, his acolyte in the conspiracy, King Alonso of Naples; this convinced Prospero to abandon his unearthly powers since the status quo has been restored to what it has been, twelve years ago, before his dethroning. This

ending with the characters ready to sail back home, would have entailed to the early modern readers/viewers a life of eternal bliss these characters would enjoy once on the main land, Italy. The account Duckett has unveiled through *Miranda in Milan*, in a substantial twist, begins from the moment these European protagonists have landed in Naples shifting very quickly the scenery to Milan with Miranda and her father making their way “on a cold, gray day” (Duckett, 2019, p. 07) towards their castle. Ferdinand has instantly disappeared from the tale because he has remained in Naples while Prospero has gone back to his ‘old ways’ of devoting his entire time to his mysterious studies. Miranda has not only been instructed and even forced to “wear a full black veil” (Ibid) to cover her face, because of the striking resemblance she bears to her dead mother, but has also been confronted with the harsh reality of being constantly ‘imprisoned’ in her chamber with the ability to talk, if needed, to only two individuals, her aunt Agata, who seems to hate her, and Dorothea, a servant, assigned by her father to attend for her needs. The other servants and castle’s staff members have shown fear and revulsion whenever they were compelled to be in the vicinity of the newly restored duke’s daughter which has been extremely intriguing to her.

The overt polemic Duckett’s novel has launched, at the level of the plot, against Shakespeare’s play has been carried to the extremes with Miranda discovering the massive web of lies her father has woven about almost everything. She has been shocked, first of all, when she has realised that he has never ever forsaken his magical powers, as promised, which he has kept intact while, for long hours, honing them with extra readings in his vast libraries and putting them into practice with his ‘sordid’ experiments in his underground laboratory. Miranda has found, in the second position, a

way to the castle's cellars, where the latter is located, with numerous cells in one of which she has stumbled, much to her dismay, upon Antonio who has been chained, ill-treated and sequestered; she has understood, thereafter, that her father's 'spirit' of vengeance could not allow his enemies to walk around unpunished. Thirdly, *The Tempest's* world has been turned upside down the moment Duckett's Miranda, with the help of Dorothy, the Moorish servant and witch, whose magical concoction has facilitated to the two heroines access to her aunt's dreams. This intentional strategy has given them the opportunity to flashback, with the readers, to the days when Prospero was still in the height of his reign before his brother's orchestrated coup d'état which, in turn, contributed to the author's cantankerous rewriting, appropriating and even fully wrecking of Shakespeare's story. The past has been polemically revised and, it turned out, in the plot of Duckett's novel, that Prospero has been exiled, by Antonio, in an attempt to save Milan, in particular, and the whole world, in general, from the sorcerer's horrendous black magic through which he has had the desire to revive or bring back his dead wife, Beatrice, to the world of the living. A few days before her death, Prospero has already vanished from sight with no cue, whatsoever, left behind; he has, finally, wielded his potent art or 'knowledge' and managed, somehow, to resurrect a faded, ghostly and monstrous version of what his wife used to be which has been, needless to say, entirely alarming to Agata, who has been charged with the mission of taking care of her. This might recall Prospero's speech, in *The Tempest*, where he has fostered,

[...] I have bedimm'd The
noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds, And 'twixt
the green sea and

the azur'd vault Set roaring war: to the dread rattling
thunder Have I given
fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak With his own bolt: the
strong-bas'd
promontory Have I made shake; and by the spurs pluck'd up
The pine and
cedar: graves at my command Have wak'd their sleepers,
op'd, and let them
forth By my so potent art. (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 93)

Through the above words, Prospero has claimed myriad god-like powers among which an ability to reanimate the dead people from their graves back to life. Time passed in Duckett's narrative and without any explanation, the revived Beatrice has fled leaving behind an unresolved mystery nobody, in Milan, could at any rate comprehend; the rightful duke and his daughter have been, as a result, sent/exiled by Antonio into an unknown destination.

Miranda and Dorothea have, before dawn, taken their exit from Agata's dreams after learning more than what is needed about the past, perceiving that Prospero's island account, which vilified Antonio, has been nothing but falsehood propped on major misconceptions premeditated to both disguise the sorcerer's truth and clear his 'villainous' reputation. The two heroines have, as such, vowed to quell Prospero's further supernatural designs; this has been intended to bring his tyranny to an end by freeing Antonio from his prison and doing whatever it takes to rid the world of his black magic. Prospero has in advance had a prior knowledge of his daughter's schemes and therefore he has arranged to catch them in the act while trying to liberate his brother; although Dorothea is a witch, her powers

have been no match to Prospero's. At the exact instant when they have been on the verge of losing their battle against him, Beatrice, Miranda's mother, has made an unexpected appearance in the cellars siding with them against her strong husband. During all those years of absence, Beatrice, who has already tasted the afterlife, has devoted her might to learning witchcraft with unprecedented skills to the point of exceeding the man who has caused her much pain and suffering. She has, hence, helped her daughter, Dorothea and Antonio to defeat him; the aftermath of this battle has been the killing of Prospero and the annihilation of his evil powers once and for all. Miranda has abandoned the idea of getting married to Ferdinand and with the two other women, Beatrice and Dorothea, they have sailed, with Antonio's help, to Caliban's island where they could perhaps, at the end, find a peaceful haven away from Milan. It might be argued, in a nutshell, that Duckett has openly attacked the source text by refashioning the course of the entire story with a conspicuous subversion of its certainties, key incidents and even whole world.

The question of the narrative voice, in terms of perspective, would not, under whatever circumstances, constitute an obstacle to Shakespeare's contemporaries, since, with the exception of a few incidents, the crushing majority of the events have been either reported under Prospero's vigilant eyes with his 'omnipresence' or altogether induced by his sweeping and 'indomitable' will. The overthrown duke of Milan has been vested with a powerful narrative voice to the extent of manipulating the three dimension of time: past, present and future; he has carved the incident of his banishment, which has occurred more than a decade ago, the way it pleased him pointing at Antonio as the 'despicable' brother whom Miranda has to

look upon as the “false uncle” (Ibid., p. 10) who has, willingly, opened the city’s gates to King Alonso’s armies. Prospero has, in Shakespeare’s play, orchestrated a tremendous storm that has ensnared his old enemies; the ensuing episodes have been carefully regulated by his efficient spells. It has to be maintained, in this sense, that “[b]ecause Prospero [has] engineer[ed] all events, the play is essentially his plot” (Charry, 2014, p. 71). Prospero’s future, moreover, has been diligently supervised by arranging Miranda’s relationship with Ferdinand, the prince heir to the throne of Naples; this would, necessarily, secure Milan against future threats from the south and if Prospero is fortunate enough, he would even lay his hands, through his daughter, on Alonso’s kingdom. Duckett’s *Miranda in Milan*, in stark contrast, has polemically addressed the issue of point of view by reconfiguring the narrative from Miranda’s perspective. The first indication of this scope shift is the novel’s title which has had the effect of ushering the reader into a world where Miranda is the centre, with Prospero relegated to the periphery, since the events have been retold, revisited and revised from her own eyes, understanding and worldview. The story’s nameless narrator has plunged the readers in Miranda’s realm shedding, likewise, light on the way she used to picture the past, her fiercest inner psychological turmoil, her anxieties, her desires and above all her daily reality. The novel’s drastic metamorphosis of the perspective, from Prospero’s to his daughter’s, might be palpable in the coming passage, in which the narrator has stated that, What frightened her most was one persistent, pernicious thought she could not put out of her mind, one repeating line. Her father was a story he had told her himself. Everything she knew of his deeds and motivations came straight from his own mouth. And now that she knew he had lied about

surrendering his magic, a vow as solemn and binding as any she could imagine, she could not help but wonder what other falsehoods he had dressed as truth. (Duckett, 2019, p. 35)

The above words, from Miranda's scope, have shattered Prospero's version of every single event since she has discovered that her father has not told her the full truth; the witty syllogism entailed in her reasoning would run as follows: whoever lies once is not trustworthy and because Prospero has lied to her, at least once, this would suggest his unreliability. He is, hence, discredited through Miranda's eyes and reduced all what he has told her, during their island sojourn, to a discourse that has been crafted to fashion and shape, for himself, the image of the ideal father whose treacherous brother has dethroned. Polemically reversing the source's tendency, in Duckett's novel, everything the readers are told about—including major or minor plot events, characters' portrayal, themes and motives of action—is neatly constructed and arranged from Miranda's perception which has attacked and appropriated *The Tempest*.

3-The Major Figures: Then and Now:

3-1-Prospero: From Hero to Villain:

The undisputed protagonist of Shakespeare's seventeenth century masterpiece is Prospero who has been, in abundant ways, moulded as "a humanist prince" (Bate, 2009, p. 84), whose obsession with books, libraries, studies and 'science' has cost him his dukedom. In many respects, he might be interpreted and seen as an artistic "representation of Shakespeare himself" (Vaughan, 2014, p. 06) because he, Prospero, has successfully fostered, all along the story, the role of the author who has had the artistic ability to set the world around him into motion. He is not only the loving father whose

entire life has been devoted to the wellbeing of his female child, but also the wholeheartedly forgiving hero who treats his mischievous enemies with an unparalleled clemency. He would have been idealised and admired among Shakespeare's contemporaries as "the apex of humanity" (Hamm, 1996, p. 112) for all the human, religious, supernatural and intellectual qualities he has embodied. Four centuries later, Duckett's *Miranda in Milan* has given this ideal portrait a corrosive treatment which has brought about an unredeemable Prospero, the tale's villain, who is the incarnation of all that is evil; he is megalomaniacal, blasphemous, power thirsty, vengeful, manipulative, imbued with arrogance, and obsessed with necromancy as well as alchemy. All the 'terrible' features about him have been synthesised, by Antonio, when Miranda has met him in the tunnels, at his cell, where the heroine has tried to defend her father against his brother's scathing criticism confirming that he has been, during the islands tribulations, a loving and caring father; Antonio's words have resonated with this response, "[l]ove, in the heart of a man like that [Prospero], is a terrible, twisted thing. His love warps. His love corrupts. [...] His very love is a sin against God, my girl" (Duckett, 2019, p. 34). Antonio has gone further to the degree of claiming that "[t]he Devil would hand over the keys of Hell to Prospero, should [he] your father offer his hand" (Ibid). These words, it has to be argued, have been carved as an overt polemic directed at the heart of Shakespeare's Prospero whose personality and whole existence as a matter of fact have been severely vilified.

Any reader/viewer of *The Tempest*, with some prior knowledge in discourse analysis, would dissect Prospero's language through which he has managed to ground himself as a tender, caring and loving father; he has, in

sum, engrained “himself as a father *par excellence*” (Sundelson, as cited in Charry, 2014, p. 86). To justify the raising of the storm which has entrapped King Alonso’s ship, at the onset, he has told the horrified Miranda, “I have done nothing but in care of thee/ Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter” (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 07). He has ‘excellently’ educated her and when Caliban has attempted to sexually assault her, her father, as usual, has been there to protect her. The situation has been reversed in *Miranda in Milan* where nothing has remained of this fatherly figure, but the hollow shell; he has had no sympathy and empathy towards either his wife, Beatrice, shortly Bice, or his daughter, Miranda. The latter’s birth has overjoyed Bice who has reached the zenith of her life “relishing her new role as a mother” (Duckett, 2019, p. 44); meanwhile, “Prospero’s eccentricities and absences only increased” (Ibid.). The time, that he was expected to dedicate to his family, which was his last concern, has been allocated to conducting ‘researches’ and experiments in witchcraft, necromancy and alchemy. Duckett’s Miranda, unlike Shakespeare’s, has endured a very traumatic past with her despotic father during the exile years; she has been imitating him, in a remarkable scene, trying to cultivate a young spirit as an Ariel of her own; once Prospero has discovered her intentions, he has mercilessly “beat[en] her black and blue” (Ibid., p. 08). He is, in this fashion, to the twenty-first century readers, the embodiment of the violent patriarchal figure designed to oppress, repress and subjugate women for the satisfaction of his unbalanced and disproportionate ego. She has to think twice before doing anything without his consent because “[i]f she were caught, perhaps her father would beat her” (Ibid., p. 12); he has meddled, following this thread of argument, with his daughter’s clothing style imposing upon her the way she has to get dressed.

Accordingly, Prospero has not “allowed her to keep any of her clothes from the island” (Ibid) and he has instructed her, instead, to wear some ‘lady-like’ apparels which she has not appreciated since they seem to hinder her from moving and running freely all over the castle and its cellars. Besides, he has kept her tightly locked in her room compelling her to wear a sombre veil in order to shroud her countenance so that the Milanese populace would not associate her with her mother. Prospero’s cruelty is epitomised when he revived Beatrice, however, he has denied her the right to hold Miranda again; Agata has been amazed at this decision telling him, “[y]ou cannot give a mother life again and keep her from her child”, to which the ‘heartless’ Prospero retorted “I can” (Ibid., p. 53). This is cruelty and inhumanity in its crude, raw and horrendous state.

Miranda has lifted Prospero’s mask and uncovered his true ‘essence’ when she has confirmed to Dorothea, that her “father’s been lying to [her]” (Ibid., p. 39) about Ferdinand’s numerous letter’s they, Prospero and Agata, have not even shown to her, about his true intentions behind shipwrecking King Alonso’s ship, about the island, about his past, and most crucial of all, about the fact that he has neither forgiven his enemies nor has he abandoned his supernatural powers. Shakespeare’s hero has been cloaked with absolutism possessing, thereby, the absolute right to rule over his territories and subjects, at whim, which might, to a high degree, bring into memory “James’s [the first] own claims to divine authority” (West-Pavlov, 2005, p. 89). He has admirably, despite his unrestrained authorities, forgiven the sour treachery of his brother, Antonio, and King Alonso. The fact that Prospero has had this unbridled “power and still recognizes the need for self-restraint and forgiveness of his enemies is perhaps the singly most remarkable feature

of *The Tempest*” (Cox, 2000, p. 38). By sheer contrast, Duckett’s Prospero has retaliated once restored on top of Milan by locking Antonio up in a filthy cell with chains and shackles to prevent his eventual escape. Miranda has made it clear that her “father has him [Antonio] in a cell smaller than [a child’s] bed” (Duckett, 2019, p. 30). She could not fathom the reasons for which, beyond vengeance, he has jailed his brother when he has had the ability to kill him. She has confessed, in this regards, her fears to Dorothea, stating that her ‘wicked’ father “must have plans unknown, plans beyond even taking back his dukedom” (Ibid). Antonio has answered Miranda, accentuating her fears, by saying that Prospero “was never interested in politics or diplomacy. His interests lie in a realm far darker and more dangerous” (Ibid., p. 34). The ‘realm’ Antonio is highlighting here has to do with Prospero deploying necromancy and acting like a god by means of which he has had the desire to take the decisions over who must be left among the dead and who has to be brought out of his grave to resume his/her life.

The novel’s readers would, at one point, realise that Prospero’s long process of vengeance against his brother has already been commenced on the island with the storm and the concomitant shipwreck. During this incident, the usurping duke of Milan has lost his “son,” “who[m] [Prospero has got] drowned [and by using his potent charms, he has] forced [Antonio] to forget [about him] until it was too late” (Ibid., p. 33). Duckett has shown ingenuity by bringing forth the idea that Antonio has potentially had a son; she has exploited her source text, *The Tempest*, by making the best use of a passage in which Ferdinand has declared the following, “[y]es, faith, and all his lords, the Duke of Milan/ And his brave son being twain” (Shakespeare, 2005, p.

28); after this single reference, the characters of Shakespeare's play have never pointed at or spoken about him. Duckett has woven these words, into her story, wielding them to attack Prospero; Miranda has confirmed that "Ferdinand spoke of Antonio's son, I'm sure of it! He said the duke of Milan and his son were both shipwrecked in the storm" (Duckett, 2019, p. 33). There is a pressing need, at this stage, to speak about the fact that Shakespeare's protagonist has renounced all his spells, charms and supernatural powers once he has achieved his ends; he has claimed, in one of his famous speech soliloquies, "this rough magic I here abjure [...] I'll break my staff, Bury it certain fathoms in the earth, And deeper than did ever plummet sound I'll drown my book" (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 93). The novelist has, in an overtly polemical manoeuvre, made Prospero hold and stick to his black magic to serve other tenebrous ends such as reviving dead people the way he has done with Beatrice. Once she has found out the truth, Miranda has almost had a seizure mumbling the following words to her servant, "[t]he power, Dorothea. The power he said that he renounced when we left [the island]. He has it still" (Duckett, 2019, p. 30). In Duckett's text, the twelve years on the island have served for nothing, but a kind of internship for the magician who has managed in this course to refine his skills in black magic. Prospero has also had a great interest in alchemy to quench his thirst for gold, money and power; he has not lost time right after his return to Milan since he has "sequester[ed] himself in his libraries to pore over the new [...] advances in alchemy that he had missed while on the island" (Ibid., p. 07).

All that remains of the 'neat' gentleman Shakespeare has delineated is the outer shape of a human being who is a wicked sorcerer, manipulator and torturer. Almost everyone in Milan has understood Prospero's evil kernel;

with the help of his potent ‘arts’, he has had the power to “reshape the world to his whims” (Duckett, 2019, p. 17) as the narrator has maintained. There is a passage through which the readers might have an indication of his strange potentials; it proceeds as such, Prospero “could appear at any moment [...] He could control [Miranda] and anyone in his reach, as easily as he once enslaved Ariel” (Ibid., p. 30). His charms are, hence, utterly sturdy that being in his vicinity is a real hazard; his abilities to manipulate people around him have been under much emphasis in *Miranda in Milan*. Agata, his wife’s sister, has known him for a quite long time; she has seen his ‘treacherous’ tongue in action contorting and crafting words to cast his ‘venomous’ ‘spells’ on his victims. After Beatrice, she has been closer to him, than anybody else in the castle, that she has known “Prospero’s tricks [and] his powers of persuasion” (Ibid., p. 50). The dark portrait Duckett has sketched about Miranda’s father has, on a similar vein, imputed inhuman practices to him; he has, for instance, been depicted in the process of conducting hideous experiments on animals such as frogs. To fulfil his designs, Prospero has had recourse to the practice of torture in all its dimension, physical, mental and symbolic; the narrator has advocated that Miranda “knew from experience how adept her father was at drawing out information, how he extracted it from Caliban with whips and lashes, and from [her] own lips with tools more subtle” (Ibid., p. 14). These words have stamped him as a torturer for whom the end would, ineluctably, justify the means.

Shakespeare would have never imagined that his Prospero, who has perhaps been ‘prodigious’ to his early modern English contemporaries, would four hundred years afterwards be slaughtered like a lamb by his brother Antonio. The necromancer has been immersed, for a while, in his

murky attempts to reanimate Beatrice, after her death, the design which he has carried to its finality, somehow, restoring her to life in his underground laboratory. Prospero has invited Agata, one midnight, to his den asserting that, “[m]idnight is the time of miracles, Agata [...] this night is filled with them. Come inside and see what I have made” (Ibid., p. 49); once there, she has been frightened with a monster-like creature that has Beatrice’s shape and features. We have to stress a key point, herein, in relation to the precise time Prospero has chosen to reveal his secret which is midnight. The whole scene and time might recall into memory the story of Dr. Faustus who has signed a contract selling his soul to the devil around midnight. The ‘corrupt’ nature of Duckett’s Prospero has enticed him to attempt usurping God’s powers; he has deployed the Bible, in this context, to convince the pious Agata so that she would side with him affirming to her,

Your mind may not at first comprehend [the wonder you are about to see] but remember that your own Bible is full of tales of such marvels, such feats of grace. Remember that Jesus of Nazareth rose after three days, and Lazarus four. Remember the words with which the apostle Paul urged us to empty Sheol and rob death of its ill-begotten prize. (Ibid)

He has made his argument and intentions visible with the above words; he has, then, blasphemously sworn eternal life with this vow, “I will ransom them [the dead] from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction” (Ibid). Time has passed with Agata taking care of the hollow copy of Beatrice that Prospero has resurrected to life in the cellars; one day, Bice has fled leaving no trace behind. She has been, during all those years, ‘devouring’ her

husband's libraries and books studying them in a meticulous fashion to acquire all his knowledge and even beyond. She has been patient waiting for a ripe opportunity to triumphantly come back; this happened with Prospero surprising Miranda and Dorothea while they have been trying to free Antonio from jail. At the exact instant when he has been on the verge of executing his daughter and her servant, Bice has come to their rescue. She has addressed her husband as follows, "[y]ou are lost, Prospero. Your sins, both committed and as yet undone, number more than the stars" (Duckett, 2019, p. 65); the outcome of the ensuing battle between two potent sorcerers, Beatrice and Prospero, is not in any respect whatsoever unpredictable. The former has not only mastered the latter's 'arts', but has also had one major advantage which is the fact that she has returned from the world of the dead which is a massive asset to defeat him. Bice has characterised her husband as ageing and weak by fostering, "[y]ou [Prospero] believed yourself invincible. But you're weak now, aren't you? [...] You are old, and winded, and your body still obeys the natural laws, unlike mine" (Ibid., p. 66); she has used her spells and powers, after these words, to choke him to the point of breathlessness. Prospero has had no choice, but beg for his life, "[p]lease, Bice—if you show me mercy, I will change. I will give up this magic, if that is your will. I swear it" (Ibid). She has not had any predisposition to believe his 'crocodile tears'; she has told him, "[w]ords are thy power and thy curse [...] You speak too much and listen too little. Speak no more" (Ibid). At this moment, she has handed a sharp blade to Antonio who has remorselessly killed him bringing, therefore, his tyranny to an end. Such is the quite aggressive reworking Duckett has engineered, all in all, through *Miranda in*

Milan where she has overtly launched a polemic at a key figure in western literary world, namely Shakespeare's Prospero.

3-2-An Apology to Caliban: Vindicating and Exonerating the 'Other':

The readers/viewers of *The Tempest*, today, might not fail to notice the racist treatment Caliban has been subjected to by most, if not all, the play's European characters. Prospero has, on numerous occasions, denigrated him; he has, for instance, vilified his lineage by calling him, "poisonous slave, got by the devil himself" (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 22) Trinculo has maintained that this native is "a very shallow monster" (Ibid., p. 56); likewise, Stephano has mockingly addressed him as the "brave monster" (Ibid., p. 58). From what has, so far, been said, one might confirm that Brinda Charry's words that "Caliban [has been] reduced to the status of subplot," (Charry, 2014, p. 71) are not altogether devoid of veracity. The pretext Prospero has deployed to enslave Caliban is firmly grounded in the rape incident; the former has claimed that he has, with great care, 'accepted' and welcomed the latter in his cave; however, the moment the native has attempted "to violate/ The honour of [his] child," (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 23) the rightful duke of Milan has expelled and reduced him into slavery. Throughout Duckett's novel, Caliban has had no actual, physical, presence since he has not been involved in the story with the return to Milan; yet, the novelist has relied on flashbacks, as an effective strategy, to initiate an overt polemic, at the islander's portrayal in the source text. The rape incident, Prospero has brandished as a justification, has been drastically remodelled in a manner that has vindicated Caliban; the narrator has transported the readers to the good days of old, in the island, when Miranda and Caliban, as

young children, used to play together all kinds of funny games such as “jump[ing] from the cliff or tumbl[ing] down the hill or swing[ing] from the hanging rope across the ravine” (Duckett, 2019, p. 12). They have had the habit of taking a rest together, now and then, because these games were quite wearisome; this custom has been repetitive “until that day Prospero found them sleeping together, as they sometimes did after a long day at play, and began to rave, beating Caliban so badly”; from that moment onwards, “he had refused to so much as look at Miranda for a year” (Ibid., p. 12). We might argue, in this context, that Duckett has reconfigured Prospero’s rape claims as a terrible misunderstanding since his daughter and Caliban have had, on many occasions, to rest together out of nothing, but extreme fatigue. The ‘clueless’ and ‘narrow-minded’ duke of Milan has misinterpreted this episode as an attempt at raping Miranda.

At the level of the seventeenth century masterpiece, Miranda has assured, in terms of physical appearance, that she “do[es] not love to look” (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 22) upon Caliban, because of his ‘deformed’ shape, while Prospero has wielded the same kind of discourse establishing it as an unchallenged ‘reality’ that his native slave is “not honour’d with/ A human shape” (Ibid., p. 20); Milan’s dethroned duke has, correspondingly, denigrated him as “[f]ilth” (Ibid., p. 23). Trinculo, after a detailed corporeal examination, has found that this islander has got “fins like arms” (Ibid., p. 52) which, one way or another, has stressed Caliban’s alleged ‘ugliness’. *Miranda in Milan* has rewritten this aspect in a fashion that would suit the second decade of the current century by resorting to a politically correct language that would not stain Caliban’s race, the Moor coloured people, with any physical inferiority. Miranda has affirmed that “Caliban [is] the only

friend she had ever known” (Duckett, 2019, p. 10); this has entrenched her as an authority in relation to the physical descriptions she would ultimately provide about the native since she has been close enough to him during the significant island sojourn. In Milan, the way she used to look upon Caliban has been transformed; the narrator has stated that,

Yet thinking back on Caliban’s face, she [Miranda] could not remember why his form held such repugnance: he limped, yes, but she had seen men here on land who limped, who held bronze-handled canes and carried their heads high. He was dark, but she did not see why darkness should signify corruption, now that she had beheld the wide range of human hues; broad-nosed, but she knew now that the faces of men were made of clay that could be sculpted into any shape. (Ibid., p. 26)

These statements have sprung from today’s world as they are imbued with tolerance, correctness and respect for the other no matter how he/she looks like; Miranda has identified nothing wrong about ‘limping’ or having a physical deformity. She has, moreover, spotted no evil or wickedness in being dark-skinned; her conclusion is that human beings, Caliban included, have been carved in divergent forms with different skin colours, a fact which is not, at all, problematic to most of Duckett’s contemporaries the way it has been to Shakespeare’s more than four centuries ago.

The sole authority in *The Tempest* is Prospero whose words, once spoken, immediately become facts; because he has maintained that Caliban is “got by the devil himself,” (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 22) both readers and viewers have no power to question the native’s lineage. His mother, thus, is Sycorax the ‘malignant’ witch while his father is, through Prospero’s

discourse, the devil. Duckett has explored an interesting ersatz hypothesis, via her novel, in connection to Caliban's parentage; now, what if Prospero has not voiced the full truth about his native 'slave'? What if the latter has been, somehow, Prospero's undesired son from Sycorax who, naturally, belongs to a totally different race than the white man? These are the questions that *Miranda in Milan* has raised and pondered at one point. Dorothea has wondered, before getting to know Miranda closely, whether Caliban is her brother; the servant has inquired "[y]ou had a brother, didn't you?" (Duckett, 2019, p. 15). This inquiry has stemmed from the rumour circulating among the Milanese which stipulated that their duke has had a male child from a witch after he has been exiled. Dorothea has informed Miranda that "the rumor [has spread the idea that] your father [has] bedded a witch [Sycorax], and she bore him a son. That they were both driven out to sea, but your father killed the witch and tried to raise the wild boy alone" (Ibid., p. 16). This hypothesis, which has addressed Prospero's narrative and Caliban's lineage, might be viewed as a revision of the original play.

The issue of language has, furthermore, been polemically revisited in Duckett's appropriation of Shakespeare's last play. The protagonist of the latter has advocated that Caliban has been a 'barbarous' creature unable to speak before his arrival on the island; he has, without hesitation argued, "I endow'd thy purposes/ With words that made them known" (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 24). This has deprived Caliban, in Jacobean English eyes and standards, of an innate mother tongue and an autochthonous culture confining him, that way, into eternal nothingness and savagery. *Miranda in Milan* has both addressed and reworked these aspects by endorsing diversity, multiculturalism, embracing the other as an independent entity with his/her

cultural identity. Duckett's Miranda has developed a low esteem, after her return from the island, towards the whole traditions and customs of the Milanese, her own people, considering them as being abhorrent and inferior; she has confessed to Dorothea, "I do not wish to acquire the customs of people [Milanese] who behave so barbarically" (Duckett, 2019, p. 09). This speech mannerism, the narrator has confirmed, is originated from her father whose language is "the only language, other than Caliban's, that she had ever known" (Ibid). These words have been intended to point out the fact that the native has had a mother tongue prior to learning the English language. There is a key discussion, between Miranda and Dorothea, which is highly relevant at this stage to the current topic; the former has regurgitated her father's 'manipulative' discourse fostering that the native is not endowed with language since it was Prospero who "taught him everything he knows" (Ibid., p. 71). Duckett has demolished, through Dorothea's answer, this colonialist worldview; the servant has retorted, "Do you believe his mother [Caliban's] knew no poetry? That she never whispered or sang him to sleep? Ask him, Miranda. His mother wrote, or spoke her truths to him" (Ibid).

Dorothea's words have responded to and rewritten Shakespeare's *The Tempest* by bringing into the surface the existence of an oral tradition engrained in a rich pre-colonial period which is long dead and drowned in the coloniser's history after Prospero's conquest. This invasion has, in order to lay the durable foundations of its existence and perpetuity, has suppressed Sycorax's prosperous cultural background saturated with oral poetry, songs, and folklore accounts. Dorothea has opened Miranda's eyes to the fact that truth is something manufactured and constructed through discourse and language when she has stated, "[h]is mother [Sycorax] wrote, or spoke her

truths to him” (Ibid); this might be juxtaposed with the way Prospero has written and spoken his truths to not only his ‘beloved’ daughter but also the entire world. Duckett has also polemically tackled the original text’s sacralisation of Prospero’s fountain of knowledge which is exclusively entailed in books. Shakespeare’s Caliban has recognised the source of his master’s powers when he has instructed, Stephano and Trinculo, his confederates during the conspiracy telling them, “[r]emember/ First to possess his books; for without them/ He’s but a sot” (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 68). Duckett’s response has come via Dorothea who has confirmed that “[l]anguage isn’t bound in books. It’s in hands and tongues and looks just as surely as in holy scripts. Caliban has a language. It’s you who ignore its import, his greater meaning” (2019, p. 71). The ‘other’ is no longer the tongue-less entity Shakespeare has sketched during Renaissance England; Caliban is, thereby, recognised as the human being who has possessed a major asset, language, prior to the coloniser’s scramble, Prospero not exempt, for Sycorax’s island. It is Miranda and her father, in Dorothea’s reasoning, who have not bothered to know more about Caliban’s mother tongue. The narrator has exposed a thought-provoking idea when he has contended that “[t]here were symbols carved into gnarled trees in the deep woods, and she’d never known if her father or the witch or Caliban himself had put them there” (Ibid). We might claim, here, that because Miranda has been unable to grasp the exact purport of those symbols, they have been, highly likely, inscribed either by Sycorax or Caliban whose tongue/language is obviously different from Prospero’s and Miranda’s. The presence of those ‘strange’ symbols might serve as a proof to the existence of some written form of Caliban’s mother language. By the end of the novel, with Prospero

killed, the three women, Miranda, Beatrice and Dorothea, have opted for an eventual return to the island; Miranda, who has been convinced that the native possesses his own mother tongue, has taken the decision to learn Caliban's language when she has vowed, "'I promise [...] [w]herever we go. I'll learn to speak his [Caliban's] language, and yours [Dorothea's]'" (Duckett, 2019, p. 71). She has, additionally, perceived that they have wronged Caliban and his mother during their twelve years stay on the island. The narrator has, thus, voiced Miranda's thoughts; she has recalled "Caliban, who she still missed, and with whom she wished to make amends" (Ibid., p. 70). We might contend that this is an intelligible twenty-first century apology to Caliban for all that he has endured during the colonial era.

3-3-Antonio: A New Standpoint:

Antonio is Prospero's younger brother in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*; because of the way he has been portrayed, through the discourse of Milan's rightful duke, his motives, the way he speaks, thinks, approaches life, in the play's realm, and crucially the way he proceeds into action, he might be characterised as the incarnation of evil. Prospero has deployed his entire linguistic arsenal to vilify Antonio calling him a wide range of predatory appellations, "perfidious," (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 10) "false uncle," (Ibid) "false brother," (Ibid., p. 11) "Unnatural" (Ibid., p. 94) and "most wicked" (Ibid., p. 96). Stephen Orgel has even claimed that Antonio is not only the "wicked [and] usurping [but also] possibly [the] illegitimate brother" (1988, p. 220). He has asserted, in this direction, that *The Tempest* "has the shape of a Freudian fantasy: the younger child *is* the usurper in the family, and the kingdom he usurps is the mother" (Ibid). Antonio is the kind of ultra

unscrupulous manipulators and arch villains for whom eliminating a brother, to ascend to power, is not a strenuous decision to take. He has already manipulated Sebastian, Alonso's brother, to follow in his footsteps and kill the King of Naples to take his throne. Antonio has said to Sebastian, "[h]ere lies your brother/ No better than the earth he lies upon" (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 48); he also suggests to him to draw his sword to finish the job while the King is asleep. *Miranda in Milan* has, otherwise, remodelled Antonio's character from a new standpoint refashioning his personality as an ordinary human being, with all his qualities and flaws. The novel has, in many respects, redeemed Antonio from being, a fixed archetype, the embodiment of evil par excellence to a common man, neither totally good nor fully bad, whose actions and motives are doomed to waver, change and swing depending on the contexts he is expected to deal with.

Antonio has immediately been imprisoned by Prospero after the return to Milan. The reader who is familiar with *The Tempest* would be intrigued with this alteration and would, normally, have the same reflection as Miranda who thought that "[h]er father claimed to have forgiven him. Why, then, was he shackled in this secret enclosure?" (Duckett, 2019, p. 14) We gradually delve into the events, with the story building up; the narrator has revealed that Prospero has never meant what he has vowed, at the end of the play, in relation to pardoning his brother. What Miranda and the readers learn through the dream sequence, constructed as flashbacks, is horrifying; Duckett's Antonio has banished his brother and usurped his dukedom in an attempt to free Milan, eventually the world, from the sordid and murky practices Prospero has got irredeemably immersed into. The potent sorcerer has had the overwhelming desire to rely on black magic and necromancy to

control death, by reviving people from their graves, handing eternity, that way, at whim to whoever pleased him. The only solution or viable option, before hand, to Antonio in order to avoid the Milanese's revolt is to dethrone his brother and send him to the unknown; however, with Prospero's survival on the island and final return to Italy, Antonio has asserted that "Milan is lost, even though I had sworn to save it, even as I thought I had secured its reaches for all the generations yet to come" (Ibid). The usurping brother has, by the end, realised the terrible mistake he has committed by not executing Prospero when he has had the opportunity to do so; he has understood that the island episode has been a golden occasion for the necromancer to practice, develop and perfect his unearthly 'arts'. Antonio has, regretfully, confirmed to Miranda, "[w]hat must you never do, when dealing with the Devil, [is to] [t]urn your back to him, and give him time [...] and books, and the sanguineous sea,"" (Duckett, 2019, p. 14) of which he has had plenty for twelve years on an enchanted island. We feel the obligation to claim, herein, that the reworking of Antonio's motives of action to dethroning his brother, from mere thirst for power to a noble end such as saving Milan, has struck an overt polemic at Shakespeare's seventeenth century play.

An admirable quality about Duckett's Antonio is his instant disposition to own his acts, endure their consequences and take full responsibility for his decisions. The moment Miranda has found him chained, in an underground cell, she has tried to fathom his mystery; he has strived to show her how evil her father is. Antonio has argued that in addition to jailing him, Prospero has on purpose caused the drowning of his son during the mighty storm he has raised. He has also maintained that anyone who would dare to meddle with the sorcerer's ugly business would

decidedly meet his doom; the usurping brother has said, accordingly, that “[i]f Prospero counts you as his enemy, you are lost” (Ibid., p. 33-34). To this, Miranda has countered, telling her uncle, “[y]ou are a liar [...] [y]ou lie to disguise your treachery” (Ibid., p. 34). Antonio has not endeavoured to hide or whitewash his usurpation of Prospero’s dukedom; he has, on the spot, retorted ““I do not claim to be a good man, child. I deserve my brother, as he deserves me. But my son deserved neither of us.” [...] “And Milan does not deserve Prospero, or the horrors he will wreak”” (Ibid.). We might perceive, through these words, that Antonio is willing to endorse who he truly is, his real self with all its human features, without any allegations to being, at any rate, a saint; despite his dire condition, shackled and ill-treated, his sole concern is Milan’s welfare away from Prospero’s harrowing deeds. The banishment of the wicked black magician might be justifiable; however, sending a child, Miranda, with him to her death is hardly defensible. Here again, Antonio has exposed his argument telling Agata, who was against the idea, that it is much better for Miranda to “perish before she learns what a monster her father is. What a monster he made of her mother. Better that she die[s] than become a monster herself” (Ibid., p. 56). What Antonio has feared the most is Prospero’s inescapable influence upon Miranda who would have inherited his mental traits and grown, as a result, into a “poisoned fruit” (Ibid.). Prospero’s daughter has come to comprehend, once in Agata’s mind, that “[s]he liked Antonio not, but he had ruled in peace. He had managed the state well and kept his people from sickness and starvation. He was nothing like her father” (Ibid., p. 62). This statement which has championed Antonio’s reign, since he has cared for Milan and its people, in contrast to Prospero’s, might be an axiomatic blow at the bard’s text.

3-4- Ariel: Four Hundred Years Later:

The island in *The Tempest* is an enchanted environment that its auspicious matrix has not only guaranteed the existence but also the bourgeoning of supernatural forms of life, beings and practices; these comprise a ‘contemptible’ witch, a potent magus, black and white magic as well as spirits of all kind. Prospero, the protagonist, has harnessed this surrounding since he has contrived himself a slave spirit dubbed Ariel, who has been ensnared by the ‘vile’ Sycorax inside a pine tree, the prison from which the white man has liberated him. Ariel has, therefore, been ‘eternally’ indebted to his rescuer which entitled him to devotedly serve his master. Virtually, the same ought to be said about Duckett’s *Mirand in Milan* in which the island is just a souvenir of a seemingly distant past that has been revisited, whenever needed, through flashbacks. The storylines about Ariel’s entrapment and eventual rescue have been closely reproduced with the narrator emphasising that “Caliban’s mother, Sycorax, had entrapped Ariel in the rift of a cloven pine long ago, until Prospero came to the island and freed him” (Duckett, 2019, p. 15); the dethroned duke of Milan, afterwards, has “turn[ed] the spirit’s powers to his own purpose” (Ibid). The first time Shakespeare’s hero has summoned Ariel, into action, he has proceeded with these words, “[c]ome away, servant, come! [...] Approach, my Ariel; Come!” (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 15). The spirit’s submissive rejoinder to Prospero has taken this formula, “[a]ll hail, great master! grave sir, hail! I come/ To answer thy best pleasure; be’t to fly/ To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride/ On the curl’d clouds; to thy strong bidding task/ Ariel and all his quality” (Ibid). The readers/viewers of the play might not fail to pinpoint the submissiveness and utter acquiescence Ariel has evinced when it comes to serving his liberator no

matter what the mission assigned to him is. This might perhaps be the reason for which Roberto Fernández Retamar has contended that “[o]ur symbol then is not Ariel [...] but rather [the ‘rebellious’ and ‘resistant’] Caliban” (1971, p. 14); it has also been on these same grounds that postcolonial writers and thinkers have regarded “Ariel [as] a colonial collaborator, a political and cultural sellout” (Nixon, 1987, p. 573). The second decade of the current century has witnessed an overtly polemical reconsideration of Ariel’s character, in Duckett’s novel, from being the incarnation of compliance and submission to being the materialisation of resistance and rebellion.

We cannot deny, at this stage, that the Ariel of *Miranda in Milan* has been, through Miranda’s eyes, ostensibly a faithful and obedient slave to Prospero who has “easily [...] enslaved” (Duckett, 2019, p. 30) him; the necromancer has mainly wielded the spirit’s powers to control his daughter all over the island. The narrator has asserted that Ariel would often “goad her into action with a few well-placed words and then arrange for Prospero to discover her in some minor transgression” (Ibid., p. 11); this way, the unearthly being has had the habit of luring the female child into trespassing certain limits in the wake of which her ‘evil’ father would chastise her. In Shakespeare’s original, the hero has recurrently appealed to Ariel to observe his surrounding landscape and even eavesdrop upon almost everybody in his entourage. George Lamming’s statement that “Ariel is Prospero’s source of information; the archetypal spy, the embodiment [...] of the perfect and unspeakable secret police,” (Lamming, cited in Kott, 1964, p. 137) has a high relevance in this direction. Duckett’s text, on a similar vein, has conveyed this idea through a distinctive scene in which Miranda has ventured outside

her chamber with neither Agata's nor her father's permission; while sneaking near Prospero's quarters, she has recalled that he went to France, far from Milan, and most importantly, she thought that her father "had no Ariel [who would eagerly] spy for him" (Duckett, 2019, p. 37) once back in Italy. The novel would reveal subsequently, in a substantial turnaround, that this outward obedience to Prospero is only a mask the spirit has worn to disguise the genuine hatred and the unbounded grudge Ariel has often felt for the duke of Milan. Duckett's Miranda has encountered the spirit, for the last time, during her intrusion into Agata's dreams; Ariel has confessed to her the following, "I thought of drowning your father many times. I thought of the look on his face as I forced him deeper and deeper down. As the water flowed into his lungs" (Ibid., p. 40); then, he has stressed, "I thought of his lifeless eyes so often that I saw them whenever I looked into his face, these last few years. His dead eyes, his blue pearls. I dreamed of it all the time, girl" (Ibid. 40-41). The bitter resentment and dreadful intentions Ariel has held and nurtured, for years, against his oppressor might be deduced through the previous quotation. The spirit's antipathy towards the necromancer has amounted to an obsession; he has told Miranda, "[n]othing brought me such pleasure as to imagine Prospero dragged down to the seabed, writhing and gasping like a fish on land. I dream of it still, though you both are gone [from the island]. I dream of it still, and maybe someday my dreams will be real" (Ibid., p. 41). These powerful words have polemically readjusted Ariel's character bringing forth a resistant and rebellious facade which is imbued with the concealed rancour and repugnance any aggrieved creature, the spirit not exempt, is supposed to breed towards the persecutor, enslaver/coloniser/ Prospero. Ariel has, as such, acquired another dimension four hundred years

after its first appearance on stage weaving into its character an insurgent's animosity and worldview.

3-5-Miranda and the Status of Women Re-evaluated:

There is reference, in terms of number exactitude, to four female figures in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*; the readers/viewers, despite this, are often pervaded, from today's standards, with the sensation that the text is, to a certain extent, misogynist or, at least, it lacks female representativeness. Three of these women, namely Sycorax, Claribel and Prospero's wife have been spoken for with no concrete physical presence throughout the whole play; the first, Caliban's mother, although she is already dead, the duke of Milan has spared no effort in denigrating and slandering her as the hideous witch with "mischiefs manifold, and sorceries terrible" (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 19); King Alonso's daughter, Claribel, has only been very briefly referred to; she has been married to the King of Tunis with a few words uttered on her behalf by the other white males. The third one is Miranda's mother upon whom Prospero has spoken only once telling his daughter, "[t]hy mother was a piece of virtue, and/ She said thou wast my daughter" (Ibid., p. 09). The marginalisation of the female figure has exceeded these three 'ghostly' characters since it might be extended to the intermittently 'visible' Miranda; despite having the opportunity to voice some of her ideas, she has not been, at whatever point, empowered to independently take decisions; with this vision in mind, she is still, to Shakespeare's contemporaries, the ideal prototype of the weak, submissive, docile, pious, dutiful and virgin young lady who has been brought up under tight patriarchal constraints with the sole purpose of becoming the perfect future mother and housewife.

Duckett's twenty-first century novel, in a sharp contrast, has directed an obvious blow at the English bard's work in connection to the subjugation, oppression and exclusion as well as the silencing of one of the play's 'others,' that is to say women. The first staggering evidence, we feel compelled to display, is the novels cover page which reads *Miranda in Milan* as its intelligible title; the disparity with the source which has been dubbed *The Tempest* might be crystal clear. The events have, thus, shifted fulcrum from the play's male-centeredness with Prospero at the heart of a rigid patriarchal world towards female-centeredness with Miranda, Dorothea and Beatrice promptly and firmly embedded as the nucleus entities of a feminine world in which males are either fleeting shadows in the backdrop or altogether unscrupulous villains. Now, if in the original, Prospero, from whose outlook the story has been told, is "more than a magician [...] manipulating the figures on the island [by fostering] the role of playwright and director" (Morrison, 2014, p. 80), in Duckett's text the dethroned duke of Milan has been discarded to the fringes casting him as the unadulterated antagonist. The novel's title is proof enough, we contend, of the change in perspective from Prospero towards Miranda who has been enabled to tell and reshape the account from the viewpoint of the silenced and oppressed, women.

The overt polemic *Miranda in Milan* has initiated which is related to Miranda and the status of women might be associated with and discerned through the revision and reworking of the character of the duke's daughter, to go along with the author's precise historical and cultural milieu, in addition to the strategic resurrection of Beatrice, Prospero's wife. Duckett's narrator has focused the reader's attention on the island epoch with Miranda and her father spending more than a decade on a remote area; she has been

stamped, during this juncture, with blind obedience as her hallmark; we are acquainted with the accurate picture of her past acquiescence to patriarchy with this statement, “Miranda obeyed. Obedience, so far in life, had been her only virtue” (Duckett, 2019, p. 17). Though she has been bred with that “part of her—the future wife of Ferdinand, the proud daughter of Prospero,” (Ibid) the narrator has confirmed that she has “[n]ever, [even with] her father’s warnings, [...] ever been able to resist an adventure” (Ibid., p. 13). Miranda has been, at the onset of the novel, a prisoner in her room devoid of the capacity to freely roam in her father’s castle; the food presented to her consisted of repetitive and low quality copious meals. She has, nonetheless, shown resilience, fortitude, strength and resistance by embarking on forbidden journey’s and manoeuvres, such as exploring the cellars without Prospero’s permission, to rummage around her surrounding for the complete truth that the ‘wicked’ necromancer has been concealing a long while ago. Miranda is no longer a secondary character, the way she is in *The Tempest*, since the novelist has interwoven the entire tale around her doubts, worldviews, feelings, desires and, in a nutshell, existence. She has been dealing with the story’s antagonist, who is her father, with the inevitable head-to-head confrontation between them looming around throughout the text; she has not wavered, nevertheless, when the right time came. She has told her servant, after she has fathomed Prospero’s character and intentions, the following,

His power is far greater now. You didn’t see him on the island. I didn’t understand it then, but now I do. He was refining his magic. Perfecting his art. I believe he could turn this whole city to ash, Dorothea. He could make all of Italy bow to him and do his bidding. Antonio is right. He could rule the

world [...] He must need more time for his plans, though, or he would have already made his move. *We must act quickly*. (Duckett, 2019, p. 60. [Emphasis is ours])

This passage has exhibited Prospero's daughter in the process of meticulously analysing the contingent circumstances she has been confronted to; the words we have italicised at the end, for the sake of emphasis, might demonstrate the inherent inclination of Duckett's Miranda to take the adequate decisions, whenever required, even if it would mean standing upright against her father.

The reanimation of Beatrice, who is unnamed in *The Tempest* and upon whom a single sentence has been deployed, might be regarded as a deliberate move to, somewhat, allow the silenced and oppressed, women, to speak. While thinking about the island tribulations, Miranda has recalled that her father did not often refer to her mother; she might only bring into memory one instance and, hence, she reflected that Prospero "spoke of her once, and only to unveil the grandeur of [his] own plans" (Ibid., p. 21). This might shed light on the extent to which women, in general, and the mother, in particular, have been excluded from Shakespeare's original with the patriarch planning and executing various manoeuvres while the females stood at the edge of the narrative. What the readers learn initially about Beatrice has emanated from the dream sequence the moment Miranda and Dorothea entered into Agata's dreams using a strong magical potion; from that instant onwards, the mother has disappeared leaving absolutely no trail behind. It has winded-up, that after her resuscitation from among the dead, she has vanished to dedicate her energies to study witchcraft in Prospero's

underground libraries; by the end of Duckett's story, Beatrice has acquired infinite powers which have amply overrun Shakespeare's protagonist. She has, at last, reversed the power relations because her "body [does not] obey[...] the natural laws, unlike" (Ibid., p. 66) Prospero's; without any signs of contrition, she has strangled him until he lost consciousness leaving Antonio behind to rid the world of Miranda's father. The female, mother and motherhood have, this way, saved not only Milan, but also the entire globe of the sorcerer's evil schemes. The final death of the patriarch, Prosper, might be interpreted as the demise of the patriarchal system in its rigid traditional sense, as known and championed by Shakespeare's contemporaries, leaving behind, perhaps, a world where women might enjoy their full rights.

4- A Feminist Agenda, Anti-patriarchy and Homoerotic Desire Patterns:

Perhaps it was naive, for surely Ferdinand would not leave [Miranda] to her own devices as she had so often been left alone [in Milan]. She would be expected to join the court and manage the household, and surely he would want children. She understood now, from being in Agata's head, how important that was, the bearing of an heir. She understood so much more now. (Duckett, 2019, p. 61)

To any reader who is wondering about Miranda's life and how it would look like after the end of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, with the fated return to Italy, you can read the above epigraph from Duckett's *Miranda in Milan*. The narrator's quoted words have arguably evinced a high degree of feminist consciousness in relation to the novel's historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political environment. The marriage of Miranda to King Alonso's son would have, axiomatically, freed her from her father's grip; yet,

she would immediately be under the hegemony of another male figure, her husband, Ferdinand. We might picture, thereby, her restrained life within the confines of the private sphere reduced to a 'miserable' housewife; while the latter would rule over vast territories, Miranda's kingdom would be limited to the domestic arena with the only one 'valid' option, for her, which is to give birth to children and then rear them. She would not taste, anymore, the freedom she has enjoyed so far either on the island or in her father's castle when he is not around. This vision contains a scathing criticism against the patriarchal structures, of Shakespeare's time, which necessarily confine women within predefined gender roles and modes of action. Accordingly, Duckett's Miranda has "understood what her life in Naples was to be, what the life of a woman within castle walls looked like," (Ibid) with all the subjugation and oppression such a life might encompass; she seems, as a result, quite reluctant with regards to the issue of the marriage her father has already arranged with his male counterparts in Naples. Miranda, as specified from the very beginning, is perplexed and she "hardly knew anymore if she wanted to be with Ferdinand" (Ibid., p. 09).

The end on *Miranda in Milan* has even accentuated the novel's feminist worldview and polemical reaction against patriarchy. With the mother figure, Beatrice, back into the daughter's life, the patriarch has been relinquished once and for all and with no space left for him, Prosper has to die liberating the females, Bice, Miranda and even Dorothea, from any possible fetters that might hinder their future emancipation. They are supposed and even expected to cherish a delightful life full of bright horizons, in store, within the feminine bounds of a matriarchal world which is drained of the rigorous impediments of the patriarchal apparatus. The

daughter has, at the end, confessed to her mother that Ferdinand, in his letters, keeps only “talk[ing] [about] the beauty of the children I will bear, of the favorable alliance our marriage will make” (Ibid., p. 68). This might suggest that their union would only be advantageous to the dominant male entity contributing, thus, to the welfare of the husband while the woman is doomed to be relegated to the backdrop with an ascribed function. This predefined gender role, of the woman’s powers to be reserved to the household, which used to be the norm to Shakespeare’s early modern readers/viewers, is no longer endorsed or adopted by Duckett’s new millennium contemporaries. Miranda has proclaimed that Ferdinand “has cast me in the role of queen, and my lines are already written” (Ibid); of course this is not, in any manner whatsoever, “the role [she] want[s]” (Ibid). Such passages might stand as a feminist outcry against the fixed gender roles which oppress and silence women while imprisoning them in patriarchal stereotyped moulds and boundaries.

Despite initially maintaining the Miranda/Ferdinand love story which is quite central to *The Tempest*’s hetero-normative desire pattern, Duckett’s *Miranda in Milan* has shifted attention to another sexual mode and orientation through the homoerotic romance conveyed via Miranda and Dorothea. During a huge “carnival ball,” (Ibid., p. 20) Prospero has organised to entertain his guests in Milan, the masked Miranda has performed a ‘sexualised’ dance with Dorothea who has camouflaged herself as a man so that they would go around among the ‘heterosexual’ crowd unnoticed. Miranda, who is a new member to the Milan circles, has been amazed with Dorothea’s ‘masculine’ dissimulation telling her, “[w]hy did you change your sex? Do ladies not dance together?” (Duckett, 2019, p. 23)

Dorothea has chuckled at these inquiries retorting instantly with these words, “[m]aybe in certain quarters of the city they do. But not in the ducal court” (Ibid). This is a perspicuous indication that mainstream culture, or at least the political elite, symbolised by the “ducal court,” (Ibid) is only admitting hetero-normative desire modes with the homoerotic relationships involving two women at the periphery denoted with the words, “in certain quarters of the city” (Ibid). The homoerotic aspect of the novel is, moreover, conveyed through Dorothea’s family member; she has fostered, at a given moment, that she has had a sister and a brother who are still alive. Dorothea has proclaimed, “[m]y sister met a man, and my brother did, too. She followed her husband to the New World, and he’s in Orléans with his French soldier” (Ibid., p. 10). This sentence points out the heterosexual and homoerotic patterns as two sexual desire norms upon which the narrator has commented, from Miranda’s perspective, as follows, “[i]t hadn’t occurred to Miranda that men could wind up with men, but she supposed it made as much sense as a man ending up with a woman” (Ibid). With the novel drawing to its end, the three women, Beatrice, her daughter and Dorothea, have travelled to Naples for safety in order to wait for the final preparations of Miranda’s union with Ferdinand; the twist has come with Prospero’s daughter realising the impossibility of conducting a life under her husband’s supervision and patriarchy dominating her existence since she has become aware of her feelings towards Dorothea. Beatrice has grasped the essence of her emotions; likewise, she has notified Miranda that she has already had a prior knowledge of her homoerotic sexual orientations by affirming, to her daughter, that her “heart belongs to another [Dorothea]” (Ibid., p. 68) and not Ferdinand. Miranda seems to dread the consequences of her feelings and

desires in a society which prioritises heterosexual relationships; however, her mother has reassured her stating, “[l]ove is life, Miranda [...] [i]t matters not in what form it comes” (Ibid., p. 69). We might argue, in brief, that *Miranda in Milan* has directed an overt polemic at *The Tempest* by rewriting its exclusive hetero-normative realm inflecting it, as such, towards a homoerotic desire paradigm.

5- Colonialism/Colonial Violence, Slavery and Racism: Reworked and Exposed:

Four centuries after Shakespeare’s ‘glorious’ adieu to the stage, it has to be professed that the postcolonial thinkers’ declarations that “*The Tempest* does not simply reflect early European attempts to colonize the world; [and that] the play itself functions as a colonial text,” (Charry, 2014, p. 67) are not mere empty allegations destitute of truth. The white protagonist has not only tightened his hold over the island, but has also brought its native population under his ‘jurisdiction’; both Ariel and Caliban have, from this scope, been enslaved and subjugated by Prospero. Here, special focus has to be cast upon Caliban, Sycorax’s son, who has been denigrated and ill-treated in order to force him to perform a plethora of tasks for the benefit of his master; addressing Miranda, the rightful duke of Milan, has emphasised the fact that Caliban is in charge of “mak[ing] [their] fire/ Fetch[ing] in [their] wood; and serv[ing] [them] in offices/ That profit [them]” (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 22) There is, therefore, no peculiarity in the perception which has stamped “Prospero [as] the symbol of colonialism,” (Beverley, 2008, p. 530) since he has been involved, at least, at the literary dimension, in the colonial enterprise. Duckett’s *Miranda in Milan* has, on the other hand, polemically revisited these controversial issues, to the

novelist's contemporaries, refashioning and rewriting them in the light of preset-day worldviews expressing, like this, a scathing criticism against colonialism, colonial violence, slavery and racism.

Colonialism is the first aspect, of *The Tempest*, that the novel has overtly treated with antagonism. There is a significant scene which we deem appropriate, herein, since it has brought Miranda and Ariel into contact at the entrance into Agata's dreams; she has inquired from the spirit the following, "[a]re you with Caliban?" (Duckett, 2019, p. 41) Ariel's reply to this question is a genuine endorsement of life in the post-independence era; he has said, "I am [with Caliban]. *He's stopped cursing me, for your father has stopped cursing him. The island is peaceful. We live without masters now*" (Ibid., p. 41-42. [Emphasis is ours]). These words seem to foster that peace, love, mercy and brotherhood have instantly befallen the inhabitants of the ex-colony once the coloniser/Prospero has returned to Milan; the two enemies, in *The Tempest*, namely Ariel and Caliban have contrived and redefined the terms of their reconciliation, during the post-independence period, four hundred and eight years later through Duckett's text. Of even greater significance, we are compelled to pinpoint Ariel's claim and above suggestion that the island has become a safe environment with the colonised relishing freedom from the master's control. Colonialism is no longer the 'worthy-of-praise' practice it used to be, to Shakespeare's early modern English readers/viewers, since it has reached its limits with the wave of decolonisation of the 1950s and 1960s; the invasion of foreign areas, to most of Duckett's contemporaries, is something quite wrong which has to be firmly condemned. We have to highlight, following this thread, that the island which has been annexed by Prospero from its legitimate heir,

Sycorax's son, has been restored, in Duckett's text, to its righteous owner; Dorothea has spoken about "Caliban's island," (Ibid., p. 71) not Prospero's, when she has discussed with Miranda the idea of leaving Italy to head somewhere else.

After the island's independence, Caliban would normally be entitled to take sovereign decision at whim. This supposition has been raised by Dorothea and Miranda while they have been evaluating a possible destination which might be a safe haven for the female trio; Prospero's daughter has proposed an eventual return to the island which is, now, Caliban's property. Dorothea has anticipated things with her fear that the native might deny them access to the island since it belong, through birthright, to him; Miranda has calmly answered her to dissipate her anxieties saying, "[i]f he refuses us— [...] If he refuses, we'll venture on. We'll find someplace. Some corner of the world no one else wants" (Ibid). This point of view might be contrasted with the coloniser's unscrupulous willingness to rob the autochthonous populations of their land; the narrator has commented Miranda's decision as such, "[i]f he [Caliban] turned them away, she would not try to trick him or cajole him into letting them stay. She hadn't begun to pay for the sins of her father, and she would not compound them by forcing her way onto Caliban's land" (Ibid). These words, we might assert, entail an intrinsic rejection of all that colonialism has often stood for including dishonesty, schemes and relentless machinations to annex other peoples' homelands. The end of the colonial enterprise has been sealed with the death of its literary representative, Prospero, who has been killed with the cutting blade Beatrice has furnished to Antonio. His death/the coloniser's death has opened radiant horizons to the colonised and women, the most

oppressed entities of the colonial era, to thrive, enjoy freedom and express their worldviews; with Prospero out of the world of the living, “[n]ow she [Miranda] could give voice to all she’d wondered. Now, for the first time, she and Caliban could speak freely, without fear, without restriction” (Ibid., p. 71).

Miranda in Milan has, furthermore, reacted against colonial violence which is, necessarily, involved in the coloniser’s/Prospero’s constant and perpetual attempts at laying the solid foundations for their enterprise. Shakespeare’s hero has on numerous episodes had recourse to acute and cruel procedures to subdue his ‘slave’; in one prominent instance, he has poured his vehemence at Caliban with these statements, “[i]f thou neglect’st, or dost unwillingly/ What I command, I’ll rack thee with old cramps/ Fill all thy bones with aches; make thee roar/ That beasts shall tremble at thy din” (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 24). Duckett has deployed such scenes to attack the crude violence often the invaders rely upon to achieve their sordid designs. There is a key passage in which the narrator, while making the best use of the source text, has affirmed that Miranda could not forget “the way her father had tortured Caliban: racking him with cramps; taunting him with demons; chasing him and caning him, beating him about the head until his face grew puffy and red, leaving him to cry in the dirt” (Duckett, 2019, p. 16). Duckett’s coloniser/Prospero might be perceived as one of those unscrupulous colonial agents to whom resorting to torture and other horrible strategies would represent no dilemma. Miranda has even seen Prospero perpetrating harrowing psychological terror on the native declaring that she has witnessed “her father pulling Sycorax’s bones from the shallow grave in which they lay, making them dance before Caliban as he wept in the

firelight, the blackened skull grinning, the rotted teeth clacking” (Ibid). The previous statement, worthy of a horror scene, has shed light on the ‘wicked’ Prospero in the process of exhuming Caliban’s mother out of nothing, but the ‘fun’ of it to torture and torment his servant.

In addition, the enslavement of Ariel and Caliban together with Prospero’s and the other white figures’ racist attitude towards the indigenous of the island has not gone unnoticed and uncommented at the level of *Miranda in Milan*. Shakespeare’s protagonist has conferred upon himself the position of ‘the master’ in relation to Caliban who has been pronounced ‘vile’ rapist whose lineage has been debased with the intention of turning him into a slave. Miranda’s antislavery stance, in the novel, has openly been declared when the narrator has reported, “[s]he’d never asked for servants: she’d never wanted them. She could manage perfectly well on her own” (Ibid., p. 08). The entire institution of slavery is, accordingly, questioned and since it is no longer needed, by people, like Miranda, who belong to the ‘masters’, it has to be abolished forever. The enslavement of Caliban, with all the racism it purports, has been grounded and engrained through Prospero’s discourse as the norm; the sorcerer’s daughter has fostered that her racist father has “forced Caliban into labor, telling me all the time it was the natural order of things” (Ibid., p. 60). This “order” has elevated the status of the white man’s race and demoted Caliban’s on purely racial and skin colour foundations. With Miranda gaining maturity and a better grasp of her surrounding, she has demanded from Ariel to swiftly address this apologetic message to Caliban, “tell him I’m sorry. I didn’t understand” (Ibid., p. 42). Miranda has even apologised from her servant, Dorothea, telling her, “I’m sorry. I never should have let you clean these rooms, never sat and watched

while you toiled” (Ibid., p. 60). We might argue, in a nutshell, that Duckett’s text has drastically remodelled *The Tempest* with a severe criticism directed at the colonial enterprise, its vehemence, its enslavement of the indigenous inhabitants and its racist tendencies.

6- The Civilizing Mission Attacked:

The civilising mission in *The Tempest* might be imputed to Prospero’s allegations that he has done all his might to ‘educate,’ ‘teach’ and ‘civilise’ Caliban especially by ‘bestowing’ upon him the precious gift of language. Shakespeare’s central character has boastfully professed, “I pitied thee [Caliban]/ Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour/ One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage/ Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like/ A thing most brutish, I endow’d thy purposes/ With words that made them known” (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 24). It was in this way that Prospero has ‘advertised’ his ‘noble’ mission of spreading what is thought of, then, as the ‘lights’ of civilisations all over the island initially and the whole globe subsequently. The twenty-first century novel, *Miranda in Milan*, has in contrast debunked and rebuffed the white man’s alleged civilising project through a wide range of episodes. Before opting to go back to the island with Dorothea and Beatrice, Miranda has mentally struggled to make the appropriate decision; from this perspective, the narrator has claimed that “[s]he had thought it her duty to stay [in Italy]. To become queen [over Naples], and rule justly, and carry on the aims of that noble civilization of which her father had so often spoken. *But the island had civilization, too*” (Duckett, 2019, p. 70. [Emphasis is ours]). Civilisation has been, at this point, associated not only with Europe, but also with a remote part of the world which, during Shakespeare’s era, the early modern English

people perceived as a wild and virgin area to be tamed. The lights of civilisation are no longer the white man's exclusive privilege since even the island, as the sentence we have on purpose italicised might denote, is in possession of that so coveted endowment of human progress.

Other strategies have been, besides, implemented to reject all the white man's claims and arguments in favour of the civilising mission. Shakespeare's Prospero has prided himself with the 'flawless' education he has given his daughter telling her "and here [on the island]/ Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit" (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 14). The return to Milan, in Duckett's text, has shown the complete opposite; the readers might right away realise that Miranda has not been brought up on mastering even the basics of the eating table etiquette; the resolution has been as the ensuing, "until her manners improved, she had been told, she would not be permitted to dine in public" (Duckett, 2019, p. 11). The myriad debates Miranda has had with Dorothea, the Moorish-originated servant, from Marrakech, Morocco, have allowed her to comprehend the falsehood of her father's claim which has stipulated that they "sprang from a mighty and cultured civilization, and though no hint of that civilization lay around them [...] they were still elevated by it, still responsible for creating it wherever they traveled" (Ibid., p. 09-10). When she was with her father on the island, Miranda could not see any special traits about themselves, as Europeans, which might demarcate them as the 'civilised' from the others. The narrator has made us delve into her reasoning, back then, in a way that has dismissed the civilising mission when he has stated the following, "[l]ong ago she [Miranda] had thought of civilization as a thin, shimmering cloak, something like the aura she could see around Ariel. *She saw no glow on her*

own skin, though, and felt no noble lineage leading her through life, no matter how often her father promised her that birthright" (Ibid., p. 10. [Emphasis is ours]). The italicised statement has been intended to strike a direct blow, the fatal coup, at the heart of the white man's pretence of bestowing the benefits of civilisation on the other races simply because he/the European has allegedly come to the world with an 'innate' quality of being 'civilised'. Dorothea has even inculcated in Miranda's mind that Caliban has, surely, been introduced to Sycorax's language prior to Prospero's rendering, thereby, invalid the white man's declaration that the native has been a mere 'tongue-less' and ignorant savage before colonisation. She has clarified to the duke's daughter that "Caliban has a language [and] It's you who ignore its import, his greater meaning" (Ibid., p. 71). The end of *Miranda in Milan* has, somewhat, sketched a utopian vision of a multicultural world where coexistence is possible with the civilising mission, colonialism, superior/inferior and master/slave dualities are nothing, but a nightmare belonging to the distant past. Dorothea has, likewise, asked Miranda to take an oath that "[i]f Caliban lets [them] ashore [on his island]—if he accepts [them] into his home" she [Miranda] "must learn his language. [she] must listen, rather than speak. Unlearn the lines of [her] father. Watch Caliban write his own in the sand" (Ibid); like that, Dorothea has argued, "maybe we can create this new land you [Miranda] dream of" (Ibid). Miranda has not, at all, wavered and instantly swore to do all what the oath has stipulated.

7-Conclusion:

In the light of what has been said, we might confirm that Duckett's *Miranda in Milan* (2019) has radically rewritten Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

(1611); this kind of relationship, since we have resorted to Bakhtin's notions, has been defined as an overt polemic. The dialogue Duckett's literary text has launched, with its corrosive approach, towards its source has resulted in an aggressive revision and reworking of Shakespeare's last play. The twenty-first century context, precisely the first and second decades, has been quite pivotal, to say the least, in defining and shaping the direction in which the novel has headed. Though it has pertained to be a sequel to Shakespeare's seventeenth century masterpiece, *Miranda in Milan* has been substantially aware of the dynamics, in action, of its cultural and historical environment. It has, therefore, markedly altered the whole account away from Prospero's viewpoint to Miranda's, casting the duke of Milan as the unscrupulous villain of the story while Antonio has, to a certain extent, been redeemed. Caliban has also been refashioned from the present-day politically correct scope, often fostered towards the coloured population, by emancipating him from the rape allegations, reconsidering his physical deformity as being quite acceptable, bringing forth his mother tongue and ownership of the island. Closely the same ought to be said about Ariel's character since the author has given him a rebellious dimension. It is in the same mode that the position of the colonised, Caliban and Ariel, has been readjusted that the status of Miranda, in particular, and that of women, in general, have been redefined to suit the beginning of the third millennium. Unlike Shakespeare's original, Duckett's text has voiced a feminist agenda which has articulated anti-patriarchal sentiments and allowed homoerotic desire patterns to come into the surface. The overt polemic the novel has directed at *The Tempest* has criticised and reacted against the play's colonial facet, the invader's violence, and his professed civilising mission.

8-Bibliography List:

- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, in Carl Emerson, ed., trans., Carl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Bate, Jonathan. *Soul of Age: A Bibliography of the Mind of William Shakespeare*. New York: Random House, 2009.
- Cartelli, Thomas. *Repositioning Shakespeare: National Formations, Postcolonial Appropriations*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Cox, D. John. "Recovering Something Christian about *The Tempest*," in Christianity and literature, Vol 50: N° 01, 2000.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. ed., *Representing the English Renaissance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- Katharine Duckett, *Miranda in Milan*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 2019.
- Kott, Jan. *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. trans. Boleslaw Taborski. Warsaw: Doubleday and Company, 1964.
- Morrison, V. James. *Shipwrecked: Disaster and Transformation in Homer, Shakespeare, Defoe, and the Modern World*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2014.
- Nixon, Rob. "Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest*," in, Critical Inquiry, Vol 13: N° 03, 1987, University of Chicago Press, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343513>.
- Poddar, Prem. Patke, S. Rajeev and Lars Jensen. eds. *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures—Continental Europe and its Empires*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
- Retamar, Fernández Roberto. *Caliban and Other Essays* trans. Edward Baker. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971.
- Shakespeare, William. (1611). *The Tempest*. San Diego: Icon Group International, 2005.
- Spaas, Lieve and Stimpson, Brian. eds. *Robinson Crusoe Myths and Metamorphoses*. London: MacMillan, 1996.
- Vaughan T. Alden and Vaughan, Mason Virginia. eds. *The Tempest: A Critical Reader*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014.
- West-Pavlov, Russell. *Transcultural Graffiti: Diasporic Writing and the Teaching of Literary Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005.