Betrayal, Magic, Love, Repentance, Forgiveness, And Acknowledgment In The Tempest By William Shakespeare

The play The Tempest by William Shakespeare is about betrayal, magic, love, repentance, forgiveness, and acknowledgment. The play depicts Prospero's journey of getting his dukedom back and marrying his daughter to the King of Naples' son, Prince Ferdinand. The Tempest is full of symbols and one of them is Prospero's books. When Prospero was betrayed by his own brother Antonio, the King of Naples, other members of the royal family, and even by Cannibal, the island's savage and deformed slave, the books gave him the hope and power to continue his fight to bring justice back. While the books prove their usefulness throughout the play, they also change Prospero's personality making him more ignorant and arrogant.

Prospero's books play an important part in the play's overall theme, as they symbolize Prospero's desire to isolate himself from others, his power and superiority over everyone, and his forgiveness. First of all, Prospero's books symbolize his desire to isolate himself from others in order to focus on improving his skills in magic. In the play The Tempest, Prospero himself states that "[he], thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated to closeness and the bettering of [his] mind With that which, but by being so retir'd, O'er-priz'd all popular rate, in my false brother Awak'd an evil nature, and my trust" when talking to his daughter Miranda (I, i, 89-93). While Prospero feels betrayed by his brother, he also highlights the fact that it was him who was so focused on his books in Milan that he "abandoned" his dukedom giving his brother, Antonio, the opportunity to take over and force him an his daughter to flee in a boat. As Prospero was so 'rapt in secret studies" and isolated from others that he did not even notice his brother's intentions (I, II, 77). The amount of time Prospero spent on his books shows how strong his desire was to isolate himself from others and focus on his studies.

Prospero can be found isolating himself again when he is watching Miranda and Ferdinand, as he says to himself "So glad of this as they [he] cannot be, Who are surpris'd withal; but [his] rejoicing At nothing can be more. [he'll] to [his] book" (III, i, 92-95). While he can continue enjoying the idea of how happy his daughter and her beloved one are, he decides to go back to his books and continue his studying. Isolation seems to help him deal with his problems. As magic became his number one priority, he became more and more isolated from everyone around. Prospero's books also symbolize his power and superiority over everyone.

At the beginning of The Tempest, as Prospero tells how he escaped from Milan after his brother took over his dukedom, he highlights the most important part, which is how Gonzalo, an honest old councillor, not only provided them with food, clothes and all other necessities but also made sure that Prospero had his books which he "[prizes] above [his] dukedom" (I, ii, 161-168). When Prospero was escaping from Milan in order to save his daughter's and his own lives, he was literally powerless and had no clue about how they would survive. When Gonzalo passed him his magic books, he actually gave Prospero powers to not only survive but also control everything around him.

The whole play shows how Prosperity uses his powers to fool, trick, and control every character from The Tempest. For example, after talking to Miranda, his daughter, he commands her to sleep by saying "Here cease more questions. [Miranda is] inclin'd to sleep; 'tis a good

dullness, And give it way. [Prospero knows] [she] canst not choose" (I, ii, 184-186). Prospero uses his power to even make his own daughter to fall asleep as he wants to talk to Ariel and does not want Miranda to hear them. As the books represent his powers, it is obvious that none of the characters is more superior than Prospero. Even the spirits obey him. While Prospero seems to be the most powerful character in the whole play, according to Caliban, if his books get seized, "without them He's but a sot, as I am; nor hath not One spirit to command" (III, ii, 91-93). From Caliban's words, it is obvious that the books not only symbolize Prospero's power but they are actually his source of magic and protection. It turns out that Prospero is very vulnerable without them so the books are his actual power to keep everything under control.

The books not only represent his desire of isolation and power, but also his forgiveness. As at the end of the play, in order to show his seriousness of acknowledging his own arrogance and decision to let things go, Prospero states that "this rough magic [he] here abjure, and, when [he has] requir'd Some heavenly music (which even now [he does]) To work [his] end upon their senses that This airy charm is for, [he'll] break [his] staff, Bury it certain fathoms in the earth, And deeper than did ever plummet sound [he'll] drown [his] book" (V, i, 50-57). Knowing how important Prospero's books were for him, it is obvious that he is ready to finally accept his past and move on in order to stop hurting his close ones.

Drowning his books can give him the opportunity to get back to his normal "human" life and live just like others without any power to control people. It is definitely a very hard decision for someone who lived the past years keeping everything under his control via his powers and books but Prospero is ready to surrender everything to return to his previous life. In conclusion, the revenge is not always the only way to solve problems. Just by looking at Prospero's example, it is obvious that the powers he got from his books blinded him and made him believe that the people who hurt him must be punished. At the end of The Tempest, Prospero himself acknowledged how far he went to bring justice back. He chose forgiveness over revenge which made almost every character happy. The books that Prospero owned had a very great impact on the play's theme as it symbolized Prospero's past (his desire to isolate from everyone around), his present (his power and superiority over others), and his future (his forgiveness gave him the opportunity to go back to his normal life).