In “Reading The Tempest,” Russ McDonald rightly cautions against ‘blunt’ political interpretations and instead traces the effect that the play’s poetry has on its audience:

The effect of the style throughout is to place the auditor in an intermediate state, and that region of indeterminacy is a version of the various other kinds of liminality associated with the text […]. The poetry seduces the audience into a state of stylistic suspension, an intuitive zone between sleep and wake. (27)

I would like to continue McDonald’s reflection on an “intermediate state” – which should, however, be distinguished from “indeterminacy” – by noting that the play has the auditor identify with characters through the shared experience of intermediacy. Ferdinand, who in his youth, good nature, and openness to wonder seems like an ideal audience member, will experience such an in-between state when he hears Ariel’s music. Even before he and Miranda enjoy Prospero’s masque in act four, Ferdinand finds himself in a mode of dream-like intermediacy through magical sounds (1.2.376–408). He first appears while charmed by music. Ariel’s opening lyric alternates between catalectic tetrameter and a monosyllabic dimeter full of emphatic dentals, placing the prince between two rhythms and two senses of time, one of movement and expectation, one of immediacy and completion:

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands;
Curtsied when you have, and kissed
The wild waves whist;
Foot it fealty here and there,
And sweet sprites bear
The burden. (1.2.376–81)

The song calls him to take hands, kiss, and dance, portending the joys of a future wedding feast, which ceremony has long been read by Christian allegorists as a type of final beatitude. But Ariel’s song then leads Ferdinand from the “yellow sands” (1.2.376) of Elysium1 to imagine the depths of the sea where his father is apparently drowned. The lyrics imaginatively situate

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1 In a footnote (2011, 177) Vaughan and Vaughan suggest that this passage may allude to Aeneas’ visit to the yellow sands of the Elysian Fields (Aeneid 6.640–4).
Ferdinand between joy and grief, even between eternal life and death, just as its burden places him within a range of pitches. He hears low growls and high cries, “[t]he watch dogs bark, bow-wow” and “[t]he strain of strutting chanticleer / Cry cock a diddle dow” (1.2.384–7). The effect leaves Ferdinand in a condition of wonder, confusion, and intermediacy: “Where should this music be? I’th’ air, or th’earth?” (1.2.388).

Ferdinand then encounters “the goddess / On whom these airs attend” (1.2.422–3), Miranda, and Prospero, seemingly a black magician, and again finds himself in a middle position. His sufferings – “My father’s loss, the weakness which I feel, / The wreck of all my friends, [and] this man’s threats” (1.2.488–9) – stand in contrast to (and are more than made up for by) the sight of Miranda. Yet he knows not who she and her father are nor how they have arrived on the island, and only later will learn their story. In being cast confusedly into the middle of an action, Ferdinand’s experience once again parallels the audience’s. The play opens with the affecting drama of the shipwreck, with thunder and lightning, with shouts and anger, with a host of unknown characters facing the terror of immediate death. Only in the following scene, through Prospero’s belabored story for Miranda of their past, will the audience receive the exposition and be allowed the emotional tranquility necessary to make sense of things. The play thus begins in medias res, in imitation of The Aeneid. The epic too begins with a storm in the Mediterranean and a shipwreck, after which the hero moves a beautiful woman to feel pity with the long story of his exile and travels before the action returns to the present. In The Tempest, however, in medias res is more than a narrative convention: it is the condition of human existence, for the characters and, through our identification with them, for us, the audience.

We find ourselves contemplating binaries and antitheses and placed between rival perspectives, with univocal explanations revealed as insufficient. Prospero, for example, telling Miranda of their arrival on the island, must correct her logical fallacy. She asks, “What foul play had we that we came from thence? / Or blessed wast we did?,” to which he answers, “Both, both” (1.2.60–1). Both/and rather than either/or is the set of correlative conjunctions appropriate to the play, as on Prospero’s island as well as in Gonzalo’s commonwealth “by contraries” are all things executed (2.1.148–9). Prospero is both the wise and loving father and the vindictive slave-master. Caliban is both a savage and a poet, speaking with “backward” and “forward” voices (2.2.89–90). The wisest characters, recognizing an essential duality that reveals the need for harmonizing, embrace paradox and conjoin opposites. Gonzalo, who would be a king without sovereignty (2.1.157), tells Alonso to weigh sorrow with comfort (2.1.8–9); for Ferdinand it is “fresh

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2 Alonso later hears the winds sing his trespass and the thunder, “[t]hat deep and dreadful organpipe,” “bass” it (3.3.97–9).
morning” (3.1.33) when Miranda is “by at night” (3.1.34) as his prison is “space enough” (1.2.493); Prospero explains that the infant Miranda “raised in [him] / An undergoing stomach to bear up” against his sufferings (1.2.156–7; italics throughout mine). In addition, the descriptions of the island contravene any fixed perspective, as repeatedly characters see in it only a reflection of themselves. The drunkard Trinculo describes its cloudy skies as “a foul bombard that would shed his liquor” (2.2.21); for Caliban, both beastly and poetical, it is a place of pricks and bites (2.2.10–12) yet also of “twangling instruments” and soporific voices that lull him into dreams of heavenly bounty (3.2.137–43). The genial Adrian and Gonzalo find it pleasant, the surly Antonio and Sebastian barren (2.2.37–57). Thus, McDonald understandably emphasizes the play’s ambiguity: *The Tempest* “demonstrat[es] the impossibility of significational certainty and creat[es] an atmosphere of hermeneutic instability” (18).

Yet intermediacy does not necessitate indeterminacy, and the presence of rival perspectives does not always mean uncertainty. *The Tempest* may not be so entirely ambiguous. At the least, one argument, even before it occurs, is clearly resolved. Ariel’s comment on the state of the survivors’ clothes – “On their sustaining garments not a blemish, / But fresher than before” (1.2.218–9) – settles in Gonzalo’s favor his later argument with Antonio and Sebastian (2.1.60–106). I will argue that this disagreement and their contrasting responses to the storm at sea allude to Reformation-era arguments about Baptism and justification. A religious interpretation is not irrelevant to a play about the intermediacy of the human condition since these controversies were at heart anthropological, not theological, arguments about human nature, not God, and about the human condition within salvation history – within time, itself a kind of middle state. The play’s camouflaged reenactments of religious disputes are the occasion for a broader reflection on being *in medias res* and on responding to that condition, a reflection that is grounded in the writings of St. Augustine, whose influence is evident even in the play’s geography, the island’s placement somewhere between Tunis, Milan, and Naples. I thus suggest that Shakespeare is both responding to Early Modern theological disputes and drawing upon an allegorical tradition that traces back to Patristic exegesis. While religious and allegorical readings often prove reductive, to recognize these contexts neither contravene nor occludes *The Tempest*’s delightful peculiarity and its moral and psychological complexity, as I hope is evident in the analysis of the relationship between Prospero and Caliban, but rather adds to the play’s heady mix. Just as Shakespeare molds a *sui generis* Falstaff out of motley stuff – medieval spiri-

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Likewise, Vaughan and Vaughan write of Shakespeare’s “rhetorical strategy of exploring different, often opposite, perspectives, never settling on a definite view” (2011, 61).
tual allegories and Machiavellian dicta, Oldcastle’s proto-Protestantism and Gargantua’s ebullient Humanism – so too does he in *The Tempest* conjure a dream world with its own colors, textures, and sounds out of a magician’s bag packed with not only Florio and Strachey but also doctrines and figures.

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If only because of his insistence, Gonzalo’s disagreement with Antonio and Sebastian about the condition of their garments seems significant. Four times he asserts that his garments after their drenching in the sea are as fresh as when first worn (2.1.63–6; 70; 97–8; 103). Gonzalo is, of course, “a spendthrift […] of his tongue” (2.1.26), a garrulous old man who not only is optimistic in himself but seeks to be the cause of hope in other men, and so maybe one should read his still harping about his garments as simply reflective of his character. Moreover, the hope he is trying to instill in Alonso may seem quite general, in the possibility of renewal after their catastrophe. The act of being cleansed by and arising out of water can work as a universal symbol of revitalization, as in *The Odyssey*, when Odysseus on leaving Calypso’s island is ducked under the water, weighed down by the tunic the goddess had given him, before emerging naked from the sea onto Scheria, where his life will begin anew (Homer 5.319–463). In *The Tempest*, however, the wet clothes are not a burden but “sustaining” (1.2.218), saving the drowning men from death, which suggests a more specific Christian allusion to ‘the garment of salvation,’ Baptism. In addition, the two perspectives on the condition of their clothes after immersion are analogous to competing doctrinal understandings of Baptism’s effects, with Gonzalo speaking like a Catholic and Antonio and Sebastian like Protestants.

Gonzalo is delighted that “our garments being, as they were, drenched in the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness and gloss, being rather newly dyed than stained with salt water” (2.1.63–6). His words sound much like the teachings on Baptism in the 1566 *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, better known as *The Roman Catechism*, which outlines the sacrament’s various effects. The third effect of Baptism is “the grace of regeneration,” which is like “a brilliant light that effaces all those stains which obscure the luster of the soul, investing it with increased brightness and beauty” (McHugh and Callan 187–8). Gonzalo claims that the garment is not “stained” but glossy, as if infused with color, “new–dyed,” which further alludes both to Baptism being a dying with Christ so as to be resurrected with Him (Romans 6:4), and to the fourth effect, the infusion of virtues into the soul. The *Roman Catechism* distinguishes Catholic from Protestant teaching on Baptism by emphasizing the cleansing of the stains of sin and the soul’s moral regeneration. The white garment worn in the ceremony, for example, “symbolizes the glory of the
resurrection to which we are born by Baptism, the brightness and beauty with which the soul, when purified from the stains of sin, is invested in Baptism, and the innocence and integrity which the person who has received Baptism should preserve through life” (McHugh and Callan 208). In its explanation of the first effect, the remission of original sin and actual guilt, the *Catechism* most explicitly rejects Reformed doctrine, reminding its readers that the Council of Trent pronounces “anathema against those who […] should dare to assert that although sin is forgiven in Baptism, it is not entirely removed or totally eradicated, but is cut away in such a manner as to leave its roots still fixed in the soul” (ibid. 193–4).

Antonio and Sebastian’s replies indicate that they believe that the stains have not been “entirely removed or totally eradicated” from their garments:

**ANTONIO** If but one of his pockets could speak, would it not say he lies?

**SEBASTIAN** Ay, or very falsely pocket up his report. (2.1.67–8).

Their understanding, that the pockets are stained, that the stains remain internally even after the garments have been washed, corresponds to Protestant teaching on the inhering presence of sin after Baptism. John Calvin in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, for example, while he does write of “purification” and “regeneration,” does not find that the soul becomes bright and beautiful from Baptism nor that it receives an infusion of virtue. Instead, Calvin asserts that the corruption engendered by original sin remains after Baptism, which serves as “an initiatory sign that we are admitted to the fellowship of the Church” and frees souls from the guilt of sin through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness (Calvin 4.15.10). Baptism delivers God’s elect from “[the giltinesse of sinne] [and not] the very matter of sinne […] [Sin] ceaseth only to reigne and not so dwell in them” (ibid. 3.3.11). Through Baptism the soul appears clean to God and thus no longer bears the guilt of sin, but it is not made “fresh,” to use Ariel and Gonzalo’s word, and instead is left “so thoroughly soaked in poison of sinne, that it can breathe out nothing but corrupt stink” (ibid. 2.5.19). Or, to switch from Calvin’s dominant metaphor of corruption to one favored by Lutheran writers, it is left stained or spotted. *The Formula of Concord* (1580), for example, rejects and condemns “the view that this blemish [of original sin] may be removed as readily as a spot can be washed from the face or color from the wall”

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4 Calvin continues, stressing the forgiveness of sin through Baptism, as opposed to any transformation of the soul: “The faithful are certified by Baptism that this damnation is taken away, and driven from them: for as much as (as we have already said) the Lord doth by this signe promise us that ful and perfect forgivenesse is granted both of the fault which should have been imputed to us, and of the pain whiche we should have suffered for the faulte.”
Antonio and Sebastian’s four references to “pockets” and to “a pox” (2.1.67; 69; 78; 92) after Gonzalo’s initial assertion may be a reminder of the little pocks, the indelible blemishes, which they believe give the lie to Gonzalo’s claim about his garment.

Sebastian’s curses the Boatswain with a “pox” (1.1.39), and in their judgment of him he and Antonio are again at variance with Gonzalo, and again with doctrinal implications. Foreshadowing the later argument about Baptism, whether a stain remains after drenching, and contrasting with Sebastian’s “pox,” in tone but also in significance, Gonzalo jocularly insists that the Boatswain “hath no drowning mark upon him – his complexion is perfect gallows” (1.1.28–9). They more obviously differ, however, as to whether the Boatswain can save the ship by doing the work the Master has assigned him. Gonzalo, as always, seeks to buck up the spirits of fearful men with humor, but both before and after Sebastian and Antonio vilify the Boatswain, he declares his confidence in him (cf. 1.1.27–32; 45–7). Antonio, however, even before the vituperation, implies trust only in the Master (cf. 1.1.12), and later blames the crew for their seemingly impending deaths (cf. 1.1.55–7). The Boatswain’s frustration with the royal party’s intrusion and subsequent insults draws attention to his and his crew’s work: “You mar our labour” (1.1.13); “if you can command these elements to silence and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a rope more” (1.1.21–3); “They are louder than the weather or our office” (1.1.35–6); “Work you, then” (1.1.41). The Boatswain is memorable for his loose tongue and cheekiness in standing up to his social betters. But maybe most striking is his willingness to do his work, his vitality and ebullience in doing it – “Heigh, my hearts; cheerly cheerly, my hearts!” (1.1.5–6) – and his persistence, despite the royal party’s interference. Indeed, *The Tempest* begins with the Boatswain responding to the Master’s appeal that he go to work to keep the ship from running aground. That is, he is to cooperate with the Master by doing a work that may contribute to his and others’ salvation.6

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5 The passage continues: “For original sin is not a sin which man commits; it inheres in the nature, substance and essence of man in such a way that even if no evil thought would ever arise in the heart of corrupted man, no idle word were spoken, or no wicked act or deed took place, nevertheless man’s nature is corrupted through original sin, innate in us through our sinful seed and the source of all other, actual sins.” The “Solid Declaration” of *The Formula of Concord* also asserts that Original Sin is a “spot or blemish” that cannot be removed (art. I, 5).

6 *The Winter’s Tale*, in which Julio Romano supposedly creates the statue of Hermione, too seemingly treats the topic of completing the work of the master. Giorgio Vasari in *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* makes much of Giulio Romano’s status as Rafael’s favorite pupil. His master at his death left as his heirs Giulio and Gioven Francesco “on the condition that they should finish the works begun by him; and they carried the greater part of these to completion with honour” (119).
For a playwright working after Luther, Calvin, and the Council of Trent, in the midst of a 150 year period of wide-ranging disruption in large part caused by disagreement about whether good works contribute to the soul’s salvation and justification, this emphasis on work is theologically suggestive. The Reformed teaching on Baptism, in opposition to the Catholic teaching that the soul is actually cleansed of original sin and that the remaining inclination to sin is not sin itself, is the grounding for the teaching on justification, which declares that the soul because of the inhering darkness of sin cannot cooperate with prevenient grace and participate in its own justification, and so is dependent solely on an extrinsic, forensic justification. Good works still have value but are in no way salvific. Luther, for example, explains that no “good works contribute to making a man righteous. Like Abraham’s circumcision, they are only outward signs proving that his righteousness is contained in his faith” (Dillenberger 27). This Lutheran sola-fideism the Roman Catholic Church rejected at the Council of Trent and asserted instead in the “Decree on Justification” that one may participate in one’s own justification: “they who had been cut off from God by sin may be disposed through his quickening and helping grace to convert themselves to their own justification by freely assenting to and cooperating with that grace” (Rahner 386). The decree goes on to explain the manner of human cooperation, good works, so that “advancing from virtue to virtue […], faith cooperating with good works, [the justified] increase in that justice received through the grace of Christ (James 2:22) and are further justified,” that is, sanctified (Rahner 390–1).

* The Tempest’s representation of doctrinal disputes, its possible sympathy with Catholic teaching on Baptism and justification through Ariel’s confirmation of the good-natured Gonzalo’s claim about his garments, and antipathy

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7 The Augsburg Confession allows that works enable Christians “to exercise [their] faith, to give testimony, and to render thanks” (Art. 4). But they in no way serve one’s justification. See Tappert, 133.

8 The passage continues, asserting that, “while God touches the heart of man through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, man himself neither does absolutely nothing while receiving that inspiration, since he can also reject it, nor yet is he able by his own free will and without the grace of God to move himself to justice in his sight” (ibid.).

9 Gonzalo’s name and playfulness may also identify him with Catholicism, specifically with the Humanist movement of Erasmus and Thomas More. Gonzalo comes from the Italian gonzio, meaning “fool,” and in his wise or “merry fooling” (2.1.178) there is something of Erasmus’ In Praise of Folly. So too in his intentionally impractical commonwealth there is much of the Utopia, by a More who liked to employ a Latinate form of his name, “Morus,” a homophone for moros, the Greek for “fool.” The following is admittedly tenuous, but the joyful, jesting, chatty, and pious “good Gonzalo” (5.1.68)
toward Reformed doctrine through the unwarranted contemptuousness of Antonio and Sebastian, provides a new perspective on Ferdinand and Caliban: the former responds rightly to the condition of being in medias res, and the latter’s depravity hints at a critique of Protestant anthropology. Like the Boatswain, Ferdinand and Caliban are laborers, both in the service of Prospero, but with diametrically opposed attitudes toward their work.\(^\text{10}\) Ferdinand, who after his labors is blessed by Prospero with his daughter’s hand in marriage, because of her associates work with happiness and love: “There be some sports are painful, and their labour / Delight in them sets off. […] / [Miranda] makes my labours pleasures. […] / [S]weet thoughts [of her] do even refresh my labours / Most busilest when I do it” (3.1.1–15).\(^\text{11}\) His work is not simply an Adamic curse, as it is for Caliban after his original sin of attempted rape, but serves a higher end, love, and so is ennobling – “Some kinds of baseness / Are nobly undergone” (3.1.2–3) – even elevating, as good deeds potentially are according to Tridentine doctrine. Yet Miranda then enters to tell Ferdinand not to labor only:

\begin{quote}
Alas now, pray you,
Work not so hard. I would the lightning had
Burnt up those logs that you are enjoined to pile!
Pray set it down and rest you. When this burns,
’Twill weep for having wearied you. My father
Is hard at study; pray now, rest yourself. […]
I’ll bear your logs the while. Pray give me that; (3.1.15–20; 24, emphasis added)
\end{quote}

She encourages Ferdinand to rest, but the repetition is a reminder of something more, and he does then speak of praying (3.1.35) and offer a prayer (3.1.68), as does the hidden Prospero (3.1.75–6).\(^\text{13}\) St. Augustine, contra
Pelagius, asserted that works alone are not salvific (cf. Augustine of Hippo 1992 3–21), and The Tempest too stresses dependence on divine grace, especially through prayer. Even if there had been no interference from the royal party, the Boatswain’s efforts can only do so much, and with the ship apparently doomed Gonzalo chooses to join the “King and prince at prayers” (1.1.52), before ending the opening scene with an echo of the Lord’s Prayer (1.1.67). The mariners too turn to prayer, and to chiasmus: “All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost!” (1.1.50). In the middle of the figure is the call to prayers; likewise, the play intimates that in the middle condition of human existence, particularly in the midst of dangers, the right response is to work and especially to pray.

For Caliban work is a curse, to which he responds with cursing (1.2.322–5). New Historicist interpretations have seized upon Caliban’s cursing, not unreasonably, but maybe it can be read more largely, as his response to being cursed with Adamic toil and with depravity. Preceding Prospero’s demand for labor, preceding Caliban’s name, is an insult – “What ho, slave! Caliban, / Thou earth, thou” (1.2.314–5) – and the barrage of slurs – “poisonous slave, got by the devil himself,” “tortoise,” “Hag-seed,” “malice” (1.2.317–68) – is a kind of curse, on a supposedly irredeemable nature. Prospero’s assumption, that Caliban is “[a] devil, a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick” (4.1.188–9), operates as a potent curse, not only prompting Caliban’s impotent ones but also preventing a potentially nobler nature from being realized. Prospero errs: nurture can stick, evident in Caliban’s learning Prospero’s language, which he speaks lyrically. He possesses not only a “backward voice” that curses but also a “forward voice” that “speak[s] well,” revealing a fullness to his humanity (2.2.81–95). Caliban certainly is carnal, violently lusting after Miranda and worshipping a god, the butler, who only offers him the “butt” (3.2.1).14 His impurity is expressed through his association with unwholesome liquids, such as Stephano’s liquor, a “filthy-mantled pool” (4.1.182), “horse piss” (4.1.199), “infections […] / From bogs, fens,

The Tempest is overwhelmingly focused on the travelers’ consciousness of their creatural weakness and dependence and on their desire to overcome misfortune” (350).

14 According to J. Madison Davis and A. Daniel Frankforter, Stephano’s name may derive from Neapolitan slang for the stomach (893). In Trinculo one hears the Italian obscenity culo. But in this play that represents the redeemability of human things and the harmony of high and low, the body is not to be despised. Prospero and Miranda are saved by “providence divine” working through a “rotten carcass of a butt” (1.2.159; 146).

15 The word “mantled,” while literally referring to a covering of slime (Vaughan and Vaughan 2011, 256), also hints at a type of garment. Without a Baptism for which the white garment signifies actual cleansing, Caliban is left with a filthy mantle. In contrast, note that the Boatswain at the play’s end sounds like Gonzalo when he says that he and the mariners “in all [their] trim, freshly beheld” their ship (5.1.236). Vaughan and Vaughan suggest that “trim” refers to their garments (2011, 279).
flats” (2.2.1–2), and “wicked dew” brushed with a black feather (1.2.322–5). But maybe Caliban is smelly and filthy because after his fall from an Edenic innocence Prospero keeps him from the “fresh springs” (1.2.339). The image hearkens back to the argument about Baptism and also to Augustine’s Confessions: Prospero does not offer Caliban “the spring water of friendship” but instead leaves him in a stream muddied by “the filth of concupiscence” (Augustine of Hippo 1991 3.1). Without refreshing, cleansing waters, imprisoned in “this hard rock,” where, Caliban says, “you sty me” (1.2.331–45), the islander remains stained by sin,16 which sinfulness is reconfirmed and further encouraged by Prospero’s representation of Caliban: Prospero always sees and always makes Caliban see the latter’s iniquity so that it, like a sty, like Horatio’s “mote [...] to trouble the mind’s eye” (Hamlet 1.1.115), forever obstructs their vision. But Caliban, with his poet’s tongue and heavenly visions, is capable of more than baseness and carnality, and when offered Prospero’s forgiveness through the doing of a good work, decorating his cell – “As you look / To have my pardon, trim it handsomely” – he laments being “a thrice-double ass” and chooses to “seek for grace” (5.1.293–4; 296).

Maybe the fullness of Caliban’s humanity, his potential for elevation and degradation, can be best understood through the application of the play’s most salient word to him: Stephano says that he is a “brave monster” (2.2.183). That he is a “monster” already indicates that he is compounded of multiple elements, like the monsters of classical mythology, part human, part bestial. Stephano’s adjective also unintentionally implies duality, as does Miranda’s wonder at the people of the “brave new world” (5.1.183): they and Caliban are “splendid,” but “brave” likely derives from the Latin for “crooked,” pravus, itself the source of “depraved” (Harper).17 As would argue Calvin, Caliban is indeed depraved, “misshapen” (5.1.268), “disproportioned in his manners / As in his shape” (5.1.291–2). But not totally so. His doubleness – both depraved and brave, carnal and spiritual, base and yet capable of higher things even after his falling into sin, which is evident in his speech, his yearning for heavenly blessings, and his final choice to pursue grace and wisdom – indicates that his soul is capable of being cleansed, as was Gonzalo’s “doublet” (2.1.103). The Tempest intimates that an anthropology that does not recognize this doubleness, the “both, both” (1.2.61), that does

16 Would it be hyperbolic to suggest that the image of spots and stains is as important as any image in Shakespeare’s corpus? Those who believe that spots can never come clean are led into either error (Leonatus about his daughter Hero and Othello, Leontes, and Posthumus Leonatus about their wives), madness (Lady Macbeth, the aforementioned jealous husbands), or misery (Hamlet).

17 The Online Etymological Dictionary judges less likely Ernest Weekley’s possibility, barbarus, “in the sense of wild, indomitable” (Weekley 194), which would be applicable to the barbarian Caliban and the not always civilized Europeans.
not acknowledge the full range of human possibilities, but instead univocally expresses only one aspect of human nature, such as depravity, is erroneous.

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Having twice experienced betrayal and rapacity, for his dukedom and his daughter, Prospero is tempted to think human beings unregenerate and assume their depravity, the thought of which perturbs him. He “starts suddenly” upon remembering the drunkards’ conspiracy (4.1.139 SD) and becomes so agitated while speaking of his brother’s treachery that he is short with his ever-sympathetic daughter (cf. 1.2.78–106). So too is he irascible with the loyal Ariel, whom he accuses of ingratitude (cf. 1.2.150–1). For all his good intentions, Prospero is quick to spy, or to imagine, human failings and then fall into a tyrannical rage. Only in resisting the temptation to fixate on sin can Prospero resist the temptation to tyranny and complete his work.

While the accusations of tyranny come from a bitter (cf. 1.2.342–5) and then inebriated Caliban (cf. 2.2.159), Prospero’s behavior, and not only with his resentful slave, justifies the charge. In contrast to conversation as The Tempest’s expression of love and friendship – Prospero on giving his daughter to Ferdinand tells him “Sit then and talk with her” (4.1.32), and after forgiving his enemies he invites them to spend the evening in his cell exchanging stories – its most powerful image of tyranny is the attempt to silence another, and in this respect Prospero is as guilty as are Sebastian and Antonio. They seek to make the Boatswain’s mouth “cold” (1.1.51) through insults pertaining to speech: “A pox o’your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog”; “insolent noisemaker”; “wide-chopped rascal” (1.1.39–40; 42–43; 56). And when they attempt to silence Adrian and Gonzalo through mockery, they again object to the very act of speaking: “Fie, what a spendthrift he is of his tongue!” (2.1.26). Likewise, Prospero threatens Ariel if he “more murmur’st” (1.2.294) and objects to Miranda’s defense of Ferdinand: “Silence! One word more / Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee” (1.2.477–8). Yes, Prospero here is playing the role of tyrant, but it is one he takes on easily, and repeatedly in response to what he judges perfidy. The classical philosophers, such as Plato, identified the tyrant as the man whose inability to control his appetites led to lawlessness and aggression, but Shakespeare creates tyrants whose violence stems from an overly harsh anthropology, Richard III for example, whose hatred for his own crooked form, his literal depravity, he projects on to the world, and Leontes, whose obsession with the pervasiveness and inevitability of concupiscence leads him to imagine spots on his sheets and on his wife. Prospero, thinking on Caliban’s ugliness of mind and body, decides to “plague” him and his fellows, “[e]ven to roaring,” and sends spirit-dogs named “Fury” and “Tyrant”
ANDREW MORAN

(4.1.192–3; 257). His triumphant proclamation, “At this hour / Lies at my mercy all mine enemies” (4.1.262–3), indicates that he no less than the sinister Antonio and Sebastian and the ludicrous Stephano is in thrall to *libido dominandi*, ‘the lust for domination,’ which in *The City of God* Augustine identifies as the most pervasive and vicious form of concupiscence.18 Prospero, of course, does aim at noble ends and does reject tyranny. From his first lines he promises that no harm will be done (cf. 1.2.15) and seeks after not only his daughter’s happiness but also the spiritual regeneration of his enemies through penitence and amendment (cf. 3.3.81–2). But before he finally forgives them he undergoes a *psychomachia* during which his good intentions are at variance with his tyrannical rage when oppressed by thoughts of sin. He only achieves peace of soul, and brings such peace to others, by recommitting himself to his original plan of mercy after Ariel reminds him of “the good old Lord Gonzalo” and Prospero’s own humanity (5.1.15–20). The example of human goodness, paired with the numerous examples of viciousness, reminds Prospero of the range and middling condition of human nature, which range he can see even in his own ability then to choose “virtue” rather than “vengeance” (5.1.28). Prospero’s *psychomachia* ends with his affirming a more optimistic assessment of human possibilities – again, an assessment corresponding to Roman Catholic and not Reformed anthropology. Now he can complete his good work, the right ordering of souls through the staging of spectacles, but for him, as for the mariners during the storm, work alone is not salvific, and he ends in prayer:

And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardoned be,
Let your indulgence set me free. (Epilogue 15–20)19

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Prospero will again be the duke of Milan, or to use its Latin name, *Mediolanum* – the city ‘in the middle of the plain.’ Prospero gives up his seemingly divine powers to accept the middling condition of human nature and return to Milan, a quotidian middle stage in his journey from the semi-numinous island to his namesake Proserpina’s kingdom, to the grave (cf.

18 John Cox also finds this phrase applicable to the play, for him in Antonio and Stephano’s shared immediate thought on seeing Caliban to exploit him (84–5).
19 Richard Wilson judges the epilogue “the most positive affirmation ever made on the English Renaissance stage of the Catholic belief in the power of intercessory prayer to the Saints and Virgin” (206).
5.1.312). There is another source for the protagonist’s name, one that points to the philosophical and theological teachings – including the claim that time is an intermediate state – informing *The Tempest*. Though little recognized, the connections between the play’s themes and the writings of St. Prosper of Aquitaine, the first prominent disciple of St. Augustine, are striking. His poem *On The Providence of God* explains that though the present time is a “tempest of evils,” God works through time to make “whatever is harmful become beneficial” (1989 5; 11). Prosper’s account of providence accords with what Prospero teaches Miranda (cf. 1.2.59–63; 159) and with what Alonso, Ferdinand, and Gonzalo proclaim when their sufferings on the island culminate in joy (cf. 5.1.178–9; 189; 201–4). In light of Caliban’s ultimate desire for grace, Prosper’s *The Call of All Nations*, which considers in part whether the barbarians are open to grace and salvation, seems relevant:

> there are in the remotest parts of the world some nations who have not yet seen the light of the grace of the Saviour. But we have no doubt that in God’s hidden judgment, for them also a time of calling has been appointed, when they will hear and accept the Gospel which now remains unknown to them. Even now they receive that measure of general help which heaven has always bestowed on all men. (1952, 121)

Prosper is best known for a specific phrase, “*lex orandi, lex credendi*” (loosely, ‘the law of prayer is the law of belief’), which too is pertinent to a play in which prayers as well as curses express deepest beliefs and which ends with Prospero’s claim about the necessity of prayer. In the history of Christianity, however, Prosper of Aquitaine is most important as the layman who popularized Augustine’s doctrine of grace and “devoted a major part of his life to defending and spreading Augustine’s teachings,” through works such as *The Defense of St. Augustine* and through versifying extracts of his writings (McHugh 685–6).

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20 So far as I know, only a two page article by Joan Barbara Gorin has treated the character’s relation to the theologian. I disagree with her assertion that Prospero’s offer of forgiveness is not related to good works (cf. 5.1.294), but find valuable her connection between Prospero’s universal forgiveness and the theologian’s abandonment of Augustinian predestination for a view of God’s redemptive will as universal.

21 The full passage is from Article 8 of the “Official Pronouncements of the Apostolic See on Divine Grace and Free Will”: “Let us next look also at the sacred prayers which in keeping with the apostolic tradition our priests offer after one norm the world over in every Catholic church. Let the rule of prayer lay down the rule of faith” (Prosper of Aquitaine 1963, 183). Kenneth Marchetti in a graduate seminar at the University of Dallas’s Rome Campus, June 2010, suggested the relevance of this phrase.
The lay poet Shakespeare is not versifying extracts but throughout *The Tempest* he draws on Augustine’s insights. Distinctly Augustinian are the play’s treatments of the lust for domination, prayer, Baptism, and intermedia, as well as large topics beyond the scope of this essay but worth noting, such as memory (the subject of book ten of *The Confessions*) and charity. The latter, for example, for Augustine the very end of human action, is Prospero’s aim too, as he establishes bonds of amity to unite former enemies. Only the remembrance of Gonzalo’s charity, George Slover argues, inspires Prospero to complete the charitable plan he had intended originally. Even Stephano’s drunken malapropism affirms this principle: “Every man shift for all the rest, and let no man take care for himself, for all is but fortune” (5.1.256–7). Love inspires Ferdinand’s prayers and labors, and its absence provokes Caliban’s curses and sloth.

*The Tempest* emphasizes *ora et labora* and connects them, such as in the Boatswain’s seemingly insignificant “I pray now” (1.1.11) when he tells Alonso not to interfere with his work. Indeed, the paradoxical juxtaposition of human dependence and human activity, the sense that providence guides the affairs of men and yet at the same time human works are decisive, yet another ‘both, both,’ is one of *The Tempest*’s most striking notes, maybe more noticeable in it than in any other great work of Western literature. Augustine too supposedly linked prayer and work – ‘pray as if everything depends on God, work as if everything depends on you’ – though the adage cannot be found in any of his works and has a semi-Pelagian flavor. The dispute between Augustine and Pelagius began with the former’s insistence on the necessity of prayer, and it is in the final turn to prayer in the epilogue that the playwright, like another Prosper, seems most indebted to the theologian. Though the spots have been washed away, as Gonzalo had argued, Augustine explains that prayer is still necessary:

> For who among us denies that the sins of all men have been remitted through baptism and that all the faithful arise without spot or wrinkle from the bath of regeneration. [...] It is now being brought about by God’s mercy and truth that the holy Church is being led to that perfect state in which it is to remain for eternity without spot and wrinkle [...]. But between the baptismal waters, through which all past spots and wrinkles are removed, and the Kingdom in which the Church will remain forever without spot or wrinkle, there is this intermediate time

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22 James Walter also discerns the influence of Augustine. *The Tempest* draws from the *Confessions* to provide “an allegory of the interpretive process” (61), while revising “Augustine’s more abstract reflections on the work of Providence in human life” (62).

23 Robert Hapgood also finds Stephano’s bumbling significant: “he has stumbled into a fine summary of the spirit of fellowship that inspires the finale” (433).

24 Patrick Grant argues that Ferdinand’s courtship of Miranda represents the triumph of an Augustinian sense of charity, allied with chastity, over cupidity.
In medias res, at work and prayer: Augustine and *The Tempest*

The *Tempest*’s stress on the transitoriness of earthly existence and fleeting images of a life beyond it establish an Augustinian sense of “intermediate time.” Through speech (Gonzalo’s golden age and Caliban’s dream) and performance (Ariel’s banquet and Prospero’s masque), the audience briefly is reminded of and even imaginatively experiences a world of joy and justice, peace and plenty, as if the loftiest human desires could indeed be satisfied. But of course they aren’t: “with a quaint device the banquet vanishes” (3.3.52 SD). Caliban wakes up to servitude; Prospero remembers the conspiracy; Antonio and Sebastian laugh at the obvious impracticability of Gonzalo’s commonwealth. But his description of an ideal society is not “an idle pastime” and his claim of “merry fooling” not “a face-saving strategy (a lame attempt at *sprezzatura*)” (Hunt 166). Rather, the wise fool deliberately presents to his audience a vision of things that is “nothing,” that does not correspond to this world, to “minister occasion” (2.1.174) to them, to allow them to laugh, yes, but also to speculate on the existence of something outside their quotidian existence. It is a secular vision of unspoiled nature drawn from Montaigne, but Antonio and Sebastian’s unchecked assumption that there will be no marriage (2.1.166–7) hints at Matthew 22:30, Jesus’ assertion that in the Resurrection there will be no marrying nor giving in marriage. Likewise, Prospero’s famous revels speech, which Stephen Greenblatt rightly characterizes as a “sublime vision of emptiness” (145), not only serves to nullify the richness of the masque but also proclaims that temporal existence is a nothing, and so allows the possibility that, by contrast, that which is outside time is the true something wherein one would find the vision of fullness. The passage is often read as nihilistic, and certainly the consciousness of ephemerality may be a premise for skepticism. But that is not the case for Augustine nor, I argue, in the play. Rather, Prospero’s reflections on “this insubstantial pageant” (4.1.155), the other visionary speeches, the staging of theophanies, and especially Prospero’s prayer and preparation for death cumulatively make present, though not abiding and definable, a sense of eternity. This is not to say that *The Tempest* is radically otherworldly. After his vision of emptiness, Prospero returns to his plan to provide for his daughter’s happiness and reestablish himself in Milan, though his contempt for Caliban’s depravity and maybe too his troubled contemplation of mutability initially make him fierce. That passes when he forgives his enemies, and during the subsequent joy of the reunion Alonso and Gonzalo utter blessings and praises from within the holy circle that meet with the response “amen” (5.1.204), Alonso’s heightened by the preceding literal rendering “Be it so” (5.1.215). Their response is from the liturgy, at which, according to the traditional understanding, heaven and earth are one. This too passes, with the
arrival of the Master and Boatswain and then Caliban and his confederates, yet unlike the previous liminal moments, which ended abruptly and discordantly, this time the joy abides. The audience is gently returned to Augustine’s intermediate time after Baptism, back to a world of sin and death but also goodness and grace, and so potentially a foretaste of Augustine’s “Kingdom” (Augustine of Hippo 1992 139).

The play’s geography also points to an Augustinian and more generally Christian eschatology. While “the scholarly consensus [is] that the most important books this play echoes were written by Virgil, Ovid, Montaigne, and Strachey” (Mowat 28), Augustine’s *Confessions* is more influential than any of these in its informing the play’s anthropology and theology, which find expression in the movement between *The Tempest’s* various cities. In part because of the references to Carthage and Italy, much has been made of *The Tempest’s* Virgilian echoes. But *The Aeneid* ends tragically, in a nascent imperial city without love, bound only by law and duty, if that, as even the seeming Stoic exemplar Aeneas proves himself incapable of governing violent passions. There is no possibility of change but at best control, whereas Augustine’s *Confessions*, like *The Tempest*, is a story of transformation into a new life and of continued journeying. The additional travels in the play, such as Prospero’s to Milan, Augustine’s city of conversion, and his preparation for an expected final journey to the grave, overlay an Augustinian and Christian map on the Virgilian and pagan one. Christian hope supplants *The Aeneid’s* pagan pessimism. Both *The Aeneid* and *The Confessions* tell of journeys from North Africa to Italy, but it is Augustine, not Aeneas, who also travels from Italy to North Africa, as does the royal party for Claribel’s wedding to Tunis. Everything in the play, including the drenching of their garments, follows from that southerly, downward movement. It is an image of the Incarnation: *Clear Beauty* marries *Twoness*, God to a human nature which the play continually represents as twofold. Sebastian complains that the princess marries an African (2.1.126), but since the time of the Church Fathers black characters in the Bible, especially the black Bride in the Song of Solomon, have been read as types of the Church and of the soul redeemed by Baptism (cf. Devisse 149–205). That Claribel’s spouse is of Tunis is doubly suggestive because “[t]his Tunis, sir, was Carthage” (2.1.84). Renaissance allegorists, such as Cristoforo Landino, had interpreted *The Aeneid’s* Carthage

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25 Origen, for example, writes that the beautiful black Bride has “drawn near to him who is the image of God, the first-born of all creation, the radiance of God’s glory and the perfect copy of his nature,” and, as Devisse explains, she has been made beautiful, even white, through the light shed by the spiritual Sun, whatever her appearance (cf. 15–6). Ambrose reads the apostle John, reclining on the Lord’s breast (John 13:23), as himself like the Bride: his flesh has become black from the dust of the world picked up during the struggle against sin, but his soul has been made beautiful because of Baptism, which “removes the blackness of sin” (27).
- Augustine’s “cauldron of illicit loves” (Augustine of Hippo 1991 3.1) – as emblematic of the concupiscent soul (cf. Hamilton 30). But in the play the fallen human soul becomes something new, just as the old Carthage gives way to Tunis, the new city, and is not merely saved by grace, as the Reformers would put it, but sacramentally transformed, suffering “a sea-change / Into something rich and strange” (1.2.401–2). Even the most bestial of men, Caliban, “the thing of darkness” (5.1.275), is transfigured.26

The Tempest begins with the characters coming from somewhere, the marriage of Tunis and Claribel. And it ends with them going somewhere. Again, intermediacy and indeterminacy should not be conflated; there is a terminus for the characters. It is back in Italy, but the characters and audience, still in the middle state of movement and expectation, do not experience that time of completion, though through the joyful reunion may have some incomplete sense of it. In considering the play’s representation of Reformation-era religious controversy I have been led into an even more embarrassingly retrograde allegorical reading than first intended, one that coincidentally corresponds to the first two of the three ‘spiritual’ levels of a text according to typological exegesis. Augustine was the first master in the Western church of this method which Dante explained in his famous letter to Can Grande. The first two levels pertain to Baptism and good works: the allegorical (in the narrowest sense of that term), having to do with redemption done by Christ, as through Baptism, for example; and the tropological, having to do with a person’s works during “the conversion of the soul from the struggle and misery of sin to the state of grace” (Capozzi 41). Maybe the play’s unrepresented terminus, Naples, from the Greek Neapolis, can best be understood according to the third sense, the anagogical, having to do with the final state of the soul enjoying “the liberty of eternal glory” (Dante Alighieri 347–8). As in the Book of Revelation, the wedding feast is to take place in the New City.

26 Matthew Mehan in a graduate seminar at the University of Dallas, May 2009, suggested that Ariel’s tabor (3.2.124; 152; 4.1.175) is a reminder of Mount Tabor, the site of the Transfiguration.
Works Cited


