The Tempest

AP Language and Composition - Notes
Act 2:1- Character development

◆ Alonso (king) – grief for son
◆ Gonzalo – utopia – wants king’s power, also positive outlook on situation
◆ Antonia & Sebastian – unpleasant & arrogant
◆ Use of illusion – reality/dream/magic
Act 2:2

Caliban

◆ Represents nature, not touched by man’s society’s confines (instinct, not reason)
◆ Fears & hates Prospero

Stefano & Trinculo

◆ Lowest of human nature
◆ Opportunists
◆ British exhibited American Indians for $
Low Comedy

- Slapstick = actions, not words
- Trinculo dressed as clown, rode storm in wine cask, drunkenness
- Light humor
Act 3:1

Prospero’s rules

- Ruler of island
- Ferdinand (prince) hauls logs like slave
- Miranda – can’t speak to Ferdinand
- Loving father – opposes love for show (watched loves, Godlike)
Contrast

- Love as bridge between comedic scenes
- Ferdinand (willing) & Caliban (unwilling), both labor

Reconciliation

- Miranda & Ferdinand act with honor – can bring about reconciliation with fathers
Act 3:2

Nature vs. Civilization

• Caliban & Gonzalo’s natural utopias

Parallel murder plots

• Caliban – Prospero – help Stefano & Trinculo
• Antonio – Alonso – help Sebastian
• Both ignore logic/reason – no gains

Character contradictions – Caliban

• Brutal murder vs. poetic descriptions of island
Act 3:3

Climax of Prospero’s plans
• denouncement of Antonio’s plans

Ariel
• Freedom at end, behavior (willingness) contrasts with Caliban

Reality/illusion (magical feast, harpy)
Act 4:1

- **Masque** – Goddesses of Greek and Roman mythology
- Nature, fertility, eternal spring – love
- Iris – goddess of rainbow, spring rains = bountiful harvest, symbol = winged boots
- Juno (Queen of Roman god Jupiter, Greek = Hera, queen to Zeus) – marriage & childbirth, peacock & cow = symbols
- Ceres – nature’s blessing (Greek – Demeter – agriculture worshiped by farmers, transitions between life and death)
- Venus – love & sex (excluded), honorable marriage (Greek = Aphrodite – born in sea)
Masque Continued

• Redemption (betrothal – announcement/promise), wedding, consummation
• Pastoral Tradition
  • Peace/simplicity of rural life, contemplative life, reapers & nymphs, green land, full harvest, idealized (no hardships, irony – many hardships)
• Dream/reality
  • Life, like a masque, must end
  • Fathers, adults too much earthly possessions (kids with marriage = redemption)
Origins of Masque

- **Point of contact**
  - Monarch (Queen Elizabeth) & the people
  - Queen presented as presiding over a country festival
- **Carnivals** (masks worn) – developed into an elaborate court scene during Jacobean period (also to promote political policies of James I, flattery of monarch)
- **May Queen** – myth of holiday solidarity (political ideology of national unity)
- **Themes** of virginity & purity in marriage (anxieties of succession), later queen as remote & idealized goddess
Prospero – humanity

• Character’s true nature = good
• doesn’t harm physically Caliban, Stefano, Trinculo
  - just their pride is harmed
Conclusion of *The Tempest*

- **New world** connected w/golden age & Garden of Eden
- **Natural characters:**
  - Caliban – can’t be educated
  - Ariel – fluid elements (water & air)
  - Miranda – Golden Age – educated, but hasn’t lost innocence
• **Social Rank** = moral obligation
  - Antonio’s crime – worse
  - Caliban’s crime – almost excusable

• **Pairs of characters**
  - Prospero/Alonso – sovereigns & fathers
  - Prospero/Ariel or Sycorax – magic
  - Ferdinand/Miranda – Lovers
  - Antonio/Sebastian – Plots
  - Stephano/Trinculo – Plots
  - Caliban/Ariel – Magic/servants
• **Theme** – imagery of tempest, sea, natural noise, music – to show connects between order & disorder

• **Effect of wonder** – tragicomedy, pastoral, romance, masque

• **Prospero’s Epilogue**
  - Shakespeare’s break w/writing
  - Prospero’s comment on relations between art & life