

**Zeitschrift:** SPELL : Swiss papers in English language and literature  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Association of University Teachers of English  
**Band:** 31 (2015)

**Artikel:** Intervention in The Tempest  
**Autor:** Morgan, Oliver  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-583900>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 10.12.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

# Intervention in *The Tempest*

Oliver Morgan

This essay revisits a textual crux from 1.2 of *The Tempest*. From the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth, editors felt it necessary to reassign one of Miranda's longest speeches – an angry tirade at the “abhorred slave” Caliban – to her father, Prospero. In the last fifty years this intervention has come to seem both textually unwarranted and ideologically suspect. Rather than trying to rehabilitate the emendation, I try to explain what prompted it. My claim is not that the eighteenth century editors were right, but that we have not paid sufficient attention to why they were wrong. Miranda's speech is itself an intervention in her father's correction of Caliban – an intervention that I attempt to locate in two kinds of context. The first is primarily formal – the interactional shape of the scene in which the crux occurs, and the interactional habits of the characters involved. The second is more culturally grounded. The play presents Prospero as a kind of pedagogue. As well as seeing Miranda as his daughter and Caliban as his slave, we should see them both as his pupils.

The long second scene of *The Tempest* contains a notorious textual crux. Prospero has just summoned Caliban, who comes on cursing and complaining. This island, he claims, is rightfully his. When Prospero first arrived, he made much of Caliban – stroking him, feeding him, and teaching him to speak. Caliban loved his new master, and showed him all the qualities of the isle. Now he is made a slave, confined to a hard rock, and tormented at night by pinches. Or so he claims. Prospero responds to this bitter narrative with anger. The reason for Caliban's subjection, he insists, is that he attempted to rape Miranda – until which time he had been treated as one of the family. The monster makes no attempt to deny it. If only he had been successful, he gleefully remarks, he could have peopled the island with Calibans.

*Drama and Pedagogy in Medieval and Early Modern England*. SPELL: Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature 31. Ed. Elisabeth Dutton and James McBain. Tübingen: Narr, 2015. 211-226.

It is at this point that the crux occurs. Caliban's gloating elicits the following response:

Abhorred Slaue,  
Which any print of goodnesse wilt not take,  
Being capable of all ill: I pittied thee,  
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each houre  
One thing or other: when thou didst not (Sauage)  
Know thine owne meaning; but wouldst gabble, like  
A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes  
With words that made them knowne: But thy vild race  
(Tho thou didst learn) had that in't, which good natures  
Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou  
Deseruedly confin'd into this Rocke, who hadst  
Deseru'd more then a prison. (TLN 492-503, 1.2.353-64)<sup>1</sup>

The question at issue is who speaks these words – Prospero or Miranda. The only substantive text of the play, the First Folio (1623), gives them to Miranda, as do the three subsequent folios (1632, 1663/4, 1685), as does Shakespeare's first known editor, Nicholas Rowe (1709), and his second, Alexander Pope (1725). But from the middle of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth, editors felt compelled to intervene, reassigning the speech from Miranda to Prospero. The first major editor to buck this trend was Horace Howard Furness in 1892, and the last to follow it George Kittredge, in 1939. Since Kittredge, editors and critics have been unanimous in Miranda's favour, although the lines are still often reassigned in performance.<sup>2</sup> The basic pattern of the controversy is not unusual – many emendations made in the eighteenth century were handed down unchallenged until the twentieth. But the result of such challenges is usually a greater awareness of the instability of the text, not the establishment of a new orthodoxy. What makes this particular emendation interesting is that editors are as certain now that the speech should not be reassigned as they once were that it should.

---

<sup>1</sup> All quotations from Shakespeare are from the First Folio unless otherwise stated. Citations refer to both the through line numbers (TLN) in Charlton Hinman's *Norton Facsimile*, and to the act, scene and line numbers in Wells and Taylor's *Oxford Complete Works*. When a quarto is cited, a signature is given in place of the TLN.

<sup>2</sup> As, for example, by Peter Brook in 1957 (with John Gielgud as Prospero), Ron Daniels in 1982 (Derek Jacobi), and Silviu Purcारेte in 1996. For a comprehensive survey of the performance history of the speech (and the play) see Dymkowski (164n).

My purpose in this essay is not to re-open this debate, but to re-describe it. My claim is not that the eighteenth century editors were right, but that we have not paid sufficient attention to why they were wrong. The urge to intervene does not come from nowhere, but where exactly it does come from is not always clear – even to the editor who acts on it. Like all readers, editors can often hear more in a text than they are able to explain. The intuition comes first – the text must be corrupt here – and the explanation after. The explanation may be unconvincing but it does not follow from this that the editor is simply imagining things. There may still be a basis for his intuition. Textual cruces often locate something important in the text that is only half-articulated in the debate which surrounds them. Before explaining exactly what I think it is that editors have heard in Miranda's lines – and what that has to do with early modern pedagogy – it is worth reviewing arguments on both sides of the question.

The case for intervention was first made by Lewis Theobald in a footnote of 1733:

In all the printed Editions this Speech is given to *Miranda*: but I am persuaded, the Author never design'd it for her. In the first Place, 'tis probable, *Prospero* taught *Caliban* to speak, rather than left that Office to his Daughter: in the next Place, as *Prospero* was here rating *Caliban*, it would be a great Impropriety for her to take the Discipline out of his hands; and, indeed, in some sort, an Indecency in her to reply to what *Caliban* last was speaking of. (I, 18n)

He gives three reasons for reassigning the speech, two of which have been seized upon by later editors, one of which has not. The first reason has to do with teaching. The speaker of the disputed lines claims to have taken pains to endow Caliban's purposes with words. That Miranda had at least some hand in his education is clear from what Caliban later says to Stephano about his "Mistris" having shown him the man in the moon (TLN 1184-5, 2.2.139-40).<sup>3</sup> That she could have been his teacher at a time when he did not know his own meaning and would "gabble, like | A thing most brutish," however, is less clear. This lack of clarity has opened the way to a lengthy debate about the chronology of events before the start of the play. One side insists that Miranda, not yet three when she arrived on the island, "could hardly have been competent so

---

<sup>3</sup> The point was first made by John Holt in a letter to Samuel Johnson, who includes it in the appendix to his edition (X, sig. Hh6v – curiously, the appendix has no page numbers).

early” to teach Caliban to speak (Furness 73n). The other maintains that “later on – by age 10 or so – she could have introduced him to European words and ideas that Prospero had recently taught her” (Vaughan and Vaughan 135). A third position, adopted by Frank Kermode, is that any such quibbling is misguided, since it fails to take account of Shakespeare’s “habitual disregard for this kind of immediate probability” (32n).

Theobald’s second reason for reassigning the speech – the “Impropriety” of Miranda taking the discipline out of her father’s hands – has been largely ignored, primarily, I want to suggest, because it has been conflated with his third – that it would be “an Indecency” for Miranda to respond to a remark about rape. Current critical consensus sees Miranda as more “sexually aware than early editors seemed to prefer” (Vaughan and Vaughan 135). Theobald and his followers are “discomfited by harsh words in Miranda’s supposedly tender mouth” (Lyne 107), their objections having more to do with their own preconceived ideas about femininity than they do with Shakespeare’s play. The reassignment of the “abhorred slave” speech has come to be seen as a classic example of an ideologically motivated textual intervention – the silencing of an unacceptably outspoken young woman by a male editorial tradition.<sup>4</sup>

As a characterisation of the attitudes prevalent amongst eighteenth and nineteenth century editors of Shakespeare, this may well be accurate. As a reading of Theobald’s footnote, it is not. Miranda’s outburst is surprising not only because of what she says, but when she says it. It is Prospero who is rating Caliban, and Prospero to whom Caliban is complaining. Miranda intervenes in this exchange by replying on her father’s behalf to what Caliban has just said – not to her but to him. Rather than take “the discipline out of his hands” she takes the words out of his mouth. As well as speaking out, she is speaking out of turn. The question of what it means for her to do this – or for an editor to stop her from doing it – remains open. But the fact that she does it is a matter of dialogical structure, not ideological prejudice.

Intervention, in this sense, is an example of what I want to call a *figure of dialogue* – an interactional pattern every bit as recognisable, and every bit as versatile, as a figure of speech. What distinguishes the two types of figure is that figures of dialogue can only occur in situations

---

<sup>4</sup> For other ideologically loaded textual cruces in *The Tempest*, see Leah Marcus (5-17) on the “blew ey’d hag” Sycorax, and Ronald Tumulson on “Ferdinand’s Wife and Prospero’s Wise.”

involving more than one potential speaker. They occur, that is, across and between the speech of several characters, rather than within the speech of one. Aposiopesis, for example, is a figure of speech – a sentence can be left unfinished even by a hermit, sitting alone in a cave. Interruption, on the other hand, is a figure of dialogue – it takes two. The figure I am calling *intervention* takes at least three. *A* addresses a remark to *B*, but *C* rather than *B* speaks next – *C* intervenes between *A*'s remark and a projected reply from *B*.<sup>5</sup> The significance of this apparently mundane pattern will depend on who *A*, *B* and *C* are, what they are saying to one another, under what circumstances, and so on, but the pattern itself is a formal feature of the dialogue.

What makes it significant at all – what makes it an intervention rather than simply a sequence of three speakers – is that address is the most basic means by which people nominate one another to speak.<sup>6</sup> We might think of address, in this sense, as an act of linguistic pointing – it helps us identify whose turn it is to speak next. I use the word “nominate” rather than “select” because addressing someone does not guarantee that person possession of the floor (any more than passing to someone guarantees them possession of the football). But the addressee of the current turn is at least the default speaker of the next. In the absence of a reason to do otherwise, it is to the addressee that we look for a response. To intervene, on the other hand, is to speak without having been pointed at. It is to take a turn at talk, like another slice of cake, without having been offered it – not rude necessarily, but risky amongst people you do not know well.

Before returning to the potential impropriety of Miranda's intervention, I want to look – briefly – at a couple of other examples. Here is Falstaff, intervening between King Henry and the rebel Worcester:

*Wor.* Heare me, my Liege:

For mine owne part, I could be well content

To entertaine the Lagge-end of my life

With quiet houres: For I do protest,

I haue not sought the day of this dislike.

*King.* You haue not sought it: how comes it then?

*Fal.* Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it.

*Prin.* Peace, Chewet, peace.

---

<sup>5</sup> Conversation analysts use the term “self-selection” to mean something very similar (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 704).

<sup>6</sup> On address in conversation, see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (716-18); Lerner (177-201); and Hayashi (168-73).



*Wor.* It pleas'd your Maiesty, to turne your lookes  
Of Fauour, from my Selfe, and all our House (TLN 2659-68, 5.1.22-31)

This intervention is clearly improper, as the prince's reaction shows. What makes it so clear is that the king both addresses Worcester and asks him a question – specifies who should speak next, and specifies the kind of thing he should say.<sup>7</sup> The king is also the king. His interactional wishes, like his wishes more generally, should be respected. The comedy of Falstaff's answer lies partly in his sarcastic dismissal of any explanation Worcester might give, and partly in the audaciousness of his speaking so flagrantly out of turn.

Compare Gertrude, intervening – equally publically – between her husband and her son:

*King.* [. . .] for your intent  
In going back to schoole in *Wittenberg*,  
It is most retrogard to our desire,  
And we beseech you bend you to remaine  
Heere in the cheare and comfort of our eye,  
Our chieftest courtier, cosin, and our sonne.  
*Quee.* Let not thy mother loose her prayers *Hamlet*,  
I pray thee stay with vs, goe not to *Wittenberg*.  
*Ham.* I shall in all my best obay you Madam.  
*King.* Why tis a louing and a faire reply. (Q2, sig. C1r, 1.2.112-21)

Rather than being improper, this is supremely tactful. Gertrude simultaneously relieves Hamlet of the obligation to reply to Claudius, and averts the risk that he will do so impertinently. Both men are able to save face – Hamlet because he is obeying his mother rather than his uncle, Claudius because Hamlet does as he is told. She steps between them in the dialogue like a barman stepping between two drunks in a pub – positioning herself as a conversational buffer to prevent the two men from coming to blows.

Notice too how the two examples differ. Falstaff replies to the previous speaker, albeit sarcastically, in place of the person who has just been addressed. Gertrude continues where the previous speaker left off, directing what she says to the same addressee. Falstaff's intervention substitutes for a reply, Gertrude's for a continuation. In both cases *A*

---

<sup>7</sup> In conversation analytic terms, he produces the “first pair part” of an adjacency pair (Schegloff 13) – an act of address combined with a “sequence initiating action” (in this case the asking of a question).

addresses *B* and *C* speaks next, but in one case *C* speaks to *A*, and in the other to *B*. Other permutations are of course possible (*C* can address both *A* and *B*, or neither, or can leave what he or she says ambiguously unaddressed), but I think the point is made. An intervention need not be improper. It can be an act of rescue or an act of aggression, ostentatious or tactful, momentous or trivial. It can relieve someone of the obligation to speak, make it easier for them to do so, or deny them the opportunity altogether. Figures of dialogue, like figures of speech, are “polysemous” (Vickers 307).

Any attempt to determine the propriety of Miranda’s intervention – and thus the likelihood that the text is corrupt – will therefore need to locate it in some sort of context. I want to look at two sorts, both of which seem to me to have been overlooked. The first is primarily formal – the interactional shape of the scene in which the intervention occurs, and the interactional habits of the characters involved. The second is more culturally grounded, and thus more speculative. What I want to suggest is that the interactional patterns of the scene self-consciously invoke those of the early modern schoolroom – that Miranda is Prospero’s pupil as well as his daughter.

In formal terms, then, the disputed turn is the ninety-third since Miranda and Prospero entered the stage over three hundred and fifty lines ago. Forty-six of the preceding ninety-two turns have been spoken by Prospero, the other forty-six have been spoken to him. There has been a strict alternation, that is, between *A* and *B* – where *A* is Prospero and *B* is any one of the other three inhabitants of the island. In this time Prospero has conversed with all three of them, but they have not said a single word to each other. The “abhorred slave” speech breaks this pattern. Instead of *ABAB* we have *ABCB* – instead of *Prospero-other-Prospero-other* we have *Prospero-other-Miranda-other*. It’s the dialogical equivalent of a false rhyme after a hundred lines of neat heroic couplets.

Add a little flesh to the interactional bones, and things become clearer still. The scene opens with an exchange between Prospero and Miranda, in which he assures her that no one was harmed in the making of the tempest she has just witnessed, and explains, at some length, how they first came to be marooned on the island. Prospero then puts his daughter to sleep and summons Ariel, from whom he receives a report on the shipwreck and to whom he issues instructions. When he has finished with this he wakes Miranda and continues chatting, with Ariel periodically popping in and out for further reporting and further instruction. Then Prospero calls for Caliban, who enters, as we know, cursing and complaining. The other three characters take turns to interact with



Prospero, and they do so at his bidding – he summons and dismisses them, puts them to sleep and wakes them up. He is the single centre of both the action and the dialogue. Miranda, Ariel, and Caliban rotate around him like planets around a star. They do so, that is, until the moment of the crux. When Miranda addresses Caliban, Prospero is for the first time side-lined – excluded (albeit momentarily) from the axis of speaker and addressee, a dialogical bystander rather than a participant. It is the breaking of this pattern, I want to suggest, as much as anything Miranda actually says to Caliban, that caused Lewis Theobald to reach for his red pen.

At the moment of its occurrence, then, the intervention comes as a surprise. But this is not the only time in the play, or the scene, that Miranda intervenes between her father and another character. She does so again when Prospero unjustly accuses Ferdinand of plotting to usurp him (TLN 607-40, 1.2.456-80). Stephen Orgel is one of several critics to have drawn a parallel between the two exchanges. The “decidedly active Miranda [. . .] who energetically defends Ferdinand,” he suggests, would be equally capable of an energetic attack on Caliban (*Tempest* 17). Editors who deny her the “abhorred slave” speech are refusing to recognise “an important aspect of her nature” (*Tempest* 120n). But what he calls an “aspect of [Miranda’s] nature” is really a habit of speech. She is “active” in both exchanges in the sense that she speaks without waiting to be spoken to. The source of the “energy” (*Tempest* 120n) Orgel identifies can be located more precisely in the recurrence of a dialogical pattern.

An awareness of Miranda’s interventions as formal features of the text also enables us to make some distinctions. She intervenes three times on Ferdinand’s behalf – twice when the preferred next speaker is her father, and once when it is her future husband. On the first two occasions (612, 627) she adds something to a reply that Ferdinand has already given, glossing the young man’s behaviour in an attempt to influence how Prospero will interpret it (“nothing ill, can dwell in such a Temple,” “Hee’s gentle, and not fearfull”). On the third occasion (634) she changes tack. Rather than comment retrospectively on something Ferdinand has just said, Miranda speaks first – stepping into the firing line to plead with her father directly (“Beseech you Father”). All three examples differ from her attack on Caliban because what she says is addressed to Prospero. The old man remains at the dialogical centre of the scene, the object of both Ferdinand’s challenges and Miranda’s appeals. Despite the similarity of the two exchanges, the “abhorred slave” speech remains unique. It is the only time in the play that Miranda side-lines her father in this way, the only time she addresses anyone other than him or

Ferdinand, and the only time that one of Prospero's three fellow islanders directly addresses another.<sup>8</sup>

Having located Miranda's intervention in the context of a wider dialogical pattern, I want to try to locate that pattern in the context of a wider cultural practice. Prospero has, as Lynn Enterline puts it, "a grammar school master's penchant for instructing (and dominating) his pupils" (174).<sup>9</sup> But what he teaches them is history rather than grammar. His text is a narrative, authored by himself, explaining how life on the island came to be ordered in just the way it is – including how he came to be teacher.

Sit still, and heare the last of our sea-sorrow:  
 Heere in this Iland we arriu'd, and heere  
 Haue I, thy Schoolemaster, made thee more profit  
 Then other Princesse can, that haue more time  
 For vainer howres; and Tutors, not so carefull. (TLN 280-4, 1.2.171-5)

As well as seeing Miranda as his daughter and Caliban as his slave, the play encourages us to see them both as Prospero's pupils. To understand what it means for her to intervene in the way she does, we need to understand what it would mean for an early modern schoolboy to do likewise. And to understand that, we need to know something about the interactional patterns characteristic of the early modern schoolroom.

This is not quite as easy as it sounds. The question of who speaks when is not of central concern in the pedagogical literature of the period, although it is sometimes touched on in discussion of larger issues.<sup>10</sup> One exception is John Brinsley's *Ludus Literarius: Or, the Grammar Schoole* (1612) – a handbook "Intended for the helping of the younger sort of Teachers" (sig. ¶1r). Brinsley provides a detailed account of a

---

<sup>8</sup> There are two marginal cases. First, Caliban curses Miranda, along with Prospero, at TLN 459-62 (1.2.323-6). This is marginal because, although Miranda is included as part of a plural addressee, her father is not excluded. Secondly, Ariel addresses Caliban at TLN 1414 (3.2.62) but not in his own voice. Instead, he impersonates Trinculo to make the monster believe he has been insulted.

<sup>9</sup> Other studies to have explored the pedagogical side of the play include Moncrieff and Carey-Webb. Rupert Goold's 2006 production for the Royal Shakespeare Company presented the opening section of 1.2 as a lesson. Miranda "sat in tense anticipation, knees together, back straight, hands clasped" speaking to her father "only after thrusting her hand into the air and waiting for permission to proceed" (Moncrieff 127).

<sup>10</sup> Issues such as the nature and foundation of the schoolmaster's authority, for example, the rights and wrongs of beating, and the difficulty of ensuring that schoolboys speak Latin. See Burrow, Enterline, and Bushnell (23-72) for useful surveys.

centrally important early modern pedagogical technique known as “poasing” or, less frequently, “apposing.”<sup>11</sup> Put simply, to pose a student is ask him a series of questions. Much of the schoolmaster’s expertise lies in his ability to distil difficult material into simple sets of questions and answers. According to Brinsley, “The moe the questions are, the shorter and plainer [. . .] the sooner a great deale will your children vnderstand them” (sig. H4r). The pupils proceed by stages, from hearing the master answer his own questions, to answering for themselves, first with the book open in front of them, then without it. By means of “daily repetitions and examinations” (sig. K2v) they are soon able to “say without book all the vsual and necessary rules” (sig. §3r). Further up the school, the same technique is used to test that the boys have completed the work set for them. They should be ready, according to Brinsley, “at any time whensoever they shall be apposed of a sudden” to “construe, parse” and “reade into English” any of the authors they have studied, and “forth of the translation” to read them back into Latin (sig. §4r). To be posed, in this wider sense, is to do more than simply recite a grammatical catechism. It is to be put on the spot and required to perform – to demonstrate skill as well as memory.

But the rationale for posing is only partly pedagogical. The schoolmaster’s constant questioning is also a means of maintaining discipline. According to Brinsley, the threat of being posed is enough to keep the boys “from playing, talking, sleeping and all other disorders in the Church” (sig. Ll1r). Enterline quotes an account of a class being posed by their master, written by one of the boys:

[T]hey were all of them (or such as were picked out, of whom the M<sup>r</sup> made choice by the feare or confidence in their lookes) to repeat and pronounce distinctlie without booke some piece of an author that had been learnt the day before [. . .] some to be examined and punished, others to be commended and proposed to imitation. (176)

“A Westminster boy’s choice is stark,” she remarks, “imitate well or be beaten” (176). But the fear of being beaten is both subsequent to and dependent upon another fear – the fear of being chosen to speak. The boy’s suspicion that the master is deliberately picking on the students who look most nervous is well founded. Brinsley repeatedly advises young teachers to “poase whom you suspect most carelesse” (sig. Kk3v)

---

<sup>11</sup> The same word is used in *The Booke of Common Praier* (1559) to describe how “*the Bishop (or suche as he shal appoint) shal by his discretion appose*” the children during Confirmation. See Cummings 150.

and “appose the worst and most negligent of each fourme aboue all the rest” (sig. H1v).

The relevance of posing to intervention is obvious. To pose a pupil is an act of selection on the part of the master – a heightened form of addressivity that requires the addressee to do more than just speak. It is indicative of the master’s authority, and the way in which that authority translates into patterns of interaction. As Rod Gardner has put it, “the teacher is the one who allocates turns, not the students [. . .] there is no opportunity for students to self-select, or for a student to select next speaker” (Gardner 596). There is no mention in Brinsley – or anywhere else I can find – of a schoolboy putting his hand up. The turn-taking pattern most characteristic of the early modern schoolroom is thus identical with that of the second scene of *The Tempest* – a simple alternation between *A* and *B*, in which *A* is the master and *B* is whichever of the pupils he is currently requiring to recite or construe. To acquire a turn without being posed, the pupil, like Miranda, will have to intervene.

Shakespeare explicitly dramatises the posing of a schoolboy named William in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (TLN 1835-98, 4.1.16-73). His use of the technique in *The Tempest* is more subtle. This is a play that invokes rather than depicts the schoolroom. What we have in 1.2 is an allusion at the level of interactional structure – an allusion that is activated by the play’s repeated references to teaching. By the time Caliban enters, we have already seen Prospero in recognisably pedagogical exchanges with Miranda and Ariel, both of which have involved some form of posing. With his daughter he begins as follows:

*Pros.*

Obey, and be attentiu. Canst thou remember  
A time before we came vnto this Cell?  
I doe not thinke thou canst, for then thou was’t not  
Out three yeeres old.

*Mira.* Certainly Sir, I can.

*Pros.* By what? by any other house, or person?  
Of any thing the Image, tell me, that  
Hath kept with thy remembrance. (TLN 108-15, 1.2.22-8)

This is their first lesson on a hitherto taboo subject. Prospero poses Miranda to discover how much she already knows – to determine where he needs to start from. Notice too the demand that she “obey, and be attentiu.” In the narrative that follows Prospero repeatedly pauses to

insist that Miranda “attend,” “marke,” or “heare” him.<sup>12</sup> Rather than characterise her as inattentive (as directors of the play frequently assume) this obsession with being listened to characterises Prospero as a schoolmaster. Dyers have inky hands, and teachers have an inculcated distrust of young people’s ears.

In the exchange with Ariel, Prospero shows a different but equally recognisable side of the early modern pedagogue.

*Pro.* Do’st thou forget  
 From what a torment I did free thee? *Ar.* No.  
*Pro.* Thou do’st: & thinkst it much to tread y<sup>e</sup> Ooze  
 Of the salt deepe;  
 To run vpon the sharpe winde of the North,  
 To doe me businesse in the veines o’t’h’ earth  
 When it is bak’d with frost.  
*Ar.* I doe not Sir.  
*Pro.* Thou liest, malignant Thing: hast thou forgot  
 The fowle Witch *Sycorax*, who with Age and Enuy  
 Was growne into a hoope? hast thou forgot her?  
*Ar.* No Sir.  
*Pro.* Thou hast: where was she born? speak: tell me:  
*Ar.* Sir, in *Argier*.  
*Pro.* Oh, was she so: I must  
 Once in a moneth recount what thou hast bin,  
 Which thou forgetst. This damn’d Witch *Sycorax* [. . .] (TLN 375-91,  
 1.2.251-64)

This is posing as threat and punishment. Ariel has not forgotten how he came to be released from the tree in which *Sycorax* had trapped him, and Prospero knows it. But he persists with his aggressive questioning until the whole story has been recounted. Ariel has had the temerity to remind his master of a promise to set him free, and for that he must be corrected. Like Brinsley’s schoolmaster, Prospero poses his pupils into submission. To a reader or an audience familiar with early modern educational techniques both exchanges would be recognisable – the introduction of a new text and the recitation of an old, the teaching and the testing, the beginning of the pedagogical process and the end.

---

<sup>12</sup> Eight times in total: “pray thee marke me,” “(Do’st thou attend me?),” “Thou attend’st not?” “I pray thee marke me,” “Do’st thou heare?” “Heare a little further,” “Sit still, and heare” (TLN 162, l. 67; TLN 173, l. 78; TLN 183, l. 87; TLN 185, l. 88; TLN 203, l. 105; TLN 238, l. 135; TLN 280, l. 171).



Which brings us back to Caliban, the last and least of Prospero's pupils. Unlike Miranda and Ariel, he does not wait to be posed – volunteering his own narrative, of dispossession and enslavement, as soon as he enters the stage. Like Ariel, he is immediately corrected:

*Cal.* [. . .]  
 This Island's mine by *Sycorax* my mother,  
 Which thou tak'st from me: when thou cam'st first  
 Thou stroakst me, & made much of me: wouldst giue me  
 Water with berries in't: and teach me how  
 To name the bigger Light, and how the lesse  
 [. . .] I am all the Subiects that you haue,  
 Which first was min owne King: and here you sty-me  
 In this hard Rocke, whiles you doe keepe from me  
 The rest o'th' Island.  
*Pro.* Thou most lying slaue,  
 Whom stripes may moue, not kindnes: I haue vs'd thee  
 (Filth as thou art) with humane care, and lodg'd thee  
 In mine owne Cell [. . .] (TLN 470-488, 1.2.333-50)

What we might expect at this point is another brutal catechism in which another recalcitrant pupil is forced to cooperate in the recitation of his own misdeeds. What we get instead is Miranda's intervention. And what it sounds like – at least to a reader alive to the pedagogical patterning of the scene – is one pupil intervening in the correction of another. As well as breaking an established interactional pattern, the intervention confounds a set of expectations imported from the early modern school-room. The speech itself, we recall, is a reproach to an ungrateful, unteachable pupil, and much of the argument about whether or not it should be reassigned revolves around who could have taught what to whom. By speaking when she does, Miranda assumes, albeit momentarily, the interactional role of the schoolmaster. The speech in which she claims to have taught Caliban to speak is itself a claim to the speaking rights of a teacher. That an intervention can sometimes be heard in this way is made clear a few lines later, when Prospero reprimands Miranda for defending Ferdinand: "What I say, | My foote my Tutor?" (TLN 628-9, 1.2.471-2). By intervening to protect her future husband Miranda is again assuming the role of "Tutor."

None of which means that we should correct Shakespeare's dialogue by reassigning the speech to Prospero, any more than we should correct a poet's sudden use of a half-rhyme by inserting a word more satisfying to the editorial ear. What it does mean is that the shock felt by eight-

eenth-century editors is not only a matter of prejudice. Theobald's intervention in the text is prompted by Miranda's intervention in her father's correction of Caliban – by when she speaks as well as what she says – and by the pedagogical context in which the exchange takes place. To those who would reassign the speech, this is all the more reason to do so. To those who would not, it is all the more reason not to.

\*\*\*

My final point is a slightly larger one and belongs by itself, in a coda. In a characteristically pithy and ambitious essay, Stephen Orgel bemoans the “editorial energy that has been expended on the question of consistency of character” (“What is a Character?” 106). Characters, he observes, “are not people, they are elements of a linguistic structure, lines in a drama, and more basically, words on a page” (102). To understand this is “to release character from the requirements of psychology, consistency and credibility” (102-3). As a former editor of *The Tempest*, one of Orgel's key examples is Miranda. The reassignment of the “abhorred slave” speech is, according to him, “a very clear case of the character being considered both prior to and independent of her lines” (107). It “clearly springs not from the play but from notions of how fifteen-year-old girls ought to behave” (107).

First, as I hope I have shown, this is not true. There are reasons for reassigning the speech that spring not from “notions of how fifteen-year-old girls ought to behave” but from precisely those “elements” of the linguistic structure of *The Tempest* that constitute the character “Miranda.” Secondly, there are ways of understanding consistency of character that do not rest on unexamined impressions of psychological credibility. They rest instead on the distribution of turns at talk, on patterns of interaction and habits of speech – on figures of dialogue that can be identified in the text with as much confidence as alliteration, chiasmus, or feminine rhyme.

## References

- Brinsley, John. *Ludus Literarius: Or, the Grammar Schoole*. London: Humphrey Lowes, 1612.
- Burrow, Colin. "Shakespeare and Humanistic Culture." *Shakespeare and the Classics*. Ed. Charles Martindale and A. B. Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 9-27.
- Carey-Webb, Allen. "National and Colonial Education in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 5 (1999): 3.1-39. <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/05-1/cwebtemp.html>.
- Cummings, Brian, ed. *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Enterline, Lynn. "Rhetoric, Discipline, and the Theatricality of Everyday Life in Elizabethan Grammar Schools." *From Performance to Print in Shakespeare's England*. Ed. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 173-90.
- Gardner, Rod. "Conversation Analysis in the Classroom." *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Ed. Jack Sidnell and Tanya Stivers. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. 593-611.
- Hayashi, Makoto. "Turn Allocation and Turn Sharing." *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Ed. Jack Sidnell and Tanya Stivers. London: Blackwell, 2013. 167-90.
- Lerner, Gene H. "Selecting Next Speaker: The Context-Sensitive Operation of a Context-Free Organization." *Language in Society* 32 (2003): 177-201.
- Lyne, Raphael. *Shakespeare's Late Work*. Oxford Shakespeare Topics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Marcus, Leah S. *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Moncrief, Kathryn M. "'Obey and be attentive': Gender and Household Instruction in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*." *Gender and Early Modern Constructions of Childhood*. Ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011. 127-38.
- Orgel, Stephen. "What is a Character?" *Text* 8 (1995): 101-9.
- Sacks, Harvey, Emmanuel A. Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson. "A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation." *Language* 50 (1974): 696-735.
- Schegloff, Emmanuel A. *A Primer in Conversation Analysis, Volume 1: Sequence Organization in Interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

- Shakespeare, William. *The tragicall historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*. London: Nicholas Ling, 1604.
- . *Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies*. London: Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, 1623.
- . *Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, and tragedies*. London: John Smethwick, William Aspley, et al., 1632.
- . *Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, and tragedies*. London: Philip Chetwinde, 1663/4.
- . *Mr. William Shakespear's comedies, histories, and tragedies*. London: H. Herringman, et al., 1685.
- . *The works of Mr. William Shakespear; in six volumes*. Ed. Nicholas Rowe. London: Jacob Tonson, 1709.
- . *The works of Shakespear. In six volumes*. Ed. Alexander Pope. London: Jacob Tonson, 1725.
- . *The works of Shakespeare: in seven volumes*. Ed. Lewis Theobald. London: A. Bettesworth, et al., 1733.
- . *The plays of William Shakespeare, in eight volumes*. Ed. Samuel Johnson. London: J. and R. Tonson, et al., 1765.
- . *The Tempest*. Ed. Horace Howard Furness. The New Variorum Shakespeare. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1892.
- . *The Tempest*. Ed. G. L. Kittredge. The Kittredge Shakespeares. Boston: Ginn, 1939.
- . *The Tempest*. Ed. Frank Kermode. The Arden Shakespeare: Second Series. London: Methuen, 1954.
- . *The Tempest*. Ed. Stephen Orgel. The Oxford Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- . *The First Folio of Shakespeare: The Norton Facsimile*. Prep. Charlton Hinman. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1996.
- . *The Tempest*. Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. The Arden Shakespeare: Third Series. London: Thomson Learning, 1999.
- . *The Tempest*. Ed. Christine Dymkowski. Shakespeare in Production. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- . *Complete Works*. Ed. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, et al. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.
- Tumelson, Ronald A. "Ferdinand's Wife and Prospero's Wise." *Shakespeare Survey* 59 (2006): 79-90.
- Vickers, Brian. *In Defence of Rhetoric*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.