

**The Interdependency of Foucauldian Concepts of Power and Knowledge in  
Shakespeare's *The Tempest***

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**Abstract**

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is an outstanding theatrical microcosm representing the unavoidably overwhelming Foucauldian power relations in all human civilizations and their intricate interdependency of such power relations with the possession of knowledge and construction of reality. The fictional world of *The Tempest* is thoroughly endowed with the mechanisms of an intense web of power struggles and domination fixations which typically have been, are, and will be characteristic of any human society throughout history. For the sustenance of such a complex texture of power structures and for the manipulation of the overall balance to the advantage of a specific minority, the pivotal function of a constructed reality is as substantial in the story as the real life. Prospero, the central character, successfully manages to subdue all other dangerous, power-thirsty rivals by making use of his superior knowledge enabling him to shape the subjectivities/beliefs of other characters by different means including language and masquerades in an induced world of realities on the island. Shakespeare's text can well be drawn on to reveal the stealthy workings of different social, cultural and especially moral institutions in recruiting subjects to their malignant power/knowledge network and duping the individuals with the desired notions produced constantly by the institutional apparatuses leading to the construction of an exploitive 'truth.'

**Keywords:** Power/Knowledge, Panopticon, Language, Visibility, Subjugation.

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## **1. Introduction**

The fact that such a pragmatically austere character like Boatswain should appear only at the initial and the final scenes of *The Tempest* (claiming to be slept during the whole plot on the island) implies that whatever happens in his absence is shrouded in a dream-like aura featuring a remote, mysterious location as a small-scale model of a human society in which Prospero acts upon the sensibilities and sensations of the inhabitants by inducing a “truth” of his choice to effect a Foucauldian power/knowledge structure and enslave other characters after recruiting them as his subjects through various methods. Of course, just as in the real life, Prospero is rivaled by other competing claims to the position of superiority. His rivals incessantly strive to overthrow his dominion and replace him in the hierarchy of the power relations which in Foucault’s words are “constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess; that one should take as its model a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating a transaction or the conquest of a territory” (26). Prospero’s substantial winning card in this fierce battle for mastery and control is knowledge (in the form of magical intrigues) which points to another observation in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*: “... power and knowledge directly imply one another; ... there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Foucault 27). It is this kind of knowledge/power that enables Prospero to haunt his subjects in the world of the island and ensure submission.

In the study at hand the construction process of reality and its interdependency and significance to the Foucauldian power/knowledge principles will be explored in the fictional island as well as the similarly indispensable function of the same observed mechanisms in sustaining the hierarchy of power relations that have commonly been at work in all given, real-life civilizations. Foucault refers to such interdependency between power structures and sense of reality when he states that “Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it”(170).The proceedings observed in Shakespeare’s story will be drawn on to illuminate the workings of real-life power/knowledge matrixes, the resources of such matrixes for domination capacity and the role of language, different cultural/political institutions in the formation a reality for the subjects. In addition, the analysis will attempt to highlight the striking parallel between the

basic individual manipulation/control mechanisms in Shakespeare's story of the island and the function of allegedly moral power systems in typical human communities.

## **2. Literature Review**

Michel Foucault's influential book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (1975) explores the mechanism of the panoptic eye of power on its subjects and traces the changes in the repression methods utilized from past to present. The book continued the discussion of some of the concepts regarding the reciprocal interaction of knowledge and power in human societies from his *Archeology of Knowledge* published the previous year. Foucault's main ideas have been organized around a number of pivotal concepts (two of which are power and knowledge) by Clare O'farrell and helpful explanations have been provided. Also a detailed survey of the cultural and political context of the Elizabethan era which is thought to be reflected in Shakespeare's texts can be found in Stephen Greenblatt's *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* and Richard Wilson's *Shakespeare in French Theory*. In terms of language significance, Deepti Sharma has provided details of the functionality and type of language in the text in *Caliban's Use of Language in Shakespeare's The Tempest*.

## **3. Knowledge-Power Relations in *The Tempest***

### **3.1. The Significance of Knowledge in Forming Power Structures**

In his ardent pursuit of accessing empowering knowledge Prospero has paid dearly twelve years ago by suffering near-death experiences and having to escape from the kingdom in which he was going to obtain daunting powers by mixing majestic commands with magical forces and hence pose an insurmountable domination threat. That is why it is imperative for his rivals to hamper his fixating of absolute, irreversible dominion by conspiring and plotting against his reign before it is late. The sort of information access Prospero was longing for metaphorically fits Foucault's description of the dangerous type of knowledge that can be used "... to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and discipline of practice" (Foucault 27).

Prospero is impeded and expelled from his own kingdom before he can access such dangerous power/knowledge and resorts to an island in which he

refines his practices according to his books and finally achieves such magical forces enabling him to see through other individuals intentions and find out their circumstances in remote locations (similar to an observing Big Brother in Foucault's view) thus allowing him to "regulate the conduct of others" and "restrain" their options/freedom. In order to establish his own "truth" on the island Prospero can benefit from his hardly attained knowledge which will bless him with a vantage point to observe and control other characters in accordance with Foucault's idea that "Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true" (27).

The island's virtual reality is considered to be a parallel signifier of the conditions of real-life social existence and the magical powers of Prospero's books can be taken as representative of the overwhelming powers of the Scripture in Shakespeare's own time. The exclusive access to the content of such mighty books enabled the priests and church figures to assume a superior position of authority in the society. Just as Prospero sees the shipwreck and knows about their conditions without being seen and making himself known the church figures could also monitor and influence people from a vantage point without exposing themselves to scrutiny because "visibility is a trap" (Foucault 200):

Disciplinary power ... is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection. (Foucault 187)

The church figures had also created a very solemn, coercively captivating reality of their own liking for the masses. They had established harsh codes of conduct, thought and feeling in the light of the allegedly unshakable, eternal "truths".

Moral authorities of Shakespeare's time demanded full faith, submission and complacency punishing the slightest resistance or disobedience in dreadful manners. Manipulation and exploitation through the contrived doctrines of faith and spiritual devotion was one of the most prevailing methods, maybe the most influential method indeed, of yoking subjects to a version of "truth" that was not to be questioned, challenged or doubted in any way. The system had a strong cognitive and emotive self-defense mechanism which condemned even the thought

of questioning its reality as the most immoral act and therefore deserving penalty in the most severe form.

Prospero's magical powers aid him in discovering (seeing) the ship carrying his enemies on the sea, causing a tempest and forcing the passengers to come to him for settling the old accounts and restoring the previously lost domination. Hisintends to project the newly developed power hierarchy of the island to the main lost kingdom. The small model of the island serves as a practices and box which helps in solidifying his powers. Prospero can now observe people closely, know their conditions when he wills and affect others' mentality and actions, consequently, he is capable of devising a world of his own preference in which individuals are like chess pieces in a game. This metaphor is actually alluded to in the play itself in the scene where Prospero reveals Miranda and Ferdinand playing chess game:

MIRANDA. Sweet lord, you play me false.

FERDINAND. Love I would not for the world.

MIRANDA. Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle \_

And I would call it fair play. (Tempest 5.1.184-188)

### **3.2. The Capability of Power Structure to Engender Knowledge**

It is striking as Foucault points out that knowledge and power strengthen and intensify each other in a reciprocal matrix. The mutual interaction between the two can further solidify the irresistible sway on the individuals exposed. More knowledge can be engendered by a power system and consumed later to hold a tighter control on the subjects who can hardly conceal their professional, emotional or financial conditions from the spying eyes of the power/knowledge authority. As O'farrell reminds us Foucault succinctly summarizes such a phenomenon in his comment: "mechanism of power produces different types of knowledge which collate information on people's activities and existence. The knowledge gathered in this way further reinforces the exercises of power". (101)

Therefore, according to the Foucauldian principles, once Prospero has tamed Ariel in Shakespeare's story he is able to send the magical creature to spy on other characters and bring news of other character's whereabouts and intentions. Ariel can deliver supplementary information that will boost Prospero's knowledge of the proceedings in his realm and enable him to exercise more imposition in a more effective way upon his subjects. If Prospero lacked this knowledge he would miss

the power, likewise if he missed his powers he would no longer be able to get informed about things that normally must remain unknown to him.

#### **4. Panopticon Structure in *The Tempest***

##### **4.1. The Integration of Panopticon Structure into Construction of Reality**

From the viewpoint of Foucault, one of the methods that power/knowledge combination can draw on to regulate and control the subjects in an effectual way is the implementation of a panopticon -like system. A panopticon is a building designed in a way that allows prisoners to be put in separate cells easily observed by the guards watching from a central vantage point. The prisoners are denied free communication with each other and they cannot see the guards that are monitoring them.

The panopticon functions as a kind of laboratory of power. Thanks to its mechanisms of observation, it gains in efficiency and in the ability to penetrate into men's behaviour; knowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised. (Foucault 204)

What Prospero manages to create in the island is actually a Foucauldian panopticon. By the virtue of his magical knowledge he enjoys a central vantage point, can observe what other characters do in different remote locations and can check on them at any moment through Ariel. In addition he separates the whole shipwreck survivors group in several divisions that lose contact with each other and wonder in isolation. For example he captures Ferdinand, imprisons him and then exploits him under supervision. The ultimate goal of such a structure is:

To induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary. (Foucault 201)

Just like the playwright himself (Shakespeare) who has the authority to impose his personal visions and concepts in his own fictionally devised world, Prospero has the ability of arranging the course of events in a way that will lead other characters in his preferred direction. The playwright is the supreme source of reality in his fictional creation and enjoys the position at the central vantage point of his constructed panopticon holding omniscient command and control over all his characters, their motives and thoughts while he himself is inaccessible and

untouchable by any of his fictional world's characters. Likewise, in another level, Prospero is also the master/arbitrator of the fortunes of his manipulated microcosm

Having created a panopticon of this sort Prospero can proceed to dictate his own sense of reality or a constructed version of "truth" to the subjects on the island. Now by internalizing a set of illusions, convictions, sensations and thoughts in the subjects he can determine what these subjects should believe, how they should act or react and how they should behave. The constant, weird "noise" that the subjects hear in the island stirring strange feelings in them is the symbolic implication of being under the spell of such illusionary, constructed reality. The unnatural "noise" accompanies them like a sinister presence and has a haunting effect. In addition at several points Prospero arranges bizarre banquets, masquerades and festivals that have deep impacts on the sensibilities of his subjects and lead them in the course desired and planned in advance by Prospero himself.

#### **4.2. The Island's Panopticon Structure and Real-Life Elizabethan Society**

Foucault's metaphor of panopticon and its integration in false reality accounts for the nature of Elizabethan social life mechanism. In the Elizabethan society the state authorities enjoyed the position of the central, superior vantage point by the virtue of their exclusive access to a form of critically distinguishing knowledge which was denied to the common people generally and was not shared with them, for example confidential political, economic or personal information which gave authorities judgment rights over other people.

In order to fend off the many ambitious competitors who long to usurp such a blissful position restrain and suppression surely had to be applied directly in the form of legal, punitive institutions and indirectly through cultural apparatus. A privileged minority established itself as the sole authority and went on to create an illusion; a fashioned, manipulated version of truth. Such a constructed "truth" would inevitably incorporate the very fundamental insurance of the survival and security of the dependent power/knowledge matrix by enforcing a set of contrived beliefs, norms, social practices, cultural costumes and convictions that overall condemn disobedience as sinful, shameful and punishable: "If ever there were a place to confirm the proposition that within a given social construction of reality certain interpretations of experience are sanctioned and others excluded, it is here in the boundaries that contained sixteenth-century skepticism". (Greenblatt 24)

The established power matrix in this manner successfully shaped the subjectivity of the individuals recruiting them in the ideology that ensured and protected the benefits of the minority in the guarding central vantage point. The mentality, outlook and consequently behavior of the individuals were determined, restrained and haunted by such a guarding/imposing system, much like the prisoners in a panopticon structure. The individuals' sense of reality, self-consciousness, personal obligations, principles, expectations and responsibilities, in short, the very experience of being was affected and induced.

Such a privileged, guarding minority is definitely expected to serve as the seamless example of observing its own rules and respecting its own standards so that the reality it presents to preserve its own power/knowledge system will seem believable, unshakable and definite. Despite the phony, outward mask the supervising, privileged minority did not usually subscribe to the "truth" they prescribed to other individuals as they were well aware of its deceptive origins. That is why the most severe violations and digressions from basic social principles were committed by the privileged class itself but usually covered and falsely justified through the many direct and indirect apparatuses at disposal.

Even before the modern, technological advances leading to exquisite spying devices for monitoring the behaviour of the individuals in the community the Shakespearean power system could efficiently benefit from the observation network, for example, in the form of employed, under cover officials or agencies in all commercial, cultural and educational institutions. These spies were obliged to constantly report on the speeches, opinions or interactions of the individuals under their supervision: "... the robe worn by Queen Elizabeth was embroidered with the thousand unsleeping eyes of Argus, 'to symbolize her jealous hold on her dominion', in the words of a contemporary, and desire to have the eyes and ears of spies".(Wilson 81)

In *The Tempest* Ariel and his constant reports on the intentions, situations and actions of the characters in different places can be taken as a reminder of such an omniscient, monitoring procedure which was crucially indispensable for Prospero, for any panopticon in fact, if the very structure of the power/knowledge is to be protected and sustained. Apparently, in Shakespeare's own time the Queen longed to possess such an all-seeing eye on the community and indeed, as Archer notes in *Sovereignty and Intelligence: Spying and Court Culture in the English*



Renaissance: “In certain of her portraits, this Queen of England’s motto ... was TuttoVendo: I see all”. (5-6)

## **5. Language and Power Structures in *The Tempest***

### **5.1. The Inevitability of Power Structures in Human Communities**

From one point of view the establishment of such a power/knowledge network on a constructed virtual reality seems unavoidably needed in every human community. Paradoxically, it is sometimes claimed that the existence of such a harnessing network is far better than its non-existence because the lack of such a panopticon does not essentially mean equality, freedom and felicity for all individuals of a society but, on the contrary, the lack of a central regulating power sinisterly leads to confounding chaos, a constant battle for superiority among different fractions and sects, each of which savagely attempting to eradicate and subdue other opponents due to the inherent, greedy thirst of humankind to assume a position of power, exploit others, distinguish oneself and get more than others sometimes by any inhuman means possible.

Catastrophic periods in history suffered from the lack of a central, overpowering force in a given country and frequently recorded long, constant and bloody conflicts costing many lives and blighting generations before one party finally managed to override all others and establish itself as the single, stable source of authority with its own version of dictated reality. Once there is a central, reliable core of power, the succeeding insurgencies usually take much shorter time to repress/stifle as the dominant version of the constructed reality supports and justified the stance of the sole authority and its loyal recruited subjects no matter how irrational or inhumane it may actually be.

In *The Tempest* such a chaotic contest to usurp power in a remote island has been woven into the very fabric of the course of the events. Antonio and Alonso first plot to overthrow Prospero out of the fear of his accessing ultimate magical, dooming powers. Later on, once the characters get to the island some of them have ruthless dreams of eliminating others and setting a kingdom for themselves in this seemingly untouched realm. Sebastian and Antonio intend to kill their companions in sleep, Caliban wishes to eliminate Prospero and take his daughter by force and Stephano rejoices at the prospect of killing Prospero and replacing him. All of these attest to the observation that power relations are “not univocal; they define innumerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each of which has its

own risks of conflict, of struggle, and of an at least temporary inversion of the power relations” (Foucault 27).

Such an uncontrollable, prevalent usurpation drive in these characters is indicative of the bitter fact that unfortunately the absence of Foucauldian power principles in a society will not promise a state of idyllic utopia in which individuals live together equally, sincerely and justly. Dark forces in the savage nature of men will not allow a satisfactory and peaceful co-existence ensured by self-restraint from abusing, sacrificing and misbehaving others. The brutal side of human nature will try to seize the slightest opportunity to fulfill selfish desires and whims as is evident in the scene where despite Prospero’s kindness and favours, Caliban does not regret his attempt to violate his daughter and wishes he had succeeded in the ungrateful felony:

PROSPERO. Thou most lying slave,  
Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have us’d thee,  
Filt’ as thou art, with human care, and lodg’d thee  
In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate  
The honour of my child  
CALIBAN. Oh ho! Oh ho! Would it had been done!  
Thou didst prevent me; I had peopl’d else  
This isle with Calibans. (Tempest 1.2.405-412)

A reference to Scripture will substantiate such a view if one considers the fact that the original sin of Adam and Eve stems in part from their inherent greed and thirst to obtain only one thing they are forbidden to long for, Tree of Knowledge and subsequently power. Even the heavenly, ideal bliss of perfect, unburdened life in The Creator’s own garden will not stop Adam and Eve from reaching out to acquire what is beyond their allowance. Foucault’s concept of power/knowledge again seems utterly fitting in this context as out of all possible desires and wants, the only thing Adam and Eve were prohibited from was eating from the Tree of Knowledge which is indicative of the utmost importance of knowledge for human kind in attaining power and fulfilling the burning, insatiable desire inside him to control and overwhelm his fellow-creatures and settle the aspirations to transcend his limitations.

Once Adam and Eve acquire knowledge in Eden, Scripture tell us, it was decided to expel them to lower levels suffering a miserable, painful existence because they had accessed the dangerous knowledge and were going to attempt breaking free of their limitations posing a threat to the heavenly order and

hierarchy by, for example, finding the Tree of Life in Eden and eating from it too in a desire to powerfully gain immortality.

## **5.2. Language Significance in Subjugation**

One other parallel between the mechanism of the power/knowledge authority in *The Tempest* and the fundamental revelations of Scripture is the function and significance of language in the complex amalgam of power-ridden contexts. In Shakespeare's story Prospero and Miranda teach Caliban communication and instruct him how to use language but as Caliban complains frequently this has not helped him to have a better existence, quite on the contrary, linguistic alienation has led him to become a subject serving Prospero in the constructed microcosm of the island. By teaching Caliban language the power structure has given him a false consciousness of himself, his identity, his rights and situation suggesting that he is different from Prospero and Miranda in an inferior way. In fact they have used language as a medium that conveys their orders and thus they have changed and tamed Caliban's rebellious temperament to serve their own purposes. That is why Caliban hatefully asserts:

CALIBAN. You taught me language, and my profit on't  
is I know how to curse: the red plague rid you,  
for learning me your language.(*Tempest* 1.2.425-427)

Such a function of linguistic subordination and the utmost significance of language in the power structures of a given community remind us of the ancient account of the Babel Tower in Scripture. According to the account, at the beginning there was only one language for the humankind, men had mastery over it and this enabled them to have a unified experience of existence in harmony and integrity. The conditions were so promising that now nothing seemed impossible to human powers. Consequently men ambitiously started to build a hugely monumental tower soaring into the skies to reach the position of their Creator and match his powers in a way. Their Creator, infuriated with such a rude transgression committed by his inherently power-thirsty creature, shook the foundations of the earth so violently that the enormous tower collapsed with a deafening, crashing noise which drove people mad and made them run in different directions while they babbled in confused languages.

6 The LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them,

which they have imagined to do. 7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. 9. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth. (KJV, Genesis 11:1-9)

The unifying language was lost and humankind was divided into different races, groups and ethnicities, each speaking in a different, fragmented and inefficient language that was far away from the originally empowering language they possessed before the building of the tower. With the loss of language control and mastery, man's powers diminished and humanity learned to be satisfied with his subordinated position in the cosmic power hierarchy.

Caliban's complaints about the sinister effects of language on his fortunes and his subordination to Prospero who impeded his mastery over the inherited island resonates vibrantly with the noteworthy implications of the story of the Babel Tower concerning the determining role of language in the creation and sustenance of power structures. Even Lacan's concepts of language alienation and the transference of a child from the imaginary state of uncontrolled desires to the symbolic stage of linguistic order and regulation emphasize the same implications. It is mainly through the linguistic apparatus that all the notions and senses containing Althusserian ideologies and concealed significations are conveyed to the individuals' minds forming and directing his subjectivity, identity, consciousness, ego, duties or responsibilities etc. Such a collection of conveyed concepts through language will all in all culminate in a form of tangible reality for each subject, and according to this induced sense of "truth" the subjects will behave in various situations, even when they are unwatched and no immediate supervision is present.

For Baudrillard this condition for the men has been grimly aggravated in modern times by the flood of contrived information drowning the individuals through mass media. The modern men are continually bombarded with a tsunami of selected data in all forms of mass media and communication which is aimed at dissolving the critical thinking of the individuals and making their minds fragmented, incoherent and in constant conflict. Men become more disillusioned than ever before, feeling more enfeebled and disappointed in the hyper real context of existence constructed for them. The actual reality of one's existence and

qualities fades away under the heavy, crushing burden of such power structures and mentalities are enslaved through the projection of a false system of values, criteria and needs.

A noteworthy scene in *The Tempest* which hints at the above mentioned mechanism is the when Caliban gets heavily drunk and once freed from the constraints of the captivating illusion of his false reality starts to use language differently in a way that is not typical of him. It is as if once beyond the imposed reality the very nature and function of the subject's language changes drastically. If we take into the account the fact that language has an undeniably formative influence on the thought, consciousness and identity of the subject it can be claimed that such a great alteration in the nature and function of language (during the occasional escapes from the false reality in the form of hangovers or dreams) is indicative of a remarkable shift in the experience/quality of being/ego in a higher level of reality not touched by the power/knowledge network in the panopticon monitoring system:

CALIBAN. I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;  
I'll fish for thee,  
and get  
thee wood enough. A plague upon the tyrant that I serve! I'll bear  
him no  
more sticks, but follow thee, Thou wondrous man. (Tempest 2.2.131-  
134)

Considering the potential threats posed by such occasional escapes from the dominant "truth" again it only seems obvious that the power structures will naturally try to condemn such experiences of reality as irrational, immoral and sordid.

### **5.3. The Absolute Urgency of Confining Curiosity and Sensuality/Sexuality**

Prospero's treatment of Ferdinand and his own daughter, Miranda invokes strong parallels between the proceedings of the story and codes of moral institutions in real life societies. Ferdinand is a good-natured young man, untouched by the treacherous schemes of the other characters. However, he has to suffer unjustifiably, not realizing the true nature of the course of events that blights him. He is captured, imprisoned, exploited, accused and maltreated for no guilt or crime but for the sheer reason that he is a chess piece in the game played by his master. Prospero lets Ferdinand suffer because of his own large scale intentions. He does

not let Ferdinand see through the fabricated reality although he has good plans for him to marry Miranda. Ferdinand's naïve unawareness of the main power struggle raging fiercely beyond his romantic infatuation with the allurements of a rosy reality and the fact that he is just a puppet performing his role in a plotted scenario for more serious ends draws attention to Prospero's meticulous concern for preserving the dignity of an official marriage before his plans have produced the desired result. Prospero's obsession with confining the sensual aspects of the love between Ferdinand and Miranda and his utmost care to keep them controlled notably alludes to the major concern of all moral institutions in limiting, denying and punishing sensual desires in the subjects as they are well aware of the uncontrollable vehemence of such desires in human nature leading the subjects to dare and act in the most outrageous manners against the restraining power/knowledge systems.

That is the reason passion and sensation on the whole have always been looked upon with suspicion as any excess in them unleashes the fearsome potentialities of the individuals in challenging and disregarding the control, be it moral, legal, administrative or political. Subsequently, in the reality presented to the masses through media, including books and literature, such strong, wayward desires threatening the very fabric of every society naturally had to be presented as contemptible or illegal and in extreme cases punishable by the most severe forms of execution.

What highlights the validity of such a view in the story is that the obedient, simple-hearted Miranda displays signs of dissidence and revolt only at the scenes related to the issues of her sensuality. It is surprising to hear such a meek girl speak so confidently and assertively about her own desires in several scenes.

MIRANDA. At mine unworthiness, that dare not offer  
What I desire to give; and much less take  
What I shall die to want. But this is trifling;  
And all the more it seeks to hide itself,  
The bigger bulk it shows. Hence, bashful cunning!  
And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!  
I am your wife, if you will marry me;  
If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow  
You may deny me; but I'll be your servant,  
Whether you will or no. (Tempest 3.1.120-129)

This anomaly of behaviour in a subject duped by the constructed reality in a power/ knowledge matrix is indirectly signifying the unpredictable, resilient

potentiality of strong human passions in subverting and disregarding the dominant social, cultural and moral masquerades so vital to the sustenance of contrived power structures.

## **6. Conclusion**

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* succinctly embodies Foucault's main notions of the interdependency between knowledge and power and the capacity of power matrixes to dictate a version of their own constructed reality to the subjects. The ultimate goal of such a system is the subjugation of individuals and the function of language plays a significant role in achieving supremacy in the constant conflict of instable power relations. The power hierarchy induced in Shakespeare's island and its mechanism implies the workings of the panoptic eye of power systems in human societies and corresponds especially to the Elizabethan control system of Shakespeare's own time. In addition, the inevitability of restraining power structures imposing their influence under different facades and their co-existence with social life from the time of earliest human communities is noteworthy.

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