

BRAVE NEW MEDIA:  
THEY THAT SOW THE SECESSION, SHALL REAP *THE TEMPEST*

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**RESUMO:** Desde sua produção, as obras de Shakespeare têm sido reescritas e remodeladas de várias formas e através dos mais variados meios semióticos. Devido às suas características atraentes e seus temas instigantes, especialmente sobre as relações de poder sob o regime colonialista, *A tempestade* está entre as obras de Shakespeare mais exploradas e remodeladas. No filme de 1998, *A fúria da tempestade*, o diretor Jack Bender adapta a peça para o contexto da Guerra Civil norte-americana. Para analisar o filme, o presente trabalho se concentra em questões relacionadas à construção do enredo e dos personagens, bem como ferramentas fílmicas usadas para abordar os temas da peça e adaptá-la para o contexto da Guerra de Secessão. Em suma, o trabalho analisa a forma como essa admirável mídia (relativamente) nova, o filme, lida com a representação das relações entre literatura e história.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Intermedialidade; Literatura e Cinema; Literatura e História.

**ABSTRACT:** *Since their production, Shakespeare's works have been rewritten and reshaped into the most varied forms and through different semiotic means. Due to its compelling features and instigating themes, especially regarding the power relations under the colonialist regime, The tempest is among the Shakespearean plays most frequently explored and reshaped. In the 1998 movie The tempest, director Jack Bender adapts the play to the context of the American Civil War. In order to analyze the film, this paper focuses on issues related to the construction of plot and characters, as well as on the motion-picture devices used to approach the themes from the play and to adapt it to the War of Secession context. In short, the paper analyzes the way this brave (relatively) new media, film, manages to represent the relations between Literature and History.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Intermediality; Literature and Film; Literature and History.*

## **Introduction**

Shakespeare has been a source of inspiration to countless productions through the centuries. The resonances of his works appear in the most varied forms: adaptations, allusions, parodies, and so on. In the twentieth century, there was a breakthrough and an improvement of new medias and this phenomenon resulted in an even wider range of possibilities for exploring the Bard's oeuvre. We can see Shakespearean echoes through postcards, literary productions, film productions, TV series, and the most varied types of media that flourished through the years. The reason for the playwright's popularity may lie in his own ability to reshape and adapt the ancient texts he was exposed to as well as exploring his own historical context:

Shakespeare's exalted canonical status is a function of his unique creative

abilities as a writer, but this status derives from his ability to assimilate the texts of many others into his work. Adaptation is central to Shakespeare's work and to his continuing cultural presence: Shakespeare adapted source texts and now his 'adaptations' are adapted in an enormous range of cultural contexts. (FISCHLIN e FORTIER, 2009, p. 8)

Shakespeare lived from 1564 to 1616, a period under the government of Elizabeth I and her successor, James I. Britain lived the "Golden Age" with the flourishing of economy and culture. This was also the time of exploration and discovery of new territories. One of these exploration endeavors, the shipwreck of the company of the *Sea Adventure* in the Bermudas in 1609 and the survival of its members, "are said to have provided Shakespeare with an immediate source for his production" (BROWN, 2000, p. 206). This production is the last play attributed to Shakespeare (as its only author): *The tempest*. Due to its instigating themes, especially regarding themes related to colonialist politics, *The tempest* has become one of the most adapted of Shakespearean plays. Some of its film adaptations became references for study, Derek Jarman's *The tempest* and Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's books* figure as some examples.

In 1998, director Jack Bender adapted the plot of the play to the context of the American Civil War in his movie *The tempest*. Issues from the play, which were heavily explored in previous productions, received a new shape in Bender's work in order to fit the historical context proposed by the production. My intention is to analyze the way Bender's film blended elements from the play with elements from the historical context of the Secession War. This research paper will focus mostly on issues regarding adaptation studies as well as plot and character construction. First, my research will explore concepts concerning film adaptations in order to classify Bender's film according to adaptation theories mainly supported by Julie Sanders and Deborah Cartmell. Second, this research will describe and analyze plot and character construction in the film supported by studies on the play along with studies on the historical context in which the movie is set. Finally, there will be a conclusion on the point of adapting the Shakespearean play to the context of the American Civil War based on the work developed throughout this research.

## **1. (Re)shaping *The tempest*: adaptation theories**

Besides the appearance of new medias, the communication among them has developed through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One can find intertextual references in the most varied art forms, especially in the field of film adaptations. Movies became not only one of the most popular medias but also the media that has mostly evolved. Since its origins, the motion picture industry has explored literary works; hence, the field of film adaptation became the focus of increasing studies in the past decades.

In his 1957 book, *Novels into film*, George Bluestone opened the field of film adaptations to countless subsequent studies. Since then, scholars and critics have explored fidelity and correspondence of semiotic signs, among other issues related to the politics of adaptation. By the very end of the last century, the studies of Timothy Corrigan, Robert Stam, James Naremore, Brian McFarlane, Deborah Cartmell, and Julie Sanders, widened

the field of film adaptation as they explored not only diegetic features, but also extra-diegetic features involved in the adaptations. The concepts developed by Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Wheleham, and explored by Julie Sanders in her book, *Adaptation and appropriation*, will serve as guide to the present study.

Sanders (2006) defends that “infidelity” is the aspect in which “the most creative acts of adaptation and appropriation take place[...]” and continues by stating that “[a]daptation studies are, then, not about making polarized value judgements, but about analysing process, ideology, and methodology”(p. 20). So, although an adaptation may not be “faithfully” attached to its source, it is defined as a work that “signals a relationship with an informing source text or original” (p. 26). On the other hand, Sanders presents the concept of appropriation that, differently from the adaptation process, “frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product or domain” and its product is not “always as clearly signalled or acknowledged as in the adaptive process” (p. 26).

By considering these two concepts, adaptation and appropriation, we could say that Bender’s work is an adaptation because of its relationship to the original text. The film is named after the play and so are most of its main characters; also, the basic plot and themes are explored according to the source text.

Regarding the concept of adaptation, Sanders explores three concepts that are usually attributed to Deborah Cartmell: transposition, commentary, and analogue. However, these concepts were first coined by Geoffrey Wagner and further developed by other theorists as Cartmell. In sum, these concepts address different levels of adaptation according to the relation between the source text and the film adaptation:

[...] whereas ‘transposition’ refers to adaptation from one mode to another, in ‘commentary’ the process of adaptation aspires beyond simple approximation towards cultural critiquing of the usually well-known parent work by means of alteration or addition; ‘analogue’ is a variation of the commentary type, in which the hypertext can be enjoyed independently, although a prior knowledge of the parent text would certainly enhance the enjoyment and understanding. (KUNDU, 2008, p. 4)

So, “transposition” is the “immediate” adaptation from literature to film; “commentary” is an adaptation that “comments on the politics of the source text [...] usually by means of alteration or addition” (SANDERS, 2006, p. 21); “analogue” is an adaptation that “only uses the novel as a point of departure” (PUNZI, 2007, p. 68). In this sense, one could say that “analogue” is the type of adaptation from which Sanders developed her concept of appropriation, as the new text is more distant from the source text than the other two types of adaptation.

Nevertheless, in adaptation studies, we should not limit our research only to these

classifications for “[i]t is possible, however, for a single rewrite, to encompass several or all of these modes and even stretch beyond them to embrace other zones of creative inter involvement” (KUNDU, 2008, p. 5). As medias evolve, so do the ways they deal with adaptation and intertextuality. Thus, adaptation is not an easy field for classifications and conceptualizations for it deals with art and as art itself, it displays an inherent fluidity, which results from the process of creativity and serves the purpose of appreciation of the work of art in its varied mediums.

By following this line of thought, Bender’s adaptation of *The tempest* falls in the concept of “commentary”, but with some differences: the film suffers modifications, which do not necessarily simply comment on the play; these modifications use the play to comment on the events of the historical context the movie explores. However, they do not move far away from the literary source as to be classified as an “analogue.” In other words, Bender’s *The tempest* is a two-way street not limited to its relationship with its source text, the Shakespearean play; instead, it widens the reach of the play to comment on an important historical period of the United States.

## **2. Sowing the secession and reaping *The tempest***

Bender’s film opens with a shot of a very southern landscape, the bayous of the Mississippi, seen from the perspective of a bird flying over the land. Right at the beginning, the title of the movie fills the screen: *The tempest*. By being named after the play it was based on, the movie suggests a bond with its literary source; however, the opening image of the movie also states it as an adaptation that explores something beyond the original content of the play. Similarly to Greenaway’s movie, Prospero, played by Peter Fonda, assumes the narrative from the start: “My name is Gideon Prosper and this is the story of my life.” The character-narrator assumes the voice-over during the whole movie and, in the beginning, he provides the background for the story that is being shown on screen. The audience learns that he inherited a plantation from his father and lived happily with his wife and daughter “unaware of the tempest that was about to come.”

As the camera continues to simulate the flight of a bird, we realize that it is “accompanying” the flight of a crow. The black bird arrives at the gate of “Prosperity Plantation - Est. 1783” and we have the indication of place and time on the screen: “Mississippi - 1851.” At the same time, Prospero’s voice-over reveals that after his wife’s death, four years before the events of the film, he started “questioning.” The audience may suspect that, as Prince Hamlet, Prosper began to question issues related to life and death, and general matters from the supernatural realm. This suspicion is confirmed as the scene continues and we witness the first sign of magic in the movie: the crow, which guided the camera from the beginning of the shot, turns into a black woman who meets Prosper. Her name is Azaleigh and she is one of the slaves from Prosper’s plantation. Prosper treats her as “Mambo Azaleigh” (“Priestess Azaleigh”) for she is his tutor in the arts of voodoo and the one who announces to Prosper that he has become a “houngan”, a voodoo priest. In the voice-over narration, he reveals that due to his studies with Mambo Azaleigh, he left the control of the plantation to his younger brother, Anthony.

While Prosper is in Azaleigh's quarters, Anthony is hosting a ball in the house. This party aims at introducing other characters to the audience, especially Anthony, played by John Glover. His antagonism in relation to his older brother is explicit: he walks around with Sophie Dupree, who is kind of intended to Gideon as we learn later on, and introduces her to Wilfred (Willy) Gonzo, the bookkeeper of the plantation and counterpart of the "honest old councillor" Gonzalo from the Shakespearean play. When Gonzo calls him "young master", Anthony is clearly displeased and points out with disdain that the bookkeeper insists on addressing him as "young master" in contrast to Gideon, "the master." Then, Anthony tells Sophie she should marry him and not his brother for since Gideon became a widower, "he prefers the company of slaves."

The ball scene alternates with the scene of a slave being punished. The alternation of these scenes works to destroy the mythology of the good Old South, which Americans had and still have in mind:

Southerners, a North Carolina editor once wrote, are "a mythological people, created half out of the dream and half out of slander, who live in a still legendary land." Indeed, most Americans, including southerners, carry in their minds an assorted cluster of myths about the South. But the main burden of southern mythology is carried in those enduring images of the Old South set during the nineteenth-century sectional conflict: the idealized picture of a kindly old massa with his mint julep on the white-columned porch, happy "darkies" singing in the fields perpetually in harvest, coquettish belles wooed by slender gallants underneath the moonlight and magnolias. (TINDALL e SHI, 1989, p. 353)

The movie unveils the (mis)conception of the good Old South as it attempts to make the audience question this ideology, which sustains a colorful picture of the South and consequently an attractive picture of the colonialist system. The "happy darkies" were not happy for they were mistreated by their so allegedly gentle masters. So, the North was not fighting against a system of harmony because the "[g]entle old massa became the arrogant, haughty, imperious potentate, the very embodiment of sin, the central target of anti-slavery attack" (TINDALL e SHI, 1989, 353).

As we see later in the film, Ariel is the whipped slave and he is punished because he complained about the food the slaves were receiving. Breaking the tradition of adaptations that depict Ariel as a white magical creature, Bender chose to characterize Ariel as a black slave. Shakespeare sketched the picture of an early colonialist system under the eyes of the Old Continent; Bender borrows the Shakespearean sketch and paints it with the colors of the New Continent; thus, Bender's innovations on the realm of characterization show that even though the picture is painted in different colors, the portrait of colonialism remains the same.

In spite of the fact he is Mambo Azaleigh's son, Ariel is a man of action and is not interested in the magical tradition of his people. His rebellious act, which culminates in his

punishment, triggers a series of events that will affect Prosper's life. When she realizes her son is being whipped, Azaleigh asks for Prosper's help and Gideon finds out that his brother Anthony is stealing from the plantation, including the money destined to slave provisions. Hence, Prosper decides to reassume the control of the plantation and Anthony, contemplating the possibility of losing his power, plots to take Gideon out of his way. The key to his plot lies in Ariel's freedom and escape for as Prosper is a friend of slaves, he can be accused of helping the slave to escape; also, Anthony can hunt the runaway slave and kill him, getting his revenge against Ariel's rebellion and its consequences. So, Anthony puts his plan in motion and watches it turn out successfully: he thinks his brother and Ariel are dead. However, Mambo Azaleigh's magic saves Prosper before Anthony kills her; Ariel also survives and, with the help of Gonzo, the two men and Miranda flee and go to live on a small island in the bayou.

Following the tradition of the play and most of its many adaptations, Prosper is constructed as a dubious character. He defends good treatment for the slaves when he argues with Anthony about the money for their provisions. During this scene, we see that Anthony sees the slaves as inferior creatures. Prosper's view is different only on a certain scale for he says the masters should protect and care for the slaves because they are the ones who make the masters' lives possible. Gideon may not see them as inferior creatures, but he sees them as tools that can be used to sustain his life. After twelve years living on the island, Gideon uses Ariel as a vehicle for his magic since Azaleigh's son does not wish to develop his own magic. Ariel wants to be free to fight for the Union, but Prosper does not let him go, using the excuse he is protecting the slave and Miranda from the dangers of the world. Prosper seems to fool himself by giving the right reasons for the wrong actions. He neither leaves the bayou sanctuary nor lets Miranda leave it. The only one who can visit the "exterior world" is Ariel, but only through Gideon's magical abilities to turn the slave into a crow. Prosper governs the bayou as if he is governing his plantation. He uses his magic to keep things under his control.

In the bayou, the constructed image of Prosper's as the "good colonizer" becomes clearer to the audience. The "good colonizer" is the one who hides behind the mask of a benefactor to spread his colonizing habits. This "good master" uses his "good intentions", as bringing "civilized habits and culture" to "uncivilized people", in order to justify his oppressive behavior. Prosper plays the role of the colonialist entity over all the spheres of domination related to the colonialist discourse. According to Paul Brown (2000, p. 209),

Geographically, the discourse operated upon various domains of British world influence, which may be discerned roughly, in the terms of Immanuel Wallerstein, as the "core," "semiperiphery" and "periphery." Colonialism therefore comprises the expansion of royal hegemony in the English-Welsh mainland (the internal colonialism of the core), the extension of British influence in the semiperiphery of Ireland, and the diffuse range of British interests in the extreme periphery of the New World.

As the British Empire from Shakespearean times, Prosper controls the three spheres of the colonialist entity embodied in the people under his command: Miranda, Ariel, and

Gator Man. Miranda, as Prosper's immediate family, represents the "core;" Ariel, as Prosper's slave, a possession that should live in his domains, represents the "semiperiphery;" finally, Gator Man, as someone who is not in Prosper immediate domain, but lives in the bayou, represents the "periphery." As post-colonial subjects, the fact that these three instances of early colonialism can find correspondents in another version of this same practice enables our questioning on the real nature of colonialism, in which the awareness of a negative nature is a prevailing conclusion.

In Shakespeare's *The tempest*, Ariel is an "airy spirit" who uses his magic to fulfill Prosper's designations and longs to be free from this duty. The slave Ariel is eager to be free from Prosper's duty in order to join the Army and help the North. Ariel is not attached to the past traditions of his people; instead, he wants to help building a better future for them in this new nation. As in the play, Ariel demands his freedom from Prosper. In the movie,

[h]e is unable to understand how Prosper could have sympathized with the blacks on the plantation, only to change his principles in the bayou. As a blackbird, Ariel observes the movements of the Union Army, and he really wants Prosper to release him so he can paradoxically join the ranks of Ulysses Grant. (HOENSELAARS, 2001)

Ariel expresses his wish not to be a bird, but to be a man and reminds Prosper of the "Emancipation Proclamation", issued by President Lincoln, "which warned that on January 1, 1863, all slaves in the Confederate states or areas still under active rebellion would be 'thenceforward and forever free'" (TINDALL e SHI, 1989, p. 423). Since it is April, Ariel is officially a free man. Prosper does not approve Ariel's point of view and reminds the slave of his debt to his master for Gideon was the one who taught everything Ariel knows and even offered to teach "his spells" to the slave. As his literary counterpart, Ariel is attached to Prosper and, in a certain way, he depicts a picture of the "darkies" from the Old South: "The 'happy darkies' in this picture became an oppressed people longing for freedom, the victims of countless atrocities, forever seeking a chance to follow the North Star to freedom" (TINDALL e SHI, 1989, p. 354). Therefore, "[b]y presenting Ariel's wish to be 'liberated' in this fashion," as the movie progresses, "Bender nicely contrasts Prosper's desire for private revenge and the black servant's desire for public justice, nationwide" (HOENSELAARS, 2001).

Miranda and Ariel are friends in the movie. Ariel warns Gideon about the dangers of his behavior towards his grown daughter, "a kind of Jehovah trying to prevent Miranda from eating from the tree of knowledge." Perhaps, Miranda and Ariel's friendship results of their identification: both trapped in the bayou under Prosper's control. Miranda is a character that can be manipulated to fit the classic stereotype of a damsel or to portray a strong willed young lady. Bender's film works with the second pattern. The actress Katherine Heigl portrays an inquisitive and active Miranda, who is curious about the world outside the bayou sanctuary. Also, she performs some typically male chores as, for example, leading a canoe down the river, setting and checking the traps. This way, Miranda assumes the role that most southern women had to assume during the Civil War. Clara Barton, founder and first president of the American Red Cross,

[...] claimed that the Civil War accelerated by fifty years the involvement of women in traditionally male vocations. This was saying too much, for after the conflict ended most women reverted to their traditional domestic roles, but many did not or could not, and as such the war did mark a significant change in women's status. (TINDALL e SHI, 1989, p. 413)

So, through his Miranda, Bender offers the contemporary audience a glimpse of the development of the female potential during the American Civil War. However, probably due to her father's overprotection, Miranda keeps a certain naivety and is not aware of desires she may arouse in men in spite of her romantic nature.

Caliban's counterpart in Bender's production is Gator Man, "the Southern type who raises and kills alligators to sell their meat and skins" (HOENSELAARS, 2001). He was once the owner of the bayou sanctuary and we only learn that Prosper deprives him of his rights over the bayou without further explanations. Gator Man is depicted as a simple and ignorant type. At the first moment, although he feels desire for Miranda, their relationship is playful and outgoing and he does not make any attempt to have her. One could say that he represents those marginalized types we can find in several societies throughout times: the "masterless type", a term described by Brown as "the ungoverned and unsupervised man without the restraining resources of social organization, an embodiment of directionless and indiscriminate desire" and who "were discerned in the royal proclamations to exist in the very suburbs of the capital" (BROWN, 2000, p. 210). Thus, Gator Man also embodies features from Trinculo and Stephano, as these two characters do not have specific correspondents in Bender's film.

The film portrays not only a factual event of American history, but also people who were directly involved in the Civil War: General Sherman and General Grant. They discuss about how to get to Vicksburg, a key location to conquer in the South. Anthony appears at the Union Army Headquarters offering help to get the troops across the river. He says that the best place to cross the river is at Bruinsberg and the generals assign the young Captain Frederick Allen, Ferdinand's counterpart in the movie, to accompany him as he tries to find a path through the swamps for the troops to cross. Actually, Anthony is planning to betray the Union Army for money from the Confederates. He threatens Gonzo to help him. Captain Allen realizes Anthony is a spy when they are ambushed by rebels that, with Anthony's help, get in a boat to go and warn the rebel regiment on the other side of the river. Ariel witnesses the entire action and reports it to Prosper who, taken by anger and vengeful feelings, conjures a storm. During to the storm, Captain Allen falls off of the boat; Anthony and Gonzo survive but the rebel soldiers do not have the same luck.

After the storm, Prosper turns Ariel into an old man with the mission to attract Anthony and Gonzo to his encounter. Miranda goes to check Gator Man's. This is an interesting scene to analyze the different way Bender chose to portray him in contrast to Caliban. Miranda says her father had sent her to check if he was fine (actually, it was her idea to check on him). Gator Man says that Prosper does not care about him: "he treats that dang slave better than me..." and continues, "he says I'm ugly and mean. But you've never



been scared of me?” and when Miranda answers negatively, he replies, “If you’re not scared of me, do you like me?” Before she has the chance to answer, he kisses her. She is scared because she does not understand what could have triggered that reaction. Then, Prosper saves her from the man’s arm and threatens him. Gator Man does not like Miranda simply out of lust; he likes her because she does not share her father’s vision and treatment of him. One could say that Bender’s Caliban does not want to people the bayou with Gator boys, he wants the girl because she does not treat him as a monster.

Miranda’s incident with Gator Man also works to show that the Gideon Prosper from the movie presents some important differences from his literary counterpart: gradually, he develops self awareness, which enables him to evaluate the selfishness of his actions and feelings. When Miranda asks her father the reason for Gator Man’s reaction, he has to admit she is not a girl anymore and it is time for them to leave the bayou. It is interesting to note that Prosper’s realizations usually are the result of actions of words from his supposed foes. When Prosper goes after Anthony to confront his brother, they argue and Anthony speaks the words that will induce Gideon’s next realization about his life. He accuses Prosper of preferring to be a king of alligators and mosquitoes under the excuse of protecting his daughter rather than going to the real world and fighting for her. Prosper realizes he has been afraid of the real world and created his own private kingdom in the bayou. As he acknowledges his internal war, Prosper abandons his fears and decides to help in the Civil War. He uses his magic to help General Grant and the Army of Tennessee to defeat General Pemberton’s army in the (factual) Battle of Champion Hill.

After the battle, Prosper decides to regain control of his bankrupt plantation and “fight his own battles.” General Grant asks Gideon what her is supposed to do to three arrested traitors: Gonzo, Gator Man, and Anthony. He asks the General to release his bookkeeper for, afterwards, Gonzo has saved his life and he will need some to help him rebuilt the plantation. As General Grant explains he must take Anthony under arrest anyway, Gideon gets a rifle and threatens to shoot his brother; however, he changes his mind and utters his ultimate realization: “North and South. Brother killing brother. Sooner or later this war will end and brother will have to forgive brother or we’ll live lives poisoned with hatred and thoughts of vengeance. And sleep with pistols under our pillows.” Then, Prosper offers his hand to his brother, who answers before being taken away: “You’re a fool!” Ultimately, Anthony is the representation of those men who built their fights over pride without even realizing it. Prosper, on the other hand, reaches self-awareness and uses this enlightenment to change his life and the lives of those around him. He does not seek external battles for he is aware that the internal battles are even more demanding.

The film ends with Prosper leaving the tiny island in the bayou. As they pack, he consents on Miranda and Frederick’s marriage. He returns the island to its rightful owner as he recognizes that he has been a usurper, and when Gator Man exclaims, “It’s mine? [...] Thank ee [sic]”, Gideon returns the acknowledgement, “Thank you,” quite different from the Shakespearean Prospero who acknowledges that “thing of darkness” (Caliban) as his. Prosper also recognizes the value of Ariel in his life journey so far, “And now, my friend, you truly are free.” Finally, Prosper gives up his magic and ends the film with part of its original source epilogue: “Now my charms are all overthrown. What strength I

have's mine own. I suppose it'll have to be enough."

## Conclusion

Bender's adaptation can be classified as a "commentary," but is not restricted to comment on its literary source. The movie comments on a historical event; moreover, this adaptation deals with the main subject of all Shakespearean plays and enduring art works of all times: the human condition. Humans shape their environment as well as they can be shaped for environmental conditions. Prosper was modified by his wife's death, but the way he chose to deal with it was of his own. Later in the movie, he realizes that he should overcome his fear. Anthony, on the other hand, cultivated hate and jealousy for his older brother and not even the experiences he shared with his brother in the Civil War worked to his enlightenment and transformation. Human beings have the potential to take advantage of good and bad experiences in order to shape their personalities and built their choices.

The movie explores two tempests: internal and external, and at times, the relation between these two spheres. The tempest is a manifestation of nature not only in the climatic sphere, but also inside human hearts. These atemporal and inherent human features along with the ambiguity of human hearts constitute the elements explored by the Bard and permanent in the adaptations of his works. The rivalry between brothers is the representation of the rivalry between nations and among the peoples of the same nation. Prosper final realization is the realization that the American nation had to come to terms: brother should forgive brother or be condemned to a life over fear. This theme has been and is still current as we can find through history books or by checking the news.

Humans have always searched for guidance and explanations for metaphysical issues; afterwards, "We are such stuff / As dreams are made on, and our little life / Is rounded with a sleep" (*The tempest* 4. 1. 156-158); humans merge concrete and abstract, fantasy and reality, and the key for dealing with these elements is balance. Unlike Prospero, who gives up his magic because he had fulfilled his intentions, Prosper gives up his magic because he finds the balance he needs: the man of thoughts and the man of action. Ariel follows the same path, his will of action is balanced when he realizes he cannot turn his back to his people's magical tradition.

The final and most important difference between Bender's production and Shakespeare's work is the realization that colonialism, in any configuration, is a force of oppression. Of course, the Bard did not have the post-colonial view we (privileged?) share, which is the view of colonialism undressed of its idealistic aura: an oppressive system that kills one's freedom and will in order to please the dominant subject. Prosper recognizes Ariel as an equal and friend, Miranda as someone who deserves to govern her own life, and Gator Man as the rightful owner of his own territory. These acknowledgements may sound pleonastic, but they are exactly the "redundancies" the colonialist regime ignores. Therefore, we could say that Bender's film is not a byproduct of the Shakespeare's *The tempest*; it is a production that completes the play.

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