

## "The Tempest"

Discovery is the most essential aspect of the human experience. It allows us to develop deep understandings of the previously unknown, or may challenge our thoughts, perceptions and attitudes. This concept is often explored in literature, such as in Shakespeare's "The Tempest" and "Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Ultimately, these texts demonstrate that the process of discovery involves uncovering what is hidden and reconsidering what ~~is~~ is known, and how we respond <sup>to it</sup> <sup>is</sup> crucial in shaping who we become.

Reflection can be a valuable tool for discovery, as it allows us to reconsider what is known and challenges our previously held thoughts, attitudes and perceptions. "The Tempest" explores themes of forgiveness and mercy, which require the characters to reflect on the past actions and reconsider what is known. Prospero is forced to confront his lack of humanity when Ariel questions his treatment of his enemies, saying "I would feel sorry for



them, were I human". The riposte becomes the catalyst for Prospero's reflection and realisation that "the vanity is in virtue rather than vengeance". The antithesis of "virtue" and "vengeance" highlights that sometimes we make mistakes, but through reflection and reconsidering what is known, we can right our wrongs. Shakespeare further this concept through the character Alonso, who is forced to confront his betrayal of Prospero. Instead of punishing Alonso for his misdeeds, Prospero gives him a "hearty" welcome. The connotation of "hearty" conveys Prospero's sincerity and demonstrates how deeply our discoveries may alter us. Prospero's kindness forces Alonso to reflect upon his actions, reconsider what is known, and ultimately ask Prospero "pardon me my wrongs". Shakespeare demonstrates the importance of reflection as a tool for discovery, as often we can make deeply personal and altering discoveries by reconsidering what is known. He challenges us to reflect upon our own decisions and actions and be open-minded to reconsidering our beliefs.



By discovering what is hidden, we gain a deeper understanding of the unknown in the wider world, as well as in ourselves. The poem "Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson explores this concept. The poem is a dramatic monologue, told from the perspective of Ulysses, the King of Ithaca. Ulysses travelled and explored the unknown world, and has now "known and seen many cities of men: councils, climates, governments" and so on. The alliteration of "councils" and "climates" as well as the litting style Tennyson employs, convey the deep understanding of the world Ulysses has developed as a result of uncovering what was previously hidden. However, his most major discovery is his own life's purpose; "to chase knowledge like a shooting star". The simile conveys Ulysses longing to uncover more of the hidden world, as well as the limited time he has to do so. Ulysses' imminent death is referenced repeatedly throughout the poem, such as the symbolic "long day wanes: the slow moon climbs". The effect



of this is it builds a sense of urgency and a need to seek out discoveries before it is too late. ~~Ulysses~~ Ulysses accepts that "death ends everything" but is determined to "drink life to the lees". The alliteration of "life" and "lees" emphasises the importance of living life to the fullest through discovery, and the phrase also serves as a metaphorical bottle of wine; Ulysses is determined to drink the last drop. Tennyson intends for the audience to follow Ulysses example and be open to discoveries of all kinds, no matter what age. In the final line, Ulysses explains that his "will to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield" sustains him. The use of iambic pentameter emphasises the verbs "strive... seek... find... not... yield", reinforcing the need to actively seek discoveries and uncover what is hidden. ~~Ulysses~~ Ultimately, Tennyson conveys the value of uncovering what is hidden as a process of both personal <sup>discovery</sup> and discovery of the wider world. We see the need to be open-minded and proactive in making discoveries in order to understand the world, and



ourselves.

The process of discovery involves uncovering what is hidden and reconsidering what is known, and how we respond to these discoveries is dictated by our past experiences. Shakespeare explores this perspective on discovery in his play "The Tempest". In Caliban's final speech, he claims "I'll be wise henceforth". The decision is the product of his uncovering of Trinculo and Stephano's betrayal. The connotations of wise suggest that he will be transformed by his discovery for the better however, Shakespeare's portrayal of Caliban forces the audience to question if he will actually become more deceitful and distrusting, as a result of his past experiences. Similarly, Miranda's discovery of the King and his courtiers is met with her exclamation of "O wonder! How beautiful mankind is!... O brave new world!" Her innocence leads her to respond with a sense of wonder, although it is ironic she is describing



treasonous betrayers. Shakespeare contrasts Caliban's response to discovery with Miranda's in order to outline that our past experiences greatly shape how we respond to new discoveries. In the process of uncovering what is hidden and reconsidering what is known, we must be aware of how our past influences are impacting upon our judgements. By demonstrating this concept, Shakespeare empowers his audience to consider if the ramifications of our discoveries are positive or negative, as well as highlighting that the process of discovery involves uncovering what is hidden and reconsidering what is known.

~~Over~~ The process of discovery is crucial in shaping both our understanding of the world and of ourselves. Regardless of whether this process involves uncovering something hidden or reconsidering what is known, we must be wary of the ramifications, and yet open to discovery. By exploring this concept in literature



we are empowered to understand the impact of discovery. We see the value of reflection in reconsidering what is known, and we recognize the importance of uncovering what is hidden. Ultimately, we see that discovery is an essential part of the human experience, as it shapes our thoughts, beliefs, values and attitudes, and <sup>ultimately</sup> shapes who we are.

(\*) Shakespeare also uses setting to convey that, although the discovery was unexpected in Prospero, it was necessary for him to reconsider his actions in order to learn, change and grow. On the island, Prospero lives in a cave, literally in the dark and figuratively unable to see clearly his abuses of power. Through setting, Shakespeare conveys that, only after Prospero left the cave, could he become enlightened and reconsider what is known. By extension, we, <sup>the audience,</sup> should always strive to see clearly and reconsider our ideas, thoughts and beliefs in

order to change for the better.)