



Re – Reading Shakespeare A Post – Colonial Reading Of The Play The Tempest

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Abstract

One of the most important factors influencing the world in which we have lived is colonialism. It was a supremacy policy that entails subjugating one superior nation to another inferior nation. Typically, colonisers are interested both in appropriating the markets, labor, and resources of the colonised region and in imposing socio-cultural, religious, and linguistic frameworks on the native people. One of Shakespeare's most well-known dramas, *The Tempest*, explores aspects of colonial life, particularly via the interaction between the colonist Prospero and the native Caliban. The purpose of this paper is to examine the colonist's attitude toward the native and how he mocks them, as well as the native's rebellion and revolution against such mistreatment, which led to hatred, scorn, loathing, cunning, and enmity because of the settler's perception of their superiority over the natives' inferiority.

Keywords: Colonialism, Prospero, Caliban, Shakespeare, Superiority.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the word colonialism is derived from the Latin word "Colonia," which means "farm" or "settlement," and refers to the Romans who established themselves in other countries while retaining their citizenship. As a result, the OED refers to it as a settlement in a new nation. Colonialism was not always the same process over the world, but it forced native populations and newcomers into some of the most difficult and painful interactions ever recorded in human history (Ania, 1998).

World history is rife with instances of societies progressively enlarging by annexing neighbouring lands and establishing their populations there (Margaret Kohn, 2014). The modern world is shaped by this phenomenon. Since the beginning of Greek, Roman, Moorish, and Ottoman settlements, to mention just a few of the most prominent instances, it is not a recent observable truth. Therefore, colonialism is not confined to a certain time or location. Nevertheless, due of scientific advancements in navigation that allowed for the rule of more remote regions of the world in the sixteenth century, colonialism underwent a significant transition. The British took credit for a number of developments in the colonies, including economic growth, law and order, an uncorrupted government, free institutions, civil liberties, the cessation of communal and tribal fighting, and the construction of infrastructure that drew in British and foreign capital (Johnson, Robert, 2003). When it became feasible to transport huge populations across the ocean and preserve political sovereignty despite geographic dispersion, the modern European colonial policy emerged. For instance, because the large majority of the colonists knew English, English evolved as the official language of the United States (Darrell, 2010).

Shakespeare, in particular, was particularly impacted by colonialism in the realm of writing. In *The Tempest* Shakespeare clearly attempted to address one of the most contentious and important subjects of his time throughout the play, expressing his own position and viewpoint on the subject. Shakespeare was genuinely motivated by Columbus's discovery of America. His imaginative portrayal of the exploration of new geographical areas and the explorers' authority over those territories essentially sums up what we currently understand about the empirical nature of colonialism and its scope. For instance, Prospero used his knowledge and power to exert strong control over the country and its residents in *The Tempest*. As a result, *The Tempest* has in large part prompted critics, historians, and other writers to identify it as one of the most significant earlier works depicting the core characteristics of colonialism. Shakespeare presented Prospero as a settler. One of Shakespeare's most compelling characters is Prospero. It is impossible for Prospero's personality, his deeds and logic, or the way he treats the local, to inspire either condemnation or conviction of colonialism. Shakespeare would portray Prospero as arrogant, a dictator, and forceful to demonstrate that such colonial methods are extremely uncivil and unacceptable if he were to seek to criticise colonialism. For instance, Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda is a prime illustration of his impulsive behaviour and lack of societal restraint. Critics claim that Prospero is a model of a civilised man who rightfully establishes and upholds law and order on the island

and in the little society that he, Miranda, Ariel, and Caliban form. Shakespeare demonstrates in *The Tempest* that Prospero is the leader of the island not because he deliberately sought that position, but rather because he is the most qualified candidate given his education, civilised outlook, and enlightenment. Prospero's address to Caliban was a powerful representation of these beliefs. "I felt sorry for you, worked hard to get you to talk, and gave you lessons every hour. One way or another, I gave your intentions words that made them clear while you, barbaric creature, could not understand what you were trying to say and instead gabbled like a thing most uncivilised." (3.5)

Prospero illustrates the value and benefits of his stay on the island for Caliban in this section. It demonstrates the colonists' mentality and their superiority over the aboriginal people. Prospero, however, may have seemed to the readers from an altogether other angle as merciless, cruel, harsh, usurping other people's rights, greedy, and egoistical. "The colonist aggressively views the native people as labourers, domestic staff, followers, and travellers in addition to treating them as slaves" (Ania 198). The colonial masters were typically described as administrators, soldiers, merchants, settlers, travellers, writers, domestic staff, missionaries, teachers, and scientists. Caliban is a lower being in Prospero's eyes. He genuinely thinks that Caliban's purpose in life is to serve and adore Prospero's order, not to complain or express any irritation with his task. Additionally, Caliban ought to be appreciative of Prospero for teaching him and rescuing him from the barbarism.

A brutal aspect of colonialism is that "natives" were considered inferior, scarcely human, closer to animals than to civilised people, and were ignored, treated as a minor inconvenience, walled off from view or physical intrusion, or made the target of genocidal projects, according to British colonialist views of the American natives or Irish as being lazy, uncivilised, impulsive, and thieves (Fiona and Lionel, 2011). It is clear from *The Tempest* that Prospero initially develops a tender bond with Caliban as Caliban addresses him "When you first arrived on the island, you grabbed me and made a big deal out of me. You would give me water that had berries in it and teach me how to identify bigger lights and smaller ones that burn during the day and at night. So I started to adore you " (act I, scene ii, line 335) and later he takes advantages out of him. While the text implies that his physical appearance is disfigured and that he is lecherous and deceitful, he is articulate in his protestations against Prospero and others' abuse and has some of the play's most beautiful passages,

particularly when he describes the island. As soon as Prospero gives up power of the island in exchange for education, Caliban learns that Prospero sees him as a second-class citizen who is only suited for service.

As a result, the native forcefully exhibits many forms of rejection and opposition to the colonists' hostile abuse and disdain. It is possible to think of Ariel and Caliban as "the substantial objects" of the coloniser, and their conflicting attitudes toward their superior mirror their inconsistent behaviour. Both were obviously mistreated by their master, but they each elicit a different pattern of response based on their innate tendencies as well as their unique situations. Some indigenous believe that the only effective strategy for achieving independence and freedom is via nonviolent resistance. In other words, using violence and conflict is less useful and effective than using diplomatic means.

Ariel expertly illustrates this calm philosophy as a result. Without a doubt, Ariel longs excessively to be liberated and autonomous from Prospero's tyranny and humiliation. But he discovers that his diplomatic performance and attitude might help him attain such independence and freedom. His unwavering readiness to serve Prospero and submit to his authority on the condition that over a period of time, Prospero should grant him independence, serves as a representation of this subtle approach to achieving such freedom. Ariel appears to develop his own identity as an obedient, a submissive, and flexible subject via his first experience. He speaks and approaches Prospero in a manner that is very comparable to that of a slave who entirely and unreservedly obeys his master.

However, other locals approach their opposition to the colonisers from a completely different angle. They discovered that using violence and resistance to coloniser tyranny is the most efficient and useful approach to achieve liberation and independence. This is the argument Caliban made when he resisted Prospero. Caliban uses conflict as the most effective means of obtaining freedom to express his hatred and opposition. The man-monster rebels against Prospero by claiming, "This island's is mine, by Sycorax my mother, which thou takest from me," after being brutally tortured for a protracted period of time. As a result, Caliban uses the opportunity to insult and curse his master: "As nasty dew as ever my mother swept with raven's feather from unwholesome fen Drop on both of you! A southwest wind will hit you and hurt you all over!" (I, ii, 321-24)

A large portion of Caliban's discourse is filled with apparent animosity against Prospero, which strongly suggests that their relationship is toxic. As a result, the play prominently presents and uses the full argument made by the indigenous people against the invasive civilization. Caliban's attitude of disdainful rebellion starkly contrasted with Ariel's self-effacing eagerness to serve Prospero. Contrary to Ariel, Caliban is not assured of his freedom, which would excuse his reverent demeanour. His revolutionary behaviour is a reaction to his sense of unfair usage and dominance.

The Tempest is focused on the complex and contentious interaction between the natives and the settlers. Prospero's approach on the island is comparable to the colonizer's mindset as he travels through the colonies. The coloniser believes that he has the right to do whatever he wants in the territory he has taken over and will not even acknowledge the presence of the natives. As a result, he thinks that since the natives aren't opposing him, he can utilise his authority to exploit the resources of the country and its inhabitants. Therefore, the established People had no choice but to submit to them and cede their territory to them.

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Shakespeare's most inventive and obviously best example of portraying colonial mindset. Many of the arguments concerning colonialism that took place a century ago are still relevant today, as colonialism today takes on a new form of economic and cultural dominance.

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