Colonialist discourse in *The Tempest*

A clear example of Caliban's subjugation is seen in George Lamming's largely autobiographical work, *The Pleasures of Exile* in which he reassessed Caliban as a victim of cultural imperialism imprisoned by his colonizer's language. Prospero uses language to control Caliban's present and limit his future - "the first important achievement of the colonizing process." Clearly language was then as it is now, instrumental in the organization and legitimisation of power relations which "involves, as one of its components, control over the constitution of meaning." As the author of one of the first modern grammars, Antonio de Nebrija said, appropriately enough in the introduction to his Gramatica in 1492, "language is the perfect instrument of empire." (Barker and Hulme 197) Lamming's concept of language is not confined to English in particular but speech and concept as a necessary avenue towards aspects of the self which cannot be reached in any other way. Caliban learns Prospero's language which is necessary to expression which in turn is essential to change but it is Prospero's vision of the future that Caliban must accept.

It comes as no surprise then that Caliban sees civilization's most basic tool as no gift at all but something in which is inscribed a power relation where the other recognizes himself as a linguistic subject of the master language. Prospero's legacy to Caliban is merely the means to curse his own fate and his oppressor's power as is evident in Caliban's outburst "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!" (I.i. 365-67) Until the middle of the twentieth century, most Shakespearean critics sided with Prospero and blamed Caliban for his own linguistic limitations. Caliban's outburst in I.ii. 365-67 legitimized this view in the sense that his resistance was seen as an irresponsible refusal of a simple educative project. Now, however those very same words of Caliban empower him with a new weapon for resistance for when he greets Prospero with a curse and continues to goad him eloquently, he incurs his master's anger and Prospero is thus provoked to curse in reply; reducing the eloquent master of civil language to the same level as that of a bad-tempered slave who indulges in curses. Furthermore, Caliban ignores his master's curses and proceeds with his own narrative, in which he accuses Prospero of being the usurper of his monarchy and initial hospitality: "I must eat my dinner / This island's mine by Sycorax my mother / which thou tak'st from me / ...For I am all the subject that you have,/ Which first was mine own King; (I.ii.333-346) Caliban's eloquence shows that indeed he has mastered enough of the lessons of civility to ensure that the labelling of him as simply savage, "a born devil on whose nature / Nurture can never stick" (IV.i.188-189) is inadequate.

Ironically, although it is language which imprisons Caliban, it is also the eloquent power of civility which liberates him, offers him a medium for resistance and allows him to know his own meaning. Janheinz Jahn has observed that Prospero's language is an instrument that can be used by Caliban to express his own culture. Prospero, of course, thinks the monster has no culture, but Caliban possesses:

a culture Prospero did not create and cannot control,
which he, Caliban has recognized as his own, but in the process [of recognition] the language is transformed, acquiring different meanings which Prospero never expected. Caliban becomes 'bilingual'. That language he shares with Prospero and the language he has minted from it are no longer identical. Caliban breaks out of the prison of Prospero's language. (Jahn 2)

Interestingly Janheinz Jahn's labelling of Caliban as 'bilingual' has a resounding ring of truth in it considering the phenomena of bilingualism that has been sweeping through previously colonized territories where former "Calibans" are now producing works using "Prospero's" language but also converting that language to their own needs for self-expression. This phenomenon is especially prominent in Africa and the Caribbean due largely to a movement called "Negritude" initiated by Léopold Sédar Senghor. The literature of Negritude enjoyed much critical success between the years of 1934 to 1948. Not content with just the current styles, some writers have tried to distance themselves still further from Prospero's colonialist influence by employing dialectical English as in Lemnuel Johnson's calypso rhythms and by writing in Gikuyu as is so bravely attempted by Kenyan author Ngugi Wa Tiong'o.

Prospero was too presumptuous in thinking that Caliban had no culture and no language because the rich and irreducible concreteness of Caliban's verse compels us to acknowledge the independence and validity of his construction of reality. We hear this in Caliban's speech - "I prithee, let
me bring thee where crabs grow; / And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-
nuts; / Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how / to snare the nimble
marmoset; I'll bring thee / To clustering filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee /
Young scamels from the rock." (II.ii.167-172)

Such imagery that is rooted in concreteness is the reality of Caliban's
world and we cannot ignore or make it vanish into silence. In his essay,
"Learning to Curse", Stephen Greenblatt so perceptively pointed out,
"Caliban's world has what we may call opacity, and the perfect emblem of
that opacity is the fact that we do not to this day know the meaning of the
word 'scamels'." (Greenblatt 31) It has been variously interpreted as "sea-
mew", "bar-tailed goodwit" and various other obscure names. The fact that
the meaning of the word continues to elude us is an indication of the
possibility that Caliban had a language before the arrival of Prospero that is,
before the imposition of Prospero's language upon Caliban which seems to
have eclipsed the slave's identity and linguistic heritage. Another instance in
the play which hints at the lost language of Caliban can be found in the
words of Miranda "I pitied thee, / Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee
each hour / ... When thou didst not, savage, / Know thine own meaning, but
wouldst gabble like / A thing most brutish." What sounded like "gabble" to
Miranda would have been Caliban's old language, the one which he used to
converse with his mother, Sycorax. There is a lot of truth in Greenblatt's
words that "Europeans in the sixteenth century found it difficult to credit
another language with opacity." (Greenblatt 32) They would rather render
the other's language transparent by either limiting or denying his existence
or by dismissing it as an obstacle to communication between peoples. It is
indeed a great fallacy to judge the other’s language or culture as inferior merely because it is different from one’s own.

However, to be fair, Meredith Anne Skura stresses the exceptions which she says were not given fair treatment by Greenblatt who made “it sound as if these exceptions were rare and were largely confined to the ‘rough illiterate dog, bartering for gold trinkets on a faraway beach’ in comparison to the ‘captain or lieutenants whose accounts we read’.” (Skura 40: 56-57) She points out that even the earliest travellers had often included Indian terms in their report and supports her argument with references to Eden’s translation of Martyr’s Decades and to Purchas’ writings among others. I feel, however she has somewhat missed Greenblatt’s point for he too writes of the remarks of such illustrious figures as Montaigne who described the Indians in a flattering light, whose language was to him a kind of pleasant speech, that had a pleasing sound and some affinity with Greek termination; and Ralegh who found the Tivitis of Guiana possessed of a most manly speech. Apart from Montaigne and Ralegh, Greenblatt also quotes many other accounts from various chroniclers. The reason he quotes so many examples is precisely to make the point that even with so many accounts in support of the colonized natives, the view that Indian speech was close to gibberish remains current in intellectual as well as popular circles at least into the seventeenth century.

This theme that language is power pervades The Tempest. To possess language and eloquence is to ensure one’s access to power because authority is not just a matter of having a voice but of voicing which
is the ability to create or be supported by powerful narratives and power is voicing for it deals with representation, the imposition of stories and the insistence on their truth. In short, language can be used as a tool for propaganda that masked power relations between the colonizer and colonized as is vividly illustrated in Prospero’s narrative for it is his version or representation of the past we have to accede to and accept as the truth. He weaves a powerful narrative, a tapestry depicting betrayal and usurpation, a shipwreck and the renewal of civil power in magic upon the obscure island and his success in being able to initiate, control and resolve the conflicts in the play is proof that he is the supervising sovereign who is able to “forge” the island in his own image and affirm his position as a beneficent master to his subjects. Therefore “for Miranda he is a strong father who educates and protects her; for Ariel he is a rescuer and taskmaster; for Caliban he is a colonizer whose refused offer of civilization forces him to strict discipline; for the shipwrecked he is a surrogate providence who corrects errant aristocrats and punishes plebeian revolt.” (Brown 59) Prospero’s narrative is recounted as something rescued out of the “dark backward and abyss of time”(1.ii.50) in which he explains how his neglect of office caused his Dukedom to be usurped by his brother and himself banished. He further tells of his fortunate landing upon the island of which he is now master. The regaining of civil power through the medium of the non-civil (magic or force) is an essentially colonialist discourse which brings with it elements of resistance in the other. For instance, the other powerful if not more compelling narrative in the play is ironically that of Caliban’s who, because he has learnt Prospero’s language, is now able to wield some degree of power and assert his birthright as seen in his eloquent outburst: “This island’s mine,..../ Which thou
tak' st from me.../ Which first was mine own King." Prospero who cannot deny the fact, quite naturally turns defensive and counterattacks Caliban by calling him a "slave" and "filth", reducing Caliban to a level lower than man. Caliban's narrative is overwhelmed by Prospero's because the native has simply no knowledge of European laws. It is Prospero, learned in statecraft and liberal arts who, by the power of his narrative alone is able to render the others voiceless or expose the inadequacies of their speech. Hence Caliban's claim to kingship is rejected on the basis that a would-be rapist, "a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick" is unfit to govern. It is a clever practical manoeuvre by Prospero to accuse Caliban of attempted rape, for it reaffirms Prospero's right to rule the island when the memory of the attempted rape functions to legitimize Prospero's takeover of power. Indeed, Prospero unwittingly makes a slip much later in the play which exposes the fact that his intention to govern the island had been present the moment he set foot on it as seen in his speech to the noblemen and aristocrats: "I am Prospero, and that very duke / Which was thrust forth of Milan: who most strangely / upon this shore..., was landed, / To be lord on't." (V.i.159-162). Such are the assumptions of a colonizer and Caliban a mere obstacle to be rid of on his way to power and revenge.

Prospero's position of authority is, however built on precarious ground, for Prospero and Miranda have indeed rewarded Caliban's guilelessness by enslaving and despising him. Had Caliban been more well-versed in the laws of ownership, he would have argued for his right to sovereignty; instead he can only exclaim with glee: "O ho, O ho! would't had been done! / Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else / This isle with
Calibans". (I.ii.351-353) Caliban's ignorance of European laws have led to a spate of revisionist readings which defend his actions whereby Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda is seen as an expression not merely of sexual but also of territorial lust, understandable in this context, for Caliban was merely exerting his power as King of the island and therefore the rightful owner of every subject and human being on it.

Furthermore, Paul Brown observed that Caliban's version of events was circumvented and his boundlessness was reencoded as rapacity. Caliban had no understanding of the concept of private bounded property as shown by his earlier overeagerness to share the secrets of the island with Prospero - "I lov'd thee, / And show'd thee all the qualities o' th 'isle." (I.ii.338-339) When Caliban is willing to share his island with others he would obviously presume that he could share Miranda too, whom he fancies - "But she as far surpasseth Sycorax..." (III.ii.100) Here Caliban's boundlessness is reinterpreted as a desire to violate the chaste virgin, who epitomised courtly property.

Prospero's narrative triumphs over Caliban's and this proof of Prospero's power to order and supervise his little colony which is manifested in his capacity to control not his, but his subject's sexuality, especially that of his slave and his daughter. Miranda is the chaste virgin to be protected from the rapist native and presented to a civil lover, Ferdinand. This concept of civil power in relation to sexuality is an important and crucial element in colonial discourse. "The other...is presented to legitimate the seizure of power by civility and to define by antithesis (rape) the proper course of civil
courtship - a channeling of desire into a series of formal tasks (Ferdinand is asked to carry wood) and finally, into courtly marriage." (Brown 63) By constantly warning the courtly lovers against truant desires (as at IV.i.15-23 and 51-54), Prospero reasserts his power to regulate sexuality. Yet his continued insistence against truant sexual desires is suggestive of a fear of his own sexuality in that he has to repress any sexual desire he feels towards Miranda if he is to pass on his heritage to the next generation. Paul Brown and Meredith Anne Skura observed that Prospero’s desire for power and revenge as well as sexual desire were easily projected onto the fishily libidinous Caliban, a walking version of Prospero’s own "thing" of darkness. Caliban then, is seen to function as a projection of Prospero’s disowned passions which may help explain why Caliban’s sin does not consist of cannibalism, to which, one assumes, Prospero was never tempted but which was a common charge levelled at New World natives.

The idea of cannibalism as a thriving practice amongst New World natives was due largely to Christopher Columbus’ perceptions of the newly discovered islands. He wrote of accounts heard from the Arawaks, inhabitants of the Northern Islands which include Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo and the Bahamas, concerning "people who had one eye in the forehead, and others whom they called 'cannibals.' Of these last, [the Arawaks] showed great fear, and when they saw that this course was being taken, they were speechless,...because these people ate them and because they were very warlike." (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 366)
The Arawaks could have been speaking out of fear and hatred of the Caribs, their more aggressive neighbours on the smaller islands to the south, namely St. Vincent, St. Croix, Martinique but whatever their intentions were at the time, we are unable to verify for it is not obvious today how Columbus came to understand the Arawaks since his only interpreter was an Arabic-speaking Jew who had been expelled from Spain in 1492 on the Santa Maria. Columbus' record was not an eyewitness account of what the Arawaks called 'cannibals' eating other people, rather it was a report of other people's words spoken in a language of which he had no prior knowledge and at best would have taken at least 6 weeks' practice to understand. Judging from this, can one not help but conclude that the first appearance of the word 'cannibals' in a European text might have been too hastily linked with the practice of eating human flesh, for there certainly is a lack of empirical evidence and the truth has been obscured by language barriers.

W. Arens in his book The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy observed that when two human groups come in contact, there is a tendency in either group to label the Other as cannibals and the implication of this charge is that the Other is denied their humanity. Arens interprets such assumptions on cannibalism as part of an intellectual process attempted "by every society to create a conceptual order based on differences in a universe of often competing neighbouring communities. In other words, one group can appreciate its own existence more meaningfully by conjuring up others as categorical opposites....In effect, this means a line is drawn between the civilized and savage modes of existence, which translate as 'we' and 'they'."(Arens 145) Indeed the European colonialists
placed much emphasis on accounts of cannibalism practised by natives in faraway lands that they seem to have quite forgotten of the possibility that their early European ancestors too could have been guilty of precisely the same cannibalistic transgressions. The Greek scholar, Herodotus, who lived in the Mediterranean when it was the centre of the European cultural universe assumed that the custom of cannibalism flourished in Eastern Europe and the ancient geographer, Strabo, had the same fear about the barbarians on the western fringe for he wrote of the Irish: "Concerning this island I have nothing certain to tell, except that the inhabitants are more savage than the Britons, since they are man-eaters." (Arens 14) Contrary to Strabo's views which presented ancient Britons as more civilized, skeletal evidence have been unearthed in the Yorkshire region of Britain which displays marks of cannibalism. Brothwell, a proto-archeologist who recorded the find in his article "Cannibalism in Early Britain" which appeared in Antiquity, 1961 wrote: "It appears to me, that, in these broken skulls and disjointed bones we have the result of feasts." His assertion was based on the imperfect condition of the human skeletal remains and although he received some early support, his study on European cannibalism was soon rejected. Perhaps the boundaries of the savage mode of existence have been drawn too close for comfort because not only were the remains found in Yorkshire, they were also scarcely two thousand years old, from the Iron Age which immediately preceded the Roman era. Such a swift dismissal of European cannibalism arouses one's curiosity as to why the same strictures were not observed in the examination of more ancient remains of early man discovered in the non-western world. Perhaps the western world would rather repress such possibly incriminating evidence against them for fear of
losing their claim to moral superiority. However, it is not my aim to prove the existence of western cannibalism, rather, it is the psychological implications of the man-eating idea that is of most interest to me.

The charge of cannibalism practised by the Other was more acceptable and in the age of imperialism, carried with it a more insidious aim. Cannibalism was conceived as symbol of the ultimate in human depravity, a convenient concept that was later used by the West to initiate religious reforms and ultimately, slavery. The European missionaries had wanted to save the savages from their inhuman transgressions. It is interesting that the man-eating custom amongst Africans, Polynesians, New Guineans and American Indians is often portrayed as being rampant prior to or during these people’s “pacification” by the various agents of western civilization such as the explorer, the missionary, the trader and the colonizer all playing their roles in the civilizing mission. An early example of such a “civilizing mission” can be seen in the case of Columbus. The explorer, having been newly bestowed the rank of “Admiral of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy of the Indies” paid another visit to the New World with seventeen ships and fifteen hundred men, this time with intentions not only to explore but also to colonize. The fleet made its first landing on the unknown Southern islands inhabited by Caribs for the “pacification” of the still unsighted Caribs was a high priority and it would have been a surprise for the Admiral to see the anticipated “warlike” Caribs of Guadaloupe fleeing from their villages at the sight of the Spaniards. Perhaps the Caribs too had heard of man-eaters on distant islands.
Columbus failed in his quest for the spices and gold he had promised King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain so it was not long before the civilizing mission was perverted into a slave trade which carried with it a greater potential in terms of profit. Columbus sent the first of the captured Caribs to Spain with the message that he was doing so for the sake of their souls but his increasingly negative portrayals of the Caribs as hideous people who ate humans ensured that the gradual enslavement of the Caribs was justified. He had never really witnessed an act of cannibalism but the prejudice Columbus cultivated against “cannibals” influenced the monarchy of Spain as is evident in the official royal policy which stressed the island inhabitants' spiritual welfare and prohibited enslavement except in the case of "a certain people called Cannibals" as stated in the royal proclamation of 1503 which decreed that cannibals who spurned the sacred Catholic faith taught by the missionaries and resisted the authority of the colonizers working under the King's orders may be captured and taken to the Spanish kingdom and domains or to other places to be sold. Not surprisingly, there was an immediate scramble for profit to be made in human bondage and greater areas were gradually recognized as Carib and their enslavement legalized.

* An additional point of interest concerning cannibalism involves the Aztecs who were vanquished by the Spanish under Hernando Cortes in 1520. Like the Caribs, they too were often accused of being cannibals. Were these accusations based on fact or were they just convenient charges to facilitate the pacification of the Aztecs? After all, the existence of such an advanced civilization in the New World must have disturbed the European
psyche, more so, when it was discovered that there were similarities between the Aztec religion and Christianity. One Aztec ritual in particular, greatly resembled the Eucharist, a Catholic ritual. As part of their religious worship, the Aztec priests created dough images of their god which was distributed and eaten by those in attendance. Here, the consecrated element is bread or dough just as in the Eucharist where Christian worshippers partake of the bread and wine which symbolises the body and blood of Christ. Apart from preparing dough images of deities, the Aztecs also made similar representations of human sacrificial “victims.” The dough image of “victims” were taken home and eaten or shared with their kin and neighbours. How different is the Aztec practice of symbolic cannibalism from the concept of transubstantiation in the Eucharist? Aren’t the Europeans also guilty of symbolic cannibalism? The Aztec traditional act had flourished before the coming of the Spaniards but was observed in secret after the colonizers had condemned the ritual as a great heresy and abominable sin. Perhaps the Europeans found it difficult to accept the idea that others could have developed symbolic structures as subtle as theirs and “the first missionaries to the New World found the idea an affront to Christian dignity.”(Arens 70)

* Caliban, though he is never portrayed as a cannibal in The Tempest, shares many aspects in common with the New World inhabitants such as the Caribs and Aztecs. For instance, the name Caliban is usually regarded as a development of some form of the word “Carib” and is also widely perceived to be a simple anagram of the word “cannibal.” Therefore, although not guilty of eating human flesh, he still embodies the traits of “cannibals” in that he is
ugly, devilish, ignorant, gullible and treacherous. Cannibalism features only indirectly in *The Tempest*: as Alonso ponders on the fate of his son, he asks "What strange fish / Hath made his meal on thee?"(II.i.108-109), "a strange fish"(II.i.27) being precisely the same words Trinculo uses in his first description of Caliban. With such links to the New World, Caliban is secured firmly in the realm of colonial discourses especially since he shares an even more telling quality with the Caribs and Aztecs or even other New World natives in the sense that he resisted colonization and his rebellious streak earned him the contempt of the colonizer who then labelled him as a savage reprobate that cannot be reformed and is therefore only fit for slavery. Indeed, many of the New World inhabitants resisted colonization and religious reforms due to the inhumanity of the Spanish system. As a result, their insubordination and what was construed as depraved "cannibalistic" tendencies were convenient excuses for the colonizers to justify their enslavement. It is estimated that "between 1494 and 1508 more than three million natives died on Santo Domingo alone as a result of Spanish pacification."(Sauer 155) Whole populations of New World natives including the Arawaks, Caribs and the Aztecs were decimated either by wars, diseases or the slave trade. With the demise of these natives, the European colonizers were forced to look for new "subjects" to rule. Thus, slaves were imported from Africa and the descendants of those African slaves are now the predominant inhabitants in those formerly colonized territories. It is not surprising that the imported African slaves were also accused of cannibalism but in some quarters, the Africans were held somewhat superior to the Indians because the victims of the Africans were not sacrificed before being eaten. Therefore, "as one group of cannibals disappeared, the European
mind conveniently invented another which would have to be saved from itself by the Europeans before it was too late." (Arens 79)

Judging from the horrible fate suffered by so many colonized New World inhabitants, it is only natural that many Third World critics have taken their anti-colonial arguments further into the realm of colonial history. What right had Prospero to speak of sexual restraint and morals or spiritual salvation when his own people (the European colonizers) did not abide by it and have been guilty of far more heinous crimes in their race for imperial power? How many countries have been raped and pillaged just because the new masters felt that it was their right to do as they wished with their newfound "property"? Indeed for some critics, Caliban, a symbol for the wronged Other, pales in comparison to these conquerors and proof of this is at the end of the play when he shows us he has redeeming qualities, by learning from his mistakes and by promising in his final speech that he will "be wise hereafter, / And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass / Was I to take this drunkard for a god, / And worship this dull fool!" Antonio, the aristocrat from the so-called "civilized" world and raised with the benefits of civilization, knowingly chooses the path of evil and remains silent because he stays unrepentant and unlikely to change. Therefore though Caliban remains "natural" in contrast to "civilized" Antonio, the "monster's" desire for grace underlines the civilized world's debasement and with this, Caliban's ultimate humanity is emphasized. Interestingly, Deborah Willis has also suggested that the play's true threatening 'Other' is not Caliban, but Antonio. (280)
Further evidence which supports the humanity of Caliban can be seen in his relationship with Prospero and Miranda. Both Prospero and Miranda by educating and civilizing him have attempted what can be done only to a human. Although they came to judge Caliban as impervious to nurture, he did learn their language and he continues to serve them in wholly human ways. “We cannot miss [that is, do without] him,” Prospero reminds his daughter: “He does make our fire, / Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices / That profit us.”(I.ii.311-313) For all this, Caliban still remains in Prospero’s and Miranda’s eyes neither admirable nor an acceptable suitor.

Caliban’s perceptions of the isle are human enough. His words of comfort to the frightened Stephano and Trinculo “Be not afeared; the isle is full of noises, / Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not. / Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments / Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices” (III.ii.133-136) reveal the slave’s sensitivity to art in the form of music. Caliban’s poetic response to the music of the spirits on the island is a natural reaction born out of the human desire to be transported out of the world of slavery and pain into the world of comfort and pleasure for Caliban dreams of a heavenly realm where the clouds open “and show riches/ Ready to drop upon me, that, when I wak’d, / I cried to dream again.”(III.ii.139-141) Thus the more pleasant aspects of the imagination are sought out in order to survive the torments of reality. That the slave has imagination is evident in his mastery of the English language which he skillfully uses to curse or rail against Prospero and also in his ability to hatch a bold plot to kill his oppressor. He speaks most passionately of the anticipated murder and his thoughts take shape in a torrent of words
filled with graphic details - "Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake, / Or cut his wezand with the knife."(III.ii.88-89) Other instances of Caliban's imaginative use of language can be seen in his eloquent description of the island filled with vibrant imagery which betrays his true delight with its abundant resources- "I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow; / And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts; / Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how / To snare the nimble marmoset; I'll bring thee / To clustering filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee / Young scamels from the rock."(II.ii.167-172)

His humanity is also reinforced by his capacity to appreciate beauty. It is a rare moment in the text to witness Caliban concur with Prospero on the subject of Miranda's beauty even if the observation is not done in Prospero's presence. Caliban compares Miranda to Sycorax and utters these words of praise: "I never saw a woman, / But only Sycorax my dam and she; / But she as far surpasseth Sycorax / As great'st does least." (III.ii.98-101) Anything less than human (a monster or an animal) would not have had the consciousness to evaluate beauty what more the impulse to aspire towards beauty.

Returning to Prospero's ability to sustain his powerful narrative, we see how even his mistake, that of his own past forgetfulness due to his all-consuming devotion to private study, which led to his loss of power, is turned around to represent a fortunate fall whereby Prospero as the ruling sovereign is able to restore the peace and order of the state or situation by
correcting the errors of errant aristocrats and by charitably conferring his forgiveness upon those who have wronged him.

This power of Prospero's narrative is reinforced through repetition and Prospero's constant reminding of Ariel and his indebtedness to the master operates as a mode of symbolic violence. There is an underlying power relation operating here because Ariel is paradoxically bound in service by this constant reminder of Prospero's gift of "freedom" to him, in releasing him from imprisonment in a tree. Prospero reinforces this bondage by both a promise to repeat the act of release when a period of servitude has ended and a promise to repeat the act of imprisonment if service is not forthcoming. To do this, Prospero employs the methods of the previous regime of Sycorax who was the evil other. She was a powerful witch, deliberately endowed with many of the qualities of classical witches. She practised "natural magic" and exploited the "universal sympathies" (Kermode 40) for evil purposes but her power was limited by the fact that she could only command devils and the lowest order of spirits. Prospero's magic, on the other hand, is Art that is used to achieve supremacy over the natural world by holy magic which is "an achievement of an intellect pure and conjoined with the powers of the gods." (Kermode 47) Clearly Sycorax's black magic contrasts with that of Prospero's in that it was viciously coercive while Prospero's is benign. Yet when Prospero constantly threatens Ariel of reimprisonment in a tree there is an underlying threat of precisely this coercion. Therefore, can Prospero's magic be "white magic" if he too is potentially capable of such cruel punishment as that meted out earlier by
Sycorax? It is clear that Prospero is not above indulging in the obscene habit of dredging up the past and turning it into a weapon for blackmail.

We often doubt Prospero's credibility as interpreter of the irretrievable past for much of what is crucial took place before the play began and his main source, Ariel, having spent a dozen years confined in a cloven pine can scarcely be deemed an impartial witness to testify on Sycorax's behalf. Fuelled by the unflattering remarks from a resentful Ariel and coupled by the need to legitimize his sovereignty on the island, Prospero passes quick judgement on her as he does her son. Hailing from Algiers, she is the African witch whose close associations with devils have made her diabolical, a demon ruled by her primitive, inhuman passions. Sycorax the African, inevitably suffers the fate of the Other neatly stereotyped as evil, depraved, in need of religious enlightenment and is ultimately silenced. Like Caliban, she is portrayed as the antithesis of Prospero but is he all that noble? One senses that Prospero has unwittingly undermined his authority when he says: "I have bedimm'd / The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds, / ...and rifted Jove's stout oak / With his own bolt; the strong-bas'd promontory / Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up / The pine and cedar: graves at my command / Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth / By my so potent Art." (V.i.41-50) This is not the first instance of his egotism and his words conjure up the image of an upstart magician who perhaps had taken his role as 'god o' th' isle' too literally. He subjects the dead to an unnatural resurrection. It is an act of conjuring which is akin to Sycorax's brand of "black magic" and by indulging in it, hasn't Prospero also transgressed the beliefs of religious orthodoxy?
Judging from this, one can say that there is an identification between the regimes, a fact further strengthened by the biographical similarities of both rulers, for instance, both are magicians, both have been exiled because of their practices and both have nurtured children on the isle in a one-parent family structure (mother-son; father-daughter). The most obvious difference between both regimes would be that the white regime is simply more powerful and flexible. It is flexible in its capacity to produce and utilise an Other, Sycorax in order to attain Ariel's compliance to his continued subjugation.

Such inconsistencies in Prospero's character serve to reveal that although undoubtedly his narrative is the voice of authority in the play, there exists beneath such eloquence, sites of resistance that could erode his claims to power and would especially put his noble character in a bad light. When Prospero asks Miranda if she remembers anything of the time before their exile, we are struck by the fact that the first image of her infancy is that of her four or five maids and not of her mother. She has absolutely no recollection of her mother nor does she raise the question until Prospero's ambiguous way of explaining relations forces her to ask "Sir, are you not my father?" to which he unemotionally and in an almost complacent tone replies "Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and / She said thou wast my daughter."(I.ii.56-57) It is the first and last reference we have to Miranda's mother who was presumably Prospero's wife. Why is he so brief and detached in his description of his wife? Did he not love her? It has taken him twelve years to make up for lost time but his priority lies in giving his
daughter a summary account of events which led to his brother's conspiracy with the King of Naples.

One would think that Prospero's account of history is no more than a schematic arrangement of necessary and self-protective emphasis. He seems less interested in Miranda as a person than as an instrument for royal marriage that would restore his good name and position of power in royal circles. Evidence of this is seen in his most insistent lessons of chastity, and more subtly in the way he has equipped her with basic prejudices, particularly against Caliban. He raises her against a moral background of opposites where Caliban represents the exact antithesis of virtue, nobility, chastity and beauty, hence preparing her to react unsurprisingly in awe and wonder at the more physically attractive Ferdinand.

Prospero has subtly conditioned Miranda to abhor and reject Caliban precisely because a marriage between them would bring no political gains. Miranda is the unknowing although willing victim of Prospero's scheme and her position is not unlike that of Princess Claribel, Ferdinand's sister, in that she too has been used as a pawn to secure a political match which would be advantageous to the parties involved. The significant difference here is that Claribel agrees to marry an African after much emotional torment "Weigh'd between loathness and obedience,..."(II.i.126) Stephano's description of the situation is rather derogatory for he uses the phrase "loose her to an African"(II.i.121) thereby demonizing the African as a lustful animal seeking a sacrificial prey that would satisfy his appetites. In both cases, the non-European, represented by Caliban and the African, is portrayed as
embodies moral disorder and having rampant "primitive" or "animal" sexual desires. Perhaps a marriage between Caliban and Miranda would be unthinkable for fear of contamination but in the case of Claribel, no matter how repulsive the idea was, they were willing to accept and tolerate Claribel's marriage in Tunis because it would bring economic and political gain to them. Judging from this, wouldn't Caliban have had a good chance of a political match with Miranda if he too had been as rich and powerful as the Tunis king?

Nevertheless, in most societies, there are rules that prohibit marriage between one who is too close (incest) or one who is too distant (outside the zone of normal exchanges such as one who is of a different race). Therefore, although the marriage between Claribel and the African has been reluctantly accepted, it is still seen as a transgression, bound to be attended by misfortune which is why the match is later hinted at as being the cause of the misfortunes that have befallen the King of Naples and his train. For all their differences, Alonso and Sebastian are in agreement on this point and from their dialogue we see a connection between the distant marriage, misfortune and death as in Alonso's words "Would I had never / Married my daughter there! for, coming thence / My son is lost, and, in my rate, she too, / Who is so far from Italy removed / I ne'er again shall see her." (II.i. 103-107) Alonso's insistence on the remoteness of North Africa from Southern Europe seems a little absurd because elsewhere, the characters in Antony and Cleopatra travel back and forth between Alexandria and Rome without a second thought but such exaggeration is important for it suggests that in order for a black-white marriage to succeed, it must be removed as far as
possible from the old world in which Shakespeare had earlier demonstrated its inevitable failure - the tragic marriage between Othello and Desdemona. In The Tempest, the fair princess Claribel is sent to Tunis, the territory of her black prince, where she and the royal entourage become disorientated until "no man was his own" that each has to find a new centre and a new self. It is presumed that Claribel will eventually discover her new self in Tunis thereby assuring the success of her marriage away from Western interference and Old World values.

Frank Kermode in his introduction to The Tempest spoke of Prospero's art as 'the disciplined exercise of virtuous knowledge,' 'the ordination of civility, the control of appetite, the transformation of nature by breeding and learning; it is even, in a sense, the means of Grace.' (Kermode 48) The primary requirements of his art are learning and temperance yet it is ironical that although Prospero constantly curbs his passions, "Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury" (V.i.25-27), we see him angry, suspicious and anxious for most of the play. We have already seen his treatment of Ariel whom he angrily accuses of lying and calls a "malignant thing."
(I.ii.257) At the time of his narrative to Miranda, he manages to irritate his normally calm and benign daughter when he impatiently questions her accusingly all within the space of a short time "Dost thou attend me?"(I.ii.78); "Thou attend'st not?"(I.ii.87); "Dost thou hear?"(I.ii.105) until Miranda is forced to answer him with a slight hint of irritation: "Your tale, sir, would cure deafness."(I.ii.106)
Furthermore when Caliban cannot be cowed so easily by Prospero’s threats, the threats and invectives “proliferate in the kind of sputtering, deadly earnest rage” (Hunt 22: 298) as demonstrated in the following samples:— “Thou earth, thou! Speak!”; “Come, thou tortoise!”; “Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself / Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!”; “Thou most lying slave, whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have used thee (Filth as thou art) with human care”; “Abhorred slave / which any print of goodness wilt not take, / Being capable of all ill!”; “Thy vile race / Though thou didst learn, had that in’t which good natures / could not abide to be with”; “Hagseed, hence!”; “Shrug’st thou, Malice?”. Clearly, far from practising temperance, Prospero is frequently given to outbursts of temper and curses especially in his treatment of Ariel and Caliban, his subordinates. Even Ferdinand is not spared, for Prospero practises upon the young prince that loathsome habit (which he has always indulged in at Caliban’s expense) of cutting people down to size as illustrated in his words to Miranda: “Thou think’st there is no more such shapes as he,/ having seen him and Caliban: foolish wench! / To th’ most of men this is Caliban,/ And they to him are angels.”(I.ii.481-484)

Prospero, when seen in this light, lacks ‘civility’ and ‘Grace’ particularly in his dealings with those he deems his inferiors. In fact he trusts no one with the authority that he has achieved in his life that he comes to somewhat resemble Caliban’s mother, “The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy / Was grown into a hoop” (I.ii.258-259) For all his providential powers, Prospero’s magic is used chiefly to subdue and manipulate, as
Caliban emphasizes: "I must obey. His art is of such pow'r / It would control my dam's god, Setebos, / And make a vassal of him." (1.ii.374-376)

Prospero's consciousness recalls one to the fact that the play is actually about subtle revenge for the magician must have harboured a great deal of resentment about his treatment back in Milan and after twelve years of exile, the fires of his anger would have been stoked long enough for him to want to injure the parties that treated him so badly. Indeed, he anticipates the act of revenge with much relish:- "Now does my project gather to a head: / My charms crack not; my spirits obey; and time / Goes upright with his carriage."(V.i.1-3) Buoyant in his moment of triumph after having set the hounds on Caliban and the co-conspirators, it seems nothing will stop Prospero but he is stopped, by of all things, a spirit. It is Ariel who enlightens Prospero with the central insight that "the rarer action is / In virtue than in vengeance"(V.i.27-28) for Ariel says "if you now beheld them, your affections / Would become tender....Mine would, sir, were I human."(V.i.16-19) His words move Prospero so much that Ariel is immediately commanded to release the disorientated aristocrats. Of course it is Prospero who makes the ultimate choice of forgiveness and we have to give him credit for that, yet it was Ariel who had to prompt him towards the path of reconciliation and there is a nagging doubt whether Prospero would have chosen the nobler path on his own initiative.

Therefore the more one thinks of Prospero, the more one questions the superficial impression of him as a superhuman character and begins to see the sleight of hand behind the magic act. That his magic is essentially
Veneer is evident for power is commonly symbolized by a man's apparel. Clothes make the man and in The Tempest, Prospero dons a rich glistening garment which with the aid of his books of spells enables him to exercise his magical powers to the height of their potency, making him into an omnipotent and omniscient godlike figure. A man's apparel can swathe him with an aura of power but it can also envelop him with a false sense of security. Take the case of Antonio who has wrongfully supplanted his brother, Prospero, but feels not the sting of conscience:- "if 'twere a kibe, / 'Twould put me to my slippers."(II.i.271-272) Rather, he sees himself the better man as Duke of Milan and justifies this by using his clothes as a metaphor: "look how well my garments sit upon me; / Much feater than before."(II.i.267-268) So fitting are Antonio's garments indeed that he has the audacity to inspire Sebastian to emulate him in his fineries by instigating Sebastian to murder his brother, the King of Naples. Take away Antonio's title and his clothes of office and we see a ruthless, power-hungry, morally degenerate man.

Like Antonio, Prospero's failings seem non-existent but if one were to strip Prospero of his robe, his magic books as well as Ariel, where would he be? Reduced to a mere mortal, an aged former Duke of Milan conventionally dressed in hat and rapier.(V.i.84) As Caliban has very bitterly yet aptly pointed out in his instruction to Stephano on how to murder Prospero (there is a ring of truth): "Remember / First to possess his books; for without them He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not / One spirit to command. They all do hate him / As rootedly as I."(III.ii.90-93) Caliban has very rightly assessed him as a mere human being and not a very noble one at that for he calls
Prospero a “sot” which could be interpreted as one who is habitually drunk on magic so much so that without it, he would be dull or an impotent fool like Caliban. Caliban sees the man behind the magic as a wilful tyrant who must have his way but at least Caliban manages to rise above his hatred when he places Prospero as his equal and does not demonize him as Prospero and Miranda have done to their slave.

After such a detailed examination of Prospero, we begin to distrust the former Duke. Why should we believe that the people of Milan really loved him, for it would have been difficult to love a rich and absent leader. Prospero too is partly to be blamed for his brother’s treachery, for if he had wanted to retain the honour and privilege of being Duke, he should have carried out his responsibilities and if his deepest interest lay in the pursuit of knowledge, he should have told the people that his studies would be to their benefit and made the decent choice of abdication. Seen in this light, can we then blame Antonio for usurping the rights and privileges of the Duke? Prospero sees this act of usurpation as well as Caliban’s failed coup as instances of ingratitude, but in Caliban’s case such ingratitude is of a most bestial nature for Caliban upon whom Prospero has bestowed language has conspired ‘with men not much better than himself to sabotage the divine hierarchy of which he [Prospero] is the most privileged on earth!’. (Lamming 116)

Is it truly ingratitude that bothers Prospero or is it because Prospero is really aware of a shattering kind of self-knowledge that he actually deserves such ingratitude because he did previously neglect his official
duties and also because he did steal Caliban's birthright and deceived him into slavery? George Lamming has very profoundly elaborated Prospero's real sin, which is not hatred, for that would imply an emotional involvement, but the calculated and habitual annihilation of the person whose presence you can ignore but never exclude.

Nevertheless, Prospero remains master until the end of the play where after he has punished and enlightened those who have wronged him, he strangely withdraws from his position of power to retire and die where he says "Every third thought shall be my grave." (V.i.311) It seems petty that Prospero has lived his life for the sole aim of revenge, but his wish for the advantageous marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand is understandable and fortunately they seem to have found true love in each other. Still one is left with a disturbing doubt as to whether Prospero really did care for the people of Milan or for that matter his wife or whether he really cared more about the reinstatement of his power and influence through his daughter's royal marriage to Ferdinand, son to the King of Naples.

In the midst of reproaching the conspirators for plotting against his life, Prospero utters the ambiguous words "this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine."(V.i.275-276) In the literal sense, Prospero might simply be claiming possession of Caliban, designating the slave as his property, an object for his own utility, a darkness from which he may salvage self-knowledge. Perhaps too, as Greenblatt observed in his essay, "Learning to Curse", the word "acknowledge" implies some moral responsibility, as when the Lord, in King James translation of Jeremiah, exhorts men to
“acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed the Lord thy God.” 
(3:13) (Greenblatt 26) Interestingly, even as Prospero’s words affirm his 
claim to Caliban, they seem ironically to create an identification between 
Prospero and Caliban in the sense that it was Prospero who created the 
malcontent Caliban when he imposed his will, his moral values and his 
language upon the native. Caliban has become the “mirror” that reflects the 
dark qualities of Prospero’s that have been projected onto him such as 
Prospero’s repressed sexuality, cruelty and treachery. Again, there is irony 
in Prospero’s repudiation of the slave he has created into his own image.

The irony is further hammered in when seen in a wider context. This 
is evident in the argument of Aimé Césaire who has very cleverly noted in 
his work, Discourse on Colonialism, the boomerang effect that was the result 
of colonization. The phenomenon of:

Colonization... dehumanizes even the most civilized man; 
that colonial activity, colonial enterprise, colonial conquest, 
which is based on contempt for the native and justified 
by that contempt, inevitably tends to change him who undertakes it; that the colonizer; who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as 
an animal, and tends objectively to transform himself into an animal. (20)

Hence the equation that arises according to Césaire in his work Discourse 
on Colonialism is colonization equals “thingification”(21) for Miranda calls 
him a being who “wouldst gabble like a thing most brutish.”(l.i.356) In the 
process of colonization, the native is turned into an instrument of production.
The idea of Caliban as the reflector of Prospero's darker nature is taken into the world of psychoanalysis where Caliban for the first time in Shakespeare shows "will" or narcissistic self-assertion, in its simplest form as the original "grandiosity" or "megalomania" of a child.(N.Holland 521-533) Shakespeare is said to have made Caliban into a seeming child whose ego is a "body ego" as Freud said, a "subject" whose "self" is defined by the body. There is a childishly amoral glee in Caliban's sexuality, as seen in his admission of the attempted rape, "O ho, O ho, would't had been done!"(l.ii.351) and a childish exaggeration in his dreams of revenge, "brain him / ...or with a log / Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake, / Or cut his wezand with thy knife."(lll.ii.86-89) Like a child he thinks often about his mother and like a child he was taught language. He is enraged like an imperious child when his kingship is usurped by Prospero who had first stroked him and then disciplined him for Caliban objects to being made a subject. Psychoanalysts interpret this as the rebuke made by every child who begins life being pampered by his mother and who is then subjected to the strict disciplinary demands of the father. Childhood is the period in which anyone can experience the slave's side of the master / slave relation, its indignities, and the dreams of revenge it can instill. While this is appropriate and acceptable in a baby, all these traits simmering in Caliban will grow with age and ultimately find their release in violent ways. Childishness has been used as a defense for colonial power in that Prospero takes on the role of father figure to his subject "children." However, it is a defense which itself is revealing. Caliban's childishness is an aspect of the Other in which Shakespeare seems very interested. For instance, in his book, _Black Skin White Masks_, Frantz Fanon observed that "a white man addressing a negro
behaves exactly like an adult with a child and starts smirking, whispering, patronizing and cozening."(31) Childishness is a major source of Caliban's defining characteristics and of what makes his relationship with Prospero so explosive. However, it is important to note that Caliban, even at his most evil and treacherous merely succeeds in coming across as a "Comic Vice", a crude conspirator"(Berger Jr. 260) compared to the more diabolically sophisticated Antonio. Prospero must have been initially attracted to Caliban's childish innocence and now it is Caliban's childish lawlessness that enrages him. To a man like Prospero who has spent his life learning self-discipline, Caliban would seem like a child who must be controlled, and who, like a child defies discipline with a murderous rage. Prospero then treats Caliban as he would treat the wilful child in himself. Therefore when Prospero acknowledges the child-like Caliban, "this thing of darkness as his own" and without relinquishing hierarchy, he moves towards accepting the child in himself rather than trying to dominate and erase that child in order to retain his adult authority.

Another meaning that can be culled from Prospero's ambiguous words in V.i.275-276 lies in the relation between the colonizer and the Other. Caliban wins a somewhat brief victory when Prospero acknowledges his slave "this thing of darkness" as his own because Prospero's announcement identifies himself with Caliban, the projection of his dark side, hereby reducing him to the same level as the slave. Prospero then is in danger of becoming the other and risk being relegated to the margins. In fact this is what colonial discourse has led to in previously colonized territories for there has been a subversion in the hegemony whereby the former Calibans of
today have a tendency, whether consciously or unconsciously, to make their world the new centre as opposed to the old one, Europe. Such actions would defeat the whole purpose of colonial discourse which was meant to bring an awareness of the power relations that exist in this world and to somehow work towards a reconciliation and a balance of power relations between both sides rather than a reinstatement of a new reverse hierarchy of power. Interestingly, the play vaguely reflects these problems of power in the sense that when Prospero speaks of retiring and dying, his powerful narrative loses its strength and becomes a mere entertainment to while away the last night on the isle. Prospero is also reduced in the epilogue to beg for the release of applause "The play's 'ending' in renunciation and restoration" [is a] "final ambivalence for it is the mystification and potential erosion of the colonial discourse."(Brown 68) If this powerful discourse is finally reduced to the stuff of dreams, then it is still in the process of dreams, the site of a struggle for meaning.