

# Racial Conflict and Colonial Overview in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

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## Abstract:

This research article endeavours to dissect the intricate interplay of race and colonialism within William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Through the lens of postcolonial theory, the study seeks to unravel the colonial perspective embedded in the play, exploring how Shakespeare navigates racial dynamics, power structures, and linguistic nuances in the context of early 17th-century England. Focusing on characters like Caliban and Ariel, the analysis illuminates the complexities of racial representation and resistance, shedding light on the enduring relevance of Shakespeare's exploration of colonial encounters and their impact on identity and power dynamics. This paper contributes to the broader discourse on race, literature, and colonialism, offering insights into the playwright's nuanced engagement with the complexities of the colonial world. This research article seeks to unravel the intricate portrayal of race in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* through the lens of colonial perspectives. Grounded in historical context and informed by postcolonial theory, the analysis explores how Shakespeare engages with race, colonialism, and power dynamics in a narrative that unfolds on a mysterious island. By examining characters such as Caliban and Ariel, this study aims to illuminate the complexities of racial representation and its intersection with colonial ideologies within the context of early modern England.

**Keywords:** Colonialism, Resistance, Literature, Mysterious, Representation, Ideologies.

A sizable population set differentiated from others based on shared physical traits is referred to as a race. One of William Shakespeare's most well-known works of English drama is *The Tempest*. The drama depicts colonialism in a way that also includes its various facets, such as race, class, and colour. The native people in the play are oppressed and subjugated by the colonisers, and because of their racial differences, the colonised people are hegemonised. The drama portrays Caliban, the island's first resident, as an uncivilised and barbaric person. Prospero, the play's primary male protagonist, is an outsider who nonetheless rules over the other characters like a colonial lord. Shakespeare's play also demonstrates how colonial control dehumanises people. The power dynamics between white and black, colonizer-colonized, master-slave, and civilized-uncivilized are all depicted in *The Tempest*. The goal of this essay is to demonstrate how *The Tempest's* colonial tactics. With the aid of Prospero and Caliban's characters, it will also symbolise the connection between a master and a slave. The conflicts in the play between "black" and "white," "self" and "other," and "civilised" and "uncivilised" will also be represented in the paper. The suffering of Caliban, the subaltern character, as a result of the hegemonic framework will also be emphasised in this study.

The historical practice known as colonialism is the west's methodical attempts to erase or neutralise the cultural distinctions and worth of the non-west. The end of colonial occupation does not mark the end of colonialism. According to one of Edward Said's seminal books, *Orientalism*, cultural dominance forced non-Western people to be the 'others'. Similar to Said, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak contended in her book *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, that oppressive colonial authority denies post-colonial subjects a voice. They are referred to as 'colonial subjects' since they are unable to speak out against the prevailing power. The opposition between the Orient and the Occident, the self and the other, the coloniser and the colonised, the oppressor and the oppressed, the centre and the margin, white and black, etc. is highlighted by critics of colonialism and postcolonialism. Colonialism also examines the structure's binary opposition. The process of colonialism varied depending on where you were in the world. However, it restricted both the original occupants and the newcomers to the most difficult and complicated relationship in human history. Colonialism has the potential to describe as the annexation and seizure of the property and assets of others, and it is not just colonial hegemony's spread but also its widespread characteristic of people. Forming a community in the new land is a process that involves the captivity, commerce, and behaviours imposed on the aboriginal people. Pramod K. Nayar defines 'race' in his book *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory*, "A marker of difference that leads to slavery, exploitation and death. While biological evidence for the superiority of one race or another has not emerged- or has been faulted- the social and political fields remain emplotted within discourses that consistently, if subtly race as difference" (Nayar 222). While there is biological proof that certain races are better than others has not materialized—or has been criticized—the social and political spheres still exist. *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare is the best example of the colonial interaction, in which every facet of colonialism is combined. Shakespeare portrays the white man's perspective in the play *The Tempest*. Prospero serves as a metaphor for colonial authority in the Sycorax's island due of his hedonistic actions.

The play has frequently been interpreted as a commentary on colonial rule, the reason Prospero, an outsider who visits Sycorax's island, has power over both control the island and begin forcing his own culture on the locals the island. He plays the girl's father in the play. Miranda, but on the island of Caliban, he rules more like a father. Prospero is the spokesperson for the white people and the European colonial power. Hegemonists, who enslaved Native Americans and controlled their homeland, Caliban and the locals of that specific island, like Prospero, are the representatives of the American Black community. Prospero transformed Caliban into a slave in the play, and think of him as half-man. He has more power than he does, thus he drives the locals, including Ariel and Caliban, to the brink. He moves Caliban's mother is treated like a beast and is called a witch. The master possesses total authority over the island and everything on it. Caliban will undoubtedly be his slave and refers to him as a thing of darkness, demonstrating the racist have fun. Despite being the island's occupying force, Caliban is being dehumanised.

Edward Said stated in his book *Orientalism* the Westerners view the Non-Westerners are viewed as the 'other', or the 'orient' and in this drama, this specific idea is particularly pertinent because Prospero is the outsider, and he appears to us as a Westerner, and he acknowledges Caliban as the 'other' or 'the burden of the white man'. The *Tempest's* Caliban character is characterised as violent, primitive, misshapen, uncivilised, etc. As said by Prospero, "A devil, a born devil, on whose nature Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains Humanely taken-all, all lost, quite lost !" (Shakespeare 50).

He is not a human person; he is a born devil. She claims that even though Prospero could teach him the language, it is unable to be good due to his race.

The play makes extensive use of conflict through the characters of Prospero, Miranda, Caliban, etc. Shakespeare is effective at illustrating the contradiction between the great and inferior, West and non-West, White and Black, Master and slave, oneself, and the other. Prospero views Caliban as barbaric and uncivilised since he is civilised. The Continent with the aid of colonisers, the numerous colonies throughout the world that managed by education, and they saw the aboriginal people as their 'burden'. Prospero, the European, attempts to teach and elevate Caliban as well, but he is not successful. Many detractors claim that the advancement of civilization is inextricably linked to supremacy over the subordinate. Caliban is therefore restrained as a result of his inferiority and the outsider's superiority. Shakespeare created the figure of Caliban in a singular way, devoid of Caliban Tempest is not feasible. Caliban serves as their representative. Unwillingly, Caliban accepts his master's status of slavery. He is against picking up the language which Prospero instructs. He stays in the same place through the play's conclusion. The colonial authority has no effect on him. similar to the white, those from Europe, Prospero attempts to alter the inhabitants' innate character, but he fails as a result of Caliban's failure to internalise the master's lessons. In this Caliban attempts to voice his disapproval of the dominant colonial force.

One examine the drama from a postcolonial standpoint, we shall observe that Caliban protects against the ruling class from the outset of dominance. Prospero uses cunning to conquer and control the island's indigenous people. The native population serves as a puppet for the colonist in the theatrical production. Caliban wishes to be the colonial master of the island, Prospero. Prospero uses the shipwreck to access the island, and as a result, he is an outsider, and then he seizes control of the island that was seized from the mother of Caliban by forcing her to relocate. Consequently, Caliban attempts to protest the unfair treatment they've received. Similarly, postcolonialism begins in both the protestation and the play. An illustration of the relationship between White Man and the aboriginal people living within the bounds of civilization. Additionally, the play displays the relationship between the exterior and the interior. The play is a sort of dialogue regarding 'Colonial issue', it displays the oppressing class's resistance. Within the theatrical production, Caliban utilises what he learns from Prospero to his detriment. The Caliban's marginalisation and Prospero's hegemony and persecution demonstrate the influence of colonialism in the play. Prospero, a virtuous colonist, forces the locals on the island are segregated and viewed as 'other'. The performance is a colonial encounter allegorical. With the help of Prospero's and Caliban, most of the conceptualization of racial difference has occurred.

Shakespeare effectively illustrates the many stages of colonisation during his time. He predicts that the colonies will be conquered by colonialism by serving as the play's island representative. The pre-capitalists are the conquerors; they always attempt to create and enslave members of the lower class. Despite the play is a play that was composed in Elizabethan times, yet it can be read again as a piece of Modern-day Marxism, Postcolonialism, and Colonialism.

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