

## Chapter 6

### Colonial metaphors

I am subject to a tyrant . . . that by his cunning hath  
cheated me of the island.

*The Tempest* (III.ii.40–41)

What is our history, what is our culture, if not the  
history and culture of Caliban?

Roberto Fernández Retamar (1971)

A sociointellectual trend contemporaneous to the American school, yet profoundly different in its assumptions and perspectives, has flourished in the twentieth century outside the English-speaking nations. Since the 1890s in Central and South America, and especially since 1950 in the Caribbean and Africa, writers from Third World nations have contended that *The Tempest* embodies heretofore neglected meanings for their societies and that Caliban conveys a very different message than traditional scholarship has allowed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By "Third World" we mean, very loosely, "the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America not politically aligned with Communist or Western nations" (*American Oxford Dictionary*). We are aware of growing dissatisfaction with the term and use it here reluctantly (in the absence of a better alternative) because Caliban has been a frequent metaphor in Latin American and African writings, as this chapter demonstrates, and occasionally in Asian texts; writers from other geopolitical areas, moreover, have often applied *Tempest* metaphors to what they identify as Third World contexts. A suggestive comment on use of the label comes from Bapsi Sidhwa, "Third World, Our World," *The Massachusetts Review*, XXIX (1988–89): 703–06.

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Such authors -- few are Shakespearean scholars, but many are distinguished in other fields -- argue that Caliban is no mere fish or monster or even a North American Indian. His true significance lies instead in an emblematic identification with modern men and women, especially Latin Americans and Africans, no matter how anachronistic those identifications may seem to traditional Shakespeareans.

Authors who invoke *The Tempest* in Latin American or African contexts have differed drastically over whom or what Caliban symbolizes. Diametrical opposites are proposed: Caliban as exemplar of imperialist oppressors (the prevalent view in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) or Caliban as emblem of oppressed natives (prevalent in recent decades). Advocates of the first approach found Shakespeare's monster a handy image for everything gross and vicious in a domineering nation or social class -- Yankee imperialism, for example, or European racism. The second and now more widespread view stresses Caliban's implicit virtues -- his innate sensitivity, rough dignity, articulateness, and intelligence -- rather than his cruder characteristics. Thus recast, Caliban stands for countless victims of European imperialism and colonization. Like Caliban (so the argument goes), colonized peoples were disinherited, exploited, and subjugated. Like him, they learned a conqueror's language and perhaps that conqueror's values. Like him, they endured enslavement and contempt by European usurpers and eventually rebelled. Like him, they are torn between their indigenous culture and the culture superimposed on it by their conquerors. In sum, the Third World's image of Caliban before midcentury emphasized his foreignness, his "otherness"; since then he has been "ourselves."

The shift in Caliban's image from symbol of the oppressor to symbol of the oppressed occurred, not surprisingly, when mass movements in both Latin America and Africa brought to prominence a generation of cultural and political spokesmen who stressed indigenous heritages and national independence. Earlier Latin American intellectuals were tied emotionally and often ethnically to the Iberian Peninsula. They wrote in Spanish (or, in the case of Brazilians, in Portuguese) and looked to Europeans, especially French and Iberian intellectuals, for their ethnic identity and cultural heroes. As an Argentine scholar wrote in 1911, "Despite the [racial

and ethnic] mixtures, . . . [o]ur spirit and our culture are Latin. But within our Latinism we belong, and will eternally belong, to the Spanish caste."<sup>2</sup>

For Central and South Americans as a whole, that statement was too broad; for the writer's own era of Latin American intellectuals it was essentially true. Trained in a European cultural context, and often educated in European schools, they found their symbols in European history and literature. But in recent decades, changing social forces have drastically modified the structure of Latin American intellectual life. A new generation of scholars and writers, many from non-European racial or ethnic stocks and cultural heritages, has insisted on new symbols or, at the very least, new interpretations of old symbols. Caliban is a prime example. A somewhat similar shift has occurred among African intellectuals: An earlier dependence on European education and European literature has been replaced by reemergent indigenous cultures. Along the way, Caliban has undergone a drastic interpretive change.

Either approach – Caliban as oppressor or Caliban as oppressed – differs fundamentally from traditional interpretive modes. Whereas traditional scholarship is at least partly concerned with the probable prototypes for Shakespeare's characters, most Third World authors who borrow emblems from *The Tempest* ignore, as irrelevant, Shakespeare's sources and intentions. The Third World interpretation of Caliban is symbolic, not historic; it adopts Caliban for what he represents to the observer, not for what Shakespeare may have had in mind. Few Third World exponents of *Tempest* images contend that Shakespeare expected his audience to see Caliban as a black African, brown mestizo, or white American.<sup>3</sup> Instead, they want

2 Manuel Gálvez, quoted in Harold Eugene Davis, *Latin American Social Thought: The History of Its Development since Independence, with Selected Readings* (University Press of Washington, D.C., 1963), p. 424. For the Spanish version, see Gálvez, *El solar de la raza* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tor, 1936), p. 39.

3 A possible exception is Roberto Fernández Retamar, "Caliban: Notes towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America," *The Massachusetts Review*, XV (1973–74): 11–16. "There is no doubt," Fernández Retamar contends, "that *The Tempest* alludes to America, that its island is the mystification of one of our islands" (p. 15) and that "Caliban is our Carib" (p. 16). Fernández Retamar thus implies that Shakespeare intended Caliban to be a Caribbean and hence an ancestor of Latin American mestizos.

modern readers to accept Shakespeare's dramatic symbols because, retrospectively, they fit. New situations give the play's characters new meanings. As one exponent of Caliban metaphors explains, "*The Tempest* . . . presents figures that are suggestive, evocative and allusive; and it often relies on mythopoetic references for full effect. If we accept this, . . . [it has] applications appropriate for a present cultural dilemma."<sup>4</sup> The principal dilemma that faced users of *Tempest* (and especially Caliban) metaphors in the third quarter of the twentieth century was postcolonial self-fashioning.

## I

Caliban's sociopolitical career has been longer and more diverse in Latin America than in Africa. He first appeared in late-nineteenth-century Spanish-American literature as a symbol of the region's political and cultural resentment of the United States. Rubén Darío, a young Nicaraguan nationalist, journalist, and poet (later also a diplomat and Nicaragua's leading intellectual), probably was the first writer to apply images from *The Tempest* to the Western Hemisphere's international rivalries. In 1893 he visited New York City; its crudeness, materialism, and vice convinced him that he was in "the gory, the cyclopean, the monstrous capital of the banknote," where "Caliban soaks up whiskey as he soaked up wine in Shakespeare's play."<sup>5</sup> Five years later, Darío's article "The Triumph of Caliban" denounced North Americans as "buffaloes with silver teeth"; "red-faced, heavy and gross . . . like animals in their hunt for the dollar."<sup>6</sup> That same year (1898), Paul Groussac, an Argentine writer, dubbed the early United States "Calibanesque."<sup>7</sup>

This casting of Caliban as a greedy, overbearing *yanqui* received major encouragement a few years later from the Uruguayan philosopher/politician José Enrique Rodó, who had recently published a

4 Max Dorsinville, *Caliban without Prospero: Essay on Quebec and Black Literature* (Erin, Ontario: Press Porcépic, 1974), p. 12.

5 Quoted in John T. Reid, *Spanish American Images of the United States, 1790–1960* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1977), p. 195.

6 Reid, *Spanish American Images*, p. 195. The original Spanish version, "El Triunfo de Caliban," is reprinted in *Escritos inéditos de Rubén Darío*, ed. E. K. Mapes (New York: Instituto de las Españas en los Estados Unidos, 1938), pp. 160–62.

7 Quoted in Fernández Retamar, "Caliban," p. 18.

biographical sketch of Darío. In a long essay entitled *Ariel* (1900), Rodó combined praise for Spanish-American characteristics with sharp but sophisticated criticism of the United States. Rodó structured his book as an impromptu lecture by a master teacher – affectionately called Prospero “after the wise sage of Shakespeare’s *Tempest*” – to his departing scholars, who have assembled around a bronze statue of Ariel.<sup>8</sup> Prospero urges his disciples to seek art, beauty, virtue, truth, and sensitivity; he warns them against materialism and utilitarianism. Sometimes implicitly, often explicitly, Prospero identifies those virtues with Spanish America or the Spanish “race,” the vices with North America or the Anglo-Saxon “race.”<sup>9</sup> Nearly a third of *Ariel* is aimed at *yanqui* shortcomings, tempered here and there by grudging praise for American achievements (mostly in the early years of the republic) and softened a bit by Rodó’s affinity for generalizations and abstractions.

If *Ariel*’s target was ostensibly the United States, its intellectual inspiration was unquestionably France. Writing amid Latin America’s modernist movement, Rodó and his contemporaries championed a new literary voice and a more nationalistic political stance. Yet the modernists could not wholly shed their own cultural training. While largely rejecting the Castilian tradition that had long dominated Spanish-American culture, they turned not to truly indigenous sources but to France’s creative vitality. Their heroes were Victor Hugo, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and other French authors who flourished in what Latin American intellectuals believed to be the world’s most free and stimulating cultural environment.<sup>10</sup>

Rodó’s *Ariel* is a case in point. It was partly a response to Ernest Renan’s dramatic epilogues to *The Tempest*. As we recounted in Chapter 4, Renan’s first play, *Caliban, suite de La Tempête* (1878), ends with Caliban in command of Milan; Prospero is dead, and Ariel, rejecting human machinations, has vanished in the air to be

8 All quotations from *Ariel* in this book are from the English translation by F. J. Stimson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1922). The quotation concerning Prospero is on page 3.

9 Rodó, *Ariel*, esp. pp. 89–123.

10 The modernist movement is discussed in Jean Franco, *The Modern Culture of Latin America: Society and the Artist*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 25–51; and Arturo Torres-Rioseco, *The Epic of Latin American Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1942), pp. 86–132.

a universal spirit. The workaday world is left to the triumphant mob and an increasingly conservative and manipulative Caliban. The French intellectual community was not wholly sympathetic to Renan’s formulation; some critics found it too cynical, too anti-democratic. Alfred Fouillée, especially, expressed philosophical dissatisfaction. His *L’idée moderne du droit en Allemagne, en Angleterre et en France* (1878) argued that Ariel should return to the playwright’s world as the necessary other dimension of Caliban; anything else, Fouillée contended, would be unjust and illogical. Renan responded with another play, *L’eau de jouvence: suite de Caliban* (1881), but it failed to fulfill Fouillée’s suggestion, for in this, Renan’s second epilogue to *The Tempest*, Ariel plays no significant role. Again the theme is cynical and elitist.<sup>11</sup>

Nearly two decades later, Rodó’s *Ariel* implicitly extended Fouillée’s objection to Renan’s pejorative dichotomy between refined aristocracy and utilitarian democracy. Like Fouillée, Rodó sought compromise in the idealistic notion that social evolution would improve the human species through natural selection: Caliban’s qualities would eventually merge with Ariel’s as successive refinements made rough-and-tumble leaders more sensitive and intelligent. Thus, Ariel and Caliban, in Rodó’s eyes, were complementary; they were concurrent influences in a cultural dialectic that some day would produce an ideal civilization. Rodó hoped, in short, that Spaniards and Anglo-Saxons in America would reach “a higher concord in the future, that will be due not to a one-sided imitation of one race by the other, but to a reciprocity of influences and a skilful harmonizing of those attributes which make the peculiar glory of either race.” The gentle Ariel was Rodó’s symbol of Spanish-American civilization at its best, and though he refrained from blatant labeling, Rodó implied unmistakably that Caliban represented North American civilization at its worst. Ariel is “the spirituality of civilization, and the vivacity and grace of the intelligence; – the ideal end

11 Ernest Renan, *Caliban: A Philosophical Drama Continuing “The Tempest” of William Shakespeare*, trans. Eleanor Grant Vickery (New York: The Shakespeare Press, 1896), passim. For the influence on Rodó of Renan and Fouillée, see especially Gordon Brotherston’s Introduction to *Ariel* (Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 3–7. *Ariel* mentions Renan more often than any other author, including Shakespeare.

to which human selection aspires; that superman in whom has disappeared . . . the last stubborn trace of the *Caliban*, symbol of sensuality and stupidity." Rodó feared that *yanqui* culture might overwhelm Spanish America before an amalgamation could occur. The history of the United States, Rodó presciently complained a year before Theodore Roosevelt acceded to the presidency, "is above all a very paroxysm of virile activity."<sup>12</sup>

Uncle Sam had, to be sure, cast greedy eyes at neighboring territories for almost a century, to the growing unease of Latin American spokesmen. Examples of Yankee expansionism abound: the annexation of Texas in 1845; the war against Mexico in 1846–48 and, at its conclusion, the confiscation of nearly one-third of Mexico's territory; frequent demands in the 1850s for the annexation of Cuba; armed encroachments in the 1880s and '90s in Central and South America and the Caribbean.<sup>13</sup> Thus, long before the Spanish-American War of 1898, Latin Americans feared Uncle Sam's imperialist intentions. How could they trust a nation whose secretary of state, Richard Olney, announced in 1895 that the United States was "practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition." Olney was ready to extend the fiat to the southern continent as well. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, in his own mind at least, already had. In June 1895 Lodge asserted in the *North American Review* that the United States had "rightful supremacy in the Western Hemisphere."<sup>14</sup>

By its expansionist policy and aggressive rhetoric, the United States unwittingly encouraged the pan-Hispanic movement that began in the late nineteenth century. Earlier in the century, Latin Americans had resented Iberian colonial policies even more than North American encroachment. The resulting wars of liberation

12 Rodó, *Ariel*, passim, esp. pp. 90, 95, 63, 145, 4, 102. For a general discussion of "Arielism," see Franco, *Modern Culture*, pp. 61–70.

13 The major events in the United States' relations with Latin America can be found conveniently in Dexter Perkins, *Hands Off: A History of the Monroe Doctrine* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1941); and Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1943).

14 Ruhl J. Bartlett, ed., *The Record of American Diplomacy: Documents and Readings in American Foreign Relations* (New York: Knopf, 1948), p. 344; Henry Cabot Lodge, "England, Venezuela, and the Monroe Doctrine," *North American Review*, CLX (1895): 658.

from Spanish and Portuguese control had drawn some of their inspiration from the United States' struggle for independence from Great Britain; Washington and Jefferson were hailed throughout the hemisphere.<sup>15</sup> But gradually "the Colossus of the North" became too powerful, too expansionist, too dictatorial. Secretary Olney's "doctrine" and Senator Lodge's bombast were prime evidence.

The clash between Spain and the United States in 1898 marked a critical juncture in the evolution of Latin America's attitude toward itself and toward its northern neighbor. Many Latin American commentators cheered the liberation of Cuba, but most resented Anglo-American intrusion in a Spanish-American affair. Their resentment grew more vociferous when the United States occupied Cuba, annexed Puerto Rico, and embarked on a prolonged war against Philippine insurrectionists. "The disaster of 1898," an American historian argues, "by which the Anglo-Saxon racial foe added several more notches to the stock of his imperialistic gun, aroused sympathy for the ancestral race and praise of its shining virtues."<sup>16</sup> Later the Chilean poetess and pan-Hispanic champion, Gabriela Mistral, would advocate "one Spanish-America united by two stupendous factors – the language which God gave us and the misery which the United States gives us."<sup>17</sup> It had been a continuing misery, exacerbated by Theodore Roosevelt's pseudolegal acquisition of the Panama Canal Zone in 1903 and his "corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine in 1904. The latter went a giant step further than Secretary Olney's earlier statement by asserting that the United States could intervene anywhere in the Western Hemisphere in cases of "[c]hronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society."<sup>18</sup> T.R., of course,

15 José de Onís, *The United States as Seen by Spanish American Writers, 1776–1890* (New York: Hispanic Institute in the United States, 1952), pp. 193–95.

16 Reid, *Spanish American Images*, pp. 123 (quotation), 130–31. On the pan-Hispanic movement, see also J. Fred Rippy, *Latin America in World Politics: An Outline Survey* (New York: Knopf, 1928), ch. 12.

17 Quoted in Donald Marquand Dozer, *Are We Good Neighbors? Three Decades of Inter-American Relations, 1930–1960* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1959), p. 318.

18 Bartlett, ed., *Record of American Diplomacy*, p. 539. The quotation is from Roosevelt's annual message to Congress in 1904; a slightly different version appears in Roosevelt's letter to Elihu Root, quoted in Perkins, *Hands Off*, p. 238.

would be the judge of who was wrong or impotent or uncivilized. In 1904, Rubén Darío's poem "To Roosevelt" vividly expressed Latin American fears: "The United States is grand and powerful / Whenever it trembles, a profound shudder / Runs down the enormous backbone of the Andes."<sup>19</sup>

Against this backdrop, *Ariel's* verbal assault on the United States and its ready acceptance by Rodó's contemporaries are not surprising. Rodó denied that his essay was an indictment of the United States, but it quickly acquired that reputation. And Rodó himself grew more critical of the United States in his later years, as continuing Yankee imperialism made Latin Americans increasingly wary of Anglo-America's intentions. Between *Ariel's* appearance in 1900 and Rodó's death in 1917, the United States intervened often and forcefully in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Each event added fuel to the rhetorical fire that Rodó had ignited, and many disciples carried still further his condemnation of North American materialism and aggression; Rodó's subtle distinctions were lost in rampant Yankeeophobia.<sup>20</sup> To South Americans, a Venezuelan writer reported in 1918, their non-Iberian northern neighbors were "rough and obtuse Calibans, swollen by brutal appetites, the enemies of all idealisms, furiously enamored of the dollar, insatiable gulpers of whiskey and sausages – swift, overwhelming, fierce, clownish."<sup>21</sup>

Rodó's death did nothing to dim *Ariel's* popularity or influence. The return of the author's body to Uruguay in 1920 (he died in Italy) occasioned memorials throughout Latin America, and Rodó remains to the present a cultural hero in Spanish-speaking nations of the Western Hemisphere; in the 1940s his magnum opus was hailed as "the ethical gospel of the Spanish-speaking New World."<sup>22</sup> Through

19 *Selected Poems of Rubén Darío*, trans. Lysander Kemp (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), p. 69.

20 Brotherston, Introduction to *Ariel*, pp. 9–13; Reid, *Spanish American Images*, pp. 131, 192; Rippey, *Latin America in World Politics*, ch. 15.

21 Jesús Semprún, quoted in Dozer, *Are We Good Neighbors?*, p. 4, from "El Norte y el Sur," *Cultura Venezolana*, I (1918): 132.

22 Torres-Rioseco, *Epic of Latin American Literature*, p. 116. For recent reminders of Rodó's continuing influence, see James W. Symington, "Learn Latin American Culture," *New York Times*, 22 September 1984; and Jean Franco, "Coping with Caliban," *New York Times Book Review*, 22 May 1988.

more than fifty editions and countless printings, *Ariel* continues to wield enormous influence on Latin America's self-image and, especially, on its image of the United States.<sup>23</sup> "*Ariel*," a prominent Peruvian scholar born in 1900 attested, "we knew by heart."<sup>24</sup> And to know *Ariel* was almost always to subscribe to its thesis. To be sure, a few Latin American authors disagreed with Rodó's position from the outset, and a few more dissenters emerged later in the century when United States involvement in the world wars encouraged a kinder view of its idealism and industrial strength. But even then the Caliban/*Ariel* dichotomy remained central to Latin American imagery, and Caliban continued to symbolize the United States. During World War II, for example, another Peruvian writer couched a more benign view of Uncle Sam in the old metaphor:

Many [Latin Americans] thought they saw a spiritual antithesis between the United States, representing the vile part of Caliban, and Indo-America, playing the subtle role of Ariel. We now see that this is an exaggeration. There are many Ariels in the lands of the North and among us some Calibans who would shock Shakespeare himself.<sup>25</sup>

Thus the basic identities of Caliban and Ariel persisted, even if their respective characters became less distinct.

## II

Despite Rodó's reputation and his book's popularity, Latin American writers in the past thirty-five years have repudiated his symbolic

23 Rodó, *Ariel*, p. v; Brotherston, Introduction to *Ariel*, p. 1. The major studies of Rodó include Victor Pérez Petit, *Rodó, su vida – su obra* (Montevideo: C. Garcia, 1937); Lauxar [Osvaldo Crispo Acosta], *Rubén Darío y José Enrique Rodó* (Montevideo: Agencia General de Librería y Publicaciones, 1924); and Mario Benedetti, *Genio y figura de José Enrique Rodó* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1966). An extensive annotated bibliography accompanies the most recent translation of Rodó's masterwork. See Margaret Sayers Peden, trans. and ed., *Ariel* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), pp. 115–49; Peden lists the numerous editions of *Ariel* on pp. 115–23.

24 Luis Alberto Sánchez, quoted (with no citation) in Reid, *Spanish American Images*, p. 193.

25 Reid, *Spanish American Images*, pp. 192–98 (quotation on p. 197); translated from Manuel Seoane, *El gran vecino: América en la encrucijada*, 2nd ed. (Santiago, Chile: Editorial Orbe, 1944), p. 4.

strategy, while clinging to *Tempest* metaphors. Partly in response to Latin America's turn-of-the-century emphasis on cultural unity, partly as a reaction against a sudden influx of non-Iberian immigrants, and largely, perhaps, in belated recognition that most of the continent's population was not of European background, truly indigenous cultures reemerged throughout Latin America in the 1920s and '30s.<sup>26</sup> In a dramatic and perhaps inevitable transformation, Caliban at the same time became the emblem of exploited Latin Americans, and Prospero took on the menacing visage of Uncle Sam. Ariel again silently disappeared.

The reasons for the eventual rejection of Rodó's imagery are partly explained by *Ariel* itself. Despite the book's staunch advocacy of Latin American independence and spiritual superiority, it is palpably Eurocentric, with scarcely a nod toward the Western Hemisphere's cultural achievements.<sup>27</sup> The great heritage to which Rodó appeals throughout the essay is European and classical. His cultural pantheon includes Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero among the ancients; Taine, Bourget, and Comte among the moderns. At bottom, Rodó's vision of the clash between Latin America and the United States pits the Latin branch of the western tradition against the Anglo-Saxon branch – hardly a compelling vision for those who traced their heritage to American Indian or African roots. Consequently, the image of Caliban that Darfo and Rodó used with such success in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries collapsed when the old intellectual elite lost its monopoly on Latin American cultural and political leadership. New leaders lauded a different heritage. In the words of a modern Cuban writer, "[O]ur culture – taking this term in its broad historical and anthropological sense – [is] . . . the culture created by the *mestizo* populace, those descentents of Indians and Blacks and Europeans . . . the culture of the exploited classes."<sup>28</sup> But if the reversal of Rodó's Ariel/Caliban metaphor was emphatic, it was also respectful. An authority on Rodó epitomized the twentieth-century shift in Latin American perspective when he observed that

26 Franco, *Modern Culture of Latin America*, pp. 82–140. In the visual arts, the emergent culture is perhaps best typified by Diego Rivera's murals.

27 Rodó's affinity for European culture is partly explained by his own family's recent migration to Uruguay; his father was a Catalan emigré.

28 Fernández Retamar, "Caliban," pp. 58–59.

"Perhaps Rodó erred in naming the danger [to Latin America], but he did not err in his perception of where it lay."<sup>29</sup>

Caliban's metamorphosis had begun, arguably, in 1928, when Jean Guéhenno's *Calibán Parle* (1928) portrayed him more sympathetically than had earlier works. But the influence of Guéhenno, a French writer, on his Latin American contemporaries seems to have been slight on this matter, perhaps because he, like Rodó, was largely concerned with refuting Renan's extension of *The Tempest*.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Argentinian Aníbal Ponce's *Humanismo burgués y humanismo proletario* (1938) favorably identified Caliban with the exploited masses in partial refutation of Renan; Ponce, too, had little overt influence on the Caliban metaphor.<sup>31</sup> But in 1950, Caliban's image shifted radically. The impetus was another French contribution: the publication in Paris of Octave Mannoni's *La psychologie de la colonisation*, translated into English in 1956 as *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*.<sup>32</sup> Because Mannoni wrote about the African island of Madagascar, rather than the Americas, consideration of his argument and impact belongs elsewhere in this chapter.<sup>33</sup> Suffice it to say here that Mannoni forcefully and explicitly identified Caliban with colonized and exploited people in general, thereby making Prospero's slave an inappropriate symbol for the European-American population of the United States but eminently appropriate for many Latin Americans.

In the 1960s and '70s, West Indian writers, especially, and some Latin Americans avidly adopted Mannoni's imagery. In 1969, for

29 Benedetti, *Genio y figura de Rodó*, p. 95.

30 Jean Guéhenno, *Calibán Parle* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1928), *passim*. Guéhenno returned to this theme in *Caliban et Prospero: suivi d'autres essais* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969). For a claim that Rodó himself foreshadowed the reversal of Caliban images, see Emir Rodríguez Monegal, "The Metamorphoses of Caliban," *Diacritics*, VII (Fall 1977): 78–83, esp. p. 81.

31 Aníbal Ponce, *Humanismo burgués y humanismo proletario* (México: Editorial América, 1938). See also Rodrigo García Treviño, *Aníbal Ponce el intelectual y el revolucionario* (México: Editorial América, 1938).

32 [Dominique] O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, 2nd ed., trans. Pamela Powesland (New York: Praeger, 1964). The importance of Mannoni and the emergence of *Tempest* metaphors in anticolonial literature are thoughtfully explored by Rob Nixon, "Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest*," *Critical Inquiry*, XIII (1986–87): 557–78, esp. pp. 562–66.

33 See Section III in this chapter.

example, three Caribbean authors – each perhaps unaware of the others' work in progress and each writing in a different language – drew on *The Tempest*, metaphor. Aimé Césaire of Martinique published in French an adaptation of *The Tempest* for “un théâtre nègre”; his Caliban and Ariel are both slaves – the former black, the latter mulatto.<sup>34</sup> Simultaneously, the Barbadian poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite wrote in English a collection of poetry entitled *Islands*; one of the poems is “Caliban.”<sup>35</sup> And in Cuba, Roberto Fernández Retamar, writing in Spanish, identified Caliban with the Cuban people in an essay on Fidel Castro.<sup>36</sup> Two years later (1971), Fernández Retamar's book *Caliban* explicitly and emphatically rejected José Rodó's formulation:

Our symbol . . . is not Ariel, as Rodó thought, but Caliban. This is something that we, the *mestizo* inhabitants of these same isles where Caliban lived, see with particular clarity: Prospero invaded the islands, killed our ancestors, enslaved Caliban, and taught him his language to make himself understood. What else can Caliban do but use that same language – today he has no other – to curse him, to wish that the “red plague” would fall on him? I know no other metaphor more expressive of our cultural situation, of our reality. . . . [W]hat is our history, what is our culture, if not the history and culture of Caliban?<sup>37</sup>

Fernández Retamar's declaration, originally in Spanish, reappeared in English in 1974 in a special issue of *The Massachusetts*

34 Aimé Césaire, *Une tempête; d'après "La tempête" de Shakespeare. Adaptation pour un théâtre nègre* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969).

35 Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *Islands* (Oxford University Press, 1969).

36 Roberto Fernández Retamar, “Cuba hasta Fidel,” *Bohemia*, 19 September 1969.

37 Fernández Retamar first published this statement in an article, “Caliban,” in *Casa de Las Américas*, LXVIII (September–October 1971), and soon after in *Caliban: apuntes sobre la cultura en nuestra América* (México: Editorial Diogenes, 1971). It reappeared in an English translation – with minor variations – in *The Massachusetts Review*, XV (1973–74): 24; we quote from this version. For commentary, see Marta E. Sánchez, “Caliban: The New Latin-American Protagonist of *The Tempest*,” *Diacritics*, VI (1976): 54–61; Rodríguez Monegal, “Metamorphoses of Caliban,” pp. 79–81; “Roberto Fernández-Retamar: Caliban y La Literatura de Nuestrera América,” *ECOS: A Latino Journal of People's Culture & Literature*, Series in Cultural and Literary Theory, No. 1 (University of Illinois at Chicago, 1985); and Fernández Retamar, “Caliban Revisited,” in his *Caliban and Other Essays*, trans. Edward Baker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 46–55.

*Review*. The entire issue is entitled *Caliban* and is devoted to Latin American cultural expression. Guest editor Robert Márquez described the issue's purpose:

The stories, poems, play, essays and art work collected in this issue are . . . a contemporary echo of the rebellious Antillean slave in Shakespeare's final play. . . . [Caliban is a symbol of] a struggle for liberation and cultural authenticity whose roots must be traced back, from Salvador Allende, Che Guevara, and Toussaint L'Ouverture, to the original revolts of indigenous Indians and Black slaves. . . . Against the hegemonic, europocentric, vision of the universe, the identity of Caliban is a direct function of his refusal to accept – on any level – that hegemony. . . . This, then, . . . a fragment of the world-view of the victim, is the world of Caliban.<sup>38</sup>

In the years since that pathmark issue of *The Massachusetts Review*, the identification of Shakespeare's monster/slave with the dark-skinned peoples of Latin America has remained firmly entrenched in the region's cultural and political rhetoric. Recently, Brathwaite has added new dimensions to *The Tempest* metaphor in a history of the 1831–32 Jamaica slave revolt: Not only is Prospero the slave owner, Ariel the partially assimilated mulatto, and Caliban the rebel slave, but Alonso now symbolizes the British Parliament and Gonzalo the humanitarian but misguided missionaries.<sup>39</sup>

### III

Robert Márquez's 1974 tracing of Caliban's ancestry to Indians and black slaves appeared to limit Caliban's physical sphere to the New World and Caliban's symbolic identity to its exploited inhabitants, whether aboriginal or imported from Africa. But other writers, especially Caribbeans of primarily African descent and native African writers of various nationalities, prescribe no geographic limits to the Prospero/Caliban metaphor. As Fernández Retamar acknowledged

38 Robert Márquez, “Foreword,” *The Massachusetts Review*, XV (1973–74): 6.

39 Edward Kamau Brathwaite, “Caliban, Ariel, and Unprospero in the Conflict of Creolization: A Study of the Slave Revolt in Jamaica in 1831–32,” in Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies* (New York Academy of Sciences, 1977), pp. 41–62, esp. p. 46.

nearly two decades ago, "The new reading of *The Tempest* has now become a common one throughout the colonial world."<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, Caliban is as much at home on the African continent as anywhere.

Caliban-as-African, much like Caliban-as-Latin American, endured an early identification with the oppressors rather than the oppressed and then experienced a parallel metamorphosis. In 1930 a South African journalist of English background, Leonard Barnes, published *Caliban in Africa: An Impression of Colour-Madness*.<sup>41</sup> Barnes's title page carried as epigram Trinculo's thoughts on first seeing Caliban:

What have we here? a man or a fish? dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-like smell; a kind of not the newest Poor-John. A strange fish!

Those lines appear at first glance to be a slur on black Africans; the racist attitudes prevalent throughout England and America in the 1920s and '30s encouraged such a reading. Barnes, however, had no such intent. He attacked, virtually slandered, certain Africans, to be sure, but not the blacks. The targets of his wrath were instead the Dutch Afrikaners – the creators and enforcers of apartheid. That system of racial segregation and the white-supremacist doctrine on which it is based are, Barnes contended, "worthy of the freckled whelp of Sycorax." In his only other specific reference to Shakespeare's monster, Barnes excoriated "several features in the characteristic Dutch outlook which no civilised person, whatever his nationality, can look upon with anything but contempt – for instance, the attitude to animals and persons of colour, and a certain deep intellectual insincerity," which, "like other Calibanesque traits . . . are things which good natures cannot abide to be with."<sup>42</sup>

Barnes drew few other *Tempest* parallels. He apparently assumed that his readers would readily recognize Caliban as a symbol of cruelty, stupidity, and sloth – the qualities he attributed to a major

40 Fernández Retamar, "Caliban," p. 24 (n. 29).

41 Leonard Barnes, *Caliban in Africa: An Impression of Colour-Madness* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1930).

42 Barnes, *Caliban in Africa*, pp. 118, 54.

segment of South Africa's white minority.<sup>43</sup> Thus, by 1930, Caliban's image had reached its nadir: Most metaphorical applications of *The Tempest* identified Caliban with the world's oppressors. Darío's and Rodó's *yanqui* Caliban and Barnes's Afrikaner Caliban held sway.

Twenty years later, Mannoni first identified Caliban with black Africans. His controversial *Prospero and Caliban* sought no connections between Shakespeare's intentions and Africans; rather, he borrowed symbols from *The Tempest* (and, less extensively, from *Robinson Crusoe*) to illustrate what he believed were Madagascan – indeed universal – personality types. Mannoni, a French psychoanalyst and social scientist who for several years in the 1940s headed France's General Information Department in Madagascar, was struck by European imperialism's profound and insidious impact yet perplexed by the Madagascan uprising of 1947–48. He expounded his analysis in a multipart "Ebauche d'une psychologie coloniale" in the French periodical *Psyché* in the late 1940s,<sup>44</sup> but not until he gathered and expanded the essays in 1950 did Mannoni apply *Tempest* signifiers, and not until the English-language editions of 1956 and 1964 were those signifiers highlighted in the book's title.

Mannoni's analysis of the Madagascan crisis proposed that colonial situations produce two basic personality types, which Prospero and Caliban conveniently represent: Colonials (Prosperos) tend to be competitive, to crave power, to lack patience – else they would have remained at home – and to seek an outlet overseas for their energies, their ambitions, and their deep insecurities. They become colonials partly because they are psychologically immature. "[I]f my analysis is correct," Mannoni hypothesized, "no one becomes a real colonial who is not impelled by infantile complexes which were not properly resolved in adolescence." Once in the colonial situation, Prosperos treat the people they rule as objects, as inferiors they

43 Barnes's book is discussed briefly in Charlotte H. Bruner, "The Meaning of Caliban in Black Literature Today," *Comparative Literature Studies*, XIII (1976): 240–53. This generally accurate and useful article somewhat misinterprets Barnes's use of the Caliban metaphor; he does not identify Caliban with black Africans.

44 See especially O. Mannoni, "Ebauche d'une psychologie coloniale," *Psyché*, II (1947): 1229–42, 1453–79; III (1948): 93–96. Mannoni's invocations of Daniel Defoe and Shakespeare appear most prominently in the central chapter, "Crusoe and Prospero," in Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*.

can control through the magic of technology, written language, and political authority. Calibans, of course, are the natives, who resent colonial rule but have little choice; they become dependent on Prosperos, even grateful to them sometimes, for bringing material and educational "progress."<sup>45</sup> Initially, Prospero may befriend the native – recall Caliban's plaintive "When thou cam'st first, / Thou strok'st me and made much of me . . . / and then I loved thee . . ." (I.ii.332–36). Soon the mood changes; Prospero becomes an exploiter, rather than a benefactor, and eventually almost ignores the native. Prospero's rejection of Caliban makes the native dependent, insecure, and in his own eyes inferior. The dependency created during the early years of colonization also leaves Caliban hopelessly enmeshed in a system not of his own making but essential to his survival.<sup>46</sup> Mannoni's characterization of the Malagasies is, admittedly, far more complex than this brief summary suggests, but two points about his paradigm should be apparent: First, Caliban is an African native – or indeed the native of any nation or continent subjugated by European Prosperos – and, second, he is a rather passive, obedient chap. The former conclusion has been widely accepted by Mannoni's admirers and detractors alike; the latter has generally been rejected, or at least modified, especially by black authors in the 1960s and '70s.<sup>47</sup>

If Mannoni's book was a major force in the transformation of Caliban as the oppressor to Caliban as the oppressed, some of the credit must go to Philip Mason, a longtime British civil servant in India and Africa and later director of the United Kingdom's Institute

45 Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*, pp. 97–98, 104–09, quotation on p. 104. Some of the themes developed by Mannoni appear also in Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfeld (Corrèa: 1957; repr. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), without *Tempest* metaphors.

46 Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*, pp. 106–09, 128–31.

47 For sharp criticism of Mannoni's interpretation by a Third World author, see Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), pp. 39–43. Mannoni explained the genesis of his thesis and briefly responded to some of its critics in prefaces to the 1956 and 1964 editions of *Prospero and Caliban* and in "The Decolonization of Myself," *Race*, VII (1966): 327–35. For trenchant criticism of Mannoni's understanding of racial dynamics in Madagascar, see the Foreword by Maurice Bloch to O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

of Race Relations. Mason wrote a Foreword to the American edition of *Prospero and Caliban* and later, in his own *Prospero's Magic: Some Thoughts on Race and Color* (1962), devoted considerable attention and praise to Mannoni's metaphor.<sup>48</sup> In some respects, Mason applies *Tempest* symbolism more globally and explicitly than did Mannoni – to India and Asia as well as Africa and America – and gives Shakespeare's characters modern roles. "Ariel is . . . the good native, the moderate nationalist, the gradualist, usually content to wait until it pleases Prospero to give him his freedom; . . . one quite expects Prospero to offer him a knighthood." Caliban, on the other hand, "is the bad native, the nationalist, the extremist – the man who will be Prime Minister after independence. He has to be shut up, . . . not for making seditious speeches but for wanting to violate Miranda." Mason halts his metaphorical flight at that point. "Here I think I must draw the line," he demurs, "and resist any further temptation to make a parlour game of analogies with colonialism; Shakespeare was not gifted with second sight and did not foresee the colonial situation."<sup>49</sup>

Probably not, but the power of Mannoni's adaptation of *The Tempest* has not diminished. Critics continue to address it, although few, including Mason, accept all its implications. Mason, for example, points out that Madagascar is unrepresentative in many ways of colonial situations, particularly in the character of French colonialism and in the nature of Malagasy culture. Still, Mason believes the archetypes in *Prospero and Caliban* are generally valid.<sup>50</sup> So does Frantz Fanon, of Martinique, whose *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952) devotes a chapter to "The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples." But Fanon objects emphatically to Mannoni's minimization of racism's impact on the Malagasies and his denial of the economic motives in colonization; Fanon sees the Malagasy dependency complex as a product of white colonization, not of any innate or culture-inspired condition. In short, Fanon accepts the Caliban characterization but attributes it to Prospero's tyranny rather

48 Mason, "Foreword" to Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*, pp. 9–15; Philip Mason, *Prospero's Magic: Some Thoughts on Class and Race* (Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 78–79.

49 Mason, *Prospero's Magic*, pp. 88–89.

50 Mason, *Prospero's Magic*, pp. 78–81.

than Caliban's nature. Prospero is even more villainous for Fanon than he was for Mannoni.<sup>51</sup>

The shift in the personification of evil from Caliban to Prospero (and, almost unconsciously, the virtual exclusion of Ariel from contemporary symbolism) is, of course, essential to the reversal in Caliban's role from oppressor to oppressed. If Caliban is hero, Prospero must be villain. As Mason pointed out in 1962, "in my country until a generation ago we liked Prospero"; now, however, "some of us are beginning not to like him. . . . [W]e are perhaps moving towards some new conception of authority, in the family, in the state, and in international affairs."<sup>52</sup> That movement was inaugurated, or at least appreciably stimulated, by Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête*. "To me," Césaire declared, "Prospero is the complete totalitarian. I am always surprised when others consider him the wise man who 'forgives.' . . . Prospero is the man of cold reason, the man of methodical conquest – in other words, a portrait of the 'enlightened' European." For Césaire, as for most Third World writers who now employ *Tempest* metaphors, the corollary of a totalitarian Prospero is an antiauthoritarian Caliban: "a rebel – the positive hero, in a Hegelian sense. The slave is always more important than his master – for it is the slave who makes history."<sup>53</sup>

## IV

The Third World's adoption of Caliban is ironic. Although he readily symbolizes its oppressed and exploited peoples, he originally was a European construct – the product of an English imagination. Why, then, does Shakespeare's savage appeal so widely and profoundly

51 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (Paris: 1952; repr. New York: Grove Press, 1967), pp. 83–108, esp. p. 108.

52 Mason, *Prospero's Magic*, p. 96. For a thoughtful exploration of some recent literature on this theme, see Thomas Cartelli, "Prospero in Africa: *The Tempest* as Colonialist Text and Pretext," in Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor, eds., *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology* (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 99–115.

53 S. Belhassen, "Aimé Césaire's *A Tempest*," in Lee Baxandall, ed., *Radical Perspectives in the Arts* (Middlesex, U.K.: Penguin, 1972), p. 176. See also Thomas A. Hale, "Sur *Une Tempête* d'Aimé Césaire," *Etudes Littéraires*, VI (1973): 21–34; Roger Toumson, *Trois Calibans* (Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1981), pp. 301–486; and Nixon, "Appropriations of *The Tempest*," pp. 570–73.

to such a variety of non-English ethnic groups and nationalities? Part of the explanation is certainly Shakespeare's international fame: His plays and characters are almost as familiar to people from the Third World as to those from western nations. An authority on Nigeria reported in 1958 that "it is not uncommon to find a semi-educated Nigerian . . . who can . . . quote the Bible, and recite Hamlet."<sup>54</sup> Moreover, for Africans especially, a close knowledge of Shakespeare often is a mark of superior training and wisdom. As one black scholar observes, among Africans the ability to quote abundantly from Shakespeare is both a sign of a cultured mind and an eloquent refutation of the white-racist assumption that blacks are intellectually inferior.<sup>55</sup> And perhaps, an authority on African literature suggests, Shakespearean rhythms fit especially well with the cadences and tones of African linguistic traditions and with a widespread affinity for proverbs; Shakespeare is accordingly quoted often in African political and cultural dialogue.<sup>56</sup> Thus, African writers readily employ Caliban as an effective rhetorical device, though usually – unlike some Caribbean authors – with profound undercurrents of ambivalence toward an alien symbol.<sup>57</sup>

Perhaps too – and this is more speculative – Caliban is attractive to some authors because of the etymological identification of Shakespeare's savage with Caribbean or African settings through his supposed derivation from "cannibal." The evidence for that etymology is unproven at best, but it is widely held (as we suggested in Chapter 2) and even stated as a truism by scores of Shakespearean specialists.<sup>58</sup> Again, however, the connection is ironic, for the image it calls up is surely pejorative. Third World authors, of course, rarely take the cannibal connection literally.<sup>59</sup> Rather, they find

54 Ali A. Mazrui, "Some Sociopolitical Functions of English Literature in Africa," in Joshua A. Fishman, Charles A. Ferguson, and Jyotirinda Das Gupta, eds., *Language Problems of Developing Nations* (New York: Wiley, 1968), pp. 183–97, esp. pp. 185–86, 190 (quotation), 193; Bruner, "Meaning of Caliban," pp. 240–41.

55 Mazrui, "Some Sociopolitical Functions," pp. 185–87.

56 Bruner, "Meaning of Caliban," p. 241; Mazrui, "Some Sociopolitical Functions," pp. 187–90.

57 We are indebted to Lemuel A. Johnson for pointing out the variety of ironies that pervades African uses of Caliban.

58 See especially Chapter 5.

59 Cf. the discussion of Oswald de Andrade in Rodríguez Monegal, "Metamorphoses of Caliban," pp. 82–83.

in Caliban's possible etymology further evidence of the imperialist mentality that let Prospero seize the island, enslave Caliban, and announce (through Miranda) that the native is immune to "any print of goodness" (I.ii.351).

Perhaps these are adequate justifications for the Caliban metaphor's popularity among African writers. But a more basic reason is undoubtedly its typification of a major phase of their modern history. If Caribbeans could see in Prospero the embodiment of European and North American imperialism, and could see in Caliban a symbol of themselves, Africans were likely to make comparable identifications. From the dawn of Europe's overseas expansion in the sixteenth century (even earlier in North Africa, of course), Africans suffered a host of invasions, initially economic but increasingly political, military, and cultural. The slave trade was only the most obvious and traumatic of European assaults on Africa. By the end of the nineteenth century, western Europe controlled most of the African continent. Foreigners ran the governments, the industries, the churches, the schools; natives worked the mines, tilled the fields, fetched the wood. The African liberation movements of recent decades ended European hegemony and revived indigenous cultures; they also fostered open resentment of the former "masters" and the alien literatures imposed by the imperialists on the native populations. Many African writers, not surprisingly, adopted the anticolonial *Tempest* metaphors that were gaining currency in the West Indies and Latin America and that Mannoni had applied so forcefully to neighboring Madagascar.

For a variety of reasons, then, Caliban has been prominent in African prose and poetry, especially in the third quarter of the twentieth century. For example, Raphael E. G. Armattoo of Ghana includes in his collection of poems, *Deep down the Blackman's Mind*, these sentiments:

We have a new freedom, a new mistress  
Not with lines nor with curves nor symmetry  
Nor with brains nor great talents encumbered:  
She is Africa with her terror and her norms.  
All that in Hades or in Inferno lives  
Which Caliban has made his own beneath the seas

Plainness beyond despair, folly to the *nth*,  
All these are found in our Hesperides.<sup>60</sup>

A second example: In the early 1970s, Lemuel Johnson of Sierra Leone titled his collected poems *Highlife for Caliban*. Several of the poems have Shakespearean motifs, but they scarcely mention Shakespeare's savage; even "Calipso for Caliban" never uses the name, although it mentions "papa prospero." Johnson clearly expected his readers – Africans and others – to recognize his emblemization of Caliban nonetheless.<sup>61</sup>

A final example: Taban lo Liyong of Uganda, also writing in the early 1970s, applied *The Tempest* metaphor explicitly and ironically:

Bill Shakespeare  
Did create a character called Caliban  
The unwilling servant of Prospero,  
.....  
One thing about Caliban: he was taught language  
And what a potful of curses he contained!  
.....  
(By the way,  
I am also called Taban  
Very near to Caliban  
And was taught language  
And what do I do with it  
But to curse, in my own way?)<sup>62</sup>

60 Raphael E. G. Armattoo, *Deep down the Blackman's Mind* (North Devon, U.K.: 1954; repr. Nendeln, Netherlands: Kraus, 1973), p. 59.

61 Lemuel A. Johnson, *Highlife for Caliban* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1973), pp. 33–35, with an Afterword by Sylvia Wynter, pp. 129–56, that underscores the ambiguity of the Caliban symbol in Johnson's poetry. See also Bruner, "Meaning of Caliban," pp. 248–49. Johnson further explicates and undermines the symbol in a manuscript essay entitled "Shoeing the Mule: Caliban as Genderized Response." For additional comments on Johnson, see Chapter 10.

62 Taban lo Liyong, *Frantz Fanon's Uneven Ribs: With Poems More and More* (London: Heinemann, 1971), p. 41; another reference to Caliban is on p. 68. For other invocations of Caliban by African writers contemporary with the three quoted here, see Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (of Kenya), *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics* (New York: Lawrence Hill, 1973), pp. 7–9; and especially David Wallace (of Zambia), *Do You Love Me Master?* (Lusaka, Zambia: National Educational Company, 1977). The latter work, a play that draws extensively on *The Tempest*, was first performed in 1971.

Taban lo Liyong's final lines are, of course, a paraphrase of Caliban's "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.ii.362-64). The irony and poignancy of that passage has intrigued many critics: Prospero's legacy to Caliban is not a glorious new way to express his finest thoughts but merely the means to curse his own fate and his oppressor's power. Civilization's most basic cultural tool is no gift at all. (Some of Caliban's subsequent lines arguably are among Shakespeare's most eloquent. But on balance, Caliban insists, he gained little from Prospero's language.) Until the middle of the twentieth century, most Shakespearean critics implicitly sided with Prospero on this issue, blaming Caliban for his own linguistic limitations: His warped nature was impervious to nurture's lessons.<sup>63</sup> Even the early-twentieth-century advocates of the Caliban metaphor at least implied that Caliban was a linguistic boor when they chose him to symbolize imperialistic Anglo-Americans or overbearing Afrikaners.

But language as a key to the special relationship between Prospero and Caliban took a new turn in 1960 when the Barbadian novelist and poet George Lamming, in a largely autobiographical reassessment of Caliban as the victim of cultural imperialism, suggested that language was Caliban's "prison." Through language, Prospero controls the monster's present and limits his future - "the first important achievement of the colonising process." "This gift of Language meant not English, in particular, but speech and concept as a way, a method, a necessary avenue towards areas of the self which could not be reached in any other way." Language is necessary to expression, and expression is essential to change, but it is Prospero's language and therefore largely Prospero's vision of the future that Caliban must accept. And yet language is always problematic, giving voice unexpectedly to hidden hopes. As John Pepper Clark observed a decade after Lamming first raised the issue, Caliban "is as much drunk with his second language [before Prospero's arrival he presumably communicated well enough with

<sup>63</sup> See, for example, Edmond Malone, ed. *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, Vol. XV (London: Rivington et al., 1821), pp. 13-14.

Sycorax] . . . as he is with the heady wine Stephano serves him."<sup>64</sup> Caliban, in short, is victimized both physically and culturally, yet he has a new weapon of resistance. This privileging of language as a crucial form of Prospero's control over the native - a theme reiterated in Lamming's novel *Water with Berries* (1971) and in several subsequent Caribbean and African works - led critics to broaden their understanding of the colonial process and of indigenous responses. For all victims of cultural imperialism, but especially for societies without a common language, "language is power" had particular poignancy.

The German authority on "neo-African" literature, Janheinz Jahn, added an important codicil to the trend by interpreting Prospero's gift of language as liberating rather than confining. Jahn, like Philip Mason, is wary of reading too much into an early Jacobean play; he is unwilling "to drag Shakespeare into modern controversies or credit him with ideas some way ahead of his time!" Still, Jahn finds the Prospero-Caliban "parallel" irresistible, and he readily follows the lead of the African writers he studies by applying *Tempest* metaphors to modern conflicts between oppressors and oppressed.<sup>65</sup> Prospero's language, he suggests, provides Caliban with a medium of expression for *Caliban's* 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

<sup>64</sup> George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960), pp. 109-10; John Pepper Clark, *The Example of Shakespeare* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970), ch. 1 ("The Legacy of Caliban"), p. 3, previously published in *Black Orpheus*, II (1968); 16-39, esp. p. 17. On Lamming and his context, see Nixon, "Appropriations of *The Tempest*," pp. 566-70; on Lamming and the Caliban metaphor, see Elizabeth Nuñez Harrell, "The *Tempest* and the Works of Two Caribbean Novelists: Pitfalls in the Way of Seeing Caliban" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1977), esp. ch. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Janheinz Jahn, *Neo-African Literature: A History of Black Writing*, trans. Oliver Coburn and Ursula Lehrburger (Düsseldorf-Köln: 1966; repr. New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 239.

the language he has minted from it are no longer identical. Caliban breaks out of the prison of Prospero's language.<sup>66</sup>

Jahn even suggests a rough date for Caliban's linguistic jailbreak: Between 1934 and 1948 the literature of "Negritude," initiated by Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal and others, staged "the successful revolt in which Caliban broke out of the prison of Prospero's language, by converting that language to his own needs for self-expression."<sup>67</sup> To distance themselves still further from Prospero's colonialist clutches, some African and Caribbean writers employ dialectical English, as in Lemuel Johnson's calypso rhythms; going a giant step further, the distinguished Kenyan author Ngugi Wa Thiong'o now writes in Gikuyu.<sup>68</sup>

Jahn's analysis, like the writings (implicitly, at least) of the negritude authors he praises, elevates Caliban from a symbol of the politically oppressed and culturally stunted native to a symbol of the temporarily inarticulate yet culturally rich native. Whereas Mannoni's Caliban was inferior because Prospero destroyed his culture and never fully replaced it with another, Jahn's Caliban has a valuable heritage that finds expression through Prospero's language, even though Prospero is deaf to the message.<sup>69</sup> In sum, Jahn shifts the focus from despair over the deprivation of native culture to pride

66 Jahn, *Neo-African Literature*, p. 242.

67 Jahn, *Neo-African Literature*, p. 242.

68 See, for example, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Ngaahita Ndeenda* (1980), reissued in English as *I will Marry When I Want* (London: Heinemann, 1982); and *Matigari* (Kenya: 1987; repr. Oxford: Heinemann, 1989). For a brief but useful discussion of Ngugi's position, see David Hart, "Worlds Apart," *New Socialist*, XLIV (December 1986): 33, and, more extensively, Cartelli, "Prospero in Africa"; and Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 123-32.

69 Jahn, *Neo-African Literature*, pp. 241-69. See also Bernth Lindfors, "The Rise of African Pornography," *Transition*, No. 42 (1973): 65-71. Caliban's language is considered from a broader perspective by Stephen Greenblatt, "Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century," in Fredi Chiappelli, ed., *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), Vol. II, pp. 561-80, esp. pp. 568-75. See also Houston A. Baker, Jr., "Caliban's Triple Play," in Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed., *Race, Writing, and Difference* (University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 381-95; Patrick Taylor, *The Narrative of Liberation: Perspectives on Afro-Caribbean Literature, Popular Culture, and Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989).

in its tenacity. But in either case, Caliban is a paradigm for the oppressed, not the oppressors. Since 1950, no prominent author - from Europe or America or the Third World - has identified Caliban with the imperialists, as did Darío, Rodó, Barnes, and others in the first half of the century. Rather, as John Wain summarized the situation in 1964, Caliban "has the pathos of the exploited peoples everywhere, poignantly expressed at the beginning of a three-hundred-year wave of European colonization."<sup>70</sup> Caliban's transformation, for the time being at least, is diametric and virtually unanimous.

## V

The universality of the new Caliban metaphor is aptly illustrated by two works that explore late-twentieth-century themes: apartheid in South Africa and French nationalism in Canada. Sibnarayan Ray's essay on "Shylock, Othello and Caliban" finds important parallels between certain Shakespearean characters and the victims of "ethnic-cultural superiority" - Ray's universalization of "apartheid." "Broadly speaking, the dominant community holds in arrogant contempt the one that is dominated; the latter, on its part, is driven to reluctant subservience, smouldering hatred and fear, and clandestine schemes of revenge." Thus defined, apartheid appeared in ancient Greece and China as well as in Europe, India, and elsewhere. Not that Shakespeare had any such applications in mind. Rather, because "a work of art, once completed, may communicate meanings which were outside the conscious intentions of the artist," Caliban effectively represents native populations almost everywhere, especially in Africa, the United States, and Australia.<sup>71</sup>

70 John Wain, *The Living World of Shakespeare: A Playgoer's Guide* (London: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 226-27.

71 Sibnarayan Ray, "Shylock, Othello and Caliban: Shakespearean Variations on the Theme of Apartheid," in Amalendu Bose, ed., *Calcutta Essays on Shakespeare* (Calcutta University, 1966), pp. 1-16, esp. pp. 2-3, 10-13. For an explanation of why *The Tempest* has had relatively little reassessment in India and a provocative discussion of several aspects of Caliban's metamorphosis, see Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 142-58. Useful too are Jyotsna Singh, "Different Shakespeares: The Bard in Colonial/Postcolonial India," *Theatre Journal*, XLI (1989): 445-58, and Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Con-*

In 1974, the Haitian-born Max Dorsinville's *Caliban without Prospero: Essay on Quebec and Black Literature* carried the Caliban metaphor to Canada, one of the few regions of the globe not touched specifically by Ray or his numerous predecessors. Simultaneously, the book gave new emphasis to Caliban's cultural tenacity. As Ronald Sutherland notes in the Preface, Dorsinville goes beyond an analysis of the parallels between French-Canadian and African-American literature – both are colonial, in a sense, but irrepressible and newly vigorous – to formulate “a new concept [for] . . . the literatures of all emerging national or ethnic groups.” In the Caliban-Prospero metaphor, Dorsinville finds ready-made “an instrument of insight into the complexities of cultural confrontation in a colonial context.” Through a provocative blend of psychoanalytic theory and literary analysis, Dorsinville traces the evolution of two minority literatures in North America from their early dependence on the dominant culture to their recent emergence as literatures in their own right: Caliban *without* Prospero.<sup>72</sup>

Dorsinville is not reluctant, as were Rodó and Barnes much earlier and others more recently, to make *Tempest* metaphors explicit and emphatic. His book bristles with references to “Calibanic literature,” “Calibanic culture,” “a Calibanic search,” “a strictly Calibanic viewpoint,” “[t]he Calibanic man,” and “the Calibanic writer.”<sup>73</sup> All such phrases refer, in Dorsinville's lexicon, to the literature that emerged at various times in various parts of the world where Europeans once settled, imposed their culture, were soon (sometimes not so soon) imitated by their colonial descendants, and eventually were rejected by culturally independent “post-European” authors. Dorsinville's story, in short, is Caliban's cultural emancipation. That Dorsinville invokes not only Quebecois and African-American literature but also, at least briefly, the literatures of Anglo-Saxon Americans, English-Canadians, Haitians, Argentinians, Brazilians,

quest: *Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

72 Dorsinville, *Caliban without Prospero*, passim. On Caliban in Canadian literature, see also Chantal Zabus, “A Calibanic *Tempest* in Anglophone & Francophone New World Writing,” *Canadian Literature*, No. 104 (Spring 1985): 35–50, esp. pp. 42–49; and Diana Brydon, “Re-writing *The Tempest*,” *World Literature Written in English*, XXIII (1984): 75–88.

73 Dorsinville, *Caliban without Prospero*, pp. 15, 33, 78, 206.

and Senegalese suggests the remarkable versatility of the Caliban metaphor.

There are, however, limits to the metaphor's attraction. As Chantal Zabus points out, “In English Canada, Caliban is artfully relegated to the wings of the literary scene and such topics as language and rape receive no attention. Unlike the Black writer, the English-Canadian writer privileges Miranda over Caliban and appears to dwell more on the Prospero/Miranda or Miranda/Ferdinand relationships.” English-Canadians, with few exceptions, identify with Prospero's daughter rather than with his slave; they seek independence from parental control rather than freedom from bondage; they assert their individuality rather than rebel against their mentors.<sup>74</sup> *Tempest* metaphors, it seems, are situational as well as ubiquitous.

Still, there is no denying the power of the Caliban metaphor on the Third World, even if its impact on political and cultural consciousness defies precise measurement. The frequency and poignancy with which Caliban has been invoked for nearly a century and the variety of authors who have enlisted him in ideological causes suggest that Shakespeare's savage and deformed slave met exceptionally well the needs of Third World authors and readers for a literary metaphor that was both readily identifiable and emotionally acceptable. That Caliban served so many masters surely reflects Shakespeare's unmatched universality and *The Tempest*'s adaptability to colonial contexts, whether seen from the imperialists' or the natives' perspective.

74 Zabus, “Anglophone & Francophone New World Writing,” p. 42; Brydon, “Rewriting *The Tempest*,” pp. 77–84.