Genesis of a Discourse:

_The Tempest_ and the Emergence of Postcoloniality

By

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Abstract

This dissertation contends that *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare plays a seminal role in the development of postcolonial literature and criticism because it was created in a moment when the colonial system that was now falling apart was just beginning to come into being. Creative writers and critics from the Third World, particularly Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, and the First found that the moment reflected in *The Tempest* had something very specific to say to a generation coming of age in the postcolonial world of the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s. I establish that a significant discourse that begins in the Nineteenth Century and intensifies in the Twentieth depends on *The Tempest* to explore the nature of colonialism and to develop an understanding of the postcolonial world. I then examine the role theories of adaptation play in understanding why *The Tempest* assumes such a crucial role and determine that the most useful model of adaptation resembles the method developed by biblical typologists which “sets two successive historical events [or periods] into a reciprocal relation of anticipation and fulfillment” (Brumm 27). I argue that postcolonial writers and critics found in *The Tempest* evidence of a history of colonial oppression and resistance often obscured by established historical narratives and a venue to explore their relationship to their past, present, and future. Because my argument rests on the contention that *The Tempest* was
created in a world where colonialism was coming into being, I explore the historical context surrounding the moment of the play’s creation and determine, in spite of the contention of many historians and some literary critics to the contrary, the forces bringing colonialism into being were already at play and were having a profound effect. After briefly illustrating the historical roots of several popular themes in *The Tempest* that postcolonial writers have embraced, I turn to the work of writers and critics from the Third World and the First to show how *The Tempest* plays a significant role in postcolonial studies.
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Introduction

*The Tempest* and the Genesis of the Postcolonial

For a generation of postcolonial\(^1\) writers and literary critics in Great Britain, the United States, and the Third World, *The Tempest* proved to be a central tool in defining the nature of colonialism and the relationships constructed by that system. For both critics and creative writers of the 1960s, 1970s, and into the 1980s, *The Tempest* became a means to explore and develop an understanding of the nature of the postcolonial world after 1945. It also has served as a vehicle, particularly for Third World writers, for the overthrow of colonial ideology and an assertion of the ideological perspective of the oppressed. Although *The Tempest* has been used to explore the nature of colonialism both before and after these decades, there is arguably a *Tempest* moment in this period when the play becomes a dynamic catalyst that facilitates the birth of new ways of thinking, both creatively and critically. In the critical world, it becomes a site of ideological struggle between the “left” and “right” that grows so intense that critics like Francis Barker and Peter Hulme denounce those who do not accept that *The Tempest* is “imbricated within the discourse of colonialism” as “complicit . . . with colonialist ideology” (243). In the emerging world of postcolonial literature, the play provides a matrix to explore the struggle to overthrow colonialism and imperialism and to create a new society.

\(^1\) I have used the term “postcolonial” in this project as an umbrella term to link a variety of responses in literature, criticism, and politics to the disintegration of colonial empires after the Second World War. In using this term I do not mean to conflate the variety of perspectives on this phenomenon emerging from very different contexts. A number of critics have pointed to the problematic nature of the term and insisted that when used loosely or uncritically, it can imply correspondences that do not exist. Since the publication of *The Empire Writes Back*, a critical debate has emerged, that, while acknowledging the groundbreaking nature of this study, sees it as implicitly endorsing a singular response to the crisis in colonialism. With my use of the term I in no way wish to negate the importance of this critical debate and in fact, particularly in the last two chapters of this dissertation, note how this debate plays out in the context of creative as well as theoretical work.
Hugh Grady in his study of Shakespeare’s history plays argues that these early modern plays “constitute an intervention within our own theoretical discourses on these [same] topics within late modernity [1990]” (3). Just as Grady contends that the clash of ideas contained within Shakespeare’s history plays has a particular relevance to discursive debates in the 1990s, one can argue that *The Tempest* has an even more intense “moment,” and acts out an even more significant “intervention,” in the debates and struggles that created postcolonialism in the 1960s and 1970s.

The intervention is undeniable, and in this project I consider what the nature of this intervention is. Do the postcolonial writers and critics respond to *The Tempest* so directly because the play is “about” colonialism at its formative stage? Are the critics of the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s identifying “a foundational paradigm in the history of European Colonialism” (Cartelli, *Repositioning* 89) or responding primarily to the “ideological configurations of the moment” (Felperin 174)? Are postcolonial authors such as the West Indian George Lamming, when he contends that “*The Tempest* is prophetic of our future,” or the Cuban Fernández Retamar, when he proclaims “Caliban is our Carib,” or the Nigerian J.P. Clarke, when he identifies Caliban as the voice of the revolutionary agitator and Prospero the direct descendant of Ian Smith, entering into a dialogue with Shakespeare’s *Tempest*? Or are they speaking from a “prison of the present moment” that projects “the present into the past” (Howard, “New” 22) to construct a history that confirms an ideological stance that bears little or no relationship to the events and ideas portrayed by Shakespeare? There is no question that postcolonial writers and critics respond to *The Tempest*, but what is it about this play to which they respond?

Critics have pointed out the malleability of perceptions of the past, contending that in attempting to understand the context of a given work we must first acknowledge that “all our
knowledge of the past is conditioned by and dependent upon the culture, language, and ideologies of the present and this means that historicism itself necessarily produces an implicit allegory of the present in its configurations of the past” (Grady 2). Historian Glen Burgess warns that encounters with the texts of the past without understanding our tendency to construct contexts put us in danger of confusing “cosy self-confirming fireside chats with [ourselves]” for “enriching encounter[s] with the alien past” (36).

There is no denying that *The Tempest* plays an integral role in the “fireside chats” that produced a creative and critical explosion of postcolonial expression in the 1960s and 1970s. The “presentist” *Tempest* is a powerful contributor to this “chat,” but what is the role of Shakespeare’s *Tempest, The Tempest* of 1611, in this emerging discourse? Did *The Tempest* become a founding text of postcolonial discourse because it is a founding text of colonial discourse? Or is it rather, as Robin Headlam Wells argues, an allegory “with a rich and complex afterlife” that “has changed its meaning over four centuries” but in its origins had nothing to do with “colonial exploitation” or “the subjugation of indigenous people” (“Virtue” 252)? What is it about this play that has made it such an active intervener in a discourse that dominates an era almost 400 years after it was written and first performed? And to what extent are the times that produced it a factor in its power and influence?

These are the questions I began with when I started this project, and what follows is the place those questions have led me. I concluded that indeed *The Tempest* plays a seminal role in the development of a critical and creative postcolonial discourse, and that it has played this seminal role because there is an affinity between the moment of *The Tempest’s* creation and the postcolonial moment of the 1960s and 1970s: there is a moment when empire on the way up
meets empire on the way down. Stephen Greenblatt comments on an affinity he “senses” between “us” and Shakespeare’s early modern generation in his 1980 book Renaissance Self-Fashioning:

We sense too that we are situated at the close of the cultural moment initiated in the Renaissance and that the places in which our social and psychological world seems to be cracking apart are those structural joints visible when it was first constructed. In the midst of the anxieties and contradictions attendant upon the threatened collapse of this phase of our civilization, we respond with passionate curiosity and poignancy to the anxieties and contradictions attendant upon its rise. (174-75)

Here Greenblatt is speaking of a sense of self and identity produced by the “great syncretic structures” of Renaissance humanism that seemed so permanent and that we are now finding “as temporary, time-conditioned, contingent as those vast European empires” that once seemed indestructible (174). He could easily be discussing the related phenomenon that I point to in this project: I argue that a generation of writers and critics, coming of age in an era when colonial empires were falling and imperialism seemed doomed, saw an image of their own experience in The Tempest. This was possible because the play can be viewed as a product of a time when the same system was taking shape and the “structural joints” that were “visible when it was first constructed” are the very ones coming apart. By claiming that Prospero, Caliban, Ariel, and Miranda’s story can best be understood when perceived within the “historical imbrication which the colonial framework clarifies” (“Stormy Weather” 3), Hulme insists that “something of significance about the play [has been discovered] that was obscured or ignored for many years” (“Reading,” 234). Not only does this perspective reframe the narrative to place Caliban’s struggle at the centre of the play, it affirms, with Caliban’s curse, that resistance as well as oppression is an integral aspect of colonialism even at its earliest stages. A reading that refuses to
ignore the colonial contexts of *The Tempest*’s early modern moment necessitates a reordering of the traditional view of history to one that emphasizes “the place of the colonial and post-colonial experience as central to the moral, textual and political economies of modernity” at its earliest moments and on through more than four hundred years of history (Bhabha, Foreword x). *The Tempest*’s crucial role in the birth of postcolonial criticism means it is not an exaggeration to consider it to be the genesis of a way of thinking and looking at the world that has influenced a good part of literary studies. For many in the Third World, creative writers and critics, *The Tempest* has been the catalyst to explore their own experience and to find types that validate their own history so often erased or ignored.

In order to begin my investigation of the special role *The Tempest* plays in the development of postcolonial theory and practice, I begin my project by examining the development of a discourse. In the first chapter I trace the development of *The Tempest* as the central text in a postcolonial discourse that begins in the nineteenth century and intensifies in the 1960s and 1970s, and I examine how this discourse had a profound effect on both criticism and literature. In the second chapter I discuss just how *The Tempest* is used by writers and critics in the development of this discourse. Although the writing of critics and creative writers take very different forms, I argue that they all share a commitment to recovering and bearing witness to *The Tempest*’s representation of a historical moment that lies at the very origins of empire and has particular relevance to an era when empire is falling apart. In considering just how *The Tempest* is used to reveal the colonial experience of oppression and resistance at the centre of literature and history, I argue that postcolonialists use a method similar to that of biblical typologists which I call postcolonial typology. Ursula Brumm, in her book *American Thought and Religious Typology*, defines typology as “a form of prophecy which sets two successive historical events
into a reciprocal relation of anticipation and fulfillment” (27); her formulation has particular relevance to the discourse I examine. I explore how biblical typology’s emphasis on the revelation of a concealed historical truth, and on the relationship of that truth to both the present and the future, provides a useful model for exploring the methods used by postcolonial writers in their readings of *The Tempest*.

Before turning to the ways that postcolonial writers and critics engage with the play, in the third chapter I examine the nature of the contextual moment in which *The Tempest* was created; and I argue that, in spite of what a number of historians and critics contend, Shakespeare’s England was marked by the forces of colonialism coming into being, and those forces had a profound effect on the formation of the play. Postcolonial literary criticism of *The Tempest* has had a major impact on the understanding of both the play and the early modern period, but in spite of its influence, a number of historians and critics have argued that this approach overestimates the development of colonialism and thus misreads the play. This chapter is important for my argument because it both defends the historicism of the postcolonial approach and supports the usefulness of the postcolonial typological model of adaptation. In this chapter I support the contention that the context in which Shakespeare created *The Tempest* was one in which colonialism, while not yet a coherent system, was already coming into being. In the next short chapter I return to the play itself to point out briefly the way my historical investigation supports postcolonial readings of the play and, by exploring the variety of forces at play in the development of colonialism in 1611 (some of which have not traditionally been associated with colonialism), I provide a context for deepening the postcolonial reading of the play. Although my major purpose in this section of my project is to examine the way postcolonial writers use *The Tempest*, in this chapter I summarize three important themes in *The Tempest* towards which
postcolonialists gravitate, and I discuss historical contexts that may make them particularly attractive to this kind of engagement.

In the two final chapters I examine the way *The Tempest* has been used by both creative writers and literary critics from the Third World and the First to develop an understanding of the colonial and postcolonial experiences on both a critical and imaginative plane. In fact, *The Tempest* became one weapon in an intense struggle being waged in different venues and in different ways across the world. The struggle involved nothing less than the remaking of the world, and it was waged intensely not just in politics and warfare but also in the realms of culture and ideology. A significant part of a generation was eager to remake the world, and *The Tempest* provided a vehicle to explore this possibility. *The Tempest* not only provided the matrix within which over four hundred years of imperial history could be reframed “from the perspective of those who suffered its effects” (*Postcolonialism* 4), to use Robert Young’s words; it also played a prophetic role to reveal how “from its very first [colonialism] carried with it the seeds of its own destruction”(74). I argue that these effects occurred not simply because *The Tempest* has proved to be a useful allegory, but because the questions that are basic to the postcolonial era are explicitly explored in *The Tempest*. I show that just as *Genesis* is the seminal text for biblical typology, so *The Tempest* is the seminal text for postcolonialists, and has proved to be a key matrix to explore and understand power, gender, nationalism, sex, identity, and ideology in a postcolonial world. I examine how exploration of the play has had a profound effect on the direction of Western literary studies, the thinking of Third World intellectuals, and the creative work of men and women from both the Third World and the imperial homeland as they reframe through fiction the reality of four hundred years of history.
In an article defending George Lamming’s discussion of *The Tempest* in *Pleasures of Exile*, Hulme argues that “Lamming was not wrong, and that his reading of *The Tempest* deserves a place at the centre of Shakespeare criticism, not just at the centre of what the institution regards as the outpost of the Third World allegory” (“Reading” 224). For Hulme, Lamming’s genius lies in his “dual recognition: that the play could be read as a kind of colonial history, with specific Caribbean reverberations, and that he himself was a Caliban-like figure, educated by Prospero but rebelling against that education” (222). The dual role *The Tempest* plays for Lamming and, in different ways, for many of the writers and critics I discuss in this dissertation, I believe is a result of the conflation of two moments over four hundred years apart where colonialism on the way up has something very particular to offer a generation making sense of the same system as it falls apart. History provided the context for *The Tempest* matrix, but Shakespeare provided the types that proved so useful. Hulme ends his article on Lamming and “the Paradox of Exile” with these thoughts on the importance of the postcolonial *Tempest*:

And in the struggles over the meaning of *The Tempest*, which have been a significant aspect of literary culture in the last half century, Mannoni and Lamming have moved from their once-peripheral positions to occupy something like centre-stage. Rather like Eshu, in Césaire’s play, they have moved uninvited into the masque, spoken their lines, and made a new generation of readers see the play differently. (234-35)

And I would add that Mannoni and Lamming, along with their contemporaries, made many in that new generation see not only their own world differently but Shakespeare’s as well.
Chapter 1

The Development of a Discourse “From Seeds of Exile and Paradox”: Some Travels with the Postcolonial Tempest

The extent to which Thomas Cartelli’s assertion that “The Tempest will seldom any longer be taken up in isolation from what postcolonial writers and critics have made of [it] in their efforts of appropriation and transformation” (Repositioning 110) is borne out in Amy Fine Collins and Bradley Collins’s essay on Peter Greenaway’s film Prospero’s Books. They are almost shocked by Greenaway’s “surprising” reluctance “to expand on The Tempest’s famous theme of master versus slave and colonizer versus colonized” (54). The assumption that The Tempest is a play primarily concerned with the dynamics of colonialism has become a dominant trend in the last twenty-five years. Even though critics like Susan Bennett are beginning to question whether “the tired trope of Prospero and Caliban (standing in for the equally tired trope of Same and Other) should be retired,” she goes on to conclude that “it in fact still seems premature to abandon this particularly powerful staging of strategies for regulation across the boundaries of gender, class, race, sexuality, and nation” (119).

This chapter will examine a complicated intertextual discourse that has developed over more than a hundred years and the way that discourse has come to situate Shakespeare’s Tempest as a “foundational paradigm in the history of European colonialism” (Cartelli, Repositioning 89). Some, like Francis Barker and Peter Hulme, have argued that The Tempest is a text “imbricated within the discourse of colonialism” (243) from its very inception; others choose to emphasize The Tempest as “prophetic of a political future which is our present” (Lamming, Pleasures 13), a dramatization of “the practice and psychology of colonization years before it became a global
phenomenon” (Ngũgĩ, *Homecoming* 7); and still others adopt *The Tempest* as a site of polemical struggle to “write back to the empire,” re-inscribing the voice of the oppressed onto a “master- or seed-text” of colonialism (Cartelli, *Repositioning* 107). This discourse has engaged literary critics, historians, playwrights, poets, novelists, film-makers, revolutionaries, and psychiatrists from both the Old World and the New. These disparate voices, sometimes in dialogue with each other, other times oblivious to each other’s existence, have constructed a discursive environment that has transformed the way *The Tempest* is experienced in our time.


Howard Felperin also captures the moment well in his chapter on *The Tempest* in his book *The Uses of The Canon*:

[A]nti-authoritarian, anti-elitist, and anti-aesthetic doctrines were in the wind in a recently politicized academia. . . . A “social realist” *Tempest*? How oxymoronic, how literally unthinkable and incredible, would such a notion once have been! . . . [T]he time was right for a new fit
He notes that in the fourteen years that separate Erlich’s talk and his own text “positions have practically reversed themselves.” He adds: “What Shakespearean now would be oblivious or audacious enough to discuss The Tempest as anything other than ‘a work of profound social realism’ – which is to say, discuss it from any critical standpoint other than a historicist or feminist or, more specifically, a post-colonial position?” (171). Although Felperin, in response to what he sees as unreasonable attacks on the “Canon,” may overstate the overwhelming dominance of postcolonial approaches to The Tempest, it cannot be denied that the perspectives raised by literary critics in the 1970s significantly altered the terrain of Tempest criticism and interpretation.

Barker and Hulme point out that “different readings struggle with each other on the site of the text” (232), and this new trend in criticism of The Tempest rose up in opposition to what had become generally known as an “idealist” view of The Tempest that presented Prospero as an example of timeless human values. Stephen Orgel cites Madeleine Doran’s comments as typical of the view dominating criticism of the play in the 1960s:

The action of the play is Prospero’s discovery to his enemies, their discovery of themselves, the lovers’ discovery of a world of wonder, Prospero’s own discovery of an ethic of forgiveness, and the renunciation of his magical power. (Introduction 13)

Frank Kermode’s introduction to the widely read Arden edition became a particular focus of criticism. Ania Loomba identifies what she considers the typical attitude of many critics. She acknowledges that critics note The Tempest’s “New World” connection as far back as 1808, but these references are considered background material not central to an understanding of the text and “not allowed to become part of the play’s ideological and historical ‘con-text.’” She adds: “in Kermode’s introduction to the play, for example, sources are painstakingly logged but kept at
bay; we are told that the play is primarily concerned with the opposition between Nature and Art” (*Gender* 143). To illustrate her point, she cites Kermode’s comments in his introduction that “there is nothing in *The Tempest* fundamental to its structure of ideas which could not have existed had America remained undiscovered” (qtd. in Loomba 143).

In arguing that the play cannot be properly understood without placing its colonial implications at the centre, this new wave of critics is not the first to suggest that the play could provide important insights into the nature of colonialism. Felperin cites J. S. Phillpott’s 1876 introduction to the Rugby Edition, part of the inexpensive and widely read *Rivington’s School Classics* series, as an early example of the use of *The Tempest* to justify colonialism: “The character [of Caliban] may have had a special bearing on the great question of a time when we were discovering fresh colonies,” revealing that “we might justify the usurpation of power by those who were mentally and morally stronger, as long as that usurpation was only used to educate and humanise the savage” (177). In the twentieth century, G. Wilson Knight continued this trend when he glorified Prospero as a symbol of England’s “colonizing, especially her will to raise savage peoples from superstition and blood-sacrifice, taboos and witchcraft and the attendant fears and slaveries, to a more enlightened existence” (qtd. in Skura 46). 2 Felperin notes that in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, *The Tempest* played a crucial role in building the ideological basis for the British Empire as “the recently established Shakespeare industry turned its ideological apparatus to the production of an English subject fitted to the needs of empire” (179). As David Johnson points out, in his article “Shakespeare and Education in Africa,” Shakespeare in general, and *The Tempest* in particular, began to be seen as

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2 It is interesting that there was one early anti-imperialist voice. Griffiths notes the first anti-imperialist response to the play in a review published in 1904 by W.T.Stead who wrote that “when Caliban says ‘This island’s mine, by Sycorax my mother,’ . . . we have the whole case of the aboriginal against aggressive civilisation dramatised before us” (qtd in Felperin 170).
important tools in the effort to “civilize” the African. He cites A. Victor Murray’s 1929 book *The School in the Bush* as an illustration of his point: “Africa is the child, Europe the adult . . . the treasures of the past are all European — for [the African] . . . Shakespeare wrote . . . [t]here is a universal heritage waiting to be taken up by him” (222). Ania Loomba contends that in India *The Tempest* became an ideological vehicle to promote identification with the Empire and that Indians, as Aryans, were encouraged to feel “closer to noble, white Prospero than monstrous, black Caliban” (*Gender* 147).

Alden T. Vaughan’s essay “Shakespeare’s Indian: The Americanization of Caliban” discusses another important prelude to the blossoming of postcolonial criticism that takes over *The Tempest* beginning in the 1970s. In 1960, when Leo Marx proclaimed *The Tempest* “Shakespeare’s American Fable” and “a prologue to American literature” (qtd. in Vaughan 146), he marked the culmination of a trend that Vaughan traces back to the end of the nineteenth century. Although Vaughan notes that critics like Edmond Malone, who in 1808 argued that pamphlets and narratives describing early exploration of the Americas “triggered Shakespeare’s imagination and provided much of *The Tempest*’s narrative framework” (138), it is not until the end of the nineteenth century that a Shakespearean critic emphatically claimed *The Tempest* for America. In 1892 Sidney Lee, a prominent and popular English critic, declared that *The Tempest* is “a veritable document of early Anglo-American history” (qtd. in Vaughan 140); and in 1898 an American critic, Frank M. Bristol, argued that *The Tempest* “has an entirely American basis and character” (qtd. in Vaughan 141). Influential critic Walter Raleigh, in spite of a slight detour during the First World War to identify Caliban with the “Fritz, or the Boche” (Hawkes 64), championed *The Tempest* as “a fantasy of the New World,” adding “Shakespeare, almost alone, saw the problem of American settlement in a detached light” (qtd. in Vaughan 141).
One of the more creative examples of the trend to Americanize *The Tempest* was put forward by the American critic and clergyman Edward Everett Hale in 1902. Claiming that Prospero’s island was actually Cuttyhunk Island, off the coast of Cape Cod, he concluded “we have a right to claim Miranda as a Massachusetts girl” (qtd. in Vaughan 142). Vaughan sees the preoccupation with a *Tempest* rooted in America as part of an overall trend of *rapprochement* between England and the United States. He explains that during the nineteenth century relations between the two countries “were often strained and sometimes hostile” (142), but as the century ended the two countries became interested in their common roots, culture, and language.

America’s rediscovery and subsequent appropriation of British roots grew with the twentieth century, becoming particularly strong during the First World War. Charles Mills Gayley, in his 1917 book *Shakespeare and the Founders of Liberty in America*, illustrates Vaughan’s contention:

> That speech, the poetry, of the race are ours and theirs in common, we know – they are *Shakespeare*. But the institutions, the law and liberty, the democracy administered by the fittest, are not only theirs and ours in common, they are derived from Shakespeare’s England, and our Shakespeare, too. (qtd. in Vaughan 143)

In the Americanization of *The Tempest*, Vaughan argues, we can see a reflection of the developing “special relationship” between Britain and the United States. Although Vaughan does not explicitly make this point, as power shifted from a British Empire on the decline to an American Empire on the ascent, *The Tempest*, with all the authority associated with it as the culmination of Shakespeare’s work, moves too.
Along with the appropriation of *The Tempest* as an “American” text, Caliban became identified as a native American Indian. Vaughan notes that some scholars, like E.E. Stoll, fought against this trend. Stoll denounced Gayley’s book as “prompted by the spirit of propaganda.” Pointing out that “[t]here is not a word in the *Tempest* about America or Virginia, colonies or colonizing, Indians or tomahawks, maize, mocking-birds or tobacco,” he attempted to re-establish *The Tempest*’s European origins (qtd. in Vaughan, 144). His efforts were by and large unsuccessful, and by mid-century “[a] close identification of *The Tempest* with American colonization and of Caliban with American natives [was] becoming axiomatic among Shakespeare scholars” (Vaughan 145). In the sixties the new sensitivity about the ugly side of colonialism was reflected in Americanist *Tempest* criticism. Vaughan notes that this new generation of critics was less interested in historical proof of the play’s American roots than in the “appropriateness of its emblems for subsequent American history” (146). This trend is particularly evident in Leslie Fiedler’s *The Stranger in Shakespeare*. Fiedler writes:

> the whole history of imperialist America has been prophetically revealed to us in brief parable [Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo’s revolt, and Prospero’s response]: from the initial act of expropriation through the Indian wars to the setting up of reservations, and from the beginnings of black slavery to the first revolts and evasions. [...] *The Tempest* foreshadows as well the emergence of that democracy of fugitive white slaves, deprived and cultureless refugees from a Europe they never owned. (238)

With a certain amount of irony, Vaughan observes that just as “literary critics were abandoning a literal for a figurative reading of Caliban’s New World connections, English and American historians jumped on the American School bandwagon” (149). For Vaughan, the intense interest that erupts among historians and literary critics of the 1970s and 1980s to view *The Tempest*
within the context of a postcolonial paradigm is a direct descendant of almost a hundred years of *The Tempest*'s Americanization.

It would be a mistake, however, to view the pre-history of the interest in a postcolonial *Tempest* that emerged in the seventies as resting solely with *The Tempest*'s British imperialist and Americanist critics. As Edward Said has remarked: “‘interpretation of Western culture’ has been controlled by the ‘universalizing discourses of modern Europe and the United States,’ with only an infrequent ‘acknowledgment that . . . colonized people should be heard from, their ideas known’” (qtd. in Robinson 431). Writers and critics from the colonies, former colonies, and neo-colonies play an important, if often little acknowledged, role in the development of the discourse that has produced more recent Western debates about the nature of *The Tempest*. Jonathan Bate, in his article “Caliban and Ariel Write Back,” finds “it mildly ironic that very few of the ‘radical’ critics of the 1970s and 1980s have acknowledged that a revisionary reading of *The Tempest* had already been undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s by non-white non-Europeans” (165).

In fact, this tradition goes much farther back than the 1950s. In 1971, when Cuban writer and revolutionary Roberto Fernández Retamar writes in his influential essay “Caliban,” “what is our history, what is our culture, if not the history and culture of Caliban?” (14), he builds on an almost eighty-year-old tradition of Latin American criticism that evokes *The Tempest* as emblematic of Latin American experience. Fernández Retamar, like his Western counterparts, credits Shakespeare’s colonial sources, but emphasizes Columbus’s diaries describing exploration and discovery of the Carib Indians as a more likely source than the explorations of Virginia. With the same pride of ownership that many of the American critics express, Fernández Retamar declares “Caliban is our Carib” (9).
Originally, Latin Americans identified with Ariel rather than Caliban. Caliban was instead identified with the threat from the North, the United States. Alden Vaughn and Virginia Mason Vaughan, in their book *Shakespeare’s Caliban: A Cultural History*, cite Rubén Darío, the Nicaraguan nationalist, journalist, and poet, as the first to apply images from *The Tempest* to the politics of Latin America. In 1893, on a visit to New York, he described his impression of “the gory, the cyclopean, the monstrous capital of the banknote” where “Caliban soaks up whiskey as he soaked up wine in Shakespeare’s play.” In 1898, he published an article denouncing the United States under the title “The Triumph of Caliban” (147). In the same year, at the time of America’s victory in the Spanish-American War, Franco-Argentinean writer Paul Groussac spoke of the United States as a “formless ‘Calibanesque’ body” (qtd. in Fernández Retamar 10) – an identification that would go on to be popularized by the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó in his essay “Ariel” written in 1900. Fernández Retamar calls this essay, written in the form of a lecture given by a teacher Prospero, one of the most famous works of Latin-American literature. Rodó contends that “Shakespeare’s ethereal Ariel symbolizes the noble, soaring aspect of the human spirit” (qtd. in van Delden 152), representing “the spiritual, aesthetic culture of Latin America” (158). Caliban is again identified with the United States. Maarten van Delden, in his essay on the Darwinist influences on Rodó, contends that “Caliban was for Rodó not so much what Latin America had left behind, but rather what he feared the continent might become if it followed in the footsteps of the nation which after its victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898 was already beginning to look like the most powerful on earth” (147). Rodó’s attitude towards Caliban was later challenged by other critics, but his characterization of Ariel remained fixed in Latin American tradition. The Cuban writer and founder, in 1925, of Havana’s Ariel Polytechnic Institute, Julio Antonio Mella Fernández, associated Rodó’s Ariel with progressive intellectuals, declaring in 1924 that Ariel represents “the only man who in Rodó’s judgement is worthy of life.
Latin America produced one of the first explicitly Marxist interpretations of *The Tempest*, written by Argentinian Aníbal Norberto Ponce in 1935. In his essay, “Ariel or the Agony of a Stubborn Illusion,” Ponce argues that *The Tempest’s* central characters represent a microcosm of classes and class struggle: “those four beings embody an entire era: Prospero is the enlightened despot who loves the Renaissance; Miranda, his progeny; Caliban, the suffering masses; and Ariel, the genius of the air without any ties to life.” Caliban’s suffering exposes “an enormous injustice on the part of a master.” Like Rodó, Ponce associates Ariel with the intellectual, but emphasizes Ariel’s dependence on both Prospero and Caliban. Ariel may be dominated by Prospero in a “less burdensome and crude . . . way than Caliban, but [he is] also in his service” (qtd. in Fernández Retamar 11-12). He is also dependent on Caliban, as “Ariel would not enjoy his spiritual freedom in the air, if Caliban did not carry the wood to the stove next to which Prospero re-reads his old books” (qtd. in Vanden Berghe 188). Ponce’s Caliban is not so much a representation of the oppressed masses of the colonized nation, as a symbol of the international proletariat. After experiencing a performance of *Richard III* attended by enthusiastic workers in Leningrad he wrote: “the wretched red monster which Shakespeare had so much calumniated in Caliban, might he not be present, with a new soul, in that immense hall in which the hammer and sickle have replaced the crown and the eagle?” (qtd. in Vanden Berghe 191). The influence of Ponce’s work has been debated by critics. Vaughan and Mason Vaughan argue that Ponce “had

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3The essay appears in Ponce’s book, *Humanismo burgués y humanismo proletario*, a study of humanism in the form of four case studies concerning Erasmus, Shakespeare, Renan, and Romain Rolland. See Kristine Vanden Berghe’s “The Forgotten Caliban of Aníbal Ponce” for a description of this text.
little overt influence on the Caliban-metaphor” (155). Vanden Berghe, in her essay, disputes this claim, pointing out that “the remarkable resemblance [of Ponce’s work] to some later Latin American interpretations [. . .] obviously sheds doubt on Vaughan and Mason Vaughan’s assertion” (185). She acknowledges that his uncritical support of the Soviet Union may have contributed to his work being ignored by important critics like Rodríguez Monegal, but points out that the reissuing of his book by the Cuban publishing house Casa de los Americas in 1962 made Ponce’s work available to a new generation of critics and scholars.

Another important vehicle for the popularization of Ponce’s work has been Roberto Fernández Retamar’s influential essay “Caliban,” which first appeared in Spanish in 1971 and in English in 1974. Fernández Retamar gave up a promising academic career at Columbia University to return to Cuba on the triumph of the Cuban Revolution to become a government functionary, head of Casa de los Americas, and a leading Cuban revolutionary intellectual. His essay, part revolutionary polemic, part literary criticism, generally continues in the Latin American metaphorical traditions. He accepts Ponce’s basic analysis of The Tempest but differs with him somewhat on the symbolism of Caliban. For Fernández Retamar, Caliban is not the Europeanized proletarian, but the Latin American mestizo, the hybrid race forged from a mixture of black, Indian, and European. He contends that:

To assume our condition as Caliban implies rethinking our history from the other side, from the view point of the other protagonist. The other protagonist of The Tempest (or, as we might have said ourselves, The Hurricane) is not of course Ariel but, rather, Prospero. There is no real Ariel-Caliban polarity: both are slaves in the hands of Prospero, the foreign magician. But Caliban is the rude and unconquerable master of the island, while Ariel, a creature of the air, although also a child of the isle, is the intellectual. (18)
He argues that Caliban’s famous speech, “You taught me language, and my profit on’t / Is, I know how to curse,” has particular poignancy for the mestizo American. Calling this speech “the extraordinary out-cry [. . .] in a work by perhaps the most extraordinary writer of fiction who ever existed” (5), he argues that Latin Americans—because of their mixed origin—have no language to communicate with one another other than the language of the colonizers. Ariel, he insists, indirectly challenging many of his readers, is the intellectual with a choice to make: “He can choose between serving Prospero [. . .] at which he is apparently unusually adept but for whom he is nothing more than a timorous slave, or allying himself with Caliban in his struggle for true freedom” (39). The Latin American tradition of Tempest criticism developed in isolation from the American and European tradition and engaged primarily philosophers and political intellectuals rather than literary critics; however, given the richness of its tradition and its interest in the formulations that would fascinate later thinkers, it is hard to believe that Latin Americans did not have at least some influence on the debate that erupted in the seventies.

Although the Latin American tradition goes virtually unmentioned (with the exception of brief references to Fernández Retamar’s essay) in the postcolonial academic debates that began in the 1970s, the same cannot be said of three influential thinkers who also based their conclusions about The Tempest on the experience of colonialism: Octave Mannoni, Frantz Fanon, and Aimé Césaire. These three men share an interesting personal as well as polemical relationship. Mannoni, a French colonial administrator, taught for a time in the French Caribbean colony of Martinique, where one of his students became the writer and radical politician Césaire. Césaire, in turn, taught the young Fanon, who went on to work as a psychiatrist for the French colonial administration in Algeria and became one of the most important theoreticians of the 1960s anti-imperialist Left. Mannoni, as well as working as a colonial administrator and teacher, was a
psychiatrist and follower of Lacan. His book-length study, *Psychologie de la Colonisation*, published first in 1950 and translated into English as *Prospero and Caliban* in 1956, has had a profound effect on almost all *The Tempest* criticism that follows.

Mannoni’s study, based on his experiences as an administrator in the French colony of Madagascar, is not a literary or historical study of *The Tempest*, but rather uses *The Tempest* as a metaphorical paradigm in order to examine “the meeting of two entirely different types of personality and their reactions to each other, in consequence of which the native becomes ‘colonized’ and the European becomes a colonial” (Mannoni 17). Written at a time when French colonialism was beginning to come apart at the seams and after witnessing a bloody failed colonial rebellion in 1947, Mannoni emphasizes the colonial relationship as primarily psychological rather than economic. Mannoni approaches *The Tempest* not as a work of literature, but as a case study, and places Prospero and Caliban (and Shakespeare) on the analyst’s couch. Mannoni sees the colonial experience as a “context that brought out traits . . . already in existence in a latent and repressed form in the European psyche” (97). He claims Prospero’s preference for characters of “his imagination,” Ariel and Caliban, reveals a “grave lack of sociability combined with a pathological will to dominate” (102). The colonialist, like Prospero, is unable to cope with the demands of his homeland, and escapes to the colony where he indulges his “pathological need for solitude” and projects “his faults [and incestuous desires] on to others” (103), who become a scapegoat for his “own evil intentions” (106) that can then be controlled. He adds:

> What the colonial in common with Prospero lacks, is awareness of the world of Others, a world in which Others have to be respected. This is the world from which the colonial has fled because he cannot accept men as they are. Rejection of that world is combined
with an urge to dominate, an urge which is infantile in origin and which social adaptation failed to discipline. (108)

The colonialist is “perfectly happy if [he] can project [his] fantasies of [his] own unconscious on to the outside world, but if [he] suddenly find[s] that these creatures are not pure projections but real beings with claims to liberty, [he] considers it outrageous . . . . [R]acialism . . . . is simply a rather poor rationalization” for this outrage (117).

Although Mannoni sees this “Prospero Complex” as latent in all human beings – indeed he considered *The Tempest* as Shakespeare’s attempt to sublimate his own “Prospero complex” – he believes the colonies attracted those who suffered acutely from the complex, and the colonial experience encouraged its dominance in those that had previously managed to repress it. His analysis of Caliban proves to be more controversial than his analysis of Prospero. Mannoni argues that “colonization has always required the existence of the need for dependence. Not all people can be colonized: only those who experience this need” (85). The Malagasy, he contends, like many primitive people, live in a culture dominated by a cult of the dead or ancestors. Unlike the European, who believes that “he is a man like his father, the Malagasy appears to claim all men our children. [I]t is only the dead who are to the Malagasy what adults are to European children” (60). When the Malagasy’s world is disrupted by the colonialist and he feels inferior, “he does not compensate in the way a European does by claiming equality or superiority. On the contrary, he tries to rectify the situation by establishing a dependence relationship on the pattern of that of the child with his parent.” Once he re-establishes this relationship, “everything is all right” (61). The Malagasy is angry not because he feels exploited by the colonialist, but because he feels betrayed and abandoned when the colonials begin to withdraw. Thus, as colonialists introduce reforms, revolts are more common; Caliban is angry with Prospero because he realizes
he is about to be abandoned. The fact that he has been taught Prospero’s language, been partly assimilated like the educated Malagasies, means he feels even more angry about being abandoned.

Mannoni’s ideas are picked up by Phillip Mason, applied to explain the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, and refuted by Frantz Fanon in his influential book *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon, while acknowledging Mannoni’s insights into the colonialist’s mentality, denounces his belief that Caliban’s dependency is rooted in his indigenous culture and not in the system of colonialism. Fanon sees the violence of the “Calibans” as an attempt to find an alternative other than to “turn white or disappear” by choosing action “with respect to the real source of conflict — . . . the social structure” (100).

Although Aimé Césaire’s 1969 play *Une Tempête* is the better known, an earlier Caribbean appropriation of *The Tempest* occurs in George Lamming’s book *The Pleasures of Exile*. In 1959, when Lamming began writing his book, classic colonialism still held sway. At this time there were no independent English-speaking countries in the Caribbean and only three independent countries in all of Africa. In his introduction Lamming states “it is my intention to make use of *The Tempest* as a way of presenting a certain state of feeling which is the heritage of the exiled and colonial writer from the British Caribbean” (9), and the play runs like a leitmotif through the whole book. Lamming is best known as a novelist and poet, and this book is a work of literature that weaves together autobiography, history, politics, and literary criticism. Foreshadowing the work of later postcolonial critics, Lamming evokes the con-texts of the beginnings of English colonialism:

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Considering the range of Shakespeare’s curiosity, and the fact that these matters were being feverishly discussed in England at the time, they would most certainly have been present in his mind. Indeed, they must have been part of the conscious stuff of his thinking. (13)

In embracing *The Tempest* – “drama which grows and matures from the seeds of exile and paradox” (95) – as a metaphor for the colonial experience, Lamming sees no need to reject it as “the poet’s last will and testament [. . .] an apology for any false dividends which Art – meaning all method and experience of transformation – may have brought home” (95). In the chapter devoted exclusively to *The Tempest*, Lamming provides a close scene-by-scene reading of the play, analysing the characters of Prospero, Caliban, Ariel, and Miranda, and their relationships with one another. Caliban evokes the slaves who survived the middle passage: “they worked and were rebellious and often went wild with the spirit of freedom, and were imprisoned, and yet, like Caliban, they survived” (98). Ariel is Prospero’s “lackey . . . the archetypal spy, the embodiment . . . of the perfect and unspeakable secret police” (99).

Where Mannoni stresses Caliban’s dependence on Prospero, Lamming points out that everything in Prospero’s world depends on Caliban’s labour. Anticipating more recent feminist criticism, Lamming stresses the affinity between Miranda and Caliban: they are both motherless and “share an ignorance that is also the source of some vision . . . a kind of creative blindness” (115). Lamming, again anticipating later criticism, emphasizes the ambiguity of Prospero’s gift of language to his slave. This gift is both a “prison” and Caliban’s future – “for future is a very name for possibilities” (109) – a gift that Lamming identifies with the “gift” of the English language that he as a writer from the colonies has no choice but to use. In shifting the play’s

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5 Lamming goes on to explore this affinity in his novel *Water with Berries*
perspective from Prospero’s experience to Caliban’s struggle, as Edward Said points out,
Lamming demands that we “see that Caliban has a history capable of development, as part of the
process of work, growth, and maturity to which only Europeans had seemed entitled” (Culture 212-13).

Lamming’s essay, although acknowledged as “pioneering” by Peter Hulme in his book
Colonial Encounters, has, according to James Robinson, been “largely neglected in Shakespeare
Studies” (450). The same cannot be said of another important Caribbean interpretation of The
Tempest, Aimé Césaire’s 1969 play, Une Tempête. Césaire was already a well-established poet,
radical political figure, and famous for founding the négritude cultural movement when he wrote
his Tempest adaptation specifically for the black theatre, and his play has gone on to have a
profound effect on subsequent interpretations of the play. In an interview Césaire explained his
approach to the play:

A great work of art such as Shakespeare’s play belongs to all humanity; and, as such, it
can undergo as many reinterpretations as do the myths of classical antiquity. [...] I was
trying to ‘de-mythify’ the tale. To me Prospero is the complete totalitarian. [...] What is
most obvious, even in Shakespeare’s version, is the man’s absolute will to power. [...] Caliban is the man who is still close to his beginnings, whose links with the natural world
have not yet been broken. Caliban can still participate in a world of marvels whereas his
master can merely “create” them through his acquired knowledge. [...] Caliban is also 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. (qtd. in Belhassen 176)

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6The exception is Robinson’s essay “Caribbean Caliban,” in which he deals with Lamming’s essay
and his novel Water with Berries at some length.
Césaire’s interpretation is a radical re-centering of Shakespeare’s text. Caliban and Ariel have been brought to the forefront, Prospero and the Europeans pushed back, and an African trickster god, Eshu, has been introduced into the masque. Césaire’s Caliban is an irrepressible, exuberant rebel who glories in antagonizing his bad-tempered, grouchy old master who is barely capable of hanging onto his power.

This Caliban is just as articulate as his master. In *Une Tempête*, Caliban has thirty more lines than Prospero, and he uses his words effectively to insult his master at every turn. He is not only articulate in his master’s language; he speaks his own indigenous language of liberation as well. The first word he utters in the play is “Uhuru,” the African word for freedom, an expression that in 1969 had come to be associated not only with the movements for African independence, but with the dynamic African-American liberation movement as well. Prospero’s response bears witness to his slipping power over his once docile slave: “Mumbling your language again! I’ve already told you, I don’t like it. You could be polite, at least; a simple ‘hello’ wouldn’t kill you” (11). Caliban rejects his “slave” name and demands to be called X instead.

The relation between Ariel and Caliban is emphasized and the two debate politics: Ariel embraces the gradualist non-violent road to freedom associated with Martin Luther King, Jr., and Caliban articulates the militant voice of the black power movement. At the end of the play, Prospero cannot bring himself to leave the island; he cannot exist without Caliban. How the two will go on to work out their relationship is left unsettled, but it is clear that power has irrevocably shifted and a new era has begun.

The major African *Tempest* appropriation, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s 1967 *A Grain of Wheat*, is not buoyed by the optimistic exuberance of Césaire’s adaptation. This novel, set on the eve of Kenyan independence, deals with the experience of three young “Calibans” who have all been
involved to some degree in the Mau Mau rebellion and one “Ariel,” a young African who has thrown his lot with the colonial masters. Ngũgĩ’s Prospero, John Thompson, is no doddering old fool on his way out; he is, rather, a direct descendant of Mannoni’s Prospero. A colonial administrator, Thompson sees his role as bringing the “three principles basic to the Western mind: i.e. the principle of Reason, of Order, and of Measure,” to the African mired in “irrationality, inconsistency, and superstition” (53). Inspired by a vision that “the British Empire was the development of a great moral idea” that “must surely lead to the creation of one British nation, embracing peoples of all colours and creeds,” he begins to write down his thoughts and experiences in a manuscript he calls “Prospero in Africa” (54). Gradually his idealism gives way to an iron fist, and he finds support in Albert Schweitzer’s belief that “the negro is a child, and with children nothing can be done without the use of authority” (55). As the rebellion develops, Thompson abandons all pretence of benevolence and evolves into an all-too-human monster who burns villages and tortures and kills the Africans he herds into concentration camps. The three “Caliban” figures are all to one degree or another contaminated by the poisonous system of colonialism and must make their ways in the new society already fraught with problems as best they can. Karanja, the Ariel figure, is left bitterly abandoned, and nearly run over by the shattered Thompson, as he recklessly drives off to escape the independent Kenya. Caliban may have triumphed, but there are new struggles on the horizon.

The African and Caribbean writers of the 1960s seized The Tempest and made it their own. Rob Nixon expresses the event well in his essay on African and Caribbean Tempest appropriations:

They reaffirmed the play’s importance from outside its central tradition not passively or obsequiously, but through what may best be described as a series of insurrectional
endorsements. For in that turbulent and intensely reactive phase of Caribbean and African history, *The Tempest* came to serve as a Trojan horse, whereby cultures barred from the citadel of “universal” Western values could win entry and assail those global pretensions from within. (577-78)

Nixon adds that as African and Caribbean writers have gone on to explore their own indigenous cultures and develop a voice independent from Western influences, “Shakespeare’s play has been drained of the immediate, urgent value it was once found to have” (577). However, *The Tempest* as a “Trojan horse” has done its job. The accumulated work of writers and critics insisting on *The Tempest* as part and parcel of the discourse on colonialism had invaded from the margins and established Felperin’s “unthinkable and incredible notion,” a *Tempest* indelibly inscribed with the “discourse of colonial imperialism” (172).

Given the long history of associating *The Tempest* with colonialism, it is difficult to understand just why the contributions of the New Historicists and what Felperin calls the “social realist” critics were seen as so new and radical when they appeared on the scene in the seventies. Partly the response can be understood as a reaction against the view of the play that had become entrenched in academic criticism, the “idealist” notion of *The Tempest* characterized by Felperin as, “fixed on Prospero as Magician, on the power of art, on his collaboration with his spirits, and . . . on his repudiation of magic and departure from the island” (174). Partly it can also be understood as a response to the “ideological configurations of the moment” (Felperin 175). However, to attribute the impact of this criticism solely to the dominant anti-imperialist mood of the sixties and seventies with its corresponding questioning of the supremacy of the traditional literary “Canon,” as Felprin seems to do, clearly underestimates the innovative contribution that these radical literary critics make to the ongoing *Tempest* debates. This discourse brought a new
perspective to the understanding of the nature of Shakespeare’s play and its relationship to colonialism. This innovation can be summarized in the following four ways: firstly, its insistence on the notion that *The Tempest* must be understood within the context of intertextuality; secondly, its belief that *The Tempest* is not an ideologically neutral text, but part of an attempt to produce a “coherent discourse” required to justify “British colonialism in its initial phase” (Brown 48); thirdly, its observation that the text’s “ambivalence” reflects the inherent contradictions already present in early colonial practice; and, finally, its contention that to ignore or deny that the play is “imbricated within the discourse of colonialism” is to be “complicit [. . .] with a colonialis  

The notion of intertextuality, a term coined by Julia Kristeva in 1970, insists that “no text is intelligible except in its differential relations with other texts” (Barker and Hulme 231). Certainly the New Historicists who applied this method of analysing *The Tempest* are, as has already been discussed, far from the first to find traces of early colonial writings in the text. However, past attempts to link *The Tempest* to specific colonial writings were more interested in understanding the influences that were working on Shakespeare’s mind or justifying the play as “about” colonialism or, for the Americanist, “about” America, than understanding the discourse that produced *The Tempest* and the play’s role within that discourse. Barker and Hulme provide a useful summary of the difference between source criticism and the intertextual approach:

Intertextuality, or con-textualization, differs most importantly from source criticism when it establishes the necessity of reading *The Tempest* alongside congruent texts, irrespective of Shakespeare’s putative knowledge of them, and when it holds that such congruency
will become apparent from the constitution of discursive networks to be traced independently of authorial ‘intentionality.’ (234-35)

In approaching *The Tempest* intertextually, critics cannot simply connect “text with text . . . assuming that single texts are the ultimate objects of study and the principal units of meaning.” They must work to discern the “discourse” or “the field in and through which texts are produced” (235).

Thus the New Historicists and the literary critics they influenced see any writings, ideas, customs or tropes, either embedded in the text of the play or “in the air” at this early stage of British colonialism, as impinging on and amplified by *The Tempest*. History and historical documents are no longer “reduced to being no more than a background from which the single and irreducible meaning of the text is isolated” (230), but viewed as a rich context which the text, *The Tempest*, must be “read with”; they “are the precondition of [understanding] the play’s historical and political signification” (233). This approach, they argue, releases *The Tempest* from its isolation behind “a high wall called Literature”(233) and frees – in fact compels – the critic to situate the text in the wide field of texts that can be discerned to have constituted the environment that created the dominant discourse of the early seventeenth century at the very origins of English colonialism. The critic is no longer concerned with what Shakespeare intended or what texts he may have read or been inspired by. Now the emphasis is on situating the play in “the historical con-textualization that would locate it among the early universalizing form of incipient bourgeois hegemony” (234).

The critic can bring in con-texts that Shakespeare himself could not have been aware of, including texts that were written after *The Tempest* itself. An example is John Rolfe’s 1614 letter seeking the governor’s blessing on his marriage to Pocahontas which, Paul Brown argues, reflects
a colonial discourse evident in “Prospero’s power to order and supervise [including] the sexuality of his slave and his daughter” (51), part and parcel of the colonial discourse controlling the libidinous Other whose allure could spell disaster to efforts of colonial control. For critics like Brown, Greenblatt, Barker and Hulme, discourses that involve the “expansion of royal hegemony” (Brown 52) to the periphery, whether it be to Wales, Ireland, the Americas, or the suburbs of London with its predominance of a new masterless element, were all-important discursive con-texts in which to situate the text of *The Tempest*. Stephen Greenblatt’s assertion that “Europeans had, for centuries, rehearsed their encounter with the peoples of the New World” (*Learning* 21) means that the trope of the “Wild Man of Medieval and Renaissance literature” (21), references to Ovid and to Virgil as well as contemporary “con-texts,” can be mobilized to show how *The Tempest* plays an integral role in understanding the “constitution of an ideological discourse” that validates British colonialism.\(^7\)

A second distinguishing feature of these new critics is their interest in the way *The Tempest* plays a role in perpetuating an ideological discourse that validates British colonialism and functions “as a foundational paradigm in the history of European Colonialism” (*Repositing* Cartelli 89). Barker and Hulme argue that *The Tempest*’s preoccupation with usurpation, combined with its relative silence on Prospero’s initial act of usurpation (of Caliban’s island), is “performative of the discourse of colonialism . . . that characteristic trope by which European colonial regimes articulated their authority over land to which they would have no conceivable claim” (239). According to these critics, *The Tempest* perpetuates colonialist claims that the lands

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\(^7\)It is interesting to note that the methodology of these critics reflects their theory. The articles by Brown, Greenblatt, Hulme and Barker cited in this essay all approach the text of *The Tempest* only after discussing other texts at some length. In practice as well as theory, they are questioning the *specialness* of *The Tempest as Literature*, and placing the play in what they see as its *proper place* as part of a wider colonialist discourse.
of the New World were almost empty and the handful of resident natives were a tabula rasa essentially without culture or language, an idea that Greenblatt contends was “remarkably persistent even in the face of overwhelming contradictory evidence” (17). Caliban’s acknowledgement to Prospero that “you taught me language” (I ii 353) implies that he had no language before Prospero’s arrival. Greenblatt, citing a number of contemporary sources including Sir Walter Ralegh and the 1513 Spanish colonial document The Requiemiento, asserts that colonial ideology was based on an “unspoken belief in the isomorphic relationship between language and reality” (Learning 28), thus justifying the colonial language and the world-view that it carried as reality that subjugated people must embrace.

Brown argues that the play’s narrative “legitimizes” Prospero’s “exercise of power” against the base and illogical Caliban “by representing Caliban’s resistance to colonisation as the obdurate and irresponsible refusal of a simple educative project” (61). In Brown’s view, the play also affirms hierarchy and underscores the importance of ruling-class unity in order to defend the rightness of the colonial claim:

The unselfmastered aristocrats are reabsorbed [. . .] into the governing class, their new solidarity underscored by their collective laughter at the chastened revolting plebeians . . . which celebrates the renewal of courtly hegemony. [. . .] In the masque, power is represented as an aesthetic ordering. This correlates with Prospero’s investment in the power of narrative to maintain social control and with The Tempest’s production of the origins of colonialism through the rhetoric of romance, its representation of colonial power as a gift of freedom or education, its demonstration of colonialist organization as a “family romance” involving the management and reordering of disruptive desire. (63-64)
Brown argues that inscribed in the play is the colonial belief formulated so clearly by Mannoni that the desire of the colonial subject is not for power but for dependency; “Caliban’s dream is not the antithesis but the apotheosis of colonialist discourse. […] [It] represents a desire for powerlessness” (66). Thus these critics situate The Tempest as an integral part of the original discourse that produced the ideology that justifies and perpetuates the practice of colonialism.

However, these critics also argue that in presenting a colonialist view, The Tempest does not, and in fact cannot, completely obscure the contradictions inherent in colonialism. Brown explains that “colonialist discourse voices a demand both for order and disorder, producing a disruptive order to assert the superiority of the coloniser” (58). The focus of this disorder and disruption is the figure of Caliban. Caliban, in many ways, conforms to the colonial stereotype of the inferior savage, but Brown cites Homi Bhabha to argue “that even in the stereotype there is something which prevents it from being totally useful for the coloniser” (58). Greenblatt’s famous essay provides the most well-known example of the stubborn appeal of Caliban. He points out that Shakespeare has created a character that even exaggerates the stereotype: he “is deformed, lecherous, evil smelling, idle, treacherous, naive, drunken, rebellious, violent and devil-worshiping.” Yet “out of the midst of this [stereotypical] attitude Caliban wins a momentary victory that is quite simply an assertion of unconsolable human pain and bitterness” (Learning 26). He goes on to point out that, in spite of Caliban’s assertion that he can only curse, “the rich, irreducible concreteness of the verse [Caliban utters] compels us to acknowledge the independence and integrity of Caliban’s construction of reality” (31). Greenblatt’s identification of Caliban’s contradictory nature is far from the only ambiguity emphasized by critics. Barker and Hulme contend that Prospero’s “well known irascibility,” revealed in his cruelty, not only to Caliban but also to Miranda and Ariel, cannot be reconciled with “Kermode’s picture of a self-
disciplined, reconciliatory white magician” (234), and such contradictions are “symptomatic of the text’s own anxiety about the threat posed to its decorum by its New World materials” (242). However, in the end, these contradictions are contained and Prospero’s power and world-view triumph, and “it has been left to those who have suffered colonial usurpation to discover and map the traces of complexity” (242) that exist within the ambiguity of *The Tempest*.

The final original contribution to *The Tempest* debate provided by many of the sixties and seventies revisionist critics is their most controversial one: the accusation that to ignore or downplay *The Tempest*’s role as part of the discourse of colonialism is to perpetuate the ideology of colonialism. Barker and Hulme argue that critics who “ignored or occluded” the play’s role in the discourse of colonialism “have often been complicit, consciously or not, with a colonialist ideology” (243). Cartelli goes farther in arguing that *The Tempest*, in privileging Prospero’s voice, “continues, in short, to support and substantiate the very reading of itself transacted by [colonialist] ideologies. . . . *The Tempest* is not only complicit in the history of its successive misreadings, but responsible in some measure for the development of the ways in which it is read” (*Repositioning* 104). In the polarized atmosphere dominated by sympathy for people struggling to be free from the legacy of colonialism and the intensely bitter struggle against American Imperialism being waged in Viet Nam, the responsibility to expose and criticize imperialist ideology wherever and whenever it appeared took on impetus for many as a moral imperative. Eldridge Cleaver’s famous maxim, “You are either part of the solution, or part of the problem,” became part of the radical milieu that demanded that any complicity with colonialist ideology be soundly denounced.

With the fading of the heady radical atmosphere that pervaded the 1970s, criticism of the play’s colonialist implications became less strident and the debate less polarized. Yet, it cannot
be denied that the criticism of the New Historicists and the “revisionist” critics has changed the way critics and audiences experience *The Tempest*. Some critics, like Susan Bennett, have accepted the basic premise put forward by some New Historicists “that the play is unquestioningly imbricated within that [colonial] discourse” (Bennett 120), but have extended the debate into other areas, many particularly examining the role that gender plays within the text. Bennett explores the analogy of colonialism and the body, and urges that critics “plunder” the text “for its gaps and blind spots” (149). She argues that the preoccupation of postcolonial critics with “[t]he potency of the Prospero/Caliban tropology has served to mask the sites in *The Tempest* of patriarchal colonization and the play’s women (Miranda and the textually absent/silent Sycorax) have not been much read for their participation in (and destabilization of) what otherwise becomes a hegemonically male contest” (125).

A number of other critics have also expanded the scope of revisionist criticism to explore questions of gender, race, and class. Ania Loomba in her chapter on *The Tempest* in her book *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* criticizes the “typical [. . .] gender blindness of many anti-colonial appropriations” and makes the interesting point that the shift in power from Sycorax to Prospero reflects the historical shift from matriarchy to patriarchy which was forced on many indigenous people by colonial masters. She argues that “colonial conflict intersects with others – those of class, gender, caste and ethnicity and the ‘colonial subject’ is not a simple being” (157). Ann Thompson has explored the interesting contradiction that a play marked by an absence of women has images of female fertility and sexuality embedded within the narrative. Laura Donaldson, in her study *Race, Gender and Empire-Building*, questions the widely accepted postcolonial assumptions when she argues “Caliban’s over determined participation in imperialism and masculinism as both victim and victimizer [of Miranda] radically questions any
construction of him as the homogenous colonized Other” (17). Stephen Orgel emphasizes the significance of Prospero’s absent wife, a space appropriated by Prospero. Orgel points out that Prospero “describes the voyage to the island as a birth fantasy” (“Wife” 54) and, once on the island, re-creates both dukedom and family within himself. Some other critics, while accepting the postcolonial interpretation of the play, question the limitations it has imposed. Mark Fortier, in his article “Two-Voiced, Delicate Monster: The Tempest, Romance, and Post-Colonialism,” argues for a dialectical approach to the play that embraces both the colonial implications of the play and the nature of the play as a romance.

Although much recent criticism accepts the postcolonial Tempest paradigm, there are some critics who completely reject its emphasis. The most striking example of this is Meredith Anne Skura’s article “Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in The Tempest.” She argues that New Historical efforts to correct New Critical “blindness to history and ideology [. . .] is now in danger of fostering blindness of its own” (46). She acknowledges that there are New World allusions in The Tempest but contends that to conclude that the play “enacts” colonialism is extremely problematic. Her concern is that revisionist criticism “flattens the text into the mold of colonial discourse,” and she is alarmed that this “flattening” can have the effect of destroying “a unique work of art” and turning it into simply a “master plot – or master ploy – in colonialist discourse” (51). She directly challenges the New Historicists’ basic premises. She contends that it is extremely “problematic to speculate about the discourse of an entire nation or an entire period” (58), and that New Historicists have chosen to highlight con-texts that conform to a particular notion of discursive environment that produced the play. Citing a number of historical references she argues that, although “no writer ever treated Native Americans as equals [. . .] in this early period the movement was to loosen, not to consolidate, the prejudices brought
from the Old World [and the] typical attitude is a wary, often patronizing, but live-and-let-live-
curiosity, rather than the exploitative erasure which would later become the mark of colonialist
discourse” (56).

Skura goes on to claim that in 1611 colonialism was such a new phenomenon that it had
yet to “establish enough power to euphemize” (55) and points out that at that time “there were in
England no literary portrayals of New World inhabitants and certainly no fictional examples of
colonialist discourse” (57). She goes on to assert that, in emphasizing The Tempest as a product
of a discourse, critics have negated the role of the individual artist, Shakespeare. While stressing
that she is not arguing that Shakespeare or his play transcends ideology, she contends that
individuals, especially individuals “like Shakespeare, both absorbed and shaped the various
conflicting discourse of the period” (58). She points out that, to the extent that Shakespeare did
allude to encounters with inhabitants of the New World, he was the first to do so and he did this
in a unique way:

Shakespeare was the first to show us mistreating a native, the first to represent a native
from the inside, the first to allow a native to complain onstage, and the first to make that
New World encounter problematic enough to generate the current attention to the play.

(58)

Skura argues for flexibility in approaching the play and spends much of her article reclaiming and
developing a psychoanalytic analysis that stresses The Tempest’s relationship to issues in other
Shakespeare plays and its “roots in personal history as well as in ‘history’” (67). She ends her
article by challenging us to consider that:
[Shakespeare] was not merely reproducing a preexistent discourse; he was also crossing it with other discourses, changing, enlarging, skewing, and questioning it. Our sense of *The Tempest*’s participation in “colonialist discourse” should be flexible enough to take account of such crossings; indeed our notion of that in which such discourse consisted should be flexible enough to include the whole of the text that constitutes the first English example of fictional colonialist discourse. (69)

Skura’s article is a useful one to end this examination of the development of the postcolonialist discourse that has developed over more than a hundred years. Although some might suggest that her reclamation of *Tempest* interpretations is a return to an idealist non-historical *Tempest*, her argument is a useful challenge to a trend that has the potential to fix the meaning of this complex text into just one discourse. The postcolonial *Tempest* discourse has opened the text to new and exciting insights into the meaning of Shakespeare’s play. Skura reminds us that, as we deepen our understanding of the play by opening that door, we must have the flexibility not to close the door to an exploration of the “whole text” and the intersecting discursive environment the creative artist Shakespeare explored when he created the play.

In closing this consideration of the evolution of a discourse, it is useful to return to one of the most eloquent defenders of the postcolonial interpretations of *The Tempest*, George Lamming. In his book *The Pleasures of Exile*, written more than forty years ago, Lamming, while anticipating much of the work done by the new postcolonial critics, sees no need to “flatten” the text or relegate it to a single meaning. As has already been mentioned, in his exploration of the text as colonial metaphor and “prophetic of our future,” he has no difficulty accepting the “idealist” concept that the play seems to reflect Shakespeare’s final thoughts about his art as he approached the end of his life. He also embraces *The Tempest*’s colonial paradigm as a metaphor
for the creative process. He points out that Prospero’s determination to rule people and to organize reality “is directly related to that creative will to conquer the absolute: a will which finds its most perfect vessel in the infinitely expanding powers of transformation that characterise the timeless frontiers of the Poetic Vision” (107). In claiming Caliban as an ancestor, he acknowledges he is a descendant of Prospero as well:

Moreover, I am a direct descendant of Prospero worshiping in the same temple of endeavour, using his legacy of language—not to curse our meeting—but to push it further, reminding the descendants of both sides that what’s done is done, and can only be seen as a soil from which other gifts, or the same gift endowed with different meanings, may grow towards a future which is colonised by our acts in this moment, but which must always remain open. (15)

The postcolonial discourse surrounding *The Tempest* is a “gift” that has “endowed a familiar text with different meanings.” This gift is the product of an often unacknowledged, but none the less real, collaboration between “the descendants of both sides,” and has enriched and deepened our understanding of a play we thought we knew so well. If we heed Skura’s and Lamming’s warnings and remain open, this discourse and the way it has transformed our view of *The Tempest* can go on to push our understanding even further.
Chapter 2

Text as Event: Postcolonial Typology and Adaptation as Revelation

[W]hat happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. . . . the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is altered by the past.

T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”

Histories, like ancient ruins, are the fictions of empires, while everything forgotten hangs in the dark dreams of the past, ever threatening to return.

Todd Haynes, *Velvet Goldmine*

In his article “Texts as Events: Reflections on the History of Political Thought,” historian J. G. A. Pocock recounts an intriguing anecdote:

The playwright Tom Stoppard was once heard to deliver a lecture entitled “Theatre as Event or as Text?” He declared in its course that he wrote his plays to be performed by actors, and that when scholars discovered all manner of layers of meaning in the published texts, he felt as if his baggage was being unpacked by customs officials and he was saying, “Well, I’ve got to admit it’s there, but I don’t remember packing it.” (21)

Pocock uses this anecdote to explore questions of authorial intent, but I would like to shift the focus slightly: from the traveller to the customs officials. In my reading of this anecdote the metaphorical customs officials represent postcolonial writers and critics and the piece of baggage they search is *The Tempest*. Through their unpacking they discover evidence that marks the early formation of colonialism and the oppression and resistance that lies at its heart. The two groups of customs officials, the critics and the writers, respond quite differently to their discovery. The
critics, like the customs officials in Stoppard’s anecdote, might like to question the author, but since Shakespeare is not available for questioning, they root through historical evidence to uncover the hidden proof that “The Tempest is imbricated with the discourse of colonialism” (Barker and Hulme 243). The creative writers, empowered by their discovery in the “baggage,” waste no time on historical verification. Instead they set out to re-imagine and reframe The Tempest, its characters, and its story in order to reveal their own experiences. Both postcolonial writers and critics, in their engagement with the text, can be said to explore and adapt The Tempest for very specific purposes: to bring what has often seemed invisible and marginal onto centre stage, to point out the truth of oppression and resistance hiding in plain sight or lurking in the shadows, and to speak this truth to power.

In the hands of these writers and critics, adaptations of The Tempest become a tool that uses the power of revelation. In this approach to adaptation, postcolonial writers and critics, particularly those coming to terms with the world that confronted them in the sixties and seventies, utilized a methodology akin to one of the most durable and creative types of adaptation present in imaginative life: Christian typology. In the same way that for St. Augustine “in the Old Testament the New Testament is concealed, in the New Testament the Old Testament is revealed,” so for the postcolonial writers a text like The Tempest conceals or contains in shadowy imperfect forms the types of colonialism that are fulfilled in their reality, the archetypes of their own era. Just as the New Testament fulfils and completes the Old, the postcolonial adaptations of The Tempest (and here I include criticism as a form of adaptation) are seen by their creators to fulfil and complete the story of colonialism. In the same way that generations of exegetes were enabled by dialogic discourse, both with the Hebrew Bible and with each other, to enrich and invest meaning into the Christian Bible, postcolonial “Tempest exegetes” have engaged with
Shakespeare’s text and each other to reveal colonial origins and the fulfilment of these origins in the struggles of their present.

Paul Stevens’s discussion of the relationship between Milton’s work and Shakespeare’s provides interesting parallels with the postcolonial use of adaptation as revelation:

[The] intention of allusion in *Paradise Lost* is not so much transumptive as typological; the poet’s concern is not so much poetic revision as divine revelation. Miltonic allusion seeks to reveal all good words as types of the Word, to reveal the informing presence of the Word concealed in a secular chaos of well-seeming verbal forms. In particular [. . .] allusion and echo reveal the autonomous imagination as a type of icastic imagination, that is, Shakespearean imagination as the means by which Milton is led to understand the psychological mechanism of faith. For Milton, *The Tempest, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Winter’s Tale* are all imperfect models of the way grace moves the imagination to believe, the way grace moves through the imagination to provide us with an assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (248)

In the same way, Shakespeare’s imagination combined with his historical moment, as manifested in *The Tempest*, enabled the postcolonial writers to understand and explore the material and psychological mechanisms of colonialism and bear witness to the centuries-long resistance to the system that defined their lives and dominated their postcolonial era. For these writers, *The Tempest* is an imperfect model, a type of the way colonialism breeds oppression at the same time as it incites resistance, a resistance that brings “assurance of things hoped for [and] evidence of things” to come.
Northrop Frye, in his exploration of the theoretical and practical way biblical typology works, makes some interesting observations that have relevance for the way postcolonial writers approach *The Tempest*. In *The Great Code* Frye emphasizes the historical nature of typology. He stresses that typology “is not allegory: allegory is normally a story-myth that finds its ‘true’ meaning in a conceptual or argumentative translation, and both testaments of the Bible, however oblique their approach to history, deal with real people and real events” (85). Discussion of the differences between allegory and typology has a long history in Christian exegesis, one going back to the fourth century. Ursula Brumm considers this history in her study of typology’s relationship to American thought and provides useful definitions that tease out the differences between typology and allegory. According to Brumm “typology is a form of prophecy which sets two successive historical events into a reciprocal relation of anticipation and fulfillment” (27), whereas allegory “is a preconceived idea which needs a fictitious reality in order to be revealed; it progresses from the idea to (artificial) reality” (9). She also makes a clear differentiation between type and symbol: “[t]he type differs in being fixed [historically] at both its poles of reference where the symbol is free to move in any direction of interpretation” (24).

Erich Auerbach’s concept of “Figuralism” that, according to critic Joseph A. Galdon, is broadly based on biblical typology but encompasses other forms of literature (24), has particular relevance to a postcolonial approach:

Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfills the first. The two poles of the figure are separate in time, but both, being real events or figures, are within time, within the stream of historical life. [. . .] But it differs
from most of the allegorical forms known to us by the historicity both of the sign and what it signifies. (53)

From the early days of Christianity, scholars like Augustine and Jerome have stressed the realism of typology, arguing that the types of the Old Testament, both the events and figures, were “in themselves, and of themselves [. . .] real things, not abstractions” (Galdon 31). Postcolonial typologists certainly would not argue that *The Tempest* and its characters portrayed real events or figures in the same way biblical types were understood to do. What postcolonial typologists do share with a Christian typological approach is a conviction that these *Tempest* types are real in the sense that they are rooted in and produced by a very real historic moment. These types are not simply convenient allegorical symbols that happen to provide a useful metaphor for the moment when English colonialism was coming into being. Just as Christian typology “sweeps across the centuries, underscoring what existence means” (Manning 58), postcolonial typology sweeps across centuries to link the colonial and the postcolonial experience, and insists on the centrality of Caliban and *The Tempest* scenario as a type that exposes the truth of history and reveals the “promise of future things” (Augustine qtd. in Galdon 49).

Frye’s emphasis that typology is based on a revolutionary theory of history that progresses towards a kind of liberation also illustrates its usefulness for the postcolonial generation who were convinced that exposing the centuries of repression also revealed the ever presence of resistance and the inevitability of liberation. In *The Great Code*, Frye contends that:

Typology [. . .] moves in time: the type exists in the past and the antitype in the present, or the type exists in the present and the antitype in the future. What typology really is as a mode of thought, what it both assumes and leads to, is a theory of history, or more accurately of historical process: an assumption that there is some meaning and point to
Typology relates to the future, and is consequently related primarily to faith, hope, and vision. (81-2)

He goes on to stress that typology “is essentially a revolutionary form of thought and rhetoric” (82-3) which enters secular thought with revolutionary movements in the eighteenth century: “For believers in progress [. . .] events are proceeding towards their own antitypes in the future. [. . .] For Marxists and other revolutionaries, a worldwide revolution is the central future event that will constitute the antitype of history as a whole” (86).

Postcolonialists discovered in *The Tempest* types that foretold the antitypes of their own historic moment and proclaimed a suppressed and marginalized historical struggle that was finally exploding into the present and taking its rightful place at centre stage. The “revolutionary” method developed by Christian exegetes to adapt the Hebrew Bible to reveal the “truth” of history is directly analogous to the method postcolonial adapters seized on in their engagement with *The Tempest*. In the sixties and seventies a generation was rejecting and debunking the old grand narrative of colonial and imperial glory and proclaiming a new narrative that championed the “wretched of the earth”: a narrative that not only placed the oppressed at the centre but also revealed a history of resistance and a future of liberation. *The Tempest*, the text which, as an event, is situated at the genesis of British colonialism, proved to be the perfect matrix to explore postcolonial typological readings that revealed and affirmed the historical experience that was so central to their analysis.

George Lamming’s book *The Pleasures of Exile*, first published in 1960, provides an illustration of the postcolonial typological method of approaching *The Tempest*. In his introduction, Lamming explains that in writing *Pleasures of Exile* he used Shakespeare’s play “as a way of presenting a certain state of feeling which is the heritage of the exiled and colonial
writer from the British Caribbean” (9). Lamming makes clear that he was drawn to *The Tempest* not only because of its power to capture metaphorically “the predicament of a group of writers who originated in the English-speaking Caribbean and who arrived in Britain as part of a larger migrating labour force,” but also because of the historical moment the play captures:

I see *The Tempest* against the background of England’s experiment in colonisation.

Considering the range of Shakespeare’s curiosity, and the fact that these matters were being feverishly discussed in England at the time, they would most certainly have been present in his mind. Indeed, they must have been part of the conscious stuff of his thinking. And it is Shakespeare’s capacity for experience which leads me to feel that *The Tempest* was also prophetic of a political future which is our present. (13, emphasis mine)

The epigraph of Lamming’s introduction is Stephen Dedalus’s famous words from Joyce’s *Ulysses*: “History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.” Lamming, by engaging with *The Tempest* – by exploring and adapting it – awakens from the colonial nightmare by reframing the play to reveal its hidden truth: the history of both oppression and resistance and the prophecy of liberation he finds there as a shadowy promise. Just as once a reader accepts the frame of Christian typology, the meaning of the Hebrew Bible is irrevocably altered and shifted from the meaning gleaned from a straightforward reading, Shakespeare’s postcolonial adapters reframe *The Tempest* to reveal and expose the truth of colonial oppression and resistance embedded in the play.

Lamming’s explanation of why he turned to *The Tempest* to find a venue to explore a world in flux as colonialism was beginning to unravel describes the “collective experience” of a whole generation of postcolonial writers and critics: “[In] *Pleasures of Exile* [I]he interpretation of *The Tempest* [was] used as the frame within which the meaning of our total experience, at that
time could be located.” The Tempest became a terrain on which a generation could come to terms with a world coming apart by exploring that same world as it was coming together, and in the process engage in a reordering and re-interpretation of more than four hundred years of history. The truth of Eliot’s observation that the past is altered by the present as much as the present is altered by the past is confirmed by Thomas Cartelli’s 1999 assertion that “The Tempest will seldom any longer be taken up in isolation from what postcolonial writers and critics have made of [it] in their efforts of appropriation and transformation” (Repositioning 110). In the same way that exegetes seized hold of and appropriated Genesis to justify and confirm the Christian vision of history and its meaning, “postcolonial exegetes” adopted The Tempest as their genesis and found a starting-point to shatter the dominant “dream of history” and assert their own experience at the centre of a new vision.

In order to explore more fully the way postcolonial writers use adaptation of The Tempest typologically, it is useful to examine just how postcolonial typology fits into a wider discussion of adaptation as a literary phenomenon. When literary critics approach theories of adaptation, they almost inevitably approach their subject through the frame of intertextuality. The term intertextuality, coined by Julia Kristeva in the early 1960s (Allen 14), foregrounds the concept that all texts are “a permutation of texts” (qtd. in Sanders 2). According to Julie Sanders, Kristeva’s understanding of intertextuality emphasised the way texts are “permeated by the signs, signifiers, and utterances of the culture in which they participated, or from which they derived” (2), but as the term entered common critical use it has come to mean “a far more textual as opposed to utterance-driven notion of how texts encompass and respond to other texts both during the process of their creation and composition and in terms of the individual reader’s or

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8 Later in the same introduction Lamming notes that in 1959, when he started to write Pleasures of Exile, there were no independent countries in the English-speaking Caribbean and, with the exception of Ghana, Liberia, and Ethiopia, sub-Saharan Africa was made up of European colonies.
spectator’s response” (2). Kristeva’s original definition has more relevance to postcolonial adaptations of *The Tempest* than the print-text-based understandings that have become more common. Because postcolonial writers and thinkers found in *The Tempest* types that were “permeated by the signs, signifiers, and utterances” of early stirrings of colonialism, they were able to appropriate these types to create antitypes that revealed the nature of the struggle in their own time, and its relationship to and continuation of a history that was more often than not obscured and dismissed.

As relevant as Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality is to an understanding of postcolonial typology, in fundamental ways Kristeva’s approach is diametrically opposed to typological thinking. Kristeva’s approach stresses that because the the intextual text includes “a plurality of voices, of other words, other utterances and other texts” (Allen 72) by its very nature it “sets going a plurality of meanings” (Allen). Along with Roland Barthes’s influential contention that “any text is an intertext” (qtd. in Sanders 2) “woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages [. . .] antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony” (qtd. in Allen 69), she stresses that an intertextual text is intrinsically unstable. Much as typology can bring together different voices as well as “citations, references, [and] echoes,” in its essence it insists on fixing meaning both in time and in history: meaning that would otherwise be obscured. According to Joseph A. Galdon:

> Typology demands what Burlin calls “a historical continuum” between its two terms. [It established] a meaningful and metaphysically significant link between type and antitype.

(39)

Postcolonial writers who adopt *Tempest* types to explore and understand the postcolonial experience identify historical meaning in two moments of time to insist on a historical,
metaphysical and significant link between the *Tempest* types and their postcolonial antitypes. In adopting a typological approach to *The Tempest*, postcolonial writers reveal what they see as an obscured truth: the hidden history of colonial exploitation, subaltern resistance and the intensified battle for liberation. There may be a plurality of voices in the postcolonial typological *Tempest* adaptations, but they exist within a *Tempest* matrix that frames the colonial / postcolonial experience and gives meaning to the totality of that experience.

Although critical thinking on adaptation provides useful tools in understanding postcolonial approaches to *The Tempest*, discussions of adaptation like the discourse around intertextuality are often based on assumptions quite different from a typological approach. Julie Sanders in her Introduction to her important 2006 survey of critical thinking on the subject, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, argues that the theories of Barthes and Foucault are important to understanding adaptation because of “the ability of these theories to destabilize the authority of the original text [enabling] multiple and sometimes conflicting production of meaning” (3). However, when postcolonial writers adopt *The Tempest*’s characters and narrative as types, rather than “destabilizing the authority” of *The Tempest*, they claim the authority of the play as “prophetic of a political future which is our present” (Lamming, *Pleasures* 13). Just as Christian typology claims the authority of the Old Testament to stabilize and support the authority and meaning of the New Testament, the postcolonial typologists claim the authority of *The Tempest* to reveal the obscured “truth” of history: that from its very origins colonialism contained within it the seeds of resistance. By linking *Tempest* types with postcolonial antitypes, postcolonial writers reveal “the basic evolutionary unity” between Caliban and his postcolonial antitypes in the same way that Christian typology reveals that “[t]here was no antithesis, no contradiction between the two Testaments, but rather a very basic evolutionary unity” (Galson
Postcolonial writers often take on the task of disrupting and destabilizing traditional interpretations of *The Tempest*, but the methods they use are designed not to undermine the authority of the text itself but rather to use the play’s authority to bear witness to the reality of their history and its meaning; a narrative too often obscured, ignored and relegated to the margins. The rejection of certitude and grand narratives so important to both Modernist and Postmodernist theories, including critical thinking about adaptation, is foreign to postcolonial typology, and *The Tempest* and its types have been mobilized by a generation of writers to claim a narrative proving that the history of struggle with its promise of liberation is a reality at the empire’s centre, even at its moment of origin.

Although much of the theoretical thinking underlining the discourse surrounding adaptation is not immediately relevant to an understanding of the postcolonial typological approach to *The Tempest*, the same cannot be said about the methods mobilized in the process of adaptation. In an argument particularly relevant to postcolonial adapters of *The Tempest*, film critic Robert Stam contends that adapters take an “activist stance” towards their sources and insert them “into a much broader intertextual dialogism” (“Dialogics” 64). A significant number of the postcolonial writers, particularly the writers of fiction and poetry, self-consciously identify as activists, and their engagement with *The Tempest* and the claiming of the play as a type of their own history is part and parcel of their political activism. In the same way that Christian typology is used by both religious and secular writers to signal levels of meaning and narrative nuances, *The Tempest* is available to postcolonial writers with an “activist stance.” These writers recognize in the play the intertextual milieu from which their oppression emerged, and they see the potential for exploring their own history and struggle within the typological matrix it provides.
The use of *The Tempest* typologically, while it shares many characteristics that are often attributed to adaptation, does not always conform to some critics’ understanding of the term. In order to differentiate between adaptations and texts which are not adaptations by like all text are marked by “inherent intertextuality” (3) Julie Sanders argues that adaptation “constitutes a more sustained engagement with a single text or source than the more glancing act of allusion or quotation, [or] even citation allows” (4), a view that Stam echoes. Certainly some Postcolonial *Tempests* conform to Sanders’s definitions, but many evoke *Tempest* types only as passing references. However, the power and historical significance attributed to these types by typological interpretations often permeate the whole text and serve to place it in the context of the colonial / postcolonial experience. Sanders’s definition would describe many postcolonial typological uses of *The Tempest* but certainly not all, indicating that the typological approach is not identical with her understanding of adaptation.

However, when critics begin to define the various forms adaptation may take, they deal in ideas that have direct relevance to postcolonial uses of *The Tempest*. This variety is emphasized by the sheer number of words that critics have found to describe adaptation. Stam’s list includes “reading, rewriting, critique, translation, transmutation, metamorphosis, recreation, transvocalization, resuscitation, transfiguration, actualization, transmodalization, signifying, performance, dialogization, cannibalization, reinvisioning, incarnation, [and] reaccentuation” (Introduction 25); Julie Sanders adds “variation, version, interpretation, imitation, approximation, supplement [. . .] prequel, sequel [. . .] reworking, refashioning, re-vision, [and] re-evaluation” (3). And in the same way that no one word can describe all the forms that adaptations take, as critics like Linda Hutcheon, Julie Sanders, and Robert Stam contend, there is no intrinsic purpose tied to adaptation either. According to these critics, adaptation is a tool that uses and refines the
intertextual essence of all text in order to achieve a given goal. Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier
in the introduction to their book *Adaptations of Shakespeare* contend that “[a]daptation implies a
process rather than a beginning and an end”; and they link their analysis of Shakespeare
adaptations to the organic relationship between drama and adaptation:

> Every drama text is an incomplete entity that must be “translated” by being put on stage.
> Adaptation is, therefore, only an extreme version of the reworking that takes place in any
> theatrical production. (7)

According to Fischlin and Fortier, adaptations of a play such as *The Tempest* are directly
connected to the play’s intertextual and dramatic nature. If adaptation is understood as a process
that can take many forms, postcolonial typological uses of *The Tempest* can be understood as
adaptations, adaptations with a particular historical and political end in mind.

In terms of exploring the process of adaptation, one critic who seems to have had the most
significant influence on almost all the critical theory in the field of adaptation is Gérard Genette,
with the lexicon he develops in his fragmentary collection of essays *Palimpsests: Literature in
the Second Degree*. Genette’s lexicon is particularly useful in an exploration of postcolonial
typology because of its emphasis is on the process of adaptation. His examination of the variety
of ways adaptation can work structurally gives a language and a context in which to explore the
ways many postcolonial writers use *The Tempest* for a specific purpose, to reveal the history of
colonialism from the perspective of the oppressed. Genette, like a number of other critics,
considers that it is impossible to consider the literary text as an isolated phenomenon. He argues
that the very essence of all literature is what he calls “*transtextuality*, or the textual transcendence

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9 Linda Hutcheon, Julie Sanders, Graham Allen, and Robert Stam are a few of the critics who pay tribute to and adopt for their own use many of Genette’s ideas.
of text, [which is] all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” (1). Genette adopts Michael Riffaterre’s definition of intertext as an illustration of what he means by transtextuality:

Intertext is . . . the mechanism specific to literary reading. It, alone, in fact, produces significance, while linear reading, common to literary and non-literary texts, produces only meaning. (qtd. in Genette 2)

The absolutist claim of Riffaterre’s observation might well be contested, but its relevance to the typological use of *The Tempest* is clear. The transtextual presence of Shakespeare’s play in so many creative and critical explorations of colonialism’s legacy in the work of the sixties and seventies created a web of meaning with far-reaching significance. This web created by the typological use of *The Tempest* catches voices from across the postcolonial world, connecting them with each other, their historic moment and the historical moment of Shakespeare’s play.

Once Genette has defined transtextuality, he goes on to outline different categories of transtextual relationships that can be understood to describe forms of adaptation, some of which have particular usefulness in understanding the way postcolonial writers use *The Tempest* typologically. The variety and flexibility of these categories allow for the exploration of relationships between texts that would be excluded if Stam’s and Sanders’s definition of adaptation as a “sustained engagement with a single or sourced text” was rigidly followed. One transtextual category Genette defines is what he calls intertextuality, “the actual presence of one text within another” (1-2). Stam points out that Genette’s intertext is not always explicit but is often “the taken-for-granted background reference” and cites the imprint of Exodus on *Grapes of Wrath* as an example (“Introduction” 27). Stam’s illustration underlines the parallel between
biblical typology and postcolonial typological application of *The Tempest* which is used in this same “taken-for-granted background reference” manner in so many postcolonial texts.

Paratextuality is another type of adaptation (or transtextuality) that Genette defines which has relevance to the typological use of *The Tempest*. Paratextuality is the relationship “that binds the text [. . .] within the totality of the literary work.” In this category he includes “a title, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewards, etc.; marginal, infrapaginal, terminal notes: epigraphs; illustrations; blurbs, book covers, dust jackets and many other kinds of secondary signals, whether allographic or autographic” (3). The incorporation of paratextual references to *The Tempest* in works like Sarah Murphy’s *The Measure of Miranda* (1987) situates a novel, which does not explicitly engage with *The Tempest*, within a framework that invests it with specific postcolonial meaning.

Another type of adaptation or “textual transcendence” that has particular relevance to the use of *The Tempest* is metatextuality, the “relationship most often labelled ‘commentary’” (4). This type of “textual transcendence” is critical in nature and often as implicit as it is explicit. Genette’s inclusion of critical writing as a form of adaptation is particularly relevant to the study of *The Tempest*’s role in the creation of postcolonial theory in the sixties and seventies. Just as creative postcolonial writers were using the play to validate their past, explore their present and predict their future, literary critics, many of them young Western academics, were mining *The Tempest* to expose the nature of colonialism’s origins and its legacy. Although straightforward literary criticism falls within this category, metatextuality also can include much more subtle interconnections. An interesting example of the complexity and variety that metatextual adaptation can take is the metatextual relationship of Mannoni’s 1950 study, *Prospero and Caliban*, to *The Tempest* adaptations of Fanon, Césaire, and Lamming. All three “write back”
critically to Mannoni’s characterization of Caliban – sometimes explicitly and at other times silently – in the process of creating their own responses to Shakespeare’s play. What all these critical uses have in common is the adoption of *The Tempest* as a historical witness to early moments of colonialism.

The final type of transtextuality that Genette defines is hypertextuality, and this is the category that is closest to the more widely accepted meaning of adaptation. The language that Genette developed to describe this type has been widely adopted by critics engaged in the study of adaptation. Genette explains:

By hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the hypertext) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the hypotext), upon which it is grafted. (5)

This type of “literature in the second degree” includes the text which is “unable to exist” without its hypotext, a relationship that may or may not be explicitly announced in the hypertext. The hypertext is created through a process of “transformation” which can be direct or indirect and is imitative in nature. In imitative hypertextuality the author of the hypertext does not “transpose” the action from one place or time to another, but rather uses “a previously constituted model of generic competence drawn from a singular performance [that] is capable of generating an indefinite number of mimetic performances” (5). At this point in his description of the process of imitative transformation Genette posits there is a “supplementary stage” which mediates between the hyper- and hypotext and requires a “mastery,” or at least a partial mastery, of the form
and content of the hypotext.\textsuperscript{10} Truly to engage with any adaptation it is essential for the reader to “master” this “supplemental” stage – to know the text being adapted – but in most postcolonial adaptations of \textit{The Tempest} even more is required of the reader. It is not enough for readers to know the play; they must enter into a matrix that identifies Caliban, Ariel, Prospero and Miranda and the narrative they act out on the stage as a type of the colonial experience that is “prophetic of a political future which is our present.”

In order to understand just why \textit{The Tempest} became such a seminal hypotext, to adopt Genette’s term, for writers and critics of the postcolonial generation of the sixties and seventies, it is important to realize that \textit{The Tempest} is a work that has always been exceptionally amenable to all kinds of adaptations. In fact, as Stephen Orgel points out in his introduction to the Oxford World’s Classics edition of the play, from the Restoration to the beginning of the Victorian era, \textit{The Tempest}, with the exception of one production presented by Garrick at Drury Lane, was seen only in adaptations, primarily those written by Davenant, Dryden and Shadwell (69). Not only was the play seen primarily in adaptations, throughout its entire history (like many of

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\textsuperscript{10} Genette’s reference to the process of imitation in his discussion of hypertextuality reveals a generally unacknowledged debt that postmodern theorists of adaptation owe to the Renaissance emphasis on imitation as the key to writing and understanding literature. As Keir Elam points out, “apart from postmodernism itself, the most fruitful area of intertextual inquiry has been within the Renaissance, above all in Renaissance drama” (253). According to Thomas M. Greene, \textit{imitatio} “was situated at the core of Renaissance civilization” and had wide-ranging implications that not only included style but also philosophies of history and self (2). The “imitator,” according to Petrarch, “should take care that what he writes resembles the original without reproducing it. [ . . . ] And the similarity should be planted so deep that it can only be extricated by quiet meditation” (qtd. in Hamilton 11). Johannes Strum’s list of ways to approach imitation in his 1549 text, translated into English in 1570 under the title \textit{A Ritch Storehouse or Treasure for Nobilitye and Gentlemen}, prefigures the lists in so many recent considerations of adaptation: “addition, ablation, alteration, and chaunging: wherein is contained, conjunction, figuration, commutation, and transformation” (qtd. in Hamilton 15). Hamilton emphasizes that the Renaissance “imitation” created a hypertext “that bears the essence” of the hypotext, but the similarity between the two texts must be concealed. Postcolonial typological \textit{Tempest} adaptations share with Renaissance imitation the notion of capturing the “essence” of the hypotext, but the emphasis in the postcolonial hypertext is to reveal rather than to conceal. Although there are significant differences between the Renaissance concept of imitation and the way postcolonial writers use \textit{The Tempest}, the affinity between the two modes is intriguing. I was especially struck by Hamilton’s lovely formulation of the way Shakespeare connected to the \textit{Aeneid}: “Virgil [ . . . ] had become part of the permanent but moveable furniture of Shakespeare’s mind, intimately interiorized to the point where they [the stories and characters of the \textit{Aeneid}] were endlessly available for rearrangement and changing in one work after another” (17). This formulation captures the way postcolonialists adopted \textit{The Tempest} as the “moveable furniture” of their minds that could be mobilized to reclaim, creatively and critically, the truth of the past and the promise of the future.
Shakespeare’s other plays) it has been rewritten and re-imagined countless times in fiction, art, poetry and, in the last hundred years, film. The first major effort to film *The Tempest* took the form of an adaptation, in this case a prequel. In 1908 Percy Stowe created a ten-minute one-reeler that told the story of Miranda and Prospero’s arrival on the island and their initial meeting with Caliban and Ariel (Brode 222). The truth of W. B. Worthen’s contention that “[p]erforming reconstitutes the text; it does not echo, give voice to, or translate the text” (5) is confirmed by Stephen Orgel’s summary of recent interpretations of what he calls an “endlessly malleable” text:

> In recent years we have seen Prospero as a noble ruler and mage, a tyrant and megalomaniac, a necromancer, a Neoplatonic scientist, a colonial imperialist, a civilizer. Similarly, Caliban has been an ineducable brute, a sensitive savage, a European wild man, a New-World native, ugly, attractive, tragic, pathetic, comic, frightening, the rightful owner of the island, a natural slave. [ . . . ] [T]he play tempts us to fill in its blanks, to create a history that will account for its action, and most of all for its hero. (Introduction 11)

*The Tempest* has long proved itself to be a text that lends itself to adaptation, so it is not surprising that when postcolonialists turn to the play they find a vehicle to discover and explore their own history. However, the history postcolonialists find in the play is not one that they “create” but rather one that has been concealed or obscured and is only now being revealed in the light of their own postcolonial experience.

Why certain texts like *The Tempest* seem to lend themselves to adaptation is a question that has preoccupied critics like Linda Hutcheon, Julie Sanders, and Robert Stam. Gerald Prince

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11 According to Brode the first cinematic effort was a two-and-a-half-minute film of the storm sequence of the Beerbohm Tree 1905 London production. Individual frames of the film were tinted by hand, creating a colour film long before the invention of colour film stock (222).
contends in his foreword to Genette’s study, “literature is always in the second degree [and] all literary texts are hypertextual, and some are more hypertextual than others, more massively and explicitly palimpsestuous” (ix). In the same vein, some texts are more hypotextual than others and lend themselves more readily to participation in “palimpsestuous” relationships. Hutcheon points out that there are texts like Carmen, Don Juan, Don Quijote, and Robinson Crusoe that are “travelling stories” which have specific appeal to retelling and refiguring adaptations, and although she does not specifically mention The Tempest, the play is undeniably one of these “travelling” texts. Both Hutcheon and Stam look to a biological model to understand how and why certain stories travel. Stam observes that the film Adaptation, with its self-reflexive commentary on adaptation at the same time as it adapts a book about hybrid orchids, “brings out the Darwinian overtones of the word ‘adaptation’ itself, evoking adaptation as a means of evolution and survival” (Introduction 3).

Hutcheon picks up and expands Stam’s metaphorical frame in her recent study A Theory of Adaptation:

I was struck by the other obvious analogy to adaptation suggested in the film by Darwin’s theory of evolution, where genetic adaptation is presented as the biological process by which something is fitted to a given environment. To think of narrative adaptation in terms of a story’s fit and its process of mutation or adjustment, through adaptation, to a particular cultural environment is something I find suggestive. Stories too evolve by adaptation and are not immutable over time. Sometimes, like biological adaptation, cultural adaptation involves migration to favourable conditions: stories travel to different cultures as well as different media. In short, stories adapt just as they are adapted. (31)
Hutcheon expands her search for organic analogies in her quest to understand both why certain stories travel and how they travel by adapting Richard Dawkins’s exploration of cultural parallels to Darwin’s theories in *The Selfish Gene*, an analogy first adopted by Chantel Zabus in her 2002 study of *Tempest* adaptations, *Tempests After Shakespeare*. Noting Dawkins’s observation that “cultural transmission is analogous to genetic transmission in that, although basically conservative, it can give rise to a form of evolution” (qtd. in Hutcheon 31), Hutcheon goes on to observe:

Language, fashions, technology, and the arts, [Dawkins] argued, “all evolve in historical time in a way that looks like highly speeded up genetic evolution” [190]. Nonetheless, he posits the parallel existence of what he calls “memes” – units of cultural transmission, when memes are transmitted they always change, for they are subject to “continuous mutation, and also to blending” [195], in part in order to adapt for survival in the “meme pool.” Although Dawkins is thinking about ideas when he writes of memes, stories too are ideas and could be said to function in this same way. Some stories obviously have more “stability and penetrance in the cultural environment,” as Dawkins would put it [193]. Stories do get retold in different ways in new material and cultural environments; like genes, they adapt to those new environments by virtue of mutation – in their “offspring” or their adaptations. And the fittest do more than survive; they flourish. (31-32)

Hutcheon’s adoption of Dawkins’s theory of memes as a way of understanding the organic nature of stories that travel, while not posing an all-encompassing answer to the question of why certain texts become the favourites of adapters, points to a very practical criterion for determining which

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12 Page numbers in this citation are in Hutcheon’s original and refer to Dawkins’s text.
texts fall into that category: empirical practice, and more particularly, the practice of natural selection.

Chantal Zabus enthusiastically embraces the “meme theory” as a way of understanding the durability of *The Tempest* as a hypotext. She argues that the “fundamental reason behind contemporary rewritings of *The Tempest* that shape the end of the twentieth century” can be discovered in *The Selfish Gene*:

Using as a starting point the basic law in physics that “all life evolves by the differential survival of replicating entities,” i.e., genes, Dawkins envisages the emergence of a new replicator, a template consisting of various building-block molecules seething in a “new soup,” after the “primeval soup”[. . .]. This new soup is that of human culture. Prompted by the desire to name that new replicator and to convey the idea of a unit of cultural transmission or, for our purpose, a unit of rewriting, Dawkins ventures to call it “meme” after the Greek “mimeme” (p.192). These memes propagate themselves in a meme pool, the way genes do in the gene pool by a process of “imitation,” which here translates as “rewriting.” [. . .] Dawkins’ idea is particularly relevant to *The Tempest*, which has washed ashore more alluvial debris than any other text and from which *readers*, i.e., readers of rewriting, incessantly dredge up new meanings. [. . .] The propitious and unrepeatable end-of-century conditions – postcoloniality, postpatriarchy, postmodernism – have indeed arisen in which the *Tempest* replicators have temporarily ousted the original replicator. (265-66)

As intriguing as the Hutcheon / Zabus meme theory is as an explanation for the durability of a certain hypotext, when it comes to the particular popularity of *The Tempest* as a postcolonial “meme,” it leaves many questions unanswered. The major flaw in the theory’s logic is its circular
nature. Because the way to identify memes is empirical, we know there is a “Tempest-meme” because it is adapted so frequently and it is adapted so frequently because it is a successful “meme.” Zabus’s hyperbole –“Our meme here is a tempestuous one. It leaps and swirls in fertile seafroth and, in its capacity for self-duplicating through rewriting, The Tempest acquires a higher survival value and infective power” (266) – does not make up for the theory’s inability to live up to its claims. However, in its creativity, the theory does have appeal, and Hutcheon’s call for further research of its appropriateness is apt.

What is particularly attractive about the theory is that it affirms an instinctual feeling that the telling and retelling of stories are as intrinsic to human communication as genes are to our very physical being, and the theory may well shine light on why certain texts seem to lend themselves to a plethora of adaptations. It may help us understand why the play occurs and reoccurs throughout the years in so many guises but, unless one argues that postcolonialists simply seize upon an easily adaptable vehicle, it does not begin to explain just why and how the play has managed to speak so eloquently and persistently to postcolonial critics and writers struggling to understand the world they found themselves in as colonialism was coming apart all around them.

One powerful and often cited explanation of why The Tempest has become such a useful vehicle for the emergence of a postcolonial voice is the notion of “writing back to the empire.” Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in their seminal 1989 text, The Empire Writes Back, argue that the postcolonial voice operates in such a way as to subvert the ideology of the “centre”:

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13 This is a title that illustrates the all-pervasive usefulness of adaptation. Here we have a paratextual appropriation of a Western cultural “meme” filtered through Rushdie’s postcolonial lens and reappropriated by Western postcolonial critics, and in the process the “meme” is mutated ever so slightly to express both a new meaning and a connection with its ancestral hypotext.
A characteristic of dominated literatures is an inevitable tendency towards subversion, and a study of the subversive strategies employed by post-colonial writers would reveal both the configurations of domination and the imaginative and creative responses to this condition. Directly and indirectly, in Salman Rushdie’s phrase the “Empire writes back” to the imperial “centre,” not only through nationalist assertion, proclaiming itself central and self-determining, but even more radically by questioning the basis of European and British metaphysics, challenging the world-view that can polarize centre and periphery in the first place. (33)

As Linda Hutcheon points out, “adaptors of travelling stories exert power over what they adapt” (150), and canonical texts such as *The Tempest* become a site of the anti-colonial struggle for power. The historic role of Shakespeare’s plays as vehicles for disseminating colonial ideology through the colonial education system and the culture at large makes his plays an important terrain for taking on the challenge of the empire and asserting the new-found power of the oppressed. In this “empire writes back” scenario of adaptation, the rewriting of a canonical text is an act of insurrection where the empire’s literary citadels are overrun, occupied, and transformed into a weapon that can be turned and pointed back on the empire itself.14 *The Empire Writes Back* authors point out:

Writers such as J.M. Coetzee, Wilson Harris, V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming, Margaret Atwood and Jean Rhys have all rewritten particular works from the English “canon” with a view to restructuring European “realities” in post-colonial terms, not simply by

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14 An interesting analogy to the way postcolonial writers use the empire’s text to attack the empire is the use the NLF and the North Vietnamese made of U.S. armaments. Not only were arms stolen from the Americans a major source of weapons for the insurgency, downed U.S. planes were made into rings, bracelets and trinkets, clearly marked with the words “from the debris of a U.S. plane shot down over Vietnam,” which were then sent to supporters of the anti-Vietnam war movement throughout the world.
reversing the hierarchical order, but by interrogating the philosophical assumption on which order was based. (33)

The three critics turn to an analysis of Timothy Findley’s *Not Wanted on the Voyage* in order to illustrate how the “‘rewriting’ of canonical stories” allows postcolonial writers to appropriate “authority, ‘voice’, and control of the ‘word’, that is, seizure and control of the means of interpretation and communication” (97). They contend that by appropriating one of Western civilization’s source myths of salvation and transforming it into “a saga of destruction in the name of minority righteousness and the extension of petty power” (98), Findley re-enters “the western episteme at one of its most fundamental points of origination to deconstruct those notions and processes which rationalized the imposition of the imperial word on the rest of the world” (104).

If we apply this analysis to postcolonial *Tempest* adaptation, we could argue that, just as the biblical flood story is a “fundamental point of origination” of “the western episteme,” *The Tempest* marks a “fundamental point of origin” of British colonial ideology and may, as well, mark the historical origin of that same system. In this way it becomes the perfect vehicle for a generation determined “to deconstruct those notions and processes which rationalized the imposition of the [British] imperial word on the rest of the world.” Although “the empire writes back” theory of postcolonial adaptation certainly goes part of the way to explaining the popularity of *The Tempest* as a postcolonial hypotext, it leaves out an important element. For postcolonial writers concerned with recovering and revealing the obscured truth of over four hundred years of history, *The Tempest* read and reframed typologically provides more than just a useful ideological weapon to turn against the enemy. It becomes proof of an over-four-hundred-year hidden history of oppression and, even more importantly, of resistance.
Another influential approach that is often evoked in order to understand why *The Tempest* has become such a significant focus of postcolonial adaptations is Adrienne Rich’s concept of re-visioning developed in her 1971 essay “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision.” This term has been widely adopted by critics such as Linda Hutcheon, Julie Sanders, and Chantal Zabus as another word to describe adaptation and appropriation. However, by simply inserting Rich’s term into a list without acknowledging the particularity of the re-visioning process, many critics rob the theory of its combative essence. Sanders, while acknowledging that “Adrienne Rich’s coining of this phrase with its crucial inserted hyphen was a product of her personal feminist and lesbian politics,” goes on to argue that the politics of re-vision does not disrupt the pleasurable aspects of reading “into such texts their intertextual and allusive relationship with other texts,” and to support this interpretation she quotes Genette’s observation: “one who really loves texts must wish from time to time to love (at least) two texts together” (7). However, the notion that re-visionary writing calls on us to embrace both the re-vision and the text or texts re-visioned seriously misrepresents Rich’s position.

For Rich the act of re-visioning is a conscious radical break with the past and the creation of an alternative vision to the one handed down in the literature of the patriarchy:

Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for women more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival [. . .] it is part of our refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society. [. . .] A change in the concept of sexual identity is essential if we are not going to see the old political order reassert itself in every new revolution. We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us. (35)
In this essay Rich traces her struggle to liberate herself from a male-identified literary tradition and enter into a “new psychic geography” where “[w]omen are speaking to and of women [. . .], out of a newly released courage to name, to love each other, to share risk and grief and celebration” (49). This struggle, which she expresses in both personal and political terms, is difficult and involves “the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction,” in order to understand the seductive pull of the dominant (male) literary tradition. The aim of re-visioning is not only to undermine the authority of the text. Re-visioning means understanding the literature of the past in order to destroy it (or at least its power) and create something completely new. Rich’s concept of “re-visioning” can certainly include intertextual reworkings of existing texts, but it is far more combative and far-reaching than that. Peter Erickson in a chapter on Rich’s re-visions of Shakespeare in his book *Rewriting Shakespeare, Rewriting Ourselves* argues that Rich’s engagement with Shakespeare is a struggle with the dominant patriarchal ideology that allows Rich to posit a women-mother-centred world with its own set of values in opposition to a male-father-centred world. Because “to seek the mother requires the withdrawal of allegiance to the father” (157), Rich’s re-visioning implies a power struggle between the re-visioned hypertext and its hypotextual “father.” If we substitute a vision of a world free from colonial oppression for Rich’s radical feminist alternative to the domination of the patriarchy, Rich’s re-visionist theory provides an insight into the way some postcolonial adaptations operate.

Certainly, the empire-writes-back and re-visionary theories go part of the way in explaining the popularity of *The Tempest* as a postcolonial hypotext, but they do not provide a complete picture. Both theories stress the role of adaptation in the ideological struggle against the dominant power of the canon that perpetuates patriarchal and / or colonial power. Although
the emphasis of each theory is somewhat different, both are defined by a textual world and have little interest in the meaning of the hypotext in its original context. Neither theory emphasizes the role adaptation can play in revealing and liberating the energy and truth of that context as a way of reordering history. Kristeva’s original understanding of *intertextualité* emphasizes “how texts were permeated by the signs, signifiers, and utterances of the *culture in which they participated,*” an understanding that has been lost as her concept was absorbed into the wider field of literary criticism (qtd. in Sanders 2, emphasis mine). As a result, intertextuality has come to refer primarily to “a textual as opposed to utterance-driven notion of how texts encompass and respond to other texts” (2). In a footnote, Genette acknowledges that his study is also limited to the relationship between texts:

> I should perhaps have specified that transtextuality is only one transcendence among others; it does at least differ from that other transcendence which unites the text to the extratextual reality, which does not interest me (directly) for the moment – though I know it exists: I do sometimes go out of my library. (430 n.11)

In order to understand *The Tempest*’s use in postcolonial typology, it is not enough to understand its transtextual use; a grasp of Genette’s second type of “transcendence which unites the text to extratextual reality” (or perceived reality) is essential.

For postcolonial writers and critics, particularly for postcolonialists coming of age in the sixties and seventies, *The Tempest* above all was considered, to use Said’s term, a “worldly text”:

> My position is that texts are worldly, to some degree they are events, and even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted. (*World* 4)
This generation of postcolonialists understood *The Tempest* as embedded not simply in an ideological textual canon but also, more importantly, in its historical moment, a period they perceived as giving birth to the very system that they were now witnessing coming apart. This malleable text, by its very nature so amenable to adaptation yet anchored in a specific moment of history, would serve the purpose crucial to a generation: to reframe the more than four-hundred-year-old history of empire to focus on the erased history of subaltern exploitation and continual struggle. Like the little boy in Hans Christian Anderson’s story “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” the postcolonialists, with their particular perspective, could point to the naked truth of empire, obscured for so long by hegemonic historical narratives, but capable of being revealed so clearly in *The Tempest*.

Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker in their introduction to *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* defend an historical approach to literature that mirrors the method, whether conscious or instinctual, that postcolonial writers often adopt. Arguing that, in the seventeenth century “what inspired the literary imagination also shaped the course of events” (1), Sharpe and Zwicker contend:

> Once we recognize the imaginative as a cultural product we may begin to see its rich potential as historical evidence. Poetry deepens and complicates our historical understanding of politics as well as of values and culture. *The truly historical reading of literary texts leads not to the mere illustration of historical argument but to the reinterpretation of the past.* [. . .] Literature, however, not only divines the important changes in history but can mold, accelerate and even enact them. (17-18, emphasis mine).

Just as for the biblical typologist, a “true” reading of the Old Testament reveals the “truth” of the New, the postcolonial typologists’ “historically true” interpretation of this seminal text reveals the
truth of empire and colonialism, and reveals it in a way that established historical narratives do not. I chose an unlikely source for one of this chapter’s epigraphs, but I felt Todd Haynes’s observation at the beginning of his film *Velvet Goldmine* accurately reflects the way postcolonialists see “histories” as “the fictions of empires” while the oppression and resistance that are “forgotten” live on in the “dark dreams of the past.” For the postcolonial typologists, it is not only the truth of the past that is revealed in *The Tempest*; the play is also understood, in Lamming’s words, as “prophetic of a political future which is our present.” In the same way that for the biblical typologist the Old Testament is dynamic and reveals the past, present and future, a postcolonial typological reading and reframing of *The Tempest* reveals the past, present and future of a people once subject to colonialism.

In arguing that *The Tempest’s* usefulness for postcolonial writers lies in its amenability to postcolonial typology, I do not want to leave the impression that this alone is the root of its popularity as a site of postcolonial adaptations. The play is so complex that, once *The Tempest* is established as a postcolonial type, it provides a matrix to explore a myriad of issues and themes that impinge on postcolonial human experience. “A really complex text,” according to Pocock, “occurring in a really complex historical situation, may be seen as performing polyvalently”; and just as “a text is an actor in its own history, [. . .] a polyvalent text acts in a multiplicity of concurrent histories” (28-29). Love, sex, family, jealousy, power, magic, and class are all in the play to be explored, manipulated and reframed to fit a postcolonial context. As Sharpe and Zwicker point out, “great texts are those which simultaneously engage particular and universal concerns” (19). Pocock’s observation that “the author, in creating the text, creates the matrix in which others will read and respond to it” certainly describes the way postcolonialists have responded to *The Tempest* (29). Shakespeare’s play provides a matrix in which two historical
periods separated by over four hundred years become engaged. Through the creativity of postcolonial adapters using a typological methodology a history is reclaimed, a future envisioned, and a continuous relationship between colonialism at its birth and colonialism at its collapse is revealed. The creative imagination of a generation of postcolonialists formed the “antitype” that revealed the nature of the “type” provided by the community on Prospero’s island, and the postcolonialists’ “antitypes” are in turn “types” which gesture towards the future “antitype” of liberation.

The main criticism put forward to debunk Christian typology can also be made to criticize my formulation of a similar methodology adopted by postcolonial writers. The Christian typological idea that the Bible is a unified book with one message and that the Hebrew text can be properly understood only when viewed through the New Testament has been dismissed by biblical experts, not least among them Jewish scholars. They understandably insist that a typological reading of the Bible diminishes and debases the Hebrew Bible both as a religious and as a literary text. Similarly, one could argue, and many historians and literary critics do, that although *The Tempest* may provide a useful allegory which postcolonial adapters can exploit to explore their own situation, the historical context in which Shakespeare produced this play neither saw itself as nor was in practice a colonial nation, and thus the perceived relevance of *The Tempest* to the postcolonial era was more a product of coincidence and universal themes than of history.

However, I am convinced that this play spoke so directly, so consistently, and so meaningfully to a particular generation at a particular time, and played such a significant role in assisting that generation in creating a theoretical understanding of the world in which they found themselves, that it offered more than a useful allegory to that generation. I am also convinced
that this play, created at a moment when the conditions that were giving birth to a new colonial system were in a state of flux and beginning to form, spoke in a direct and unique way to a moment when the same colonial system was in a state of flux as it was falling apart. These two Tempest moments created the material conditions for a generation to adapt and appropriate the “type” of Shakespeare’s Tempest to create a myriad of “antitypes” that helped define the literature and political vision of a generation. However, as convinced as I may be, conviction alone will not validate this conclusion. If many critics are right and early modern England in no shape or form could be considered a colonial nation, even one in its early stages, then the idea that the response to The Tempest was provoked by the play’s affinity with colonial origins is simply a manipulation of history to prove a theory. Historian Glen Burgess warns that if we encounter texts of the past through the frame of ungrounded assumptions about the context of those works, we are in danger of confusing “cosy self-confirming fireside chats with” ourselves for “enriching encounter[s] with the alien past” (36). So, before exploring how I understand that the affinity between these two historical moments created the possibility of a particular intertextual relationship between The Tempest and the postcolonial works created in its matrix, my next chapter will consider what was really going on in the historical context in which The Tempest was created.

Before leaving this chapter I would like to return to the Stoppard anecdote I used at the beginning. In my adoption of this anecdote I have illustrated an example of the type of method postcolonial writers use when appropriating The Tempest. I have taken this anecdote, ignoring J. G. A. Pocock’s purpose in using it, and reframed it to make my own argument. I have acted as a customs officer and pulled from the baggage evidence to support a theory of postcolonial typology. Near the end of his essay Pocock warns that we have to guard against being “dishonest
customs searchers planting in the baggage of Tom Stoppard’s author the concealed goods we claim to have found there” (28). I believe that even though my use of the anecdote may be quite different from either Pocock’s or Stoppard’s, the meaning I have discovered there is intrinsic to the tale and not one imposed by me from the outside. In future chapters I hope to make a convincing argument that postcolonial writers too were honest “customs searchers” who found hidden in *The Tempest*’s “baggage” the past, present and future of their own experience.
Chapter 3

*The Tempest’s* 1611 Moment

Historical truth, if that means a complete account of an event as it really occurred, is hardly ever attainable. But historical truthfulness is much more important and is within reach of all.

J.M. Thompson in 1925 (qtd. Wells, Burgess and Wymer 6)

[T]he Janus-faced discourse of the nation . . . that investigates the nation-space in the process of the articulation of elements: where the meanings may be partial because they are in media res; and history may be half-made because it is in the process of being made; and the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it is caught, uncertainly, in the act of ‘composing’ its powerful image.

Homi K. Bhabha, “Narrating the Nation” 3.

As the first chapter of this project clearly demonstrates, *The Tempest* has become a fruitful site for postcolonial critics to explore colonialism’s influence on early modern England and a template for a generation of postcolonial writers to explore their own interactions with colonialism. In the previous chapter I suggested that the play speaks so directly to postcolonial writers because it is the product of a historical moment, a moment when the system that shaped over four hundred years of history was coming into being: a moment that had particular resonance with a generation of postcolonial writers and critics at a time when that same system was coming apart. In this chapter I examine the nature of society in early modern England to test the conclusion I reached in that chapter. In the process of this examination I conclude that the forces that would bring the empire into being are already in play in Shakespeare’s early modern England, and although the ideology engendered by this process is in flux, marginal to many, and far from consolidated, it is taking shape. Early modern England in the first part of the seventeenth century is not a prototype of the imperial Britain in miniature with a discourse
reflecting a consolidated ideology. Rather, this world reflects its own terms and the forces of its own moment. British new world colonies, which would come to be seen as a key characteristic of the Empire, were in their infancy. Too often both critics and historians have equated successful overseas colonies as the sole definition of empire. If we consider the British Empire’s origins in a far broader fashion and see its formation as a “process of the articulation of elements” (Bhabha, “Narrating” 3), elements that include trade, piracy and the consolidation of the nation of Britain itself, as well as the establishment of colonies, we can perceive the impact of the early colonial practice on Shakespeare’s world that includes far more than the North American experience.

When a postcolonial generation found in The Tempest a context in which they could explore the nature and history of colonialism, they were not simply responding to a powerful metaphor that they could adapt for their own purposes; they were engaging with a creative work that was affected by many of the same forces with which they themselves were dealing. The creativity engendered by this Tempest moment inspired critics and writers, speaking from the emerging nations of the third world and from the “belly of the beast,” to explore their history and act to make a new world from the ruins of an old one. Robert J. C. Young in Postcolonialism, An Historical Introduction states “[p]ostcolonial cultural critique involves the reconsideration of this history [since 1492], particularly from the perspective of those who suffered its effects, together with the defining of its contemporary social and cultural impact” (4); and later in the same study, he argues that “colonialism from the very first carried with it the seeds of its own destruction” (74). The Tempest provides the perfect vehicle for a generation to carry out the creative and intellectual project that Young defines.
As the discussion in my first chapter makes clear, to suggest that *The Tempest* is profoundly affected by the formation of colonialism in early modern England was not an unusual position to hold until fairly recently. The work of critics like George Lamming, Stephen Greenblatt, Peter Hulme, Francis Barker, Paul Brown, and Thomas Cartelli in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s had a profound influence on the way *The Tempest* was understood. The notion that “‘English colonialism,’ provides *The Tempest*’s dominant discursive con-texts” (Barker and Hulme 236) was widely accepted, and as late as 2000 Robin Headlam Wells called this reading the “orthodox interpretation of the play” (“Virtue” 250). However, this “orthodox” reading was significantly challenged by Meredith Anne Skura in her influential article, “Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in *The Tempest*.” Although she acknowledges that these New Historicist and postcolonial critics had made a significant contribution to “correcting New Critical ‘blindness’ to history and ideology,” she accuses the “revisionist” critics, in their insistence that the play “‘enacts’ colonialism,” of “fostering a blindness of their own” and flattening “the text into the mold of colonialist discourse and eliminat[ing] what is characteristically ‘Shakespearean’ in order to foreground what is ‘colonialist’” (46-47). In her article she questions not only the “revisionists’” interpretation of *The Tempest* but also their assumptions about the colonial nature of early modern England.

In the years since Skura’s article, her sceptical position has gained significant ground. The work of historians has encouraged literary critics to question the assumption that Shakespeare’s early modern England was colonial either in practice or ideology. Critics like Robin Headlam Wells, Jerry Brotton, David Scott Kastan, and Tristan Marshall have all expressed scepticism about the influence of colonial ideology on *The Tempest* and on its era.

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15 See Wells article “Blessing Europe: Virgil, Ovid and Seneca in *The Tempest*”; Jerry Brotton, “‘This Tunis, sir, was Carthage’: Contesting Colonialism in *The Tempest*”; David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare after Theory*; Tristan Marshall, “*The Tempest* and the British Imperium in 1611.”
Daniel Vitkus provides an example of this trend in literary studies in his book *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630*:

The binary opposition of colonizer and colonized, so familiar in recent scholarship informed by postcolonial identity politics, cannot be maintained in properly historicized description of England’s early modern culture. The Tudor period was an age of plunder, not an “Age of Empire.” . . . *In literary studies, the material reality (i.e. failure) of England’s early attempts at empire has been largely repressed.* . . . Stephen Greenblatt’s location of Shakespearean drama in the context of a nascent colonialism established the critical practice of reading all English Renaissance texts as the products of imperialist culture. . . . *The Tempest* provides a striking example of how the misapprehension of an imperial telos deflects attention from more immediate, contemporary concerns. (3-6, emphasis mine)

Contemporary critics who put into question the work done by new historicist and postcolonial critics on early modern English literature may well be playing a useful role in identifying some of the weaknesses in the innovative contributions of these writers. Stephen Greenblatt’s creative work may too often build edifices on anecdotes, and Francis Barker and Peter Hulme’s accusation that critical practices that ignore the contention that “*The Tempest* [is] imbricated within the discourse of colonialism” are often “complicit” with colonial ideology may owe a little more to Eldridge Cleaver than is customary in academic articles, but I think critics like Vitkis and Wells are in danger of repeating the old mistake of throwing the baby out with the bath-water. The face of colonial ideology and power may not be as clearly defined in *The Tempest* as a generation of critics and creative writers assumed, but that perception does not negate that it is there none the less.
The most telling challenge to an approach that considers *The Tempest* a text significantly affected by colonialism is the work of an important group of “revisionist” historians who have rigorously questioned long-held beliefs about early modern England, including the assumption that Shakespeare’s England was a self-conscious emerging colonial nation.16 The work of these historians has completely undermined many traditional truisms, and their conclusions about the nature of early modern England are well researched and overwhelming influential in their own field and more recently in the field of literary studies. Those of us who are not ready to give up

16 In exploring the historians’ critique of postcolonial literary studies, I have stumbled onto a debate that actually was more interested in the origins of the civil war in England than the origins of the British Empire and their attack on Empire myths of origins is almost a case of collateral damage brought on by their attack on the “Whig interpretation” of events leading up to the civil war. What I have gathered from my reading is that, beginning in the 50s, a group of historians who became known as revisionists historians began to examine long held assumption about the class forces in conflicts that led up to the civil war.

The traditional view assumed that there was a growing and inevitable clash developing between an absolutist monarch and his feudal allies on the one hand and a growing national class, a rising bourgeoisie of traders, industrialist and country yeomen involved in trade, on the other. This interpretation of the period fit both a Marxist and “Whig” interpretation of the roots of capitalism in Britain and was dominant before the revisionist attack on it. The revisionists put a lot of this interpretation’s assumptions under the microscope of primary historical research, undermined many of the “facts” on which these assumptions were based, and thus undermining the theory itself. Even though there has been some re-evaluation of their conclusions by “post-revisionist” historians, their critical work has had a profound affect on understandings of the pre-civil war early modern period. As far as I understand it, these revisionists saw their role not just as questioning historical facts but also undermining “grand narratives.” According to Robert Brenner the revisionist historians

have understood the ebb and flow of political events largely as the result of the disorganized and often misinformed struggles of the disparate competing units [court factions, economic interest groups, politicians, county communities, the monarch and favourites] to secure their usually ephemeral private interests and achieve their ambitions. [. . .] In this political universe, conflict was for the most part to be explained in terms of short-run factors, [. . .] Overt principles and ideologies were, in the Revisionists’ analysis, little more than post facto explanations and justifications by the participants for their roles in momentary struggles arising from conflicting special interests and competing ambitions pursued through the construction of alliances that were generally little more than temporary marriages of convenience. (645)

Revisionist historians argued that just as the English civil war was not an inevitable clash of classes but rather a product of “accidents and misunderstanding” that was reordered anachronistically into a narrative by “Whig” (and Marxists) historians, so too was the early-modern period reconfigured anachronistically by postcolonialists as a “proto-colonial” society with many of the characteristics and ideological assumptions that the Revisionists argue emerged much later.
the notion that *The Tempest* is haunted by colonial and imperial visions cannot ignore the profound challenge these historians, and the literary critics whom they have influenced, have thrown up to our analysis. In these next few paragraphs I will summarize the case they make and the challenge they bring to what is commonly understood as the postcolonial analysis of early modern England and its text.

**The Case Against the “Proto-colonial” View of Early Modern England**

In his essay “Literature and Empire,” David Armitage articulates this position by launching an attack on what he considers to be “one of the enduring myths of modernity … [the] association of the age of reconnaissance with the era of renaissance” (“Literature” 99). He dates the origins of this myth to the nineteenth century when, at the height of the British Empire, a retrospective ideology was created that produced a justifyingly glorious continuous history reaching back to a golden Elizabethan age. He argues that the Victorian and Edwardian assumption of the symbiotic relationship between the development of the English literary canon and the rise of the British Empire was perpetuated by critics like Sir Walter Raleigh,17 who in 1906 concluded that “action and imagination went hand in hand […] Shakespeare and Marlowe were, no less than Drake and Cavendish, circumnavigators of the world,” and the authors of the *Cambridge History of the British Empire* (1929), who proclaimed that “the land vibrated with an adventurous spirit [and Shakespeare’s] plays unquestionably quickened the *Wanderlust* of the average healthy young Englishmen” (qtd. in Armitage 99). Armitage goes on to contend that historical research carried out since the 1950s has discredited both myths; and that it is now well established that early modern England was far more concerned with events at home than those

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17 Raleigh, not to be confused with his more famous namesake, was an influential Scottish essayist who became the first professor of English Literature at Oxford in 1904. ("Sir Walter Raleigh." *Encyclopædia Britannica*)
abroad; and that the establishment of English literature as a discipline with a corresponding canon was an anachronistic construction created to serve the needs of British Imperialism in the nineteenth-century.

The contention that English literary tradition was retroactively constructed to serve the needs of nineteenth-century British Imperialism is hardly a contentious claim for postcolonial critics. What is more provocative, however, is Armitage’s linking of this trend with what he calls “proto-colonial studies,” a perspective he contends is produced by postcolonial studies. Stating “the collapse of an orthodoxy often creates a counter-orthodoxy similar in form to the old piety,” he criticizes Said and a host of other cultural and literary critics for taking for granted “the indebtedness of English literature to the British Empire in the early modern period” (101). The “imperial map of the world” that Said identified as having “turned up with amazing insistence and frequency … from the sixteenth century on” (98-99) is, according to Armitage, a retrospectively constructed “map” that had far more to do with the world of the mid-eighteenth or even the nineteenth century than Elizabethan or Jacobean England. Although Armitage’s tone is far from combative, essentially his implied criticism of scholars who see this “map” emerging in the literature of the early modern period, including many of the critics who have explored the influence of colonialism on *The Tempest*, is that they have appropriated the constructed nineteenth-century myth of the link between literature and empire and reshuffled its paradigm to place the emphasis on the colonized rather than the colonizer without critically re-examining that myth’s assumptions about the nature of colonial expansion and its impact on early modern England. Robin Headlam Wells provides an example of the influence of the revisionist historians’ perspective on literary criticism:

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18 Peter Hulme, Francis Barker, Ania Loomba, Stephen Greenblatt, Kim F. Hall, Jeffrey Knapp and Richard Helgerson are some of the critics that Armitage considers guilty along with Said of anachronistically projecting the imperial experience on to the early modern period.
Recent historical scholarship has shown that contemporary interest in colonial ventures may have been exaggerated by New Historicists who have adapted the myth of a national literature born from the stimulus of imperial enterprise, and used it to underpin post-colonial readings of Shakespeare and other writers of the period. (“Virtue” 250)

Essentially, historians like Armitage and a growing number of literary critics are contending that New Historicist and postcolonial critics who have studied early modern England have based a good part of their arguments on myths created by the very system that they were attempting to put under the critical microscope.

In order to expose the myth that “English literature and the British Empire were the twin children of the English Renaissance” (Armitage, “Literature” 99) – a myth that they charge influences what Armitage calls “proto-colonial studies” – historians like Armitage, Kenneth R. Andrews, and Bruce Lenman assemble evidence on a number of fronts. Armitage argues that central to that myth is the belief that “Empire spurred the growth of literature, as the planting of colonies went hand-in-hand with the building of canon” (99), and he and other historians set out to undermine this assumption by challenging the importance of colonies to early modern England. They argue that colonial concerns played a marginal role in the early modern era, pointing to the minimal interest expressed by Elizabeth or James in colonial ventures, and the failure of all the attempts to establish overseas colonies until Virginia was unexpectedly rescued by tobacco in 1620. Kenneth R. Andrews, in his book *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement*, states bluntly: “Queen Elizabeth was not an imperialist” (11). And he does not observe a significant change with the ascension of James to the throne: “Despite the difference between the foreign policy of the two monarchs, the crown’s attitude to overseas enterprise underwent no radical change in 1603: such matters continued to have low priority” (13).
Having challenged the myth that early modern England was preoccupied with overseas empires, Armitage goes on to challenge the other part of that myth by arguing that “the impress of Empire upon English literature in the early-modern period was minimal, and mostly critical where it was discernable at all” (102). While acknowledging that a number of early modern writers were associated with overseas ventures, he argues few of them wrote about them and most of what was written was promotional in nature and not widely distributed. He goes on to argue that these works were a relatively insignificant element in publishing; the vast majority of published works consisted of works of philosophy and religion. Historian Bruce Lenman, who shares many of Armitage’s concerns but none of his diplomacy, characterizes the men who wrote about their experiences as primarily marginal “projectors,” or their hired hands. Lenman is particularly hard on the “projectors” such as Walter Ralegh, Stukley, Ralph Lane and Richard Grenville. He characterizes these men as “an atypical group [of] compulsive propagandists […] insufferably arrogant court opportunists. […] Almost without exception they were physically brave, but they were nearly all ruthless gamblers in politics, and […] habitual liars. To treat these men as defining ‘English identity’ is to insult the intelligence of their contemporaries” (79).

Next Armitage addresses the discourse used in the early modern period to discuss questions of power and argues that what may sound to us like imperial rhetoric had a very different meaning to early modern ears. He acknowledges that empire was a familiar term in the period but he argues that a common error is to project anachronistically modern meaning on to the early modern concept. He argues that empire was the “vernacular analogue” of imperium, which came to mean rule and then the territory subject to that rule, and was more associated with questions facing the consolidation of power in England and its relationship to its neighbours in what we now consider Great Britain. The “conceptual framework” for considering questions of
power by the educated early-moderns derived from their training in classical literature, which Armitage argues, was, particularly in its humanist interpretation, “anti-imperialist at its heart” (“Literature” 122). Although acknowledging that we can trace the origins of empire to the early modern period, Armitage and a host of other historians argue that it is only hindsight that allows this insight and, for those alive at the time, the discourse that would come to justify colonialism and imperialism was barely in its infancy, more often than not contested, and far from dominant or hegemonic.

Armitage and his fellow historians have thrown up quite a challenge. If they are right and colonialism and the ideology which came to support it are far from a significant presence in the English early modern world, does this conclusion mean that critics who point out the importance of colonial concerns to the period’s literature are on the wrong track? The evidence these historians provide that the establishment of colonies in America was not a central preoccupation in the period in which Shakespeare was writing is certainly convincing. If the ideological underpinnings of an “imperial map of the world” have not yet been consolidated, let alone penetrated the literature of the early-modern period, what was going on? John C. Appleby points out in his article “War, Politics, and Colonization, 1558-1625” that in 1558 England’s overseas possessions were limited to the Channel Islands and Ireland, and interest in overseas expansion was restricted to “a small group of merchants and travel writers who were inspired by the Spanish and the Portuguese.” Within just sixty years “English maritime enterprise had taken on a global character paving the way for the establishment of colonial settlements in North America and the Caribbean and a scattering of trading posts in Africa, Asia and South America” (55). Trading routes to the Newfoundland fishing banks, Moscow, the Levant, and through the Mediterranean were also consolidated. Although he points to a world undergoing a rapid transition, Appleyby
echoes Armitage’s emphasis that, during this development, colonization was still a marginal interest to both merchants and the crown. The lack of state financial support left the early building of empire in the hands of private adventurers who often sacrificed long-term consolidation for immediate gain.

The evidence provided by historians certainly challenges the conclusions of critics such as Hulme and Barker, who argue that “‘English Colonialism’ provides The Tempest’s dominant discursive con-texts” (236). It might be easy to conclude that the postcolonial literary critics and writers who found The Tempest so relevant to their own preoccupations in the postcolonial era of the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s were engaging not with the play itself but with a presentist reordering of the play, filtered through a mythical “map” retrospectively created in the nineteenth century, and reflecting Burgess’s “fireside chat with themselves” (36) rather than a direct engagement with what Cartelli calls “a foundational paradigm in the history of European Colonialism” (Repositioning 89).

However, to argue that Shakespeare’s early modern England was far from seeing itself as a colonial power with an established ideology does not negate evidence that the conditions were coming into being that would lay the basis for the powerful system with its hegemonic ideology that would go on to explain and justify the British Empire. Nor does it eliminate the likelihood that the contextual soup of practices and ideas in which Shakespeare created The Tempest might well reflect and be influenced by the ideas and concerns that were being explored as the foundations of the future Empire was being laid. In their enthusiasm, the critics and creative writers of the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s may have overemphasized some of their conclusions. After all, they were part of a generation that could not help but be profoundly affected by the challenge of the emerging postcolonial world. However, before allowing some
weaknesses in their argument to cloud their important and innovative contributions, it is important to consider the essence of their argument. At the same time, we cannot ignore the very thoughtful and well-researched concerns about this argument expressed by revisionist historians. In order to understand the extent to which Shakespeare might have been affected by these early stirrings of the movement towards empire, it is important to understand just what early modern England’s relationship with the world was, and what were the debates and concerns were that were discussed and written about as people negotiated and re-negotiated their understanding of that relationship.

**In Defence of *The Tempest’s Colonial Moment***.

A common mistake made by critics is to limit a definition of colonialism in the early modern period to the establishment of quasi-feudal plantations in North and South America. Although colonial outposts like Jamestown and Roanoke certainly can be seen as the early manifestations of the British Atlantic empire, they emerged out of a wider context. Historian Kenneth R. Andrews points out that English overseas expansion can be properly understood only if we grasp that “trade, settlement and plunder were closely interwoven,” part of the same historical process, the process that gave birth to English colonialism, and “often indistinguishable in practice” (356). He contends that the reason the British Empire “took such an unconscionable time getting born is that the English put colonization much below trade and plunder in their priorities” (356). None of the attempts to found economically viable colonies were successful until 1620 when tobacco began to provide the export income that finally meant that the North American settlements could become self-sufficient and actually provide a profit to projectors and investors alike.
1. Plunder and Settlements: Unequal Partners, but Partners Nonetheless

As marginal and economically unfeasible as the settlements were during Shakespeare’s lifetime, the same cannot be said for another aspect of the process that eventually gave birth to the British Empire – plunder. Most of the projectors who came in the nineteenth century to be seen as the fathers of the British Empire were initially privateers (that polite euphemism for pirates) who were responsible for generating significant wealth for their homeland. Frank Kermode notes “J. M. Keyes pointed out in his Treatise on Money that with the profit on Drake’s venture in the Golden Hind, Elizabeth ‘paid off the whole of our foreign debt,’ […] and had a nice sum left over to invest in the East India Company, so prepared the way to the larger empire of the future” (“High” 45). The purpose of a number of the early attempts to establish settlements was essentially to provide bases to facilitate plundering the treasure-filled ships of Spain and Portugal. Private enterprise and short-term profit goals drove all aspects of the process, and the state’s role, both ideologically and financially, was minimal. Neither Elizabeth nor James showed much interest in overseas ventures, and the major concern of both dynasties was the consolidation of their power at home and their relationship with the rest of Europe.

Robert Brenner10 argues that it was still the landed estates that provided most of the wealth during this period, and it was this internal engine rather than mercantilism that provided the wealth that was in the process of changing the basic organization of society. The significant wealth

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10 Brenner, originator of the “Brenner debates” which have been very influential among historians of the period, puts forward an interpretation which accommodates the criticism of the revisionists and offers a social interpretation of the period. He argues that material conditions allowed “the neo-feudal lords” to become “commercially responsive capitalist landlords” and that the “greater landed classes thus succeeded in accumulating their wealth and social power directly on the foundations of capitalist property and capitalist development” (651). Conflict arose between the “capitalist landlords” and their desire to protect and extend the right of individual private property and “the patrimonial group,” consisting of “patrimonial lords and the monarch […] who depended on various forms of politically constituted property, created and maintained by the monarchy and the patrimonial group itself” (653). Brenner argues that with this perspective the class forces at work leading up to the civil war become clear and a social interpretation becomes discernable. I found his argument quite persuasive and have incorporated his interpretation into my consideration of the importance of internal colonization.
generated by widespread privateering and the experiences accumulated, however, played a direct role in laying the basis for empire. In fact, in this early stage of the formation of colonialism, piracy was a far more important factor in the impetus to empire than the founding of colonies.\(^\text{20}\)

A careful look at the English experience with the effort to establish colonies reveals a number of interesting insights. First, the revisionists’ contention that the attempts to establish colonies in later part of the sixteenth century and the early part of the seventeenth either never got off the ground or ended in dismal failure appears to be correct. Second, their argument that trade, the fishery, and above all privateering were the primary attractions that brought English ships to the Americas rather than the desire to implant colonies of settlers is certainly convincing. And finally, often these adventures were undertaken with the stated goal of establishing colonies, although it is difficult to discern if this goal was simply a cover to allow for the unimpinged practice of less respectable aims. Certainly, in this period, piracy partnered plantation and by and large acted as the dominant partner.

In the 1570s, projectors like Richard Grenville, Humphrey Gilbert, Walter Ralegh, the Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake, all with considerable privateering experience, became interested in exploiting lands to the south of the Spanish dominions in the Americas. In 1573 Grenville requested and was granted a licence to found a settlement on the River Plate, but this was revoked when the Queen became concerned about provoking Spain (Andrews 140). By 1577 the relationship with Spain had deteriorated and Elizabeth was ready to withdraw her ban and allow Drake to sail to South America. Kenneth Andrews argues that Drake’s famous circumvention of

\(^{20}\) Richard Wilson, in arguing that English piracy “may explain some of the complexity of The Tempest,” quotes the following from Fernand Braudel’s *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II*: “By the end of the sixteenth century the English were everywhere in the Mediterranean, in Moslem or Christain countries [. . .] They had two strings to their bow, Islam and Christendom, and fell back on a third – piracy. The English had been pirates from the very beginning of the worst kind [. . .] They were fired indiscriminately at anything considered worth taking – Turkish, French, or Italian, it was all the same to the English” (334-35).
the world in 1577 was “represented as an act of revenge . . . it was also, however, a colonial venture . . . the first step to a South American Empire” (144-45). This voyage and a number of others that followed pursued England’s interests in America south from the Tropic of Capricorn, but a combination of natural disaster, Spanish opposition and internal dissent, as well as the temptation of privateering detours, meant that the colonial aspects of the ventures remained undeveloped. However, in 1579 Drake did spend a little over a month in a bay in California, had himself crowned by the local Indians, and claimed the whole land for the Queen, naming it Nova Albion (157). 1583 marked the end of the English efforts to gain a foothold south of the Iberian possessions. Andrews sums up the experience:

It was from the start an opportunistic enterprise, seeking plunder, trade or conquest as circumstances might permit, an approach which might and did prove advantageous in the first stage of pioneering. But in the second stage lack of direction and divided purposes ruined the continuation and consolidation of the work. … The English adventure beyond the equinoctial was thus a failure. But it had positive side effects: it brought the English into the Pacific, it led to their first contact with the East Indies and it provided the queen with a considerable war chest. Above all . . . [it] took a decisive step towards oceanic power and overseas empire. (166)

The colonial aspect of this journey may well have failed while the privateering aspect thrived but the two aspects working together provided the English with the means and experience to carry on in their ventures.

At the same time as Drake was making inroads into South America, others saw potential in the North West. Motivated by the possibility of a Northwest passage to the orient, Martin Frobisher and John Davis, backed by the Muscovy Company and with considerable support from
court including John Dee, embarked on a series of voyages in what Andrews refers to as a “geographical comedy” (172). Again part, but only part, of the purpose of these voyages was to establish colonies and there was great hope that mining could provide the basis for a colony on Baffin Island, “discovered” by Frobisher and named Meta Incognito. However, when the 200 tons of gold ore mined by Frobisher’s men on Baffin Island and brought back across the sea to England turned out to be worthless rock, and the difficult climate made the voyages harder than expected, financial support for this project collapsed and the search for the northwest passage was abandoned until the next century. However, these voyages did increase knowledge of the northwest and brought the English into contact with the Inuit. Frobisher’s 1576 voyage returned “bringing with them their strange man and his bote,” an Inuit who created a stir in England and publicity for the venture but who soon died of a cold (173). Andrews speculates that John White, famous to us for his Roanoke pictures, must have been on the 1577 voyage to witness the interaction with the native population because of the detail of the studies he made of the Inuit.

In spite of the lack of success of these schemes, interest in colonization continued to be an important part of the justification and practice of new developments. Schemes were developed by Gilbert, Christopher Carliell, Sir George Peckham, and Walter Ralegh and in the 1570s the beginnings of an ideology justifying overseas ambition can be perceived. In this period John Dee invented the term “British Impire” and justified England’s claim to North America on the mythical twelfth century discovery of this continent by King Arthur and the Welsh Prince Madoc (Appleby 62). In spite of Dee’s prestige:

The impact of his ideas . . . was limited. Imperial rhetoric and ideology failed to strike a chord either with the Queen or her people. . . . The diversity of such schemes emphasizes
the lack of coherence within English colonial enterprise; the one common element they all shared, a lack of state support, rendered them all ineffectual. (62-63)

Although none of these schemes proved to be practical, the justification for them became more sophisticated. The colonies began to be seen as a place to deposit people who for one reason or another were no longer welcome or comfortable at home. In one failed plan, the colonies would provide a refuge for English Catholics, in another “a way of preventing the ‘good sort of people’ from being troubled by the poor and disorderly” (63). Others raised the prospect of the colonies providing a market for English goods that would make England less dependent on trade with other countries. In spite of being granted a patent by the Queen for discovery and overseas plantations in 1578, Gilbert was never able to get the support to mount any successful colonizing efforts, although he did manage to claim St. John’s and 400 miles of surrounding coastline for Queen Elizabeth. However, the only difference this claim made for England’s presence around St. John’s is that it allowed Gilbert to charge the fishermen rent for their drying grounds and renew his patent. Since European fishermen had been using the area for many years, the claim appears to be more of a cash grab than an act either of discovery or the founding of a colony (Andrews 195). During a harrowing voyage back from St. John’s, Sir Humphrey Gilbert’s ship sank and he was killed. According to contemporary accounts he remained optimistic about the future of North America until the end, convinced that the ore he had found would prove to be gold and that once he brought these “good tidings unto her Majesty, who wil be so gracious, to lend me 10000 pounds” (196).

Gilbert’s disastrous experience might well have meant at least a temporary end to English colonial aspirations if it was not for his thirty-two year old half-brother, Walter Ralegh. Ralegh, while as ready to seize the opportunity for immediate profit through privateering as his fellow
projectors, introduced ideas about the role of the state in colonial ventures that – had they been adopted – would have moved his nation closer to its imperial destination. Like so many of his fellow projectors, Ralegh came to North America bringing Irish experience and was granted a patent for overseas plantations by the Queen in 1584. Determined to avoid the pitfalls that precipitated the failure of his half-brother and countless others, Ralegh set out to change the traditional relationship between the state and colonial expansion. He concluded that the combination of royal endorsement with private investment, the established method of financing and organizing overseas ventures of all kinds, was inadequate for the task of establishing colonies. He set out in a well organized and determined fashion to win the Queen and her advisors to commit financially in ways they had never done before. After an initial reconnoitring voyage in 1584, Ralegh returned to England with a location selected for his colony, the future Roanoke, and set about organizing a concerted publicity campaign to popularize his plan in order to attract investments and, above all, to win the Queen, and thus the financial power of the state, to back his plan fully (Appleby 64). An eyewitness account of this first voyage by Ralegh’s servant Arthur Barlowe and edited by Ralegh “came close to portraying the land as a garden of Eden and its people as pre-lapsarian ‘naturals’ who would welcome English settlers with open arms” (64). Barlow’s diary as well as a treatise extolling the potential of the proposed colony written by Hakluyt the elder<sup>21</sup> were widely distributed in an effort to entice private investors.

The task of winning the Queen and her advisors to a new more involved relationship with the men who embarked on colonizing ventures in her name was given to the articulate Richard Hakluyt the younger. His “Particuler Discourse” (later known as the *Discourse of Western Planting*) was written for the Queen and her advisor Walsingham and laid out a coherent

<sup>21</sup>“Inducements to the liking of the voyage intended towards Virginia in 40. and 42. degrees of latitude,” circulated in manuscript in 1585, published in 1602. (Andrews 202) He cites Taylor’s *Writings of Hakluyts*, 327-28.
argument for state involvement. The purpose of the document was clear, “to induce her Majesty
and the state to take in hande the westerne voyadge and the planting there,” and Andrews argues
that the clear implication of the document is “that the state should bear the main financial burden
and underwrite the future of the plantation” (203). The argument Hakluyt put forward was
multifaceted. First came the religious justification: the conversion of the heathen. Then came the
economic justification: the colony could provide a market for manufactured goods and be a
source of raw materials and other goods that England was now forced to find in the unreliable
markets of Europe, Africa and Asia. Colonial markets for English commodities like cloth would
increase employment at home and the unemployed, vagabonds, and petty thieves could be
shipped off to undertake useful work overseas. Increased trade would mean increased custom
revenue for the crown. As well as economic arguments, Hakluyt emphasized strategic ones.
Tension with Spain was intensifying and a colony on the east coast of North America could serve
as a base to protect Newfoundland fishing grounds, threaten Spain’s West Indian Colonies and
prey on Iberian shipping. A base in North America would open the possibility of an alliance with
Spain’s aboriginal enemies and the real ability to challenge Spain’s hegemony in the South.
Hakluyt’s eloquence and Ralegh’s lobbying had some effect. In 1585 Elizabeth knighted Ralegh
and granted him the right to use the name Virginia for his new land. She contributed a ship to the
venture, and her formal approval gave Ralegh certain privileges such as the right “impound
shipping supplies and men in Devon, Cornwall, and Bristol” (205). Although important members
of her government like Walsingham, Lord Charles Howard (Lord High Admiral from 1584), Sir
Richard Grenville and Thomas Cavendish became individual investors in the project, Ralegh’s
dream of significant royal funding was dashed and “the first sustained efforts at colonization
remained firmly in the hands of private enterprise” (Appleby 64). A moment when the English
state might have moved to embrace the colonial role often assigned to them by traditional “Whig” historians came and went.

A close look at the colonies clearly illustrates the truth of the “revisionists” historians’ contention that these early colonies hardly represented the “golden age” of the “national story of Elizabethan expansion” (Armitage, “Literature” 100). However, plans went ahead for the establishment of Roanoke, and in 1585 the enterprise to found a colonial base in North America did begin. Tension with Spain had erupted into open conflict, and whatever constraints there had been on seizing Spanish riches had disappeared, providing Grenville’s fleet with its would-be colonist many opportunities to take profitable privateering detours through the West Indies. Once again illustrating the close relationship between privateering and colonization, the detours meant that it took months for them to reach their destination. A combination of delay, natural disasters, and logistical problems meant that the colony that was established was much more modest than the one envisioned. Plans also had to be altered when Drake failed to show up with expected provisions, having been diverted to seize Spanish shipping instead (Andrews 207). Grenville returned to England leaving behind a “colony” of just 100 men. On his return journey, Grenville captured “a rich Spanish prize” that Andrews speculates would have been enough to pay for the entire expedition with some left over (207). The colony struggled on for a year. Made up primarily of military men without sufficient supplies or the skills to produce them, their year was marked by sickness, hunger and conflict with the Indians. When Francis Drake, who had left England in September on a plundering voyage to the West Indies missing Grenville’s return, arrived at Roanoke in June of 1586, things were so difficult the decision was made to abandon the colony and Drake left Roanoke with what was left of the hundred colonialists. In a comic-opera scenario of missed encounters, Ralegh arrived in Roanoke with supplies, just missing
Drake, to find a deserted colony. Meanwhile Grenville, leaving England before the return of either Drake or Ralegh and making the usual privateering stops along the way (ensuring he would miss the “colonists” return), arrived with supplies only to find the colony “desolate, yet unwilling to loose the possession of the Countrie . . . he landed 15 men in the Ile of Roanoke, furnished plentifully with all manner of provision for two yeeres, and so departed for England” (211). Soon the tiny group left behind were attacked by the Indians and driven off the island and never heard of again. The initial stage of England’s “first sustained efforts at colonization” ended in disaster.

In 1587, Ralegh authorized another attempt, this time under the leadership of John White who would act as governor, and made up of “planters” who would be granted at least 500 acres each. Unlike the first primarily military colony, this was to be a self-sufficient and self-financing civilian agricultural colony. Among the original 110 settlers were tradesman, farmers and eighteen women. The colony got off to a bad start and then proceeded to go downhill. The voyage over was marred by tension, and once they arrived at Roanoke the sailors, afraid of losing privateering opportunities, refused to delay their leaving by taking the time to locate the new spot for the settlement on Chesapeake Bay as Ralegh had ordered and White expected. Instead, the settlers were left on Roanoke Island inadequately supplied, unable to find any of Grenville’s men, and in an unsuitable terrain. Plans were made to move inland, but in order to do this more supplies were needed and so White returned with one of the ships, and after a trip marked by disaster and sickness, arrived in England determined to organize a return trip to bring relief to the new colony. The war with Spain, natural disasters and the lure of privateering interfered with a number of attempts and finally in 1590, hitching a ride on a privateering ship\textsuperscript{22}, White succeeded

\textsuperscript{22} In 1590 John Watt, one of the days most successful promoters of privateering, had plans for a privateering expedition to the West Indies which were pre-empted by a Privy Order to keep all ships near home because of an expected new armada. A deal was worked out whereby Ralegh would use his influence with the Queen to obtain a licence to sail for Watt if Watt’s privateers would take White, with some planters and stores, to Roanoke. Watt got his licence but in the end took only White and refused to allow the planters and stores on board (Andrews 219-20).
in returning to Roanoke to find the fort deserted. What actually happened to the settlers was
never discovered and England’s first “sustained” colony ended in failure. Raleigh turned his
attention to his more profitable enterprise, and “[i]n 1592 he took the lead in organizing Atlantic
privateering on a grand scale and for the remainder of the war pursued the enemy by sea, seeking
spoil and victory” (Andrews 220).

The failure of Roanoke provoked criticism at the time. Andrews notes that the response
to the settlers’ return was followed by “public denigration of the enterprise so notorious that
Hariot was obliged to take notice and write what amounted to an apologetic report” (221).
Hakluyt, in his introduction to Principall Navigation (1589), implied that Raleigh was responsible
for the long neglect of the White colony. In their assessment of the Roanoke episode, historians
Kenneth Andrews and John C. Appleby consider objective conditions rather than individual error
to be primarily to blame for the failure. Andrews argues that “the Roanoke enterprise was in fact
undertaken with inadequate resources and insufficient knowledge at an unfortunate time, so that
every mishap, adverse circumstance and human error told heavy against success” (220). Both
consider that, although privateering at times kept the colonizing efforts afloat, in the end the lure
of plunder hurt the colonizing effort. Historian Bruce Lenman has a somewhat different
evaluation of the Roanoke project:

From start to finish the voyages connected with the colony involved privateering. It was a
colony only in the sense that it was an incipient nest of privateers, though men like White
and the younger Hakluyt dreamed it might be more. To see it as the foundation stone of
the British Empire is nonsense. It had no connection with such a thing. Even to

This episode is an interesting illustration of both the colonial ventures dependency on, and subordination to,
privateering.
incorporate it into the saga of “England’s Sea Empire” in the period 1550-1642 is to construct non-existent continuities as well as a non-existent empire. (93)

If we perceive Roanoke through an anachronistic lens, then the existence of this colony, even for a short time, has a significance that far outweighs the privateering aspects of the expeditions. However, if we heed the challenge of revisionist historians and try to evaluate this event not in light of our knowledge of what is to come but on its own terms, Lenman’s evaluation demands careful consideration. The privateering aspects of the various expeditions that were in one way or another connected with Roanoke involved over 1,000 men, scores of ships, and countless privateering ventures that resulted in significant economic benefit. On the other hand, the colony itself involved less than 250 people, economic failure and a tiny percentage of the human and material resources consumed in the six years of the venture. Hakluyt’s “Discorse” put almost as much emphasis on the colony as a strategic base for raids against Spain as it did on the colony’s plantation potential. Lenman’s argument that essentially the Roanoke ventures were only very marginally about the founding of colonies and overwhelmingly about the privateering is convincing. Lenman’s scepticism plays a useful role in debunking the notion that there exists a straight line between Roanoke and Britain’s future colonial empire. However, William Lamont’s thoughts on the limitations of revisionist historians provide an interesting perspective on Lenman’s iconoclastic stance. While he acknowledges that the revisionists have played a useful role in exposing weaknesses in the “Whig” interpretation of the pre-Civil War period and proved that a “Whig” map that traces a “high road to Civil War” is flawed, he asks us to consider that “there are low roads as well as high ones and cul-de-sacs which are themselves worth exploring” (119-20). If we see the colony of Roanoke as one of those cul-de-sacs on the road to empire – the experiment of its founding as part of the interwoven process that combined trade, plunder and
settlement that would give birth to the colonial system—then we give the venture the weight it
deserves. To see this first North American colony as anything but marginal is clearly an
anachronistic error; however, to dismiss the contribution it made to the context in which early
modern England was beginning to negotiate its relationship with the outside world would be also
be a mistake. The faint outline of Said’s “map,” particularly that important aspect of this “map”—
direct state involvement in colonial ventures – emerged briefly only to dissolve again. Private
enterprise and immediate gain remained the modus operandi and the Queen and the state, in spite
of Hakluyt and Ralegh’s efforts, remained well-rewarded observers. But far lands had become
familiar, strange people had been encountered, and new skills had been developed.

James’s succession to the throne and the peace with Spain provided a better opportunity
for colonial schemes to come into their own. However, this new monarch did not significantly
change state policy in relation to overseas settlements and his administration continued
Elizabeth’s practice: happy to facilitate and take a cut of profits, but unwilling to provide any
significant investment. Clearly illustrating the direct role piracy played in the foundation of
empire, the unlimited privateering that the sea war had encouraged resulted in a ship-building
boom, an explosion in experienced sailors, and the massing of huge wealth in the hands of a
significant number of entrepreneurs, many of whom turned their attention to colonization
schemes. The experience of privateering had accustomed these men to huge short-term gains,
and they had little interest in heeding Francis Bacon’s advice that investors might have to wait
twenty years before realizing a profit (Appleby 70). Countless schemes never got past the
planning and reconnoitring stage and the ones that did ended in failure. Two attempts to found a
colony on the Wiapoco River in Guiana, in 1604 and 1609 both ended in failure (Andrews 297).
Settlements on St. Lucia and Granada in 1605 and 1609 also failed (Appleby 71). A settlement in
Bermuda founded in 1609 survived, but barely. In 1610 a small colony was established in Newfoundland, but it did not survive attacks by pirates and hostility from fishers (Appleby 75). Various attempts were made to establish settlements in North America but none got past the reconnoitring stage until 1606. Ralegh’s charter rights had reverted to the crown in 1603, and in 1606 James granted the right to colonize to two connected companies, one based in London and the other in Plymouth. In 1606 the Plymouth Company established a small settlement in Maine of 120 men that lasted just two years before collapsing, but the London Company attracted more interest and investors and was able to establish a small colony in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. From the beginning the colony was marked by sickness, starvation, tension with the Indians and internal dissension. In 1609 a major effort to salvage the venture was undertaken. The Virginia Company was reorganized and a major public relations campaign was undertaken to popularize the venture and attract investment.\(^{23}\) With government support and at Company expense countless pamphlets and sermons were published in support of the colony. Patriotic and anti-Spanish in tone, advocating the riches that could be found, the souls that could be saved, the troublesome excess population that could be exported, and the trading opportunities that could be created, this propaganda had the effect of drawing in investors, although Andrews suggests the investment would have been much smaller than the amount raised by the East India Company during the same period (318). Nicholas Canny warns that the pamphlets and sermons should not be seen as proof “of widespread interest, but of the desperate need of publicity that would attract migrants and investment” (“England’s” 164).

In spite of this renewed interest, the colony continued to struggle on although it nearly died in 1610, when only the last-minute arrival of supplies interrupted a withdrawal already in

\(^{23}\) Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker claim, in their book *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, that “Shakespeare himself invested in the Virginia Company, the spearhead of English colonization” (14).
progress (321). Draconian methods kept the colony going until John Rolfe succeeded in producing marketable tobacco, and by the end of the second decade of the seventeenth century Virginia was finally financially viable. Individual entrepreneurs and planters made money from tobacco but the Virginia Company itself was still having economic difficulties. Relations with the Indians had deteriorated and in 1622 the colony suffered a devastating attack and 350 settlers were killed. The colony survived but the Virginia Company did not. In 1624, Charles I dissolved the company and took over direct rule and Virginia became the first royal colony in North America. Even though this royal rule involved little investment and not much more royal attention, Ralegh and Hakluyt’s dream of state commitment to colonial expansion was beginning to come to the fore and Said’s “map” was beginning to coalesce.

However, as Shakespeare set out to write *The Tempest*, the New World settlements were still marginal and their survival precarious. In 1610 there were only 300 English colonialists in the whole of North America (Mancall, “Native” 331). The Irish plantations attracted far more interest from investors, settlers and the general public and “colonies in America never enjoyed a similar surge of enthusiasm because most British people were ignorant of their existence or indifferent to their plight” (Canny, “England’s” 165). The idea that a policy of founding outposts would eventually pay off with the establishment of an Empire was a concept that intrigued few. To the extent that the future Empire was beginning to take shape in the first decade of the seventeenth century, it was, by and large, a disorganized hit-and-miss process that had not yet produced a full-fledged ideological justification. Although Kenneth R. Andrews emphasizes that neither Elizabeth nor James can be considered imperialists, he points out that both did support their subjects who pursued overseas ventures, especially when these ventures reaped profits and the economic risk was not a royal responsibility. These schemes remained secondary, however,
to European power politics, and the “continual dangers and pressures to which the realm was subject made it unthinkable for ministers to translate the dreams of ambitious courtiers and irresponsible sea-dogs into official policy” (11).

The New World colonies may have played a marginal role in Shakespeare’s early modern England, but events in the Americas had an impact on the English view of themselves and the world nonetheless. Their interpretation of these events reflected the particularity of their own time, and the way they framed their understandings were not ideologically identical to the way future generations at the height of the British Empire would look out at this same world. A clear example of the fact that colonial ideology in its infancy is not an identical version, in miniature, of the ideology that would mark British Imperialism at its zenith is apparent in the early modern attitude to Amerindians. From the time of Frobisher, Native Americans had been brought to England and their presence had inspired attention and curiosity. Many have identified early modern encounters with North American natives as the inspiration for Shakespeare’s portrayal of Caliban and Ariel. A close look at the particular discursive context in which *The Tempest* was being created reveals an interesting phenomenon. There is a distinct window which begins to open in 1583, opens much wider around 1590, then abruptly shuts in 1622, when the widely accepted and understood English image of the Indian was much more positive than it ever had been or, in some ways, as it was ever going to be again.

Loren E. Pennington observes that much of the literature promoting interest in North America before 1590 was translations from the Spanish and “presented a nearly unrelieved picture of native savagery” (180). He argues that the widely held opinion that, prior to 1590, Elizabethan England was repelled by Spain’s attitude towards Native Americans is not accurate, and that “English Propagandists at first looked upon it [Spain] as a model to be followed by their
own countrymen” (180). The few English accounts before 1590 that mention the Native Americans do so in a negative light. However, a new positive attitude emerged at the same time as interest in North American settlement began to come to the fore. Nicholas Canny considers Thomas Hariot’s account of the Indians of Roanoke and John White’s pictures that accompanied it as “arguably the most sympathetic portrayal by any European of any group of Amerindians during the early-modern period” (“England’s” 152). Karen Ordahl Kupperman, in her definitive study of Roanoke, has an even higher assessment of the work of White and Hariot: “In ethnography and natural history, English study of North America starts from its highest point and sets a standard not reached again until modern times” (Roanoke 44). After 1590, this positive attitude became dominant in promotional literature. Pennington suggests that this shift arose from pragmatism rather than sensitivity, because if “settlement was the intent, it was necessary to make the native a part of the attraction of the New World – to make sure that he was a propaganda asset rather than a liability” (178). The use of translations in promotional material became less common, and the few translations that were published, like Edward Grimston’s 1604 translation of Spanish Jesuit José de Acosta’s study of American Indian life and The Virginia Company’s 1609 translation of Marc Lescarbot’s report on Champlain’s expeditions, tended to portray the new world and her people in a positive light (184-5). Both Pennington and Kupperman stress that much of the English promotional literature published after 1590 portrayed Amerindian society as cultured and almost civilized, lacking only the Christianity that the colonialists would bring.

Ralegh’s *The discoverie of the large, rich and bewtiful empire of Guiana* (1596), the first text to use Spain’s persecution of the Indians as an argument for English involvement in the new world, portrayed natives as brave, friendly people eager to welcome the English as liberators
from their Spanish oppressors. Another text attributed to Ralegh or written under his direction and circulated within the court and among investors went even further. As well as accusing the Spanish of barbaric acts, it claimed that no one had the right to seize the Indians’ land, and instead proposed the building of formal alliances between native kingdoms and the English crown, and in order to cement these alliances, native kings should be given English wives (186). Attempts were made both in Roanoke and St.Jamestown to establish quasi-feudal alliances with Indian “kingdoms.” Strachey considered Powhatan as a king with an “infused kynd of devinenes” and, like European monarchs, “God’s ‘ymediate Instruments on earth”’ (qtd. in Kupperman, Settling 49). Other contemporary writers considered Amerindians’ government, social structure, and legal system to be similar to those they were familiar with at home. Indian Virginia was described by one colonialist as “a series of towns with their surrounding fields resembling shires in England” (49). The complexity of Indian religious belief was paradoxically seen as “providing hope for the speedy assimilation of European beliefs” when the obvious superiority of Christianity became evident to these pious people (78). With the exception of Rolfe’s marriage to Powhatan’s daughter Pocahontas, Ralegh’s vision of political alliance and religious conversion through marriage never overcame the resistance to intermarriage, although many projectors and their propagandist stressed a racial affinity between the Amerindians and Europeans. At various times, Indians were considered the descendants of the Welsh Prince Madoc, Trojans, and the Jews (108-10), and their colouring was attributed not to race but to the sun. As John White’s paintings illustrate, some commentators drew a direct relationship between the ancient Picts and Indians, and “it was commonplace that the English would perform for the Indians the same function as the Romans once performed for the English – the bringing of civilization and Christianity” (113). Kupperman contends that in this early part of the seventeenth century, English observers in North America viewed Amerindians not as “aliens” but
as fellow human beings, essentially the same as themselves. Citing William Crashaw’s identification of the Indian as “our kinsman and younger brother” (113), she argues that Amerindians were almost universally seen in a positive light, and when negative qualities were discussed, these qualities were considered not unique to the Indians but the same faults that were present in the English population. As further evidence of the affinity between the English and Amerindians she points to the ease with which many English settlers assimilated into the native population, the adoption of native customs and practices by some of the settlers, and the exchange of servants between English colonial administrators and their Indian allies.

While other historians confirm Kupperman’s conclusion that a generally positive picture of the Amerindian dominated the discourse about North America in the early part of the seventeenth century, historians like Bruce Lenman and Loren E. Pennington are less optimistic than Kupperman about the basis of this discourse. These historians argue that this positive picture stemmed primarily from pragmatism, not sympathy. The positive picture of the Amerindian served a twofold purpose for the promoters of the new settlements in North America. On the one hand, settlers had to be convinced that they were “going to a community, not to a military camp,” and that the major philosophical argument justifying new world contact, the spread of Christianity, would be readily embraced by the potential converts (Pennington 189). By 1609, the Virginia Company embarked on an intense campaign to popularize its colonial efforts, and “the friendly native and his aptitude for conversion were two of the most important facets of the Company’s propaganda” (188). Well-known religious leaders were recruited to write sermons advocating support for the settlements as a religious obligation that could be

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24 Richard Halpern writes about the phenomenon of “white Indians” in his article, “‘The Picture of Nobody’: White Cannibalism”: They were “Europeans who either fled to indigenous tribes in order to escape the harsh conditions of life in the colonies, or, having been captured by natives and integrated into their social world, refused to return to their families and friends when released. [. . .] To many colonists, Native American life offered a higher degree of both liberty and social cohesion than did the authoritarian government of the colonies” (271).
fulfilled peacefully because of the gentle nature of the Indians and their eagerness to embrace Christianity. William Crashaw, in two pamphlets written for the Virginia Company, argued that “natives actually desired English settlement and that to withhold it was to deny them brotherhood with the whites,” and he “utterly rejected the proposition that land, or anything else, could be taken from the natives; everything must be purchased, and with native consent” (190). Another pamphlet, anonymously published by the Virginia Company in 1610, contended that legal justification for the plantations rested in conversion: not conversion after the Spanish model of conquest and coercion, but conversion based on persuasion and mutual benefit: “we doe buy of them the pearles of the earth and sell to them the pearles of heaven” (qtd. in Pennington, 191). The only important dissenting voice to this rosy picture of Amerindians was Captain John Smith’s who, in his writings, argued that the Indians were actually hostile and needed to be handled forcefully. Pennington points out, however, that the Virginia Company did not allow his work to be published under its imprint and argues that the major reason for this was that Smith’s view of the Indians clashed with the Company’s official line (191). This period of Indian-friendly discourse ended abruptly in 1622 with the Good Friday Virginia massacre. The abruptness of the closing of this window is illustrated by what H.C.Porter has called “the most ironical sermon in English History,” preached by Patrick Copland on April 18, 1622 to members of the Virginia Company (458). The sermon “praised the ‘happy league of peace and amity’ established between English and Indians ‘and rejoiced that fears of mutual slaughter had vanished away’” (Lenman 231). Four weeks earlier 350 settlers at St. Jamestown, a quarter of the English population, had been killed in a surprise attack. Once the word of the massacre reached

25 Peter Hulme, in his article “Polytropic Man: Tropes of Sexuality and Mobility in Early Colonial Discourse,” considers the “massacre” the event that enabled “the ‘chaos’ of beginning colonialism to be reduced to a coherent narrative” (23).
England there was a complete about face in the attitude towards the Amerindians and their land in the promotional literature. As Pennington points out:

the principal rationale for settlement in Virginia – the Amerindian – now became the chief scapegoat for all the difficulties of the colony and the Company. [. . .] [T]he Indian attack had released them, and the English were now entitled by right of war and the law of nations to invade the country and “destroy them who sought to destroy us.” [. . .] [W]hat the Virginia Company was now proposing was that England adopt the attitudes and methods of the early conquistadores, the very approach the Virginia propagandists of the previous two decades had been condemning. [. . .] Thus did the view of the Amerindian in English promotional literature come full circle [and] the next change was essentially a reversion to the attitudes of the sixteenth century. (192-94)

It is impossible to know whether this period of goodwill stemmed completely from pragmatism or was influenced at least to some extent by an historical moment of mutual respect, but whatever it stemmed from, this unique amicable atmosphere was part of the discursive context in which Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*. However, before concluding that this briefly open window had a profound effect on the thinking of Shakespeare’s world, it is important to remember two things: as the historians continually remind their readers, the interest in and practice of building the North American colonies and thus dealing with the Amerindians were of marginal interest to most people in the early seventeenth century; and the discourse preoccupied with the nature of North American native people was explicitly promotional and would be seen by many contemporary observers as propaganda for suspect and financially shaky ventures. Much of this discourse may well have been taken by Shakespeare and his contemporaries with a
grain of salt, but it was there none the less and must have infiltrated the atmosphere in which Shakespeare lived and worked.

Meredith Anne Skura, in her critique of the so-called “revisionist” interpretation, cites Shakespeare’s sympathetic portrayal of Caliban as evidence that the play is not influenced by “colonialist discourse,” which she argues is not yet developed. Although throughout the article she vehemently argues against the “[r]evisionists claim that the New World material is not just present but is right at the center of the play” (44) at one point she does comment “that if the play is ‘colonialist,’ it must be seen [in its portrayal of Caliban] as ‘prophetic’ rather than descriptive” (58) because of the sympathetic aspects of Caliban’s portrayal. However, when we take into consideration that *The Tempest*’s creation date falls right in the middle of this unique “Indian-friendly window,” Shakespeare’s portrayal of Caliban is *both* descriptive and prophetic and although it does not reflect the ‘colonial discourse’ of a mature hegemonic empire, it does reflect the soup of impressions and ideas that was coming into being as a result of colonialism’s early manifestations.

2. Trade, Another Interwoven Element in the Genesis of Colonialism

While the various schemes to create wealth through settlements that the famous projectors attempted during this period all proved to be financial failures, the same cannot be said for trade. Too often considerations of this early modern period consider trade a separate phenomenon unrelated to the process of building a colonial empire. Kenneth R. Andrews, by insisting that trade, plunder, and settlement were closely interwoven aspects of the same historical process that meant the “path of English history did turn in the direction of seaborne empire” (2), illustrates the narrowness of this view. Trade with the Levant, Muscovy, and throughout the Mediterranean was a huge source of wealth both for London’s merchants and their investors as well as for both
Elizabeth and James, who generated significant income through the granting of monopolies and the levelling of custom and duties. According to Philip Edwards, James’s major source of income was custom duties, which tripled in value during his reign, partly as a response to increased trade and partly as a result of increased tariffs (262). He also revived the practice of selling trading monopolies and by 1612 this practice was far more lucrative than it had been under Elizabeth (269). The landed gentry who had gained significant wealth both through the breaking up and redistribution of church lands, the re-organization of agriculture, and the increase in landed rents, created an eager market for the luxury goods that could be imported from the east. Throughout this period woollen cloth was still England’s major export and even though English merchants often sold British cloth below cost outside Europe, the spices and silks they could buy and then import could be sold at a high profit margin. The loss they experienced on exports was more than offset by the profits generated by the import of these luxury goods. The profits from trade not only empowered the growing city-based merchant class but created a surplus. Some of this surplus trickled down to share companies that funded the various overseas settlement schemes, once again illustrating the close relationship between trade and settlement that worked to create the foundation of empire.

Andrews contends that in its initial stages, courtiers and landed gentry were the main advocates and organizers of plantation experiments in both the Americas and Ireland, and merchants’ financial contributions were fairly small and often in the form of loans. However, during the Jacobean period, patterns shifted and merchants became more directly involved (18-19). Investors from both the merchant class and the aristocracy were primarily interested in quick profits and both types of investors soon lost interest when the North American plantations turned out not to be immediate moneymakers. By the early seventeenth century English traders “had
extended their reach to Russia and the Baltic, throughout the Mediterranean, to North Africa in
the Gulf of Guinea, into the Indian Ocean and Ireland and the world beyond, and across the
Atlantic to America” (Clay 2: 126). Along with this trade came increased contact with the world
outside England.

The trading relationship with the Mediterranean world played a significant role in
developing England’s future relationship with the world at large. Elizabeth established relations
with the Ottoman Empire and in 1580 reached an agreement that allowed England’s traders to
establish commercial outposts in Alexandria, Tripoli, Algiers, Tunis, and Cairo (Hess 125). After
the defeat of Spain in 1588, English ships and sailors came to dominate the Mediterranean. The
expertise of English sailors and the superior design of their ships meant that they were able not
only to develop and protect trading routes between the Mediterranean and England, but to engage
freely in privateering as well as capturing, along with the Dutch, the internal Ottoman coastal
trade (127). Just like the American projectors, these Mediterranean adventurers were motivated
by quick profit, not strategic plan. As well as consolidating their hegemony over the trade in
luxury goods for the homeland, they engaged in the arms trade with Muslims in North Africa and
Istanbul. As the superiority of English ships and sailors became well known, the sultan’s
provincial representatives throughout the Mediterranean began to lease English ships and crews
to carry out their own tasks, from privateering to transporting pilgrims to Mecca and Medina
(127). Tunis became a major base for English ships involved in privateering, and one English
captain, John Ward, converted to Islam and organized a fleet that preyed on both Christian and
Muslim ships throughout the Mediterranean. He became so famous and his wealth and luxurious
life-style in Tunis so notorious that a play about him, Robert Dadbourne’s *A Christian turn’d
Turk* (1612), appeared on the London stage. By 1605 the Levant Company employed 40,000
people and, according to Nabil Matar, in the seventeenth century, England led the rest of Europe in trade with the Muslim Empire (Islam 10). As Matar points out, “[i]n the period which English history often dedicates to Roanoke, Virginia, the Somer Islands and Plymouth, there were more Britains going to North Africa and the Levant than to North America, and more Britons ‘dwel[ling]’ there than in the colonies of the New World” (Turks 84).

In his book Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery, Matar illustrates the interwoven process of the various aspects that set the stage for England’s colonial empire by emphasising the close relationship between England’s encounters with the American and the Mediterranean worlds. He argues that of the various triangular relationships that linked England with the rest of the world during what has become known as the “Age of Discovery,” “the most dominant triangle linked England to Moorish North Africa and North America” (83). Matar considers this trilateral relationship so important he dubs it “the Renaissance Triangle” joining “Britons, Muslims and American Indians” (83). As evidence, he points to the Drake-Mellon world map, which traced Drake’s 1577 voyage, and the Virginia Company Chart of the early 1600s, both of which clearly identify the “triangle,” and he points out that both Drake and John White stopped in Morocco before sailing on to North America (84). He assembles an impressive list that includes the vast majority of individuals best known for their involvement with New World exploration and settlement to illustrate that the same men played an equally important role in the Mediterranean.26 Most of these men were also involved in privateering, once again illustrating the close relationship between Andrews’s identification of plunder, trade, and settlements as three component interwoven elements that gave birth to England’s colonial system.

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26 As well as Drake and White, Matar identifies the following well-known New World actors as having extensive experience in the Mediterranean: Thomas Stukley, George Sandys, William Strachey, Sir Thomas Roe, Ralph Lane, John Smith, George Carteret, Richard Hawkins, Sir Anthony Shirley, John Pory, Sir Thomas Smythe and John Hawkins (Turks 97).
The nature of the relationship between the English and those they encountered as they embarked on the “Renaissance triangle” was hardly identical: Matar points out there were no attempts to establish outright English colonies in the Mediterranean, although English forts were established and maintained. However, the one relationship profoundly influenced the other. Matar tells us that the same term that was used to apply to Englishmen who had converted to Islam – renegade or runnugate – was also applied to the English who assimilated into Amerindian society (96). Just as attempts were made to establish ties with Indian society through political marriages, some suggested that ties be established the same way with Mediterranean powers, suggestions that met with the same resistance and lack of success as they more often than not met in North America (40). Matar points out that in “the age of Hakluyt and Purchas, the Golden Hind and the Mayflower, the Muslim world attracted more travelers, pirates, traders, and settlers than New England, Virginia, or the Caribbean”(96). The Muslim world may have attracted more of these adventurers, but what is also clear from Matar’s work is that this world attracted many of the same travelers, pirates, traders, and settlers as the New World did, illustrating once again the intense integration of the interwoven aspects that laid the basis for the emergence of the nascent British Empire. Those critics who argue that The Tempest’s setting in the Mediterranean distances the play from questions raised by colonialism are underestimating the power of the “Renaissance triangle” and the organic interrelationship of the tripartite empire building process that Andrews identifies.

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27 In 1614 negotiations were held in London about the marriage of an English woman, the daughter of a “gentleman of honorable parentage,” and the sultan of Sumatra, a Muslim, because the union would be “beneficial to the [East India] Company.” In the face of criticism the Company called on theologians to attest to “the lawfulness of the enterprise . . . by scripture.” The marriage negotiations failed, but Matar points out that the very fact that negotiations got as far as they did “and merchants, theologians and presumably the girl’s parents found the prospect lawful,” reveals the links between England and the Islamic world (Britain and Barbary 106).
As successful and profitable as the relationship with the Islamic Mediterranean world was for the English, it was not unproblematic. In their engagement with the Ottoman Empire, English entrepreneurs and their employees met a sophisticated well-organized civilization that directly challenged their ability to consolidate their power. As Kenneth R. Andrews points out, English success in trade “did not lead directly to empire in the conventional sense of territorial possession overseas, nor even to the kind of domination that was later associated with imperial ‘spheres of influence’” (99). In *Islam and Britain, 1558 – 1685*, Nabil Matar compares the relationship between early modern England and the Ottoman Empire to the postcolonial relationship between the Western and the Eastern bloc:

Because of its magnitude and civilization, this Empire played a significant role in the formation of British (and European) history and identity: for it was always engaged and alluded to, recalled and examined – and became part of the English world view in the same way that the Communist bloc during the Cold War partly shaped Western self-understanding. (14)

The Islamic empire not only represented an external threat but, in another characteristic aspect reminiscent of the Cold War, an internal fifth column as well. Thousands of European Christians, including many from the British Isles, converted to Islam in the early modern period. According to Matar, most were sailors, fisherman, merchants and soldiers who were attracted to the social and economic opportunities available in the Islamic world. Some were prisoners who converted to escape slavery. On their return a few of these “Renegados” publicly reconverted to Christianity but many quietly integrated back into their communities without disclosing their conversions. Matar documents the wide-spread anxiety about the invisible presence of these “apostates” within the heart of English society. This anxiety was exhibited in religious tracts and
sermons, as well as a number of plays performed on the London stage. At the same time popular ballads and travel writings, while not endorsing the “Renegado’s” conversion, often portrayed the expatriate English convert as a man of wealth and power. If, as Andrews argues, the development of trade was as much a part of the process of creating the conditions which allowed colonialism to come into being as the founding of settlements, the ambivalent early modern relationship with the Islamic empire played an equally important role in the formation of an ideology that explained and made sense of England’s expanding relationship with the outside world.

Just as the perspective from which Shakespeare’s world interpreted the American colonies and its inhabitant reflected their particular time and circumstances, so did material conditions influenced their response to the Mediterranean world. Once again we see that the ideology engendered by the experiences that will one day lead to empire are not identical to the ideology that will characterize full-blown British Imperialism. Scholars like Mark Netzloff and Nabil Matar are critical of those that trace Said’s conclusions back to the early modern period. While acknowledging the relevance of Said’s model of Orientalism to the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, they argue that to apply this model retroactively to the early modern period is a mistake: “for only after the Ottoman Empire began its military and intellectual decline in the eighteenth century did Europeans proceed to draw, paint, poeticize and imagine the Muslims the way they liked” (Matar, Islam 11). Mark Netzloff contends that “[t]he early modern period demonstrates a form of Orientalism that defines the East not in terms of distance and absence but as an encroaching and threatening presence” (78). The nature of the early modern English practices that influenced England’s developing relationship with the outside world was far from identical to that that would shape the practice and ideology of a mature empire. Plunder would fade as an embarrassing memory, settlement would move from the margins to take pride of place,
and trade would continue in importance, but the power relations with trading partners would rise and fall.

3. The Fourth Building Block: England’s British Colonial Adventure

It is not enough to look at the influence of plunder, trade, and overseas settlements, to retrieve an impression of the discursive impact of an embryonic empire on Shakespeare’s early modern world. As Mark Netzloff argues so persuasively in his *England’s Internal Colonies: Class, Capital and the Literature of Early Modern English Colonialism*, the building of Britain was as much a colonial project as the establishment of overseas colonies. He contends that there was a “mutual constitutiveness of internal colonialism in early modern England and early English overseas colonial ventures” and “that colonialist relations within England, Scotland, and Ireland provided interpretive and institutional models for colonial expansion abroad” (1).

In his argument, Netzloff is addressing a weakness in historical investigation of the early modern period identified by David Armitage in *Greater Britain, 1516-1776: Essays in Atlantic History*, the “divorce” of the extraterritorial history from “the domestic history of Britain” (438). Netzloff points to a direct relationship between internal colonization, the struggle to incorporate the diverse nations of the “Celtic fringe” into an English centric-British state, and England’s ability to begin to forge an overseas empire. Certainly the significant number of men involved in Irish colonization who later became champions of American plantations “suggests that their years in Ireland were years of apprenticeship” (Canny, “Ideology” 199). Quinn and Canny have pointed out that propaganda campaigns and joint stock companies were techniques first used to support colonial expansion in Ireland, two techniques that made later colonial efforts in the new world possible (199). Canny argues that the commonly held notion that colonization was a method reserved by early modern Europeans for the foreign “other” is false and that to “resort to
colonial methods was almost an automatic response once it became clear that reform by persuasion had proven futile, because they were convinced, both by [Roman and Anglo-Norman] precedent and by the treatises of such recent theorists as Machiavelli, that the establishment of colonies was procedure appropriate for their own time and place” (Canny, “Origins” 7). At the same time that the idealized positive image of the Native American was becoming popular, the image of the native Irish as savage and barbarous was pervasive, providing a ready-made set of stereotypes that could easily be transferred to Amerindians when the October massacre abruptly marked the close of the Indian-friendly window. Although much has been written about the relationship between the establishment of plantations in Ireland – plantations that were only marginally more successful in the period that concerns this study than their counterparts in the Americas – Netzloff, building on the work of Michael Hechter, argues that these plantations were just a part of the “inward-turning, centrifugal force of early modern English imperialism, which focused more on consolidating domestic power than overseas conquest” (9). Hechter supports his assertion that “[n]ation-building in its earliest stages might better be thought of as empire-building” (65). As well as the drive to subdue and control Ireland, the Imperial drive can be seen in the annexation of Wales in 1536, and the ongoing attempts to incorporate Scotland either through marriage or formal political union. With the Reformation giving England “effective sovereignty from outside authorities for the first time” (66) and particular conditions enhancing the central power of the crown over the traditional aristocracy, the need for both security from foreign rivals and the access to foodstuffs to feed a growing population fuelled the impetus to consolidate and expand “this realm of England” as “an empire” (Henry VIII in the 1533 Act in Restraint of Appeals qtd. in Netzloff 9). The term “British empire” is used first in the 1540s to

28 See Michael Hechter’s discussion of the conditions that existed in early modern England that gave rise to imperial expansion both at home and abroad in Internal Colonialism, Part II, “Core and Periphery in the Pre-industrial Era,” Chapter 3, “The Expansion of the English State,” 47-78.
justify English involvement in Scotland and, although in the 1570s John Dee uses the term to include overseas expansion, it continued to refer to the consolidation of English hegemony in the British Isles in the later part of the sixteenth century and early part of the seventeenth (9). While Netzloff is at pains to make clear that “British imperial identity and rhetoric in an early modern context” is “radically distinct from the high imperialism of the nineteenth century” (9), he does not disagree with Hechter’s assertion that “[i]nternal colonialism [. . .] arose out of the same systemic needs which later spawned its more notorious overseas cousin” (80).

Not only does Netzloff portray internal and external colonization emerging from the same needs, he argues that internal colonization played a role in enhancing the material conditions that encouraged the development of external empire. With the incorporation of the peripheral regions, English inheritance customs and law were imposed on a subsistence feudal economy based on common land and partible inheritance, *gavelkind*. This encouraged the consolidation of agricultural land and the increased contact with English agricultural methods and access to new markets meant landlords in the periphery adopted commercial agricultural methods. The resulting efficiency led to an increase in the value of land, encouraging the landlord to appropriate what had been common land (Hechter 81-82). Land could also be legally seized if landholders “committed acts of felony or rebellion” by a process called “escheating,” which freed the new landlord from “reciprocal feudal duties and services binding landlord and tenant” (Netzloff 11). The consolidation of agricultural land as private property controlled by the landowner and the resulting breakdown of feudal obligations resulted in increased wealth for the landowners, but had the corresponding effect of creating a class of dispossessed peasants who no longer enjoyed traditional feudal rights and “became transformed into a mobile body of unemployed labourers” who experienced ever increasing repression and deteriorating living
conditions (12). Thus, Netzloff argues, the “expanding profits of agrarian capital [often resulting from internal colonization] served to fuel the growing outlets of merchant’s capital in the form of overseas trade and exchange, the excess labor of the English [and the internal colonies] countryside[s] provided the human capital and necessary labor for England’s colonies” (13). Both Hechter and Netzloff argue that this agricultural revolution which had such a profound effect on every aspect of early modern English society and culture, was dependent in no small degree on the conquest and subordination of internal colonies, and, in turn, this revolution facilitated the development of Andrew’s three “aspects of the same political process” that laid the basis for empire.29 Thus it seems appropriate that Andrews’s tripartite process should be amended and the aspect of internal colonization should join trade, plunder and settlement as elements making their interwoven and sometimes indistinguishable contribution to laying the foundation on which the British Empire would one day rest.

These four inter-related aspects played the seminal role in laying the foundations of empire both in practice and ideology, and had a profound effect on the way early modern England framed its understanding of itself and the outside world. However, to define this emerging understanding as the ideology in microcosm that would come to underpin British Imperialism may well be, as a number of critics have pointed out, an exercise in creative anachronism. The basic elements that would go on to constitute Said’s “map” were already in play although they were yet to be consolidated into the prototype that foreshadowed British Imperialism. The outlines of the continents, oceans, rivers and hills that would go on to define Said’s “map” were still in flux and their ultimate formation as yet clearly defined. As trade, plunder, settlements,

29 Henry VIII’s dissolution of the monastic system and the crown’s sale of much of that land to the gentry added to the reorganization of agriculture practices. According to Philip Edwards in The Making of the Modern English State, 1460-1660, Henry’s actions “within a short time represent the largest transfer of land since the Norman Conquest” (164).
and the movement to forge Britain as a nation state gained momentum and became more central to the early modern English experience, the ideological conclusions engendered by that experience played their role in framing modern England’s understanding of its relationship to the world. This understanding reflected the early formation of the ideology that came to characterize the British Empire, but it was not an identical version of that ideology in miniature.

4. Books and the Building of Empire

One of the major criticisms that “revisionist” historians like Armitage level at what he calls “proto-colonial” studies is the notion that “literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries [is] deeply, because necessarily, inflected by ‘imperial’ experiences” (“Literature,”102). He accuses postcolonial scholars of accepting “the casual link between Empire and Literature so blithely taken for granted by the Victorians and Edwardians” which has “not withstood scrutiny,” and adds insult to injury by equating this stance to the “enthusiastic rediscovery in the new Elizabethan age of the 1950s”(101). Armitage goes on to draw his much-quoted conclusion: “impress of Empire upon English literature in the early-modern period was minimal” (102). In order to begin to understand the extent to which an emerging intertextual discourse might have influenced the milieu in which Shakespeare wrote, it is important to take Armitage’s criticisms seriously. To what extent was literature on exploration and colonization available in the early modern period, how widely read was that literature, and how much did it influence public opinion? John Parker in his Books to Build an Empire argues that “authors, translators, patrons and publishers gave the idea of empire to the English people and supplied England with books on geography and travel which spread to the reading public information essential to the beginning of empire” (1). Although many revisionist historians contest Parker’s conclusions about the
influence of the publications he so exhaustively documents, all acknowledge the definitive nature of his 1965 study.

What is clear from Parker’s study, and the information gathered together by the project Early English Books On-line, is that throughout the latter years of the sixteenth century and the first part of the seventeenth not a year went by without books and pamphlets being published which concerned exploration and exploitation of the world outside England. What is also true is that these publications were a tiny fraction of the works published, often published for promotional reasons or financed by individual enthusiasts, and often not financially rewarding to their publishers. Parker identifies 267 titles and editions published between 1481 and 1620 that reflect an interest in overseas travel, settlement, trade or missionary activity, and Early English Books On-line lists 314 texts dealing with the same subjects, a tiny percentage of the 19,643 titles and editions identified by Early English Books On-line as published in this same period. By 1580, according to Parker, “English readers had access to sixteenth century information on the New World, China, India, the Philippines, inner Russia, Persia, Egypt, the Levant and the East Indies” (94). However, he also notes that the numbers of these texts were limited, often consisted of translations, and their publication was more the result of the enthusiasm of a handful of men, albeit influential men30, rather than the interest of a reading public. Trading ventures to West Africa, Drake’s successful 1570 raids on Spanish America, Gilbert Horseley’s 1575 lucrative plundering expedition to South America, expeditions to seek out a Northeast Passage in 1556 and 1557, and expeditions to South America, the Caribbean and Darien all passed without published acknowledgement (94). In the literature that was published, “a recurrent theme in the dedicatory

30Parker identifies John Dee and Sir Christopher Hatton as among those who expressed particular interest in overseas exploration. Hatton, an important advisor and member of Elizabeth’s court, had “no equal [within the Queen’s circle] in his patronage of imperialism [although] his greatest influence with Elizabeth was in the area of entertainment” (94).
epistles is the lethargy of Englishmen towards overseas ventures” (96). It was not until 1579 that a translation of Marco Polo’s *Travels* reached English readers, even though it had been available in other European languages for more than a hundred years (90).

The last part of the sixteenth century saw an increase in interest in the literature of exploration. Parker identifies seventy-one texts published in the last twenty years of the century dealing with geography, trade, exploration, settlement and missionary work (249-55). Although over half of the texts published between 1580 and 1590 were translations, in the last ten years of the sixteenth century only eight of the thirty-seven were not indigenous English texts. Many of these were the promotional texts already discussed earlier in this chapter. Richard Hakluyt the younger, who Parker contends was “the first outspoken advocate of colonization,” published his compilation, *Divers Voyages* in 1582, and played a role in the publication of other texts advocating establishing colonies, including John Florio’s translation of accounts of Cartier’s voyages. Hakluyt, along with arguing that new world colonies could provide a base for trade and a source of mineral wealth, declared “the folly of hanging able men for petty crimes instead of using them as colonialists” and advocated colonies as a warehouse for “superfluous people” (109).

Hakluyt’s enthusiasm for eastern trade was almost as strong as his interest in the Americas, and he was a moving force in the publication of all kinds of texts dealing with the non-European world, including the English translation of Leo Africanus’s geography and history of North Africa in 1600 (166). This text, written by a former Arab diplomat who converted to Christianity after being captured by pirates and imprisoned by the Papal state, provided English readers with the unique experience of the world-view of the “other.” As Natalie Zemon Davis argues in her biography, Africanus, or al-Hassab al Wazzan as the diplomat had been known in
his earlier life, wrote a book of “double vision” where the author “consciously moves back and forth between Europe and Africa, [...] and between Islam and Christianity” (108). Another provocative text available to English readers was a translation in 1583 of Las Casas’s indictment of the Spanish treatment of the indigenous population. Robert Young calls Bishop Bartolomé de Las Casas “the founding father of European anti-colonialism” (75), and his *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542) had created a sensation on the continent. However, in spite of its potential as anti-Spanish propaganda, according to Parker it had little impact in England (116). The fact that Las Casas’s critique did not stop with the Spanish treatment of the Indian but extended to the whole practice of colonialism may have dampened the enthusiasm of readers interested in the New World and the promoters of the books that encouraged this enthusiasm. Parker acknowledges that the publication of books concerned with the world outside England in the latter part of Elizabeth’s reign was dependent on the “enthusiasm of a dozen men” rather than the interest of readers, and even among those who wrote about geography and travel only a handful were interested in the establishment of English colonies (171).

In the first part of James’s reign literature about the world outside England continued to appear. In 1604 *The Naturall and Morall Historie of the East and West Indies* by the Spanish Jesuit José de Acosta appeared in English. This text, while not quite the devastating critique of Las Casas’s, dealt with many of the same questions and had been widely read and discussed on the Continent. Even though it was translated by a well-known scholar, it appeared in only one edition, and although it may have had some influence on the positive view of Amerindians dominant in promotional literature, Parker argues it had little impact on English readers (232). Although not a year goes by between 1603 and 1611 without at least one publication of a text concerning the outside world, these texts continued to represent a tiny percentage of the books
published in the period. Their relative significance is clearly illustrated by a close look at publication records of the year when interest in the New World was at its height. In 1609, the year that witnessed the beginning of the propaganda campaign undertaken by the Virginia Company, only fourteen of the four hundred and ten texts that were published concerned geography, travel or the establishment of New World colonies.

During years in which Shakespeare must have been planning, writing and staging *The Tempest*, the steady trickle of books and pamphlets promoting an interest in the outside world was primarily promotional and often religious. Along with promoting a positive picture of life in the colonies and emphasizing the duty to convert the Amerindians, many of these texts advocated the colonies as a solution to the growing problems of poverty and unemployment at home. Parker observes that many of these texts had a defensive tone indicating that the New World ventures were not without critics, and he notes that some of these critics “spoke from the stage in such plays as *Eastward Ho!*” (215 n 52). A number of the pamphlets took direct aim at these sceptics. William Crashaw, in his *Sermon Preached in London before the . . . Lord Lawarre* (1610), identified the enemies of the new colony as “the greedy and the unsanctified,” as well as “the Devil, papists, and players, the latter ‘because wee resolve to suffer no Idle persons in Virginea, which course if it were taken in England, they would know the might turne to new occupations’” (203). Along with the promotional literature, travel narratives and geographies continued to appear – some like George Abbot’s *A brief description of the whole worlde* again and again – but many of these contained outmoded and inaccurate information. For example, Abbot's popular work relied heavily on biblical and classical sources and contained few references to England’s role in the world (232). It was not until 1627 that John Speed published the first English atlas (232). There is no question that texts about trade, plunder, settlement, and internal colonization,
the four components that identify as the foundation stones of Empire, were part of the public discourse. However, it also difficult to deny the assertion of revisionist historians that “the impress of Empire upon English literature in the early-modern period was minimal” (Armitage, “Literature” 102). Even Parker admits that the books, pamphlet, and few poorly written poems advocating and publicizing England’s overseas ventures were a marginal and unprofitable component of the literary output of the period. Certainly the published texts indicate that the intertextual milieu that surrounded The Tempest was not one dominated by a full-fledged hegemonic discourse of colonialism, but this discourse was there none the less and must have had an effect on the environment in which Shakespeare created The Tempest.

5. London: Rocked by the Same Forces That Create Colonialism

Trade, plunder, settlement and the process of internal colonization all had a profound effect on Shakespeare’s immediate world, London. According to C. G. A. Clay, London was by far England’s major city: its largest port, and its centre of commerce and political and social activity (1:197). Thomas Milles, writing in 1608, expressed the sentiment of the time: “all our creeks seek to join one river, all our rivers run to one port, all our ports join to our town, all our towns make but one city, and all our cities but suburbs to one vast, unwieldy and disorderly Babel of buildings, which the world calls London” (qtd. in Manley 2). While the population of England had grown rapidly (increasing by more than a third in just over fifty years to 4.3 million in 1603 [Edwards 8]), London’s grew even faster, its population doubling from 1580 to 1600 from 100,000 to 200,000 and doubling again by 1650 (Gurr, Playgoing 59). All the major trading companies were based in London; and the early seventeenth century Mediterranean and Far Eastern trade was a London monopoly; and at least one-third to three-quarters of all imports and exports were controlled by London (Clay 1:200). Clay speculates that London’s merchant traders
directly created a significant number of jobs in offices, commercial establishments, and institutions like the Royal Exchange. Together with the privateering entrepreneurs, merchant trade supported the tens of thousands that were employed in the shipping industry both as seamen and shipping-support services (1:202). Both merchant trade and changes in agricultural organization generated legal activity, and as the early modern atmosphere became more litigious, more young men, including those from the landowning gentry and aristocracy, were sent to study in the Inns. Clay suggests that by the 1610s as many as a thousand young men would be in attendance at the Inns, and the “Inns thus developed the reputation, and indeed the function, of England’s third university” (1:204). The money, luxury goods, and excitement generated by trade and privateering attracted the agricultural aristocracy and gentry with their new-found disposable income, and many started to spend part of every year in London. The court with its enormous organization (2,500 people not including their families by 1630) as well as the organs of government, all became centred in London (Clay 1:203-4). The “projectors” who advocated the economic and social benefits of settlement may have had a marginal influence as so many historians argue, but they certainly were a vocal minority as even their harshest critics acknowledge. Their influence would have been felt even if many of their contemporaries did not take them as seriously as some future historians would. The “revisionist” historians’ argument that London of the early seventeenth century did not self-consciously see itself as the heartland of a colonial empire on the verge of being born is persuasive, but at the same time the four components that were in the process of coalescing to create the material basis on which the practice and ideology of empire would be based dominated all aspects of the dynamic and growing city.
The city itself was in the midst of tremendous change and the impact of the forces that were creating the basis for empire must have had a profound impact on a society already in flux. London of the early seventeenth century was at the midpoint of a dramatic transformation. Clay considers the “growth of London [. . .] one of the most striking and important of the changes which occurred within English society and the English economy between 1500 and 1700” (1:213). In 1500 London was a minor centre which in no way compared to the important cities of Europe; by 1700 London was surpassed only by Constantinople as the largest city in Europe (1:213). The dramatic changes had an equally dramatic effect on social organization. The transformation of “neo-feudal lords” into “commercially responsive capitalist landlords” (Brenner 651), and the resulting creation of a surplus army of labour that drifted into the city whenever economic conditions became difficult, created a growing and often mobile underclass. Real wage declined. The purchasing power of a craftsman’s wage dropped almost 60% in a little over one hundred years and an agricultural worker’s fell almost as much (Clay 1: 217-220). Clay estimates that two-thirds of the adult population were labourers (1:215), many living on or below the poverty line, who would be thrown into destitution with any downward fluctuation in the economy. Traditional charity mechanisms, already weakened by the dissolution of the monasteries, were swamped, and “the result was the development of a highly visible sub-stratum of urban society, living in cellars, divided tenements and hastily erected cottages, and surviving by begging, prostitution and crime” (1:219). In spite of the huge disparities between the rich and poor, London, especially the inner city, was not completely segregated along economic lines (1:212). However, class was a sharp dividing line. Gurr stresses that “Renaissance societies were [. . .] sharply divided into distinct social roles. [. . .] Money, dress, education: the entire pattern of living enforced a rigid social identity” (Playgoing 58). There was no middle class as we know it, but there was a large middle group made up of unique classes of artisans, merchants,
manufacturer, schoolmasters, scriveners and clergy, and “each class was distinct from the others in education, occupation, dress and income, and would have been shocked to find itself lumped in with any of the others” (58). All found their place within the four classes that William Harrison defined in 1577: “first nobles and gentlemen, next citizens and burgesses, thirdly yeoman, the rural smallholders, and finally artisans and labourers” (59). The class divisions may have been rigid but paradoxically at the same time they were “becoming both fluid and permeable” (Manley 7).

Wealth generated by trade, plunder, changes in the countryside, or even play-writing, enabled individuals to move into class positions of prestige and influence. As Lawrence Manley explains, quoting from William Gainsford’s 1618 *The Glory of England*:

As a “rich and wealthy seedplot” from which “courtiers, lawyers, and merchants” were “continuously transplanted,” the metropolis [London] helped to interligitimate capital and late feudal tenure; it created a new sort of “honour community” in which “valiant hearts, great spirits, . . . exalting wisedome, and reposed experience” were as much “the badge of a Merchant, as cognizance of a true Gentleman.” (8)

Along with wealth, education could also provide the means of social mobility. Gurr points out that members of the Inns automatically became gentleman, and to further emphasize the power of education to open the door to class mobility, he gives the example of Marlowe, the son of a shoemaker who was gentrified by his Cambridge degree while Shakespeare, the son of a glover, had to wait for the death of his father to gain access to the gentleman status his purchase

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31 Theodora A Jankowski, in her article “Class Categorization, Capitalism, and the Problem of ‘Gentle’ Identity in *The Royall King and the Loyall Subject* and *Eastward Ho!*”, provides a useful analysis of class and its permeable nature in early 17th Century London. She notes that Harrison makes clear it was even possible for yeoman, “the lowest rural rank” to “come to great wealth, [buy] the lands of unthrifty gentlemen,” send their sons to school and thus transform their families class designation to one of gentlemen (qtd. 161). She also notes “making sense out of the gentry/mercantile class group in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was not easy . . . The line of demarcation between the two groups would not become fixed until the Puritan control of Parliament and the incidents of the Civil War hardened the boundaries between the gentry and the bourgeoisie once again” (165).
of the coat of arms had bestowed on his father (60). The social ladder went both ways. Andrew Gurr notes that 12.6% of the apprentices in London’s livery companies through 1570-1646 were sons of knights, esquires and gentlemen and he adds that “[g]old was the principal alchemy for converting citizenry into gentry. Lack of it, for younger sons, took them the opposite way” (62). No matter what class they came from, few were untouched by the elements that created the conditions for empire. Trade was a particularly strong economic engine in London and, in 1599, a visiting Swiss physician observed that “most of the inhabitants are employed in commerce: they buy, sell and trade in all the corners of the globe” (qtd. in Sherman 115). Economics drew foreigners as well as the English to London. John Lyly in his 1593 play *Midas* noted that “traffike and travell hath woven the nature of all Nations into ours” (115). Early modern London in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century was a society caught up in rapid change and rocked by the same forces that were laying the basis for the coming imperial system.

In an interesting parallel with the postcolonial era, early modern England, and early modern London, was an overwhelming young society. There were no national censuses carried out in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries but Philip Edwards in *The Making of the Modern English State, 1460-1660* suggests that a local census made of the township of Ealing near London in 1599 reflects the age demographic of the society as a whole. There almost 70% of the population was under forty, and a considerable proportion of that 70% was under twenty, while only 7% of the population was over sixty (13). With the late age of marriage (according to Clay the average age of marriage for women in the period between 1560-1646 was twenty-seven) and the increase in the number of people who never married (as many as 20% during the

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32 Imtiaz Habib contends that a re-examination of parish records carried out by Thomas Forbes and Roslyn Knutson reveals black people lived in areas of London where Shakespeare lived and worked (95). In primary research carried out by Habib, “50 black people of a variety of ages, genders, familial and marital statuses, including in some instances people in cross-racial unions,” were identified in two dozen London parishes (110 n5).
seventeenth century), many of these young people were single (Clay 1:23). Clay estimates that
given the large number of servants and apprentices in London (whose jobs depended on their
single status) two-thirds of the city’s population was unmarried and the huge growth of the city’s
population depended completely on massive immigration from all parts of the country.

Just as the city was profoundly affected by the forces that were to bring the Empire into
being, so of course was the theatre. The theatres that emerged in the 1580s and 1590s were
something completely new. Andrew Gurr points out that audiences paying money to hear poetry
was unprecedented. Although it is difficult to determine the size of audiences, Gurr estimates
that at least 1,000 people attended each performance at the suburban amphitheatres, and he cites
the Spanish ambassador who claimed, “more than 3000 persons were there [at the Globe] on the
day that the audience was smallest” (Playgoing 21). Gurr concludes that all classes were present
in the audience, although the class composition of the different theatres varied over the years. He
is reluctant to accept the earlier assumption that the gentry deserted the amphitheatres for the
private indoor theatres, although he is cautious about making generalizations. In his definitive
study Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London, Gurr estimates that there were fifty million visits to
London’s theatres between 1567 and 1642, and he is able to identify only 250 names of
individuals attending the theatre but these individuals represent a cross-section of society
including nineteen nobles, twenty-five foreign visitors and over sixty London commoners (69-
70). Gurr also adopts literary references to playgoers as a way of determining the types of people
who attended the theatre. He cites a poem by Sir John Davies in which “A thousand townsenmen,
gentlemen and whores, / Porters and serving-men” are identified as public playhouse patrons
(70). Even vagrants and vagabonds, mostly young male unemployed servants or ex-apprentices
migrating from the countryside, frequented the playhouses according to City of London
authorities and anti-playhouse polemics (63). Both Gurr and Richard Helgerson note that as the seventeenth century progressed, the make-up of the different theatre audiences tended to divide along class lines and Shakespeare’s move to the Blackfriars in 1610 marked a gentrification of his audience. However, the King’s Men closed Blackfriars ever year from May to September and moved back to the Globe for the summer, rejoining their traditional multi-class audience (93). 

*The Tempest* was Shakespeare’s only play written for the Blackfriars, but his company may well have staged it for his broader audience during the summer season at the Globe (Gurr, “Tempest” 200). Trade, plunder, and reorganization in the countryside generated new money and new men. Shakespeare with his generation of playwrights and players managed to escape the confines of class and create a space on the margins that allowed Shakespeare, as Helgerson claims, to help “make the world that made him” (215). In discussing the important role that the young Elizabethan writers, many with humble class origins, made to the formation of their society, Helgerson borrows a term from the postcolonial world – “transitional men” – and describes them as “men uprooted by education and ambition from familiar associations and local structures, men who were free – and compelled by their freedom – to imagine a new identity” (13): a new identity that was certainly not yet moulded by empire but an identity that was forced to negotiate many of the forces that would soon give birth to empire.

And the theatre reflected this negotiation. Platter observed in his journal after attending two plays and a bear-baiting, “with these and many more amusements the English pass their time, learning at the play what is happening abroad . . . since the English for the most part do not travel much, but prefer to learn foreign matters and take their pleasures at home” (qtd. in Sherman 111). The English at the turn of the seventeenth century may not have been extensive travelers, but the same cannot be said for actors. William H. Sherman points out that Renaissance actors often
travelled, “acting was still considered an itinerant profession during the sixteenth century, and tours of provincial and even foreign cities were common until at least the second decade of the seventeenth century” (109). And the characters they portrayed on the stage often reflected this experience with the wider world. 105 merchants appear in Tudor and Stuart plays. The only types that appear more frequently are soldiers, prisoners, and citizens. Sherman notes that “there are nearly as many mariners (24) as kings and queens together (26), and many more travelers (40) and ambassadors (64); and there are almost as many usurers (56, most of whom are foreigners and many Jews) as magicians (31) and witches (26) combined” (110). The fact that forty-five Turks, fifty-five Moors and thirty Venetians made an appearance, along with a number of other characters of foreign origins to rival the one hundred and one identified Londoners, indicates that the stage was permeated with influences from the outside world (118). Thomas Heywood staged pageants paying tribute to London’s trading institutions (117).

Playwrights sometimes turned to pamphlets and travel narratives for inspiration. For example, Daborne’s *Christian Turned Turk* was primarily based on two 1609 pamphlets and Shakespeare utilized three pamphlets concerning the wreck of the *Sea-Adventure* off Bermuda in *The Tempest*33 (113). According to John Parker, in the first twenty years of the seventeenth century, the most popular accounts of travels in the Near East were about the Sherley brothers (185), and Sherman concludes that the staging of Day, Rowley, and Wilkins’s play *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* and the publication of Anthony Nixon’s pamphlet *The Three English Brothers* (both about the Sherleys’ exploits) in the same year indicate that playwrights and pamphlet writers worked “hand-in-hand to present breaking news of contemporary travels” (113).

33 Sylvester Jourdain’s *A discovery of Bermudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels* (1610), the Council of Virginia’s *A true declaration of the estate of the colonie in Virginia* (1610), and William Strachey’s *True Report of the Wrack* (1625). Shakespeare’s use of an unpublished text that he must have seen in manuscript has been seen by critics as evidence of his interest in American exploration and settlement.
The London stage, a place where foreigners often outnumbered locals, became an environment where developing relationship between England and the outside world could be rehearsed and explored.

**In Conclusion:**

To argue that these four elements were in play and must have had an impact on early modern England, specifically on the last decade of the sixteenth century and the first decade of the seventeenth, does not refute the argument of so many historians that interest in overseas colonies was far from a central concern in this historical period. It certainly does not support the notion that the imperial map was already well developed. What it does point to is a world where the elements that will bring the Empire into being are already in play, and the ideology that is and will be engendered by this process is in flux, far from consolidated, and yet beginning to take shape. This world does not contain a prototype reflecting the future Empire in miniature and a discourse reflecting a consolidated ideology, but rather expresses itself on its own terms, reflecting the forces of its own moment. By doing our best to capture the period and to push aside the anachronistic assumptions, we can begin to discern the discursive influence of the forces that played the role of midwife to the birth of empire. We can then place *The Tempest* in a context that will allow us to explore the way a generation of Postcolonial writers and critics found a type of their own experience in an almost four hundred year old play, a type that they found could bear witness to the often obscured central role of the colonial oppression and resistance throughout those four hundred years.

Is there a specific place that an Empire on the way up can meet itself on the way down that allows a unique discourse across the centuries? Do Shakespeare and his *Tempest* provide such a fertile environment for writers and critics not because it is permeated with a consolidated
colonial ideology but rather because it is steeped in an unformed ideological flux which is just beginning to coalesce into the coherent underpinnings of Said’s map? Does Shakespeare’s exploration of the forces at work in a colonial world in the early process of coming together have something very special and particular to offer the creative thinkers of a colonial world falling apart?

In considering these questions I was struck by observations that Richard Helgerson makes in his book *Forms of Nationhood*:

I began my teaching career in West Africa just a few years after the countries of that region gained their independence from England and France. As I have studied the Elizabethan writing of England, I have often been reminded of postcolonial Africa. […] In constructing nations of their own, the Africans have written themselves from within a discursive field that first took shape in England, France, Spain, Portugal, and Holland some four hundred years ago. And, once again, education, cultural mobility, and the bureaucratic demands of the state have pointed them toward this task. Like those younger Elizabethans, removed from their artisanal background, schooled in the alien values of Greco-Roman antiquity, and directed to the service of the newly consolidated monarchic state, the Africans began with self-alienation. They were taken from their village homes, given a European education, and prepared for subaltern positions in colonial administration they have since taken over and turned to the ends of a numerous array of national states. It should be no surprise that in their frustration, envy, and ambition they often sound so much like Spenser to echo him. Their situation is at once strikingly like his and the distant product of his. (17)
Armitage, Lenman and Canny may all be right that Shakespeare’s world was not yet dreaming of Empire, but the forces that would soon bring that dream into play were certainly gathering. In further chapters I will explore how a generation of young writers and scholars coming to terms with their emerging postcolonial world in the 1960s and 1970s found in *The Tempest* the perfect vehicle to understand, explore, and discover their own world. This was in no small way because the world Shakespeare created in this play emerged out of a context buffeted by some of the same forces coming together as the young postcolonialists would encounter as these forces were coming apart.
Chapter 4
The 1611 Colonial Types of *The Tempest*

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

Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Caliban and Other Essays* (14)

In his 2000 essay, “Reading from Elsewhere: George Lamming and the Paradox of Exile,” Peter Hulme implicitly responds to historians such as Armitage and literary critics like Daniel Vitkus with his defence of Stephen Greenblatt’s comments about Caliban’s famous “curse” retort:

Stephen Greenblatt speaks of how “what we experience,” in these lines, “is a sense of their devastating justness.” [. . .] And, although “we experience” that sense of devastating justness, we do so not because we are imposing on the play our late-twentieth-century concerns. [. . .] However, it does suggest that the postcolonial reading claims to locate its local analysis in the words of the text, not in its own decision to find postcolonial themes present, to land a seventeenth-century play with a late-twentieth-century agenda. [. . .] The claim, in other words, is an historicist one, whether new or old, a claim which has no truck with the radical indeterminacy usually associated with the notion of the postmodern. This, after all, is a crucial component of the political nature of postcolonial readings: they claim to discover something of significance about the play that was obscured or ignored for many years. That discovery may have been in some sense enabled by the whole process of decolonization, but the readings invent nothing, whatever the supposed political motivation for them doing so. (234)

My aim in the previous chapter was to illustrate that Hulme’s evaluation of Greenblatt and the postcolonial “revisionist” approach to *The Tempest* is essentially correct. In spite of arguments
from Armitage that the “impress of Empire upon English literature in the early-modern period was minimal” (102) and Daniel Vilkus’s contention that postcolonial Tempest criticism demonstrates “the misapprehension of an imperial telos” (6), English colonialism was in the process of forming, and therefore the “impress” of this emerging system, as a generation of postcolonial literary critics argued, is readily discernible in The Tempest.

In discussing the work of critics who trace the “impress of Empire” on the early modern, Daniel Vitkus accuses them of falling prey to “the same postcolonial fallacy,” a fallacy that leads postcolonialists to confuse “the discursive with the material, theory with practice, rhetoric with reality” (6). Rather than a fallacy, the approach that Vitkus criticizes is a conviction that discourse does not develop without context, that theory and practice are integrally related, and that rhetoric, although often not an accurate reflection of reality, always provides insights into the “real” world. Historians such as Armitage have played a useful role in pointing out that empire and its ideology were far from consolidated in early modern England, but with the added insights of historians such as Kenneth R. Andrews, Mark Netzloff, and Robert Brenner, we can see that the colonial system that was busy being born was complex and consisted of far more than a few colonies in North America. When we take into consideration that colonialism emerges as much from trade, piracy, and the conquest of the island of Britain itself as it does from settlements, the “impress” of colonial discourse on early modern English literature in general and The Tempest in particular is not so difficult to discern. A careful look at the passage from Edward Said’s Culture and Imperialism that Armitage finds so problematic reveals that Said is not as far off the mark as some would argue:

[I]f one began to look for something like an imperial map of the world in English

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Vitkus identifies Stephen Greenblatt, Kim Hall, Emily Bartels, Jack D’Amico and Barbara Fuchs as falling prey to the “postcolonial fallacy” that is “encapsulated by Arthur L. Little, Jr., when he asserts, “[t]o talk like an empire is to be an empire”” (6).
literature, it would turn up with amazing insistence and frequency well before the mid-
nineteenth century. [...] There were established English offshore interests in Ireland,
America, the Caribbean, and Asia from the sixteenth century on, and even a quick
inventory reveals poets, philosophers, historians, dramatists, statesmen, novelists, travel
writers, chroniclers, soldiers, and fabulists who prized, cared for, and traced these
interests with continuing concern. (82-3)

Although the map may not have been as fully developed as Said claims, it was certainly well
along the way to being formed, and consistently “turned up,” as I pointed out in the last chapter,
in the textual context surrounding *The Tempest*.

Those that reject Hulme’s claim that postcolonial critics base their analysis on “the words
of the text, not on [their] own decision to find postcolonial themes present” (234) do so on the
basis that early modern England was not yet a colonial power and that interest in empire was
marginal and irrelevant to much of the dominant discourse. They may be right that consolidated,
hegemonic, developed imperial discourse was yet to form, but a careful examination of the social,
political and cultural context in and around 1611, as I have argued in Chapter 3, supports Hulme’s
contention and vindicates the ground-breaking work of postcolonial “revisionist” literary critics
such as Stephen Greenblatt, Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Paul Brown, and Thomas Cartelli, who
make the historicist claim that emerging colonial concerns lie at the centre of the play.

Unfortunately it is not within the scope of this project to revisit Shakespeare’s play and
explore ways that the early manifestations of English colonialism, including the role played by
trade, plunder and the internal colonization of the island of Britain, exert a crucial influence on
the world created by *The Tempest*. Often, the play’s Mediterranean setting has been cited as proof
that the play cannot be “about” colonialism because it is so clearly set in the Old World, not the
New. However, with Matar’s Renaissance Triangle in mind, it would be intriguing to explore how
this interwoven early colonial relationship between the old and new worlds has an impact on Caliban’s and Prospero’s island. With colonialism’s roots anchored firmly in trade, plunder, and the islands of Britain, as well as new world settlements, it would be fascinating to revisit *Tempest* criticism that deals with historical analysis that is not obviously or self-consciously about colonialism. For example, while dismissing examples of postcolonial analysis “as historical piracy [that] takes *The Tempest* completely out of context” (379), Tristan Marshall’s argument that “*The Tempest* is a stage representation of this particular ideological conceit of Britain as a distinct island kingdom replete with a past steeped in tradition” (391) may complement rather than counter postcolonial claims about the play when Netzloff’s contention about the British roots of England’s colonialism are taken into consideration. Richard Wilson’s defence of “Prospero’s story” as belonging to “the genre of pirate adventure” (339) and David Scott Kastan’s situation of the play “in the killing religious conflicts and territorial ambitions of the old [world]” (240), when placed in the context of Andrews’s interwoven colonial aspects, may well contribute more than their authors expect to postcolonial investigations of *The Tempest*. Andrew Gurr’s observation – “Colonialism in Shakespeare’s time was an extension of patriarchy. Patriarchs colonized their servants. For Londoners, colonization started in London” (“Industrious” 205) – encourages us to take a second, postcolonial look at the critical studies of *The Tempest*’s master-servant dynamics. The potential for re-examining the play in light of a much broader definition of nascent English colonialism than is usually considered is almost unlimited and certainly enticing, but, for me, this task will have to wait for another project.

However, before turning back to the main focus of the project—a defence of *The Tempest*’s colonial moment and the postcolonial response to that moment—I would like to look a bit more closely at the historical context of three *Tempest* themes that have particular resonance for postcolonial writers and critics. In the early modern period, particularly in the period before
the massacre of 1626 and the closing of the Indian-friendly window, there was a wide-ranging debate about the correct way to relate to indigenous people. Some argued that land should not be taken from natives but should be bought; others insisted that land not properly utilized could be taken; others claimed that prior occupation of the land, even by an earlier colonizing force, brought with it the right to ownership; others maintained that right of ownership could be abrogated if the original owners acted violently; while still others believed that Christian “grace” brought with it the right of ownership. Some felt that the indigenous people were much like Europeans, with familiar social institutions, while others insisted that they were savages with barely human qualities. Anticolonial texts such as La Casas’s were readily available, as were texts arguing the importance of building an empire by suppressing the natives. What is clear is that in this early stage of English colonialism there is no dominant line on the nature of colonial subjects or how to relate to them, and this flux of ideas is directly reflected in the play. A close look at the dialogue between Caliban and Prospero (“This island’s mine”) may allow us to trace the way elements of that debate are reflected in the manner in which these characters relate to each other. Gonzalo’s speech, where we see Montaigne’s contributions to the controversy explicitly quoted, is also part of the play’s discussion.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, the image of the native is far from fixed—there is the Montaigne version, the image reflected in White’s drawings, the “pro-Indian” image of propaganda pamphlets, and the monstrous wild-man image—and we can see all of these characterizations reflected at one time or another in the play. The relationship among Prospero, Caliban and Ariel serves as such an important site for so many

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35 See Anthony Pagden’s articles “The Struggle for Legitimacy and the Image of Empire in the Atlantic to c. 1700” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (1: 34-54), and “Dispossessing the Barbarian Court: The Language of the Spanish Thomism and the Debate Over the Property Rights of American Indians,” in *Theories of Empire 1400–1800* (159-78). Although the latter article deals primarily with the debate in Spain, it sheds light on the wider debate and tracks Calvinist and Lutheran contributions to this discussion.
postcolonial writers because it illustrates the ambivalent and contradictory power relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The flux of ideas that provided a context for Shakespeare’s invention of these characters was infused with many of the same questions and power dynamics that challenged the postcolonial generation in their attempt to understand the colonial relationships from which they were emerging.

The second theme that postcolonial writers have been consistently drawn to is the clash between Prospero’s “white” magic and Sycorax’s “dark” magic. This site of conflict has provided a way to explore the challenge of the colonial subjects’ traditional beliefs to the dominant ideology of the colonizer. Postcolonial creative writers are not just finding in Caliban’s heritage of Sycorax’s “black” magic a useful metaphor for négritude philosophy and the rediscovery of traditional belief. They may well be responding to the early modern interest in the power and threat of the “pagan” ideologies the colonizers encountered as the foundations of colonialism were being built. Much has been said about the influence of Native Americans on Shakespeare’s portrayal of Caliban, and critics have pointed out that the name of Caliban’s god, Setebos, is Patagonian in origin. A number of critics, citing the Mediterranean connection, have contested postcolonial assumptions that Sycorax and her magic are linked to the colonial experience. However, if we accept a broader definition of colonialism’s roots which includes the early modern trading and privateering experience in the Mediterranean world, then it is not surprising

36 This is explicitly explored in Césaire’s *A Tempest*, in which the writer introduces an African god into the play and has Caliban act as a spokesman for the author’s négritude philosophy. Caliban, in Césaire’s play, also adopts the name X, evoking the challenge that the Black Muslim movement provided to the dominance of American imperialism on its home front. Lamming, both in *Pleasures of Exile* and *Water with Berries*, associates Caliban’s potential power with the Haitian Ceremony of the Souls and other traditional African-rooted beliefs. In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi explores the power of the Mau Mau oath and associates this with his “Caliban” characters, while Brathwaite associates both Caliban and Sycorax with the power of suppressed African traditions. A number of works focus on Sycorax, and the way she imposes, through her absence, the threat of the violent revenge of the “wretched of the earth,” powered by a new-found faith in the traditional roots and a rejection of western ways. For many writers, she represents the re-emerging threat of the repressed and the never-obliterated ideology and power of a colony’s indigenous habitants.
that the beliefs expressed by the Mediterranean-influenced Caliban would speak to another
generation of colonialized “others” that were rediscovering the power of their traditional
“magic.”

Sycorax, with her magical powers, may have found her way into The Tempest through an
unusual book coming from an unusual source: the English translation of Leo Africanus’s Historie
of Africa, published in 1600. This would have introduced into Shakespeare’s milieu what Peter
Mancall has called “the most important chronicle of Africa since the 14\textsuperscript{th} century” (Travel 97).
Written by an Arab diplomat captured by Christian pirates and “converted” to Christianity by
Pope Leo X, this book became a bestseller when it was first published in Italian in 1550, and it
was soon translated into Latin, French and finally English (Zemon Davis 4). Mancall contends
that the book “remained the most influential source on Africa available until the 19\textsuperscript{th} century” and
“shaped the views of Africa held by Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Walter Ralegh” (Travel 97).

Historie of Africa translator John Pory was a close associate of Hakluyt and an active participant
in Matar’s Renaissance Triangle, having travelled to Ireland, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey,
Virginia and the young Puritan colony of Plymouth while working as a writer, diplomat,
politician, and entrepreneur. He was a member of the English Parliament from 1605–1611 and the
speaker of the first Colonial Assembly in Virginia, as well as secretary to the colony’s Governing
Council. It is unlikely that Shakespeare would not have been aware of Pory’s translation of this
influential text concerning the part of the world in which he would set The Tempest; he may well have read it.\footnote{William S. Powell, in his book John Pory, 1572-1636: The Life and Letters of a Man of Many Parts, credits Lois Whitney’s article “Did Shakespeare Know Leo Africanus?” PMLA 37 (1922) with first pointing out Shakespeare’s use of Pory’s translation. Eldred Jones also discusses this in Othello’s Countrymen (1965) and The Elizabethan Image of Africa (1971). Jonathan Bate cites Pory’s translation as an influence on Othello in his article “Shakespeare’s Island” (291).}

William S. Powell argues that John Pory’s text—which included other writings on Africa,
including Pory’s own supplement to Leo Africanus’s text—influenced Shakespeare in his writing of both *Othello* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*:

A striking parallel may be seen between Pory’s introductory account of John Leo [Africanus] and a number of significant points in Shakespeare’s description of Othello’s past. It has also been shown that Shakespeare’s information about Egypt and the Nile in *Anthony and Cleopatra* and the distinction between various Moors and Negroes came from Pory’s work. The account of crocodiles in Pory furnished the basic information used by Shakespeare. (16–17)

Shakespeare may also have been familiar with John Florio’s Latin translation (1556) of Africanus’s work.

Leo Africanus was not a typical travel writer. Natalie Zemon Davis, in her biography of Africanus (or al-Hasan al-Wazzan, as he was known during his years as a diplomat), *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds*, describes her subject as “a man with a double vision, sustaining two cultural worlds, sometimes imagining two audiences, and using techniques taken from the Arabic and Islamic repertoire while folding in European elements in his own fashion” (12–13). The translation of Leo’s text provided a rare glimpse into the world of the “Other,” an authentic image that would not be matched until the nineteenth or even twentieth century. The in-between world that Leo occupied was a meeting place between a Europe on the rise and an “other” world threatened but far from conquered, a place more reminiscent of a world caught in an uneasy balance of power—such as that emerging after the Second World War between the oppressor and the once-oppressed—than an empire at its zenith. The nascent colonial power relations that provide a context for Shakespeare to draw on when he was considering the power struggle on *The Tempest*’s island would find affinity in the world pictured in Africanus’s book.
Africanus provides insights into the magical customs of the Mediterranean, many of them pre-Islamic. He discusses divination, miracles and “diviners (kahims) [who] had recourse to angels at best, to djinns or spirits who were sometimes reliable and sometimes not, and to demons with their false counsel at worst” (Davis 167). The possibility that Caliban’s magical heritage may have been influenced by this traveller’s exploration of the magic of the Mediterranean people becomes even more intriguing when we consider there may be a Sycorax prototype in his Mediterranean world. When I discussed Sycorax with Natalie Zemon Davis, she suggested I take a close look at the “suhaqiyat” women of Fez:

Female diviners of Fez who, claiming to be possessed by djinns or demons, foretold the future or served as healers, were in fact suhaqiyat (sahacat, as he transliterated into Italian the current Arabic word for “tribades,” lesbians), women who had the “evil custom” of “rubbing” (fregare) each other in sexual delight. Assuming the voices of demons, they lured beautiful women into their lascivious company, singing, dancing, and having sex with them, enticing them to trick their husbands along the way. (201)

... Some diviners were bad, such as the women in Fez who claimed they had special connections with demons of different colors—red, white, black—whom they summoned to possess them by special perfumes, ventriloquizing the demons’ voices and answering questions put to them reverently by simple folk, who then left a gift. Rumors had it that they snared their women clients into demonic sexual pleasures. (168)

Could Africanus’s exploration of the magic of the Mediterranean world, with its “pagan” pre-Islamic roots, have provided a piece of the context in which Caliban’s potential power was situated? Could “the damned witch Sycorax [. . .] from Algiers [. . .] banished” be a sister of the women of Fez? Could her “mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible to enter human hearing” be
the same dreadful crimes of the *suhaqiyat* (or “Sahaoat, which in Latin signifieth *Fricatrices*,” as John Pory’s 1600 English translation refers to these women)?

Zemon Davis’s description of the *suhaqiyat* is consistent with John Pory’s translation, which is available in *Early English Books Online*, and this English translation is as explicit as the Italian and Arabic versions that Zemon Davis consulted. These “abominable witches” who “commit unlawful Venerie among themselves” respond to “faire women” by burning “in lust towards them no other wise then lustie yoonders doe towards young maides.” The local women “allured with the delight of this abominable vice, will desire the companie of these witches” and entice their husbands to invite the “witches” into their homes. (149–50) The description of these women occurs in what Pory identifies as the Third Book of Leo’s *Historie*, the book that deals primarily with the city of Fez. Of the eight books, this in many ways is the most shocking. The Sahaoat women are not the only benders of gender in this book. Africanus’s description of the innkeepers of Fez is equally transgressive:

> The inne-keepers of Fez being all of one familie called Elcheua goe appareled like women, and shaue their beards, and are so de lighted to imitatie women, that they will not only counterfeite their speech, but will sometimes also sit downe and spin. (Book Three 130)

In all of Pory’s translation, this third book of Leo Africanus’s is the one with by far the most references to magic, conjurors, jugglers, necromancers, casters-out of devils, and other mystical references. He describes learning from students of astrology a ritual involving drawing intricate circles in the ground. If Shakespeare read this book, and surely he must have, Africanus’s description of Fez may well have provided inspiration for the magic of both Sycorax and Prospero.

Another possible prototype for Sycorax and a possible traveller on the Mediterranean /
New World Renaissance Triangle is the West Indian folk-figure of the Soucouyant. This female witch, central to West Indian folk-tales of African origin, is a “diabolical creature who appears as an old, wrinkled woman by day but then at night sheds her skin, flies about the community in the form of a ball of fire, and invades houses through open windows and keyholes to drain the blood of her unsuspecting neighbors” (Anatol 33). Giselle Liza Anatol discusses the way this figure, traditionally used in Caribbean popular culture “to condemn female power and socialize women according to patriarchal dictates” (33), is being use by recent writers as a positive symbol of female empowerment. Whether or not the West Indian Soucouyant is in any way related to her much more sociable sister from Fez, Sahoat, or her Algerian sister, Sycorax, is an open question. However, it is safe to say all three, with their ability to subvert the authority of the status quo, occupy the same terrain.

Certainly the subversive power of “magic” was integral to every aspect of the components that gave birth to colonialism. Islam consistently threatened to disrupt the smooth business of Old World trade and plunder; the mystical beliefs of Amerindians threatened the New World settlements; and the traditional magical beliefs of the English peasantry and the “uncivilized” uncooperative residents of the Celtic Fringe played a role in the resistance to the colonial project of building the empire of Britain. This magical power, even when held in check, kept resistance alive and disrupted the linear development of colonialism’s hegemonic ideology. According to Stephen Orgel:

The darkest view of magic [in the play] is summed up in the figure of Sycorax, that ghostly memory so intensely present in the play, the perverse, irrational, violent, malicious, vindictive principle in nature, progenitor of monsters, lover and agent of the devil on earth. (Introduction 21)

This is the magic that posed a real threat to England’s early colonial ventures and made its
reappearance with the Mau Mau, the Panthers, the Viet Cong, and the Weathermen. Sycorax, with roots that well may be situated in the New World, the Mediterranean, or the witchcraft of the British hinterland, is as much a figure of emerging colonialism as Caliban, and it is no surprise that her presence resonates throughout the postcolonial era almost as much as his does.

The other *Tempest* theme that has particular resonance for postcolonial writers is the theme of sexual politics, particularly sexual politics that crosses racial lines. Barbara Fuch, in her article “Conquering Islands: Contextualizing *The Tempest*,” suggests that “the sexual politics of the play [is] a sublimated arena for imperial struggles” (59) and discusses both Claribel’s marriage and Caliban’s thwarted rape of Miranda in the context of “European imperial goals” (61). The sexual politics of the play is anchored directly in the context of emerging English colonialism. Ania Loomba notes that “Claribel’s story plays upon the imagined as well as real encounters between white European women and Moors which [. . .] reverberated through early modern culture” (*Shakespeare* 166). As I discussed in Chapter 3, dynastic marriages between native chiefs and English women were seriously considered, and not long after *The Tempest* was first performed, John Rolfe and Pocahontas were married. Caliban’s threat to rape Miranda, according to Kim Hall:

strikes at the heart of European fears of the putative desire of the native other for European women [. . .]. Caliban’s threat “to people the isle” with his offspring clearly suggests that he would control the island by creating a new “mixed” race and rebuts Prospero on his own terms. Territorial claims are backed here by a need for patriarchal control over women. (143)

“White Indians”—Europeans who escaped the harshness of the settlements and assimilated into native societies—crossed sexual barriers as well as cultural ones (Halpern 271). The movement of people into, as well as out of, England must have raised the opportunity for new types of
sexual encounters. The possibility and the threat of interracial desire are a central element in *The Tempest*, and whenever this desire emerges, it is marked by its colonial roots. It is no wonder that when postcolonial writers set out to engage with the sexual politics of their own era they were drawn to *The Tempest* and discovered in the play types of their own experiences, as well as a matrix that lends itself well to exploring those experiences.

Robin Headlam Wells, in countering what he calls the assumption that *The Tempest* is about colonialism, argues that:

>[i]n the course of its rich and complex afterlife, *The Tempest* has spoken in a powerful way to successive generations about the injustice of colonial rule. But while the play has inevitably changed its meaning over four centuries, particularly for African and West Indian readers and audiences, colonial exploitation was not part of Shakespeare’s original play. (“Virtue” 73)

In response to Wells, I would contend that although *The Tempest* may be “about” many things, the play is saturated with the contextual atmosphere of early English colonialism, and colonial exploitation and resistance lie at the heart of the play. Postcolonial literary critics who explore the “impress of empire” on *The Tempest* and postcolonial writers who find in the play types of their own experiences are not imposing an ideological “afterlife” on the play. They are all responding to a play that captures a moment in history when a system that still marked—and marks—their lives was just coming into being.
Chapter 5

Postcolonial Typology in Practice: *The Tempest’s* 1960–1970s Moments

A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.

Jawaharial Nehra, speech marking Indian Independence, midnight, Aug.14, 1947

In this chapter, I turn to the literature to defend my position that *The Tempest* acts as a matrix that provides a means of reframing and reinterpreting over four hundred years of history. The overarching method used by both critics and creative writers of the 1960s generation was primarily an archaeological method, a method of exploring *The Tempest* “site”: assembling bits of evidence, shifting that evidence around, and discovering within the play a narrative vision that captures the over four hundred years between the moment in which the play was created and the moment that these critics and writers occupied. Not only does *The Tempest* provide the matrix within which the history of empire can be reframed from the perspective of the oppressed, it also can play a prophetic role to reveal how the empire in its earliest configuration already contained the contradictions that would lead to its destruction. As I have argued in a previous chapter, the method that these writers use has a direct affinity with the method Christian exegetes employ when they approach the Bible—typology—and I have called that method “postcolonial typology.” In the same way that traditional Christians reframe the Old Testament to reveal the totality of the Christian view of history (past, present, and future) from creation to apocalypse (including the first and second comings of Christ), these postcolonial writers find within the matrix of *The Tempest* a narrative which explores their history, is “prophetic” of their own present, and gestures towards their own future.
The Tempest became a crucial one weapon in an intense struggle being waged in different venues and in different ways across the world. The struggle involved nothing less than the remaking of the world, and it was waged intensely not just in politics and warfare but also in the realm of culture and ideology. Richard Helgerson refers to Karl Mannheim’s 1928 article, The Problem of Generations, as a means of understanding the way Shakespeare’s generation became conscious of itself as a generation, and Mannheim’s observations are also strikingly relevant to the generation that came of age in the 1960s and early 1970s. Conceding that not every generation develops a sense of itself as a generation, he argues that:

> a generation as an actuality only [emerges] where a concrete bond is created between members of a generation by their being exposed to the social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic de-stabilization. [ . . . ] The generational unit represents a much more concrete bond than the actual generation as such. Youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation; while those groups within the same actual generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways, constitute separate generation units. (302–4, emphasis in original)

Although I do not want to over-emphasize its coherence, without a doubt from that 1960s generation emerged a “generational unit” that was international and made up of political activists and sympathizers who were heartened by the collapse of colonialism, committed to radical change and determined to bring about the defeat of imperialism. I know the idea of this cohort as an international unit will be somewhat controversial because I am lumping together young people in the West with Third World whose life experience was totally different, and I concede the unity of this “unit” existed mostly in the minds of Western activists.
However, it cannot be denied that there was something in the international air around 1968 to 1969. Youth revolts were not solely a Western phenomenon. Student revolts not only swept across North America and Western Europe, but also rocked Eastern Europe, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, and beyond. Millions of young students responded to Mao’s call and joined China’s Cultural Revolution.\(^{38}\) Revolt was not restricted to educated youth: according to a recent documentary on the Newark rebellion, the 1960s saw over 500 black urban rebellions (riots) in the United States. National liberation struggles existed throughout the Third World, most notably in Vietnam but also in Africa, and youth played a central role in all these struggles. Revolutionary groups organized along the Guevarist/Regis Debray foci model existed throughout Latin America. Clandestine terrorist organizations of young people and their sympathizers assembled in almost every Western state, and open organizations that espoused revolutionary action like the Black Panthers were common. This international generation (or a significant unit of this generation) embraced a postcolonial typological view of history, and especially on the terrain of culture and ideology *The Tempest* proved the perfect vehicle to wage the struggle for this vision.

Although fiction is most often associated with the typological use of *The Tempest*, the play was an important weapon in a battle waged by a group of young literary critics who were determined to bring the struggles of the street into the more rarefied world of academia. Stephen Greenblatt’s comments in his essay “Resonance and Wonder” illustrates this mind-set:

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\(^{38}\) In adding the young people who joined the Cultural Revolution in their millions, I am not negating the political use that Mao and his allies made of this mass movement in their power struggles or equating the forces behind the Cultural Revolution with the liberation movements led by young people throughout the world. What I am suggesting is that at the same time as millions of young Chinese students left everything to join the “revolution,” so did millions of other young people throughout the world—in the East and West and in the First, Second, and Third Worlds—and that this phenomenon is more interrelated than is usually acknowledged. I am thinking here of the earlier stages of the Cultural Revolution, not the later stage when the young become a problem and were sent off to be “re-educated” in the countryside.
my own critical practice and that of many others associated with new historicism was decisively shaped by the American 1960s and early 70s, and especially by the opposition to the Vietnam War. Writing that was not engaged, that withheld judgements, that failed to connect the present with the past seemed worthless. (167)

In the foreword to the first edition of *Political Shakespeare*, Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield explain that the origins and perspective of cultural materialism were also based on a critique of the status quo:

> The break-up of consensus in British political life during the 1970s was accompanied by the break-up of traditional assumptions about the values and goals of literary criticism. Initially at specialised conferences and in committed journals, but increasingly in the mainstream of intellectual life, literary texts were related to the new and challenging discourses of Marxism, feminism, structuralism, psycho-analysis and poststructuralism [and, anti-imperialism]. [...] [A] combination of historical context, theoretical method, political commitment and textual analysis offers the strongest challenge. [...] Cultural Materialism does not pretend to be politically neutral. [...] On the contrary, it registers its commitment to the transformation of a social order which exploits people on grounds of race, gender and class. (vii–viii)

Literary studies were not to escape the challenges that were confronting power all over the world.

In this section, I consider the group of literary critics, writing in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s not primarily to examine their contribution as critics— I do this in other sections of the project—but to consider their role as part of the generational unit that took on a specific task. Critics such as Brown, Hulme, Cartelli, Baker and Greenblatt brought the politics of their
generation’s moment into literary criticism and participated in a struggle to transform literary criticism to “counter the history of the victors with that of the vanquished” (Gallagher and Greenblatt 53). Both the more political cultural materialists and the new historians carried their generation’s battle into academic literary criticism and insisted that literary texts must be read in order to reveal “our true history in the interests of a politics of change” (Catherine Belsey qtd. in Brannigan 201).

Influenced by Raymond Williams, this group of critics rejected a separation of literature and art from politics and history in favour of “a radical contextualising of literature” in which could be read the stress and struggle produced by the contradictions of its historical moment. These critics rejected both “idealistic literary criticism” that saw in great literature, particularly in Shakespeare, a reflection of the universal, ahistorical human condition and “what Stephen Greenblatt calls the monological approach of historical scholarship of the past, one ‘concerned with discovering a single political vision, usually identical to that said to be held by the entire literary class or indeed the entire population’” (Dollimore and Sinfield 4–5). They insisted on a new reading, one that exposed the complex truths of history and, for the most political of them, played a role in developing a new understanding of the present:

The great project of historicist criticism is liberation, and only through its work in the world—its interpretation of culture and its critique of power’s presence—will it become not a discipline but a gift, one of power’s presents. (Cox and Reynolds 29)

For an interesting view of how The Tempest acted as a site of ideological struggle among British literary scholars in the 1980s, see Anthony B. Dawson’s 1984 article “Tempest in a Teapot: Critics, Evaluation and Ideology.” He argues that a generation of scholars based in the “new” universities outside of the Oxbridge establishment were making “a grab for power, a way of wrestling the reins of academic hegemony from the Prosperos of Oxbridge [and these] cultural materialists seize on Caliban to make their argument” (69). Noting the manner in which Terence Hawkes dismisses a renowned Oxford scholar in a London Review of Books article (“tell him to piss off”), Dawson comments: “Hawkes’ Calibanic virulence is surprising to an innocent North American like myself, but it reveals the class consciousness and hostility beneath some of the theoretical work being done in Britain today, and helps to explain the re-evaluation of central Oxbridge texts like The Tempest” (68).
The struggle of the streets was rocking the ivory tower, and as Howard Felperin

complains in his *Defence of the Canon*, “anti-authoritarian, anti-elitist, and anti-aesthetic
doctrines were in the wind in a recently politicized academia […] the time was right for a new fit,
a new mesh between text and context that would make what was formerly unthinkable and
incredible seem plausible and even inevitable” (171).

This new generation was questioning everything, but there was one area where the debate
had moved long past questioning: the primary importance of the anti-imperialist struggle. Central
to a commitment to that struggle was a reframing of the history of colonialism in a postcolonial
era. Young’s discussion of postcolonial theory in his book *Postcolonialism, An Historical
Introduction* is a good illustration of how this generation, or, to use Mannheim’s term, a
generational unit, defined its task:

Postcolonial cultural critique involves the reconsideration of this history [since 1492],
particularly from the perspective of those who suffered its effects, together with the
defining of its contemporary social and cultural impact. […]. It is concerned with
colonial history only to the extent that that history has determined the configurations and
power structures of the present […]. If colonial history […] was the history of the
imperial appropriation of the world, the history of the twentieth century has witnessed the
peoples of the world taking power and control back for themselves. Postcolonial theory is
itself a product of that dialectical process. (4)

For those critics who were determined to reframe the history of empire and move the
marginalized to the centre, proclaim their struggle, and salvage literature for the future of the
oppressed, *The Tempest* was the perfect vehicle. Bruce Erlich illustrated this stance when he
dedicated his 1977 article “Shakespeare’s Colonial Metaphor: On the Social Function of Theatre in *The Tempest,*” to “the victorious peoples of Indochina” (43). Peter Hulme and Francis Barker, Thomas Cartelli, Peter Brown, and Stephen Greenblatt all used *The Tempest* as a means to shift the centre of gravity in literary studies to center on the marginalized and the oppressed insisting that literature could not be read as separate from its context, and that part and parcel of that context were colonialism and empire.

Although she meant it as a criticism, I think Carolyn Porter has put her finger on a central element of the way this generation insisted on reframing literary studies to comply with the postcolonial politics of a significant sector of their generation:

New historicism projects a vision of history as an endless skein of cloth smocked in a complex, overall pattern by the needle and thread of Power. You need only pull the thread at one place to find it connected to another. (qtd. in Brannigan 205)

Porter here is complaining that new historicism has simply rejected one grand narrative to adopt another—“that of power.” To a certain extent I think she is correct. The most political of these literary critics were carrying on the ideological struggle being waged by other members of their generation in other aspects of life. They shared with their contemporaries an insistence not only on seeing power as a thread uniting the present with the past, but also, a commitment to pull on this thread, to reveal the hidden story of five hundred years of oppression and resistance. Either consciously or unconsciously, these critics were participating in a generational struggle to overthrow empire’s possession of the present and future by challenging the empire’s possession of the past. Certainly not all of them were as politically committed as some; Greenblatt’s influential idea that “power needs to have subversion, otherwise it would be without the opportunity to justify itself, and to make itself visible as power” (Brannigan 8) took a more
pessimistic stance to the possibility of “a new day coming” than did others. The “historical turn” in literary studies which struggled to overthrow both an acceptance of “humanist criticism which posited that literature’s primary function was to examine and reveal the intricacies of human nature” (37) and a historical perspective that privileged a Eurocentric colonial view of history was rooted in the postcolonial typological perspective of the generation coming of age in the new postcolonial era. Interestingly, the period which received the most attention in literary criticism in this struggle was the early modern period, and the most important text that served as a means to wage this struggle was Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*.

Some will argue that the fact that the major articles that claimed *The Tempest* for the postcolonial were almost all published in the 1980s contradicts my assertion that both cultural materialism and new historicism, with their postcolonial claims about the play, have their roots in the 1960s and 1970s. I would counter these objections by pointing out that even though this academic work was published in the 1980s or the early 1990s, the group of academics that produced it came of age in the 1960s and 1970s and their ideas were forged along with those of other members of their own generation in that tumultuous time. The element of the postcolonial typological perspective that is least represented in this work—the optimistic hope for change—may be a reflection of pessimism experienced by this generation, who were producing their mature work at the same time as they were witnessing both revolutionary setbacks and the rise of the right (Reagan, Thatcher) at home. Although there are still those who accept the postcolonial interpretation of *The Tempest*, today literary critics of a new generation often find it necessary to differentiate themselves from their elders, whom they see as perpetrators of “postcolonial identity politics” (Vitkus 3). However, the postcolonial *Tempest* has done its typological work. Today, even those who denounce the narrowness of their new historicist and cultural materialist elders
are busily engaged in early modern literary research examining race, religion, gender, and geography that would have been considered bizarre and irrelevant not long ago. To steal the title of Hulme and Sherman’s important essay collection, “The Tempest” and Its Travels, the play’s “travels” have remade literary studies, and it will be a while before those four hundred years will be separated from the rise and fall of colonialism and the millions who suffered and resisted that system. Postcolonial literary theory may well have found another “Genesis” if The Tempest had been unavailable, but it is difficult to think of one that would have served the purpose so very well.

The Tempest also served as “Genesis” for another part of this generational unit, a group of Third World critics coming to terms with the postwar colonial world that was beginning to unravel rapidly. As this generation grappled with their colonial history and prepared to embrace their postcolonial future, The Tempest played an invaluable role. Interestingly, it was a colonial administrator, Octave Mannoni, who introduced The Tempest into the centre of this experience. Mannoni’s psychological study of colonialism, Prospero and Caliban, became the catalyst for some of the intellectual giants of Third World anti-colonialism to develop and illustrate their understandings of the postcolonial era. Mannoni, a close associate of Lacan, was an administrator in the French colony of Madagascar and witnessed the 1948 revolt that led to a brutal response from the French army and resulted in nearly 100,000 Malagasy deaths (Bloch v). Of course, Mannoni was not the first to mine The Tempest for types that prefigured the colonial relationship—earlier in this project, I discussed the Latin American use of The Tempest trope that began in the nineteenth century—but he was one of the first to apply this trope to the postwar colonial

40 In a discussion I had with Mary Nyquist, she raised the interesting idea that the debate about the degree to which colonialism is a subtext of The Tempest is part and parcel of the cultural wars, and that recent “anti-colonial” critiques of The Tempest represent a right-wing critique of the work of postcolonial early modern scholars.

41 It is intriguing to speculate why Latin American critics of colonialism found in a foreign text such a useful vehicle to analyse their situation 50 to 100 years before Africans and Caribbeans took to The Tempest with the same spirit. To
world. Mannoni’s psychoanalytic use of *Tempest* types was not in itself controversial and his understanding of the colonialists’ mentality was not radically different from that of anti-colonialist Third World intellectuals like fellow psychoanalyst Frantz Fanon. However, with his analysis of the colonial subject—the Caliban of his analogy—he threw down the gauntlet and launched an ideological battle that would have profound impact.

According to Mannoni, the Malagasies suffered from an innate dependency complex that grew out of a culture dominated by ancestor worship. Mannoni argues that “colonization has always required the need for dependency” and goes on to insist that “not all peoples can be colonized: only those who experience this need” (85). Because the natives believe in a “cult of the dead,” they do not experience fatherlessness the way Westerners do and thus do not “grow up.” This means they seek out and are comfortable with the colonialist as a father-figure. Mannoni argues that the Malagasies revolted not because they resent being colonized; they revolted because they felt abandoned by their former protectors whose weaknesses have been exposed by the war and inept attempts at liberalization. In their “efforts to escape the horrors of abandonment the Malagasies endeavoured to re-establish a typical dependence system [a return to tradition and a national government] capable of satisfying their deepest needs” (134).

Fanon devotes an entire chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* to an examination of *Prospero and Caliban*. He does not quarrel with Mannoni’s characterization of pathological nature of the colonial relationship; what he quarrels with is Mannoni’s identification of the innate roots of this pathology. He argues that the Malagasies’ dependency complex has nothing to do with Malgasy cultures and everything to do with the racist system of colonialism. Mannoni’s

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me this response affirms the postcolonial typological potential of the play and may reflect that an element of its typological appeal is its relevance to nation-building, a major preoccupation in early modern England, nineteenth-century Latin America and in the post–Second World War era.
introduction of *Tempest* typology into this debate, and Fanon’s response, established *The Tempest* as a powerful typological trope that provided the environment for Third World intellectuals to develop their understanding of the times they found themselves in. Aimé Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955), Ndabaningi Sithole’s *African Nationalism* (1959)\(^2\), George Lamming’s *Pleasures of Exile* (1960), John Pepper Clarke’s study of African Literature, *The Example of Shakespeare* (1970), Roberto Fernández Retamar’s “Caliban” (1971) Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Homecoming* (1972), Fernando Henriques’ *Children of Caliban: Miscegenation* (1974), and Edward Kamau Brathwaite’s “Caliban, Ariel, and Unprospero in the Conflict of Creolization: A Study of the Slave Revolt in Jamaica in 1831–32” (1977) all adopt, to one degree or another, *Tempest* postcolonial typology as a framework, thus establishing a tradition with tremendous staying power. Third World intellectuals, particularly those who are part of the 1960s generational unit, continue to frame their research within a *Tempest* matrix, as the following studies attest: Housten A. Baker, Jr.’s “Caliban’s Triple Play” (1986), Abena P. A. Busia’s “Silencing Sycorax” (1989), Anthony Bogues’ *Caliban’s Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C.L.R. James* (1997), Consuelo López Springfield’s collection *Daughter’s of Caliban: Caribbean Women in the Twentieth Century* (1997), Lemuel A. Johnson’s *Shakespeare in Africa* (1998), Paget Henry’s *Caliban’s Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (2000), James W. Coleman’s *Black Male Fiction and the Legacy of Caliban* (2001), May Joseph’s “Sycorax Mythology” (2002), and James Richardson’s “A Thing Most Brutish: The Calibanization of the African American Male” (2007). *The Tempest*’s role as the genesis of postcolonial thought has been felt not only by Western academics; its power has also influenced a generation of intellectuals with roots in the Third World.

\(^2\) Chantal Zabus notes that Sithole “was the first Black African writer to identify Caliban with Black Africans” (30).
As useful as *The Tempest* has been for the development of theory, the play’s typological power is displayed most clearly in the field of creative writing. Although the groundbreaking work of critics that argue that postcolonial creative writers, by appropriating the canonical works like *The Tempest*, are “writing back to the empire” from the margins, I do not think this model best explains *The Tempest*’s power as impetus for explorations of the colonial/postcolonial experience. Certainly, no one can deny the empowering satisfaction of turning one of the empire’s ideological weapons such as *The Tempest* back on the empire itself; but I think the power of the typological approach is in its act of affirmation of truth rather than one of counter-attack, an offensive act rather than a defensive one. Just as a generation of critics used the play to reveal that colonial oppression and resistance existed at the centre of over four hundred years of history, a generation of African and West Indian creative writers found in *The Tempest* an affirmation that their experience and that of their ancestors existed not at the margins but at the very centre and origins of empire and its culture. Just as biblical exegetes found concealed in the heart of the Old Testament the story revealed in the New, postcolonial creative writers reframed and reworked *The Tempest* to reveal the reality of the colonial experience concealed for generations in Shakespeare’s play. The use of the postcolonial typological tool varied from writer to writer and from text to text, and even within a single text, but essentially it took and continues to take three forms: allusion to a type that confirms and situates the antitype; reframing of the text to expose characters and events that are obscured; and, finally, like the little boy in the *Emperor’s New Clothes* or the detective in “The Purloined Letter,” pointing to the truth hiding in plain sight.

The power of *The Tempest* as postcolonial typological tool is irrefutable: there is not one issue that is important to postcolonial writers that has not been explored through the types of *The Tempest*. Within the scope of this project it is impossible to address the myriad ways postcolonial
writers (and poets) have found concealed in *The Tempest* their own stories in all their complexities. However, a brief review of the postcolonial concerns addressed through an exploration of *The Tempest* will illustrate the complex matrix that the play provides and a context for a more in-depth discussion of particular seminal and influential examples of this phenomenon:

- Relationship between colonizer and colonized (Prospero/Caliban; Prospero/Ariel).
- Nature of colonizers’ power (Prospero’s magic).
- Nature of colonial subjects’ power and traditions (e.g. *Négritude* movement, African spiritualism, black nationalism; Sycorax’s magic, magic of the island).
- Effect of colonialism on colonizer (Prospero’s isolation, Prospero’s complex, dependency on power relationships).
- Role of revolutionary violence and anger for colonized (Caliban’s response to Prospero).
- Subaltern false consciousness (Caliban’s attitude to Trinculo and Stefano).
- The instability of alliances between the oppressed of the Third World and the proletariat of the colonial/imperialist powers (Caliban/Trinculo and Stefano).
- Role of the colonial intellectual and colonial acting as manager for colonialist (Ariel).
- Class contradictions within colonized world (Ariel/Caliban).
- Strategic and philosophical questions about resistance to oppression: use and nature of violent and non-violent methods of struggle (Ariel / Caliban).
- Class contradictions within heart of empire (class within Antonio’s party).
- Language debate (Caliban: “you taught me language”).
- Ambiguous position of the colonizers’ women (Miranda is both privileged as Prospero’s daughter and powerless / denied knowledge).
• Contradictions among colonial powers (Prospero, Antonio etc.)
• Sexual violence as a response to colonial oppression (Caliban’s attempted rape of Miranda).
• Sexual relationships between white woman/ racialized man (Miranda/Caliban).
• Generally the effect of colonialism/imperialism on sexual relationships (Miranda / Caliban, Miranda / Prospero, Claribel / King of Tunis, Ferdinand / Miranda).
• The “Intimate Enemy” nature of colonial relations (Tempest’s constructed family on the island provides perfect vehicle to explore this).
• The question “can the subalterns speak?” The colonized woman is the only absent colonial player in The Tempest. However, Sycorax’s glaring absence hangs over the play. According to Spivak, “[t]here is no space from which the sexed subaltern can speak” (103). Rather, Sycorax acts as an “aporia” or “blind-spot” that acknowledges her but does not attempt to speak for her. According to Young, Spivak argues critics should not attempt to “speak for lost consciousness [of the subaltern woman] that cannot be recovered, a paternalistic activity at best, [but they] can point to the place of woman’s disappearance as an aporia, a blind-spot where understanding and knowledge is blocked” (Young, White 207). Of course some writers answer Spivak “yes” and do give Sycorax voice.
• The absence of Miranda’s mother also provides “aporia” for writers to explore the nature of gender oppression in context of empire.

The Tempest also provides a vehicle for postcolonial writers to examine within a postcolonial context the “idealist” themes explored in The Tempest. Traditionally the play has been interpreted as a commentary on the creative process, romance, forgiveness, and renunciation.
of magic power. The approach of most critics to *The Tempest* has tended to set the postcolonial interpretation of the play in opposition to the “idealist” traditional interpretation. Barker, Hulme and Cartelli come close to arguing that to see *The Tempest* as anything but a play about colonialism is to side with the empire against the oppressed, whereas Meredith Anne Skura contends that to see *The Tempest* as enacting colonialism takes “a unique work of art and flattens it into one more example of the master plot— or master ploy— in colonialist discourse” (51).

Yet many postcolonial writers have refused to accept this binary and find in *The Tempest* an ideal vehicle to explore the following themes within a postcolonial context:

- Creativity and role of the artist. Lamming points out that Prospero’s determination to rule people and to organize reality “is directly related to that creative will to conquer the absolute: a will which finds its most perfect vessel in the infinitely expanding powers of transformation that characterize the timeless frontiers of the Poetic Vision” (*Pleasures of Exile* 107).

- Romance. A good example is Namjoshi’s *Snapshots of Caliban*; also *Water with Berries* (the meeting of Miranda and Caliban types on the heath).

- Forgiveness/reconciliation. Namjoshi, *Burger’s Daughter, A Tempest* (Caliban and Prospero are left together at the end on the island to work something out).

How this typology works:

- Characters and plot are appropriated and reframed—for example, *A Tempest, Indigo*.

- Parts of plot and characters (sometimes with original names, sometimes new names) are appropriated into newly created narrative—for example, *Figures of Enchantment, No Telephone to Heaven, Blood Relations, Grain of Wheat*.

- Fleeting references to the play help create setting and context—for example, *Annie John,*
The Diviners.

• Use of names as types or emblems bring a host of allusions to provide depth and meaning (Caliban and Miranda are especially used in this way). This works especially well in poetry (Lemuel Johnson and Brathwaite), but also in novels (The Measure of Miranda, The Diviners).

• “What happens next”—and “what happened before”—the play is used as prequel and sequel to investigate postcolonial experience (Water with Berries, Indigo, Prospero’s Daughter).

It is beyond the scope of this project to examine all the different texts and all the different ways postcolonial writers have used a postcolonial typological approach to The Tempest to capture a vision of postcolonial experience. In order to consider just how versatile and useful a tool postcolonial typological explorations of The Tempest are for postcolonial creative writers, I will first concentrate on three seminal postcolonial works written by three of the most influential postcolonial writers: Aimé Césaire’s play, A Tempest (1969), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s novel A Grain of Wheat (1967), and George Lamming’s novel Water with Berries (1970). I have chosen these three from the many possibilities because, although all three use Shakespeare’s play as their matrix, the way the play is used in each text is very different, illustrating the various ways postcolonial typology can manifest itself.

In a particularly striking example of postcolonial typology, George Lamming insists that Shakespeare’s Tempest is “prophetic of a political future which is our present” (Pleasures 13) and that “Caliban’s history—for he has a most turbulent history—belongs entirely to the future” (107). Césaire captures the spirit that Lamming is identifying as he reframes the play to reveal the essence of colonialism, the forces that resist it, and the nature of the struggle for liberation. A Tempest self-consciously adopts The Tempest intact—the plot, the characters and even some of
the lines—and reframes Shakespeare’s vision to expose, emphasize, and elaborate the colonial possibilities of the play. According to critic Pier Paolo Frassinelli, Césaire initially planned simply to translate the play into French for an international cultural festival in Hammameth, Tunisia, in 1969 (59). However, the act of translation became an act of reclamation. In his article “The Tempest Revisted in Martinique: Aimé Césaire’s Shakespeare,” Joseph Khoury characterizes *A Tempest* as a “kind of scrubbing cloth with which to clean up the layers of ideology imposed on *The Tempest*” (25), layers that obscure the truth of history. According to Césaire, “[d]emystified, *The Tempest* is essentially about the master-slave relation, a relation that is still alive and which, in my opinion, explains a good deal of history: in particular colonial history” (qtd. in Frassinelli 61).

At the very beginning of *A Tempest*, in the list of characters, the stage is clearly set for the postcolonial typological act of reframing. On the first page, after the heading “Characters,” Césaire announces “as in Shakespeare” with this caveat: “two alterations: Ariel, a mulatto slave; Caliban, a black slave” and “[a]n addition: Eshu, a black devil-god.” And this is essentially Césaire’s approach to the whole of *A Tempest*: he has given us Shakespeare with a little alteration and a few additions and, in this way, reveals the story which a generation found hidden—sometimes in plain sight and other times obscured—in *The Tempest*.

The very title of Shakespeare’s *Tempest* sets the stage for instability, and in the first scene the disorder and confusion on the ship and the portrayal of ineffectual aristocrats depending for their lives on the competence of irreverent subordinates need little alteration to set Césaire’s scene for his exploration of the nature of colonialism. Just as in the Shakespeare play, in the next scene we learn that Prospero’s magic has created the storm, but this Prospero is an anxious, pompous old man, insecure in his power, befuddled by unruly slaves, uncertain about how best to deal with old enemies, and irritated by his chattering daughter. During the course of the play,
Césaire’s Prospero will, bit by bit, find his unstable power slip away until he is alone on the island listening to Caliban’s distant voice proclaiming his freedom. Césaire certainly reframes Shakespeare’s Prospero to emphasize his role as insecure ruler of this island colony; and in the process he does not need to invent his own Prospero—he simply needs to emphasize qualities and add characteristics that create a new way of looking at the Prospero we already know from Shakespeare.

Prospero’s power in The Tempest, while impressive, is not absolute. As Stephen Orgel points out in his Introduction to the Oxford edition, “a serene sense of power and control” is often coupled with deep anxiety and reminders of the limits of his power (15). He can force Caliban and Ariel to do his bidding but he cannot force them to do it willingly; he can manipulate his brother but not compel repentance; and, in the end, he must give up his power if he is to return to Milan. He neurotically attempts to control his past by revisiting his failures in attempts to gain control. As Orgel notes, Prospero’s monologue revising his past “to gain control of it” is the first in a series of repetitions:

He will go on to restage his usurpation through the conspiracy of Antonio and Sebastian, to see in Caliban’s attempt to kill him a version of his brother’s murderous intentions, to find Caliban in Ferdinand and Antonio in Caliban. (15)

Prospero’s magic, the source of his power, is also the cause of his initial loss of power in Milan and, as he becomes absorbed in the imaginary world of the masque, of his weak response to the inept coup launched by Caliban and his new friends. Shakespeare’s Prospero is not as far from Césaire’s insecure and quarrelsome despot as traditional interpretations might suggest.

Essentially what Césaire has done to reveal his colonialist Prospero is first to absorb the ambiguities and instability in Shakespeare’s play and then shift the traditional interpretive focus of the play—what Jonathan Bate has called the “Prosperian” interpretation (Genius 248)—to
place Caliban at the centre. This, according to Joseph Khoury, invites us to re-read Shakespeare’s text, to see that in fact it is not a straightforward play that neatly irons out the opposition between nature and nurture, art and nature, or civilization and savagery. In effect, Césaire’s intertextual mechanism affirms his belief that Shakespeare’s play is an anti-colonial text co-opted by the colonizers as a means by which to justify the exploitation of the other. (25)

I am not sure I agree that we can claim Shakespeare as a proto-postcolonialist, but certainly Césaire and his fellow postcolonialists were determined to scrub away the obscuring “layers of ideology” and retrieve The Tempest as witness to over four hundred years of oppression and resistance.

By placing Caliban squarely in the middle of the play, Césaire accomplishes this shift, illuminating Caliban’s pivotal role. As Lamming points out:

Caliban is [...] the occasion to which every situation, within the context of the Tempest must be related. No Caliban no Prospero! No Prospero no Miranda! No Miranda no marriage! And no Marriage no Tempest! He confronts Prospero as a possibility; a challenge; and a defeat. (Pleasures 108)

To expose Prospero as “the complete totalitarian,” reveal Caliban as “a rebel— the positive hero in a Hegelian sense,” and assert that “the slave is always more important than his master—for it is the slave who makes history” (Césaire qtd. in Belhassen 176), Césaire makes a few alterations and additions. These few changes effectively claim The Tempest as a type for his own colonial/postcolonial world, and claim Caliban as a type of the new postcolonial man.

In Césaire’s hands, The Tempest becomes a tool of agitation and propaganda meant to educate the new generation about the nature of the enemy they face, the tools they have in their struggle, and the best way forward. Working with Shakespeare’s template, Césaire refra...
iconic exchanges between Prospero and his two subjects in order to lay out his political vision. Césaire’s Caliban, like Shakespeare’s, is full of anger and defiance, but this Caliban’s anger and defiance are armed with a political analysis. For both Calibans, language is central, but Césaire’s Caliban has not forgotten his mother tongue and, although he too knows how to curse, he knows how to say much more. In the first interaction between Prospero and Caliban we see how the tables are turning. Caliban greets Prospero with a defiant “Uhuru!” and Prospero responds with a defensive and quarrelsome response: “Mumbling your language again . . . a simple ‘hello’ wouldn’t kill you” (11). Caliban’s African greeting interjects profound implications into the Tempest matrix. Caliban’s rebellion is no longer an individual struggle; by evoking the Kiswahili word for freedom, a word closely associated with the Kenyan Mau Mau Movement, Caliban becomes one of Césaire heroes of Nègritude, a political and aesthetic movement founded by Césaire and his fellow poet and politician Léopold Senghor in the 1930s. This francophone movement that continued to have influence through the decades prefigured the black power movement that emerged out of the American civil rights movement in the 1960s. Nègritude emphasized a black African identity shared by all black people. According to Césaire, Nègritude “is the affirmation that one is black and proud of it [. . .] that there is a solidarity between all blacks [. . .] that we are suspended together in space” (qtd. in Almquist 588). In an interview in 1967, Césaire reminisced about the early days of the Nègritude movement when the way to liberation was often through becoming a “Frenchman with a black skin”:

[Nègritude] was really a resistance to the politics of assimilation. Until that time, until my generation, the French and English— but especially the French— had followed the

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43 The Mau Mau, seen by progressive Africans as a national freedom movement, was often portrayed in the popular Western press as a violent terrorist organization made up of savages. The word uhuru, therefore, signals more than a nod to African roots but also an affinity with the most radical and violent elements of the anti-colonial movement. See Steve Almquist’s article “Not Quite the Gabbling of ‘A Thing Most Brutish’: Caliban’s Kiswahili in Aimé Césaire’s A Tempest” for a fuller discussion of this.
politics of assimilation unrestrainedly. We didn’t know what Africa was. [. . .] Our struggle was a struggle against alienation. That struggle gave birth to Negritude.[. . .] That’s when we adopted the word nègre, as a term of defiance. It was a defiant name. To some extent it was a reaction of enraged youth [. . .]. We found a violent affirmation in the words nègre and Négritude. (“Interview” 75)

Caliban’s greeting, along with his references to the African god Sango, the disruptive intervention of the trickster god Eshu in the masque, and his adoption of the slogan of the American black power movement, “Freedom Now,” all link Caliban’s story with the politics of both the African and Afro-American radical tradition. His rejection of the name “Caliban,” the name given to him by his slave-master “in hatred,” and his adoption of the name X, “like a man without a name. Or to be more precise, a man whose name has been stolen” (13), draws images of the threatening leader of the American Black Muslims, Malcolm X, into the Tempest matrix.

What is interesting about the topical references that Césaire weaves into his Tempest is how seamlessly he is able to introduce these very current political trends into this early-modern play. Shakespeare provides all the ingredients—Césaire simply introduces specifics into the general elements already in the play. Caliban’s defiant response to Prospero (“A south-west blow on ye and blister you all o’er”), his anger at the theft of his land (“This island’s mine by Sycorax my mother”), his understanding of Prospero’s hypocrisy (“When thou cam’st first, / Thou strok’st me”), his embrace of his super-masculinity (“O ho, O ho! Would’t had been done! [. . .] I had peopled else / This isle with Calibans), as well as Prospero’s imposition of his language (“You taught me language, and my profit on’t / Is I know how to curse”), all provide the raw ingredients for Césaire’s polemic. And the political details that Césaire ascribes to these elements provide a context that casts a political light on other aspects of the play. There is no need to point out explicitly that Prospero’s occupation of the island mirrors colonialism, that Caliban’s unstable
and inconsistent allies are reminiscent of an opportunist and inconsistent European and American left,\(^{44}\) that Gonzalo’s idealistic ramblings evoke the idealism of “liberal” colonialists like Mannoni, or that the significance of magic in both *The Tempest* and *A Tempest* is all about power. Césaire’s reframing makes all the pieces of this political psychodrama fall into place.

Shakespeare’s use of magic to express the language of power was especially auspicious for Césaire. It not only allowed him to emphasize the deceptive but essentially empty power of the colonial masters and the organic potential of the anti-colonial revolution; it also allows him to explore the central role of African culture in black revolutionary consciousness. Sycorax’s magic, apparently defeated in *The Tempest*, re-emerges in *A Tempest*, this time in the super-masculine trickster god Eshu, who “can whip you with his dick” (48), reflecting the merger of the spirit of mother Africa with the growing masculine national imperative to power. For Césaire, black politics must incorporate African spiritualism along with Marx, and Sycorax’s magic, transformed and reborn with masculine defiance, becomes the perfect vehicle to express this consciousness. The one major addition that Césaire makes to Shakespeare’s play is a new scene where Ariel and Caliban engage in a political debate, Ariel espousing Martin Luther King’s strategy of non-violence whereas Caliban articulates the militant politics associated with the Black Panthers and the revolutionary wing of the civil rights movement. The two *Tempests* act like book-ends containing and shaping more than four hundred years of history and joining two moments when colonialism on the way up meets colonialism on the way down. The first book-end provides the type needed by Césaire to create his antitype, his vision of the present and the future; and, in the tradition of so many biblical exegetes, he uses typology to reveal a story, this one of oppression and resistance that is so often hidden in history.

Even Shakespeare’s ending, which sees Prospero reconciled with his allies, giving up his

\(^{44}\) In 1956, Césaire resigned from the French Communist Party because of the Party’s weak position on colonialism and the “negro question.”
magic and planning to return home while Caliban is driven off stage by dogs, lends itself well to Césaire’s reframing. Césaire ends his Tempest with one of his few direct quotations from The Tempest. Caliban’s chant of “Freedom, high-day!” (2.2.181) is moved and becomes the final words in the play, “FREEDOM HY-DAY, FREEDOM HY-DAY” (68). The words are the same but the shift makes all the difference. In The Tempest, Caliban’s chant contains all of Caliban’s defiant hopes for liberation, but these hopes depend on false friends and unstable allies. Césaire’s Caliban has learned his lesson; he no longer looks to others for his liberation and takes control of his own destiny. It is Prospero now who is dependent and alone. A Tempest adds a postscript to The Tempest. Shakespeare’s play ends with Prospero’s plea to be set free from “this bare island” by the “indulgence” of his audience. The assumption has always been that the audience sends Prospero on his way back to Milan. The postcolonial audience is not ready to let him go, nor is their Prospero really ready to leave. As S. Belhassen points out in his article “Aimé Césaire’s A Tempest,” which is based on his interview with Césaire:

According to Césaire, such a solution smacks of a “fairy-tale.” Césaire believes that Prospero would no longer be able to leave the island over which he had exerted so much control for more than twelve years. He would have become a prisoner of his own “creation,” Caliban. So, at the last moment in the new play, Prospero decides to remain on the island with Caliban. Why? [ . . . ] “Prospero can no more live apart from Caliban than whites and blacks can exist independently in today’s world,” says Césaire. [ . . . ] There can be neither pardon on Prospero’s part nor final submission on Caliban’s: one has dominated the world around him, and the other will some day destroy his exploiter. (177) Prospero, who seems so powerful in The Tempest, is revealed as a “paper tiger” who is helpless without the physical support and emotional gratification he receives from his slave Caliban. As Lamming observes, “Caliban haunts [Prospero] in a way that is almost too deep and too intimate
to communicate” (*Pleasures* 99). Alone, clinging to what once was his kingdom, Prospero delivers a final speech which exposes his dependency:

But it’s cold. Odd how the climate’s changed. Cold on this island … Have to think about making a fire… Well, Caliban, old fellow, it’s just us two now, here on the island…only you and me. You and me. You-me… me-you! What in the hell is he up to? (*Shouting*)

Caliban! (75)

We are left with an “aged and weary” Prospero alone listening to Caliban’s triumphant cry of freedom in the distance.

George Lamming’s typological approach to *The Tempest* is quite different from Césaire’s. Whereas Césaire reframes *The Tempest* to infuse it with postcolonial politics, Lamming uses the play to emphasize the postcolonial political context of his psychological novel, *Water with Berries*. Like Césaire, Lamming explicitly mines *The Tempest* for types, but the relationship between this antitype (his novel *Water with Berries*) and its type is much more complex than Césaire’s rewriting of *The Tempest*. Shakespeare’s *Tempest* provides a past for Lamming’s cast of London characters, all of whom in one way or another are antitypes gesturing back to Caliban, Prospero, Ariel and Miranda. The play also provides a context for the legacy of exploitation that haunts these characters and the new stifling form of oppression that faces them in the emerging postcolonial era. Lamming takes *The Tempest*, fills in gaps, shifts, alters and then elaborates to continue the plot. For every type, Lamming creates multiple antitypes: there are three Calibans, three Prosperos (one a woman) and at least three Mirandas. Sometimes the antitypes acknowledge their types explicitly, sometimes more subtly, and in one dramatic instance, the antitype’s type is concealed until the very end when the benevolent old dowager is revealed as the new face of a ruthless postcolonial Prospero. With his typological use of *The Tempest*, Lamming is able to imbue his characters and the choices they make with historical resonance and, in this
way, embeds within his story of the postcolonial experience almost four hundred years of oppression and resistance. Shakespeare becomes his co-writer as we readers bring the two *Tempest* stories together to consider how one story invests meaning in the other, how Lamming’s story reveals and emphasizes dynamics inherent in *The Tempest*, and how *The Tempest* in turn invests layers of meaning in the characters and events of *Water with Berries*.

In a 1971 interview with David Scott, George Lamming characterized himself as “a kind of evangelist . . . a preacher of some kind . . . bringing a message” (198). *Water with Berries* takes its own specific place in Lamming’s delivery of that message through his five novels and one book of essays in what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o has called Lamming’s “grand epic of the decolonization process” (“In the Name” 141). The message delivered in this novel is a dark one: the struggle to defeat colonialism is complex and difficult, and “the colonial experience is a live experience in the consciousness of these people. [. . .] The experience is a continuing psychic experience that has to be dealt with and will have to be dealt with long after the actual colonial situation formally ‘ends’” (Lamming qtd. in Hulme “Profit” 120). All the Calibans, Mirandas, and Prosperos in this novel are damaged survivors of colonialism carrying the scars and open wounds of their experience into a postcolonial era where new names and new formations often mask the same old power dynamics and relationships. Lamming’s implication, as Peter Hulme points out, is that “the psychic experience of colonialism is as present in postcolonial culture as the word colonialism is in the term postcolonial” (121).

While the psychic struggle to break colonialism’s “mind forg’d manacles” is the central preoccupation of *Water with Berries*, the typological power of *The Tempest* is mobilized to provide a political context to that psychological struggle. There is not a lot of explicit politics in *Water with Berries*. We do learn that the central character, Teeton, participated in a “minor revolt” in his birthplace, the Caribbean island of San Cristobel, that he deserted his comrades after the
failure of this revolt and escaped to England, and that after seven years he and the other members of a secret organization called “the Gathering” plan to return to San Cristobel and launch an insurrection. But all this information is transferred to us in fragments and, just like the disciplined cadres of the Gathering, we are given our political information on a “need-to-know” basis only. The plans of the Gathering provide a frame for the narrative—all the action of the novel takes place in the two weeks between the decision to return to San Cristobal and the date of that planned return—but the Gathering’s actual plans, participants, and ideology remain firmly in the background while the psychological struggle and the mayhem it creates dominate every aspect of the novel. It is *The Tempest* that provides a political prequel to the novel and sets in context Teeton, Roger and Derek’s Calibanistic struggle to be free.

From the moment a reader picks up the novel *The Tempest* type is mobilized. The title comes from Caliban’s famous confrontation with Prospero where he accuses his master of deviously using kindness to disarm him and steal his island birthright:

This island’s mine by Sycorax my mother,

Which thou tak’st from me. When thou cam’st first,

Thou strok’st me and made much of me; wouldst give me

Water with berries in’t [ . . . ]

[ . . . ] and then I loved thee, . . . (1.2.331–36)

Lamming signals that this episode of his epic will explore the “benevolent” face of colonialism. In another interesting example of colonialism on the way up meeting colonialism on the down, Shakespeare’s Caliban in 1611 is initially conquered by kindness just as Lamming’s Calibans in 1970, as they emerge from their origins as colonial subjects, are seduced by the initial embrace of “mother” England. The empire at its birth and demise may be weak, and naked power may not be as available as it will become or once was, but the empire finds effective means of control none
the less. Even though these three friends have firsthand experience of colonial oppression, conditioned by their colonial education, they accept the myth of freedom and inclusivity offered by Britain. *Water with Berries* traces Caliban’s discovery of colonialism’s true nature yet again—this time in a different era and in a different context. As Lamming observed in a 1973 interview in the journal *Black World*:

> What is happening here is that I am in a way attempting to reverse the journeys. In Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, it was Prospero in the role of visitor to Caliban’s island. In *Water with Berries*, it’s reversed. The three characters really represent three aspects of Caliban making his journey to Prospero’s ancestral home [. . .]. They then discovered the reality of Prospero’s home—not from a distance, not filtered through Prospero’s explanation or record of his home, but through their own immediate and direct experience. (qtd. in Kent 89)

In their reverse journey, Derek the actor, Roger the musician and Teeton the artist, like Caliban, are first made much of. Derek is chosen to play Othello at Stratford, and his two companions are hired to compose music and design sets for the production: “These were halcyon days. Derek was paraded like a hit song with Roger and Teeton as his chorus. Stratford was like a dream that would never end” (*Water* 75). And the dream certainly does end. Roger, the gifted composer, is reduced to writing jingles, and Derek can find acting work only as a corpse. Teeton’s relative success as a painter brings him no satisfaction, as he obsessively prepares to leave the refuge of his London life and return to face the demons that wait for him at home in San Cristobal. What makes Teeton’s task most difficult is his concern about leaving his landlady, the Old Dowager, Mrs. Gore-Brittain, who shelters and protects him: “Teeton lives as a tenant in her house, which is only another way of describing how he and people like him live in that country” (Lamming qtd. in Kent 91).
At first the relationship between Teeton and his benefactor seems mutually nurturing but, as the narrative develops, it becomes clearer and clearer that the Old Dowager is Prospero, hiding behind the face of maternal kindness. This is a world that values Derek, Roger and Teeton as curious objects to be used and then discarded once their novelty is lost. To emphasize this response, Lamming once again turns to *The Tempest*. In the midst of a paparazzi-like pursuit of Teeton, a reporter quotes Trinculo’s musings on the benefits of taking Caliban back home: “Were I in England now, as once I was [. . .] [t]here would this monster make a man. [. . .] Where they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian” (160). More than four hundred years later Caliban has finally gotten to England, and, as Trinculo predicted, his trials and tribulations produce “a piece of silver” (2.2.29), this time for tabloid newspapers.

As Helen Tiffin points out “[f]or Lamming, unless individuals are truly freed from the sinister legacies of slavery and colonialism, political freedom is a Pyrrhic victory” (“Freedom” 90). The legacy is the pathological dependency reinforced by colonialism’s maternal nurturing face: Prospero’s postcolonial antitype, the Old Dowager. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o observes:

Lamming works in Symbols. *Water With Berries* [. . .] is dealing with the colonially-nurtured image of the colonizing country, Prospero’s country, as mother: the Mother Country. The clue to the author’s symbolic intentions in *Water*, then, lies in the Old Dowager’s name: Mrs. Gore-Brittain. Teeton is breaking the psychological contract with the colonizers’ country. His independence is dependent on his cutting himself loose from the dependency complex implied in the colony’s accepting the colonizer’s view of himself as the Mother. (“In the Name” 139)

Shakespeare’s Caliban, with his defiance, rage and masculine arrogance, provides a perfect type for the three postcolonial Calibans. Roger, Derek and Teeton, motivated by the same anger and
violent rage that incites Caliban to curse his master and threaten rape and murder, go about
shattering the contract that has ensured their dependent state in a parade of horrors marked by
rape, arson, suicide and murder. For Lamming and so many of his generation, freedom was not
something won through logic and reason:

That horror and that brutality have a price, which has to be paid by the man who inflicted
it—just as the man who suffered it has to find a way of exorcising that demon. It seems to
me that there is almost a therapeutic need for a certain kind of violence in the breaking.
There cannot be a parting of the ways. There has to be a smashing. (qtd. in Kent 91)
And smashing is certainly what Lamming’s Calibans do.

*Water with Berries* is not a novel filled with revolutionary optimism. As Helen Tiffin
observes, “Lamming seems to find the past shackling the future in a repetitive cycle, empty of
any possibility of resurrection” (“Tyranny” 51). While it is true that this “fraught meditation on
*The Tempest*” (“Profit,” Hulme 124) hardly promises imminent liberation—the last chapter lets
us know that the three Calibans are all in jail awaiting trial, two of them for murder—Caliban’s
antitypes do not end the novel’s journey in the same place as they began.45 As futile and self-
destructive as their actions may be, they have begun the task of “smashing” the chains of their
dependence. Teeton and his Gathering comrades have learned a new definition of “this island’s
mine.” Their relationship to the “motherland” has been altered for ever. As Lamming explains,
“[t]hey are not going to return. What they will have to deal with now is the new reality in the
experience—that is, the world— the increasing world of Blacks in England, rather than what they
propose to do about the world on the island” (qtd.in Kent 95).

45 The last chapter of *Water with Berries*, which consists of four sentences outlining the fate of the three Calibans,
was omitted from the American edition, but cited by Peter Hulme (“Profit” 134). According to Lamming, its
omission is an oversight (Paquet 98 n.17). It is an unfortunate one, and in this project I worked with the American
edition and am grateful to Hulme and Paquet for providing the last chapter, which has a profound effect on the novel
as a whole.
As bleak as Water with Berries’ world is, we are left with a hint that future reconciliation is not impossible. Like almost all of Lamming’s work, this novel opens up a place for a version of Haiti’s “Ceremony of Souls.” In his interview with George Kent, Lamming discusses the impact of witnessing this ceremony in the late fifties, and why it emerges as a persistent motif in his work:

It’s a ceremony in which the dead returned to speak to the living about important events in their lives [. . .] and I interpret it as an example of the themes of redemption, the themes of coming to terms with the past. [. . .] It’s very central to me in the sense that the world in which one lives is not just inhabited by the living. It is a world which is also the creation of the dead. And any architecture of the future cannot really take place without that continuing dialogue between the living and the dead. I think that theme will always be running through my books. (94)

This novel’s “Ceremony of Souls” occurs at the heart of the novel in a nocturnal encounter between Teeton and Myra, one of the novel’s Mirandas. Myra is a double victim, abused by her father, Prospero, an alien both in San Cristobal and in Great Britain, and victim of terrible sexual violation at the hands of Prospero’s servants during the island’s uprising. According to Lamming, the “rage inflicted on her is really that intended for Prospero, for she cannot in the minds of Prospero’s victims be separated from his privilege and his history” (91). Myra, a wounded shell who haunts the heath, offers syphilitic sex to any man who passes by. It is so dark that Myra and Teeton are unable see each other and they never touch or learn each other’s names, but their anonymous interactions become a mutual vehicle for each of them to begin a dialogue with the past. Teeton becomes Myra’s means to bear witness to the horror of her abuse and, with Myra, he finds “a presence which had been waiting to be known” bringing him a “curious solace” (Water 118–9). In Forster-like moments of connection, they each begin their own “Ceremony of Souls”
that may in the future bring some form of redemption and reconciliation.

In response to George Kent’s suggestion that one of his other novels ends in “inevitable failure,” Lamming responded:

No, I wouldn’t say “inevitable failure.” I would say that what we have there is what occurs in all my previous books—what I call “the open end.” There is really no closing of the drama. This experience will be a creative legacy, the soil of some other movement in life. (88)

*Water with Berries* seems to end in failure but the promise is there, as in Lamming’s other works, for it to prefigure “some other movement in life.” Peter Hulme suggests that the novel itself can be seen as a Ceremony of Souls:

[I]t serves as a reminder, if any such is necessary, that Britain too is a postcolonial country and that the heritage of colonialism is not renounced quite so easily as Prospero’s example at the end of *The Tempest* might suggest. The souls of the colonial dead are not yet at peace. (“Profit” 135)

The typological connections between Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s novel *A Grain of Wheat* and *The Tempest* are nowhere as pervasive as in the two texts cited above. There is only one example in this novel of a specific allusion to Shakespeare’s play: the British colonial administrator John Thompson’s adoption of the persona of Prospero to explain his understanding of the role and mission of the British Empire. However, by bringing this one explicit allusion to *The Tempest*, Ngũgĩ does what so many writers do with biblical typology: he uses a name to evoke a powerful narrative and complexity that can then provide an unspoken, or rather an unwritten, context and history that haunts the text. One only has to think of Toni Morrison, John Steinbeck or William Faulkner and their typological use of biblical names to complicate and enrich their work to remember how useful a tool even the briefest allusion to biblical typology can be for creative
For Ngũgĩ, the role of the writer, particularly the African writer, is clear: he should act as “the conscience of the nation” (qtd. in Sicherman 299). In his book of critical essays, *Homecoming*, Ngũgĩ explains that he “wants to talk about the past as a way of talking about the present [. . .]. For what has been, especially for the vast majority of submerged, exploited masses in Africa, Asia and Black America, is intimately bound up with what might be: our vision of the future, of diverse possibilities of life and human potential, has roots in our experience of the past” (39). A committed Marxist activist—he spent a year in a Kenyan prison for his beliefs and much of his adult life in political exile—Ngũgĩ argues that all writing is political. The writer must choose what “angle of vision” to use, the angle of the “possessing classes” or that of “the dispossessed and therefore struggling classes” (*Barrel* 59). Influenced by Fanon and Mao, Ngũgĩ embraces his role as an integral part of the struggle for liberation. Ngũgĩ’s pen is not mightier than the sword; it is rather a formidable ally. According to Ngũgĩ, “the distance between the barrel of a gun and the point of a pen is very small: what’s fought out at pen-point is often resolved at gunpoint” (*Barrel* 9). *A Grain of Wheat* situates the fight in one small village as it evaluates the past in light of the coming of *Uhuru*, (independence from Britain) and uses this village “as a guide for the whole African struggle for identity” (Ngũgĩ qtd. in Sander 52). Ngũgĩ’s task in the novel is first to reveal the nature of the long history of struggle against colonialism and the leading role of the Mau Mau in that struggle. His second, and equally important, task is to warn that independence from Great Britain does not equal freedom and that the class struggle for real freedom continues into the postcolonial (or neocolonial) era.

Typology is a central tool in Ngũgĩ’s determination to engage in what Walter Benjamin calls “the fight for the oppressed past” (qtd. in Williams 180), and *The Tempest* is only one

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46 Among the many excellent explorations of the role of Ngũgĩ’s politics in his writing, Oliver Lovesey’s 2000 Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o is a useful study of Ngũgĩ’s work, placing it in a political context.
element in his typological approach. His major typological tool is the Bible itself. The novel is framed and unified by quotations from the underlined Bible belonging to Kihika, the martyred hero of the novel. Ngũgĩ also mobilizes African mythology to provide types for his cast of peasants struggling to be free. Although he uses *The Tempest* sparingly as a tool, the power of postcolonial *Tempest* typology complements his use of biblical and indigenous typology and connects his twentieth-century peasant characters and their little village with a struggle that began more than four hundred years ago with the advent of English colonialism.

Ngũgĩ’s explicit use of *The Tempest* is reserved for John Thompson, the village’s administrator and a self-identified Prospero. He arrives in Africa with Prospero’s magic, a conviction that “the growth of the British Empire was the development of a great moral idea [. . .] embracing peoples of all colours and creeds, based on the just proposition that all men were created equal” (*Grain* 62). Convincing him that he was destined to become a great leader, “[h]is faith in British Imperialism had once made him declare: To administer a people is to administer a soul” (64). Determined to develop his ideas, he compiles a manuscript made up of notes “he scribbled at various times and places in his career, hoping to incorporate them into a coherent philosophy” that he calls “Prospero in Africa” (64). Prospero’s magic is no match for Caliban’s, and Thompson’s benevolent façade is soon replaced with the empire’s iron fist as he burns villages, tortures prisoners, and becomes the focus of a public Abu Ghraib-like torture scandal. The manuscript’s lofty benevolent sentiment is soon replaced by fragmented notes exposing the true face of British post-war African colonialism:

*The darkness and mystery of the forest have led him [the primitive man] to magic and ritual. What’s this thing call Mau Mau? [. . .] Dr. Albert Schweitzer says “The Negro is a child, nothing can be done without the use of authority.” [. . .] I agree. [. . .] Mau Mau is evil: a movement which if not checked will mean complete destruction of all values on*
which our civilization has thrived. (64–65)

In the present time of the novel, the eve of *Uhuru*, Thompson is reduced to a lonely, bitter shell of a man haunted by the vision that had once inspired him.

Ngũgĩ’s use of *Tempest* postcolonial typology may be fleeting but it has much the same effect as Lamming’s and Césaire’s use of *The Tempest*: it evokes a world of typological symbols that affirms that the relationships of the postcolonial world are nothing new, and hidden in history are the oppression and resistance of generations of Calibans. Mannoni’s Prospero Complex may well influence Ngũgĩ’s understanding of John Thompson’s character, but this Prospero also fits perfectly into the typological narrative that Ngũgĩ finds concealed in Shakespeare’s play:

> In the story of Prospero and Caliban, Shakespeare had dramatized the practice and psychology of colonization years before it became a global phenomenon. [. . .] A number of things and attitudes emerge from the play. Prospero, the stranger on the island, comes with the soft voice of the serpent. He is at first friendly to Caliban, and flatters him, but all the time he is learning the secrets of the island. To him Caliban has no culture or meaningful past. He has even given his language to Caliban. And before Caliban knows it, Prospero has taken his land, has set up a one-man government, and turns Caliban into a slave-labourer. Ariel, formerly Caliban’s subject, is released from bondage into a new servitude: he will only be finally freed if he remains Prospero’s faithful servant and spy.

(Ngũgĩ, *Homecoming* 8–9)

As indicated by Harish Narang’s article about *A Grain of Wheat*, entitled “Prospero and the Land of Calibans” (which never mentions Caliban), the simple mention of one of *The Tempest’s* types has the power to evoke the whole typological cast and narrative that have proven so useful in
exploring the dynamics of the postcolonial era.  

Although Caliban is never mentioned in *A Grain of Wheat*, his presence hovers in one way or another behind all of the peasant Calibans that populate the village of Thabai. Caliban as a type is especially useful to Ngũgĩ because the character incorporates qualities Ngũgĩ wishes to explore in his peasant characters. Caliban’s defiance in the face of Prospero’s oppression and his embrace of violence to win liberation have particular resonance for Ngũgĩ. A central purpose of *A Grain of Wheat* is to reclaim the crucial role that the armed struggle waged by the Mau Mau played in the defeat of British imperialism in Kenya. Dismissed by both the British and the new Kenyan élite as a rag-tag band of tribal terrorists, Ngũgĩ uses his Calibans to counter the erasure of the heroic struggle and sacrifice. In an article originally published in 1963 that appears in *Homecoming*, “Mau Mau, Violence and Culture,” Ngũgĩ defends the Mau Mau’s use of violence: “Violence in order to change an intolerable, unjust social order is not savagery: it purifies man” (28). Even Caliban’s desire to assert his power by raping Miranda has resonance in the novel. Lt. Koinandu rapes the white Dr. Lynd; as Peter Nazareth notes, “[o]ne thinks here of Eldridge Cleaver, who said that he used to rape white women as an act of insurrection” (253). For Ngũgĩ, as for Caliban, any kind of violence, even sexual violence, is an understandable response to oppression, although in Ngũgĩ’s opinion it is a regrettable one. However, that violence is used as a weapon to change the world is not only understandable; it is also necessary and even purifying

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47 In an interview with Angela Lamas Rodrigues, Ngũgĩ responded to a question about the role of art, in the process commenting on his attitude to Shakespeare. He explained that art represented “motion, movement, life, change,” whereas capital and the state represented “death” and “predictability” (“It is the dead ruling over the living”). In response to a question about how the revolutionary potential of art is co-opted he commented: It has been done sometimes by killing people, by ignoring their works, or sometimes by normalizing art as an object of worship, as an icon. Take Shakespeare for instance. His work is very dynamic. The problem of social class, the movement of history, the clash of social forces, all is there. But by iconizing Shakespeare, his very revolutionary potential tends to be killed or ignored. Shakespeare the icon, the bad Shakespeare, is the one who is talked about as a great writer, a genius. (165)

48 See “Orality and the Literature of Combat: The Legacy of Fanon” by Alamin Mazrui and Lupenga Mphande and “Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o and the Writing of Kenyan History” by Carol Sieberman, in *Critical Essays on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o* edited by Peter Nazareth, for a discussion of both the British and the Kenyan governments’ distortion and erasure of the Mau Mau’s nature and role.
for those who have the courage to embrace it. Caliban, in his embrace and understanding of the justice of a violent response to Prospero’s tyranny, becomes a type for the peasant insurgents of Ngũgĩ’s little village.

Another aspect of Caliban that makes him a useful type for Ngũgĩ is the very nature of his flawed character. Caliban, as the type for his postcolonial antitypes, is far from the perfect, selfless hero. He is quarrelsome, at times courageous and at other times cowardly, often easily fooled, and hates, fears and sometimes adores his master all at the same time. The only “Caliban” in *A Grain of Wheat* who comes close to the stereotypical revolutionary hero is Kihika, and he is already dead before the novel begins. All the other village characters have serious weaknesses, and have been spiritually and psychologically damaged by the hardships of both colonialism and the anti-colonial struggle. Betrayals large and small drive the plot of the novel, and all the characters are haunted by loneliness and isolation. As Nazareth argues, Ngũgĩ “is attempting to deal with very complex questions: not only does he want to show how Kenya gained its independence but also he wants to find out what happened in the process to the souls of the people” (245). He is equally interested in how the “souls” of these very imperfect “people” begin to heal so they can regroup and unite to continue their struggle. Caliban, with his rage and his damaged psyche combined with his burning desire for justice, provides a perfect type for the complex, damaged people who must learn to connect, trust, and accept each other in order to find the strength to face the challenge that the postcolonial era brings.

But maybe the most important contribution that Shakespeare makes to Ngũgĩ’s use of Caliban as a postcolonial type is summed up in the famous lines “You taught me language, and my profit on’t / Is I know how to curse” (1.2.362–64). Caliban does learn to curse in his master’s language and, as the novel consistently reiterates, so do Kenya’s Calibans: the Mau Mau oath, a curse for the British intruders, becomes a major weapon in the liberation struggle, and its triumph
over Prospero’s magic is a powerful vindication of Sycorax’s magic. Although it is not so evident in this novel, Caliban’s outburst provides an intriguing prefiguration of the direction in which *A Grain of Wheat*’s author was about to move. In an interview with Reinhard Sander and Ian Munro, conducted a few years after *A Grain of Wheat* was published, Ngũgĩ discusses a crisis he found himself facing. In this interview, he is reminded of a comment he had made just after *A Grain of Wheat* was published—“I have reached a point of crisis. I don’t know whether it is worth any longer writing in English”—and is asked to comment on it:

I have not really resolved the crisis [. . .]. The crisis arose out of the writing of *A Grain of Wheat*. I felt I dealt with the Kenyan or African institution so intimately. Then I felt that people who fed the novel, that is the peasantry as it were, will not be in a position to read it. And this is very painful. So I really didn’t see the point of writing anything at all. Maybe in two years’ time I might write in Kikuyu or Swahili. (48)

Ngũgĩ published one more novel in English, *Petals of Blood*, but since 1975 he has published all his creative work in Gikuyu. Ngũgĩ has taken heart from Caliban’s curse and reclaimed his language as a language of literature.

One of the aspects of all three texts that has come under more recent scrutiny is the role women play in the narratives. All focus on male characters, and women play minor and occasionally malevolent roles. All three portray sexually charged, problematic relationships between black men and white women that involve hints of sexual violence and/or out-and-out rape. There are virtually no women in *A Tempest*: Miranda emerges momentarily as a rather silly girl and object of Caliban’s lust; and Sycorax, while lauded as ancestral “mother earth,” is as absent as she is from *The Tempest*, her place occupied by the super-masculine god Eshu. *Water with Berries* also focuses on the male postcolonial experience, and the Mirandas of the novel (all but one of them white) end up at best raped and more often dead, either as victims of murder or
more likely suicide. As the empire falls apart, the patriarch Prospero morphs into the overprotective matriarch Gore-Britain, who first smothers with kindness and then attacks with terror. The women of *A Grain of Wheat* are also secondary characters, and their main role is to nurture and support their men. To one degree or another, all three texts portray complex and problematic sexual relationships between black men and white women.

Read through the prism of the feminism that blossomed in the late seventies and dramatically affected the way we now understand the role of gender, many of the images and ideas these three writers explore are shocking and unthinkably “politically incorrect.” Jyotsna G. Singh seems genuinely mystified by the blindness of these progressive 1960s and 1970s writers:

It is surprising, however, that in their rewriting of *The Tempest*, non-Western writers like Lamming, Césaire, and Fanon have created liberationist, third world narratives oddly oblivious to the dissonances between race and gender struggles. Thus, ironically, their anti-colonial discourse produces the liberated “Black Man” via the erasure of female subjectivity. (208)

To be surprised that these progressive postcolonial texts created in the early 1960s are gendered male and celebrate “a revolution of brotherhood” (220) is to wrench these works out of their historical context and dismiss the intensity of the struggles that were to come. Singh is not alone in her perplexed response to what she considers both gender blindness and bias. Jonathan Goldberg argues that “modern readings of *The Tempest* from an anticolonialist position are ‘masculinist’” (45), scolds Lamming for using “explosively misogynistic” language (22), and goes on to state flatly that “Lamming is a misogynist” (23). Nor does Ngũgĩ escape similar criticism. While acknowledging that “Ngũgĩ’s women characters remain pioneers in the field of Anglophone African fiction written by men [. . .] [i]n their strength of character, their spirit, and their self-reliance” (192), Elleke Boehmer contends that “the enduring patriarchal cast of his
ideas cannot be ignored” (188). Accusing Ngũgĩ of fitting his women “into the thoroughly well-worn stereotypes of mother and of whore,” she goes on to argue that Ngũgĩ’s women, even his bravest heroines, are essentially victims who sacrifice themselves for the greater struggle of the nation and people, and to support this, she notes:

In *A Grain of Wheat*, not only do Njeri and Wambuku lay down their lives for the hero Kihika, but, as though to ram home the image of women as victim, Ngũgĩ introduces the one account of a rape [of a white woman] in all the fiction about “Mau Mau.” (193)

The contradiction between the progressive stance of writers like Césaire, Lamming and Ngũgĩ and their seeming indifference to questions of gender can appear mystifying to a generation schooled in sensitivity to gender issues. When Singh states, “[a] call for decolonization and revolution in a play such as Aimé Césaire’s *A Tempest* ironically shows that race and gender struggles occur in antithetical, rather than cooperative relationships,” she misses the real irony, that race and gender struggles did indeed occur in antithetical relationships and often bitter and sometimes even violent ones; and the difficulty and conflict that this antithetical relationship eventually produced rocked progressive movements of all kinds. The co-operative nature of these struggles might now be obvious, particularly in the world of academia, but in the trenches of 1960s and 1970s postcolonial political struggle, in the First World or the Third, whether interracial or within the same race, these struggles, when they finally emerged from the shadows, rarely (if ever) took a co-operative form.

As Jonathan Goldberg points out, many 1960s postcolonial readings of *The Tempest* “might be said to repeat the masculinist plot of the play,” and he is critical that these 1960s writers did not understand that this plot “requires interrogation rather than emulation” (45). In time, many would agree with Goldberg’s critique, but it is important to remember that the
Women’s Movement, a phenomenon that we tend to associate with the 1960s, is much more a product of the 1970s. As Jo Freeman states in her 1971 article about the origins of the Women’s Liberation Movement, “[s]ometime in the nineteen twenties, feminism died [and] in the early sixties feminism was still an unmentionable, but its ghost was slowly awakening from the dead” (1). Its ghost haunts these texts and, as I will discuss in the next chapter, the full force of this ghost returns as a generation of postcolonial women writers find their types in The Tempest matrix. But in the early 1960s, the “masculinist” plot of the play was a welcoming typological milieu for a generation of male postcolonial writers coming of age in a rapidly changing postcolonial world. For this generation, an essential element of the metamorphosis from colonial to postcolonial was the rejection of feminized subservience and the appropriation of masculine power. Just as we tend to conflate the rise of progressive anticolonial movements with the rise of feminism, we also tend to forget that the sexual revolution predates the second wave of feminism, and throughout most of the 60s, a generation of young women and young men, including those touched by progressive anticolonial movements, found themselves hampered by some of the same old gender rules, as they experienced the liberation of a new and unstable terrain. Just as The Tempest provides the perfect matrix to explore the postcolonial dynamics of male power, Caliban and Miranda provide the perfect types to explore the relationship between the antitypes of the new postcolonial man and the newly “liberated” (white) woman—and their very complicated relationship.

The rise of the struggle against colonialism, imperialism and racism, and an influx of

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49 Philip Holden in *Autobiography and Colonization: Modernity, Masculinity, and the Nation-State*, argues that popular and influential “national” autobiographies by leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Nkrumah, Kaunda and Mandela all wrote accounts “in which the growth of an individual implicitly identified as a national father explicitly parallels the growth of national consciousness and, frequently proleptically, the achievement of an independent nation-state” (5). He argues that for the generation involved in the process of decolonization, “gender [male] is deeply inscribed into popular images of both nation and of the pastoral state that succeeds colonialism” (16).
immigrants and students from the Third World to the First (particularly to Great Britain), meant the emergence of a multiracial, multinational movement and the breaking of barriers that separated black and white, particularly black men and white women and, to a lesser extent, white men and black women. In the United States, the civil rights movement brought young black and white men and women together and opened up sexual possibilities that would have been unthinkable a few short years, or even months, earlier. Even in the South, where merely looking at a white woman could have meant lynching for a black man, the taboo was challenged in the summer of 1964 when eight hundred young white people responded to SNCC’s call, and flocked to Mississippi to join in a voter registration drive—and young people did what young people tend to do. The breaking of the taboo negating or suppressing the potential of sexual attraction across race had a radical effect on the relationships of this generation. Suddenly, what had been forbidden and unthinkable became almost commonplace. However, the impact of this, in many ways, euphoric liberation also carried with it some heavy baggage. Sex and race was not a new combination. The practice of racial oppression merged with the emasculation of the oppressed male who was denied his “manhood.” At the same time as the colonial male subject was stripped of the accoutrements of “maleness,” he was saddled with the myth of hyper-sexuality that was seen as threatening to white womanhood, and thus white male power and white male sexual adequacy. White women and black men, as they entered into a new day of exotic and erotic possibilities, brought an historic minefield with them.

50 The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. The name of this influential organization is misleading. Always more radical than King’s SCLC, by 1964 it was already questioning the philosophy of non-violence and by 1966 had rejected it as a strategy as well, embracing “black power,” revolutionary violence, and expelling white members to become an exclusively black organization.

51 The euphoric intensity of sexual/racial liberation is reflected in the lyrics of a song from the hugely popular musical Hair (first staged in 1967), where a trio of exuberant young white women sing “Black boys are delicious / Chocolate flavored love / Licorice lips like candy . . . Black boys are nutritious / Black boys fill me up / Black boys are so damn yummy / They satisfy my tummy / I have such a sweet tooth / When it comes to love.”

52 In highlighting the black male/white female dynamic, I am not negating that this same phenomenon affected white male/black female relationships, as it indeed had an effect on exclusively white and non-white sexual relationships. However because of the complications of this dynamic which were compounded by the factors I am about to discuss,
This minefield was further complicated by one other important factor: the way women were perceived, both by themselves and their male comrades, throughout most of the 1960s and into the 1970s. Among young people, even in the most progressive circles, notions of feminism were foreign. Liberated by the pill and new ideas about sexuality, young women were suddenly free to experiment sexually without being considered deviant. Sex came out of the shadows, and women could become, and were expected by their male cohorts to become, active sexual beings. As enticing as this freedom was for young women, the world they entered was a dangerous one. They entered it with neither the protective paternalism of traditional male chauvinism nor the armour of feminist consciousness. What ensued was a period of intense exploitation of young women and an incorporation of this oppression into female consciousness. In 1967, progressive young women rebelled and that revolt, which began simultaneously in five cities, spread across North America, Europe, and, in a different form, the Third World. Over the next ten years, it changed history. But in the years before this movement took effect, sexual liberation and experimentation coexisted side by side with a virtually unchallenged ideology of women’s inferior status.

As a result, young women in the Western progressive “new left” movement found their traditional roles as nurturers, minute-takers, cooks and grassroots organizers expanded to include sexual availability. Even though a significant proportion of the “movement” was made up of women, leadership stayed firmly in the hands of men. When in 1964 Stokely Carmichael dismissed political interventions from women with his famous statement “the only position for women in SNCC is prone,” he expressed sentiments held widely by his male cohorts, black and white. Progressive young women internalized this ideology. In supporting the men who refused to

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it played out in different ways with each combination. *The Tempest* as a type had the most relevance to the black man/white woman combination, and this was the type that was of most interest in the earlier period of postcolonial consciousness.
go to Vietnam, young woman proudly wore T-shirts proclaiming “Girls that say yes to boys that say no!” “Chick” and “bird” became accepted terms of self-identification, “balling” an accepted female term for sex, and Janis Joplin’s exhortation to her man to “take a piece of [her] heart” seemed not masochistic or degrading but rather in some strange way empowering. For a while, before the tables turned, the old double standard seemed to co-exist easily with new notions of liberation.

Thus it is no surprise that the sexual encounters between white women and black men in this period of postcolonial awakening were fraught with difficulties. Women armed with “white skin privilege” and the exotic lure of the formerly forbidden encountered men armed with male privilege combined with anger accumulated over centuries of degradation (and for both the exotic lure of the once-forbidden as well). Widespread opportunities for such interracial unions emerged for the first time in centuries, but this moment brought with it so much baggage that the union was bound to be difficult, and the difficulty was reflected in the discourse of the period. Eldridge Cleaver, whose best-selling book *Soul On Ice* (1968) was required reading for young anti-imperialists, stated that “rape was an insurrectionary act” (14). This collection of prison essays, which includes love letters to his white lawyer, provides Cleaver’s political explanation of the rapes that had brought him to prison:

> It delighted me that I was defying and trampling upon the white man’s law [. . .] that I was defiling his women [. . .] I felt I was getting revenge. From the site of the act of rape, consternation spreads outwardly in concentric circles. I wanted to send waves of consternation throughout the white race. (14)

To illuminate his position, Cleaver quotes a poem by LeRoi Jones, a black “beat” poet who later, as Amari Baraka, became a grass-roots black nationalist leader. Jones wrote:

> A cult of death need of the simple striking arm under the street lamp. The cutters from
under their rented earth. Come up, black dada nihilismus. Rape the white girls. Rape their
cahers. Cut the mothers’ throats. (qtd. in Cleaver 14)

The ideas expressed by Cleaver and Jones were echoed in the work of Frantz Fanon in his
internationally influential books *Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Mask*. Exploring
the attraction of white women, he wrote: “When my restless hands caress those white breasts,
they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine” (*Black* 63). The acceptance of
rape and degradation of white women as an understandable response to oppression was also
reflected in Jean-Luc Godard’s English-language movie *Sympathy for the Devil*, also known as
*One Plus One*. Although over half the movie follows the Rolling Stones in the studio as they
develop the song “Sympathy for the Devil,” most of the remaining segments follow armed young
black men, reading aloud from Cleaver and other revolutionary thinkers, as they wander through
piles of wrecked cars adorned with the bloodied bodies of white women. Peter Brook’s 1968
production of *The Tempest* at the London Round House, which ends when “Caliban rapes
Miranda, sodomizes Prospero [. . .] and takes over the island” (Zabus 70), is another example.

Although I am not arguing that any of these men considered rape an act of revolution in
itself, they all saw rape and the degradation of white women as an understandable response to
racist and colonial/imperialist subjugation. When Richard Halpern contends “Retamar’s choice of
a rapist as anti-colonial hero not only betrays a striking indifference to matters of gender, but falls
into an ideological trap set by *The Tempest*,” what he misses is that the super-masculine Caliban
who brags of the desire to rape Miranda is a perfect type for a moment obsessed with freedom but
more often than not “indifferent to matters of gender,” and that the male-preoccupied milieu of
*The Tempest* is the perfect matrix to explore Caliban’s experiments in struggling for liberation
(283). As acceptance of interracial relationships became normalized, at least within the anti-
imperialist community, normalized at the same time with this was the acceptance of woman’s second-class position and her role as coveted possession of a master race.\textsuperscript{53}

When we examine these dynamics, it becomes clear why Caliban and Miranda become such important types for the antitypes of this period. Caliban, with his savage, defiant challenge to power and his desire to capture his master’s possession and people the world with Calibans, served as a perfect type for the rise and revenge of the dispossessed who emerged from the ghettos and jungles as militant fighters claiming their stolen masculinity along with their future. Miranda’s marginal role, and her simultaneous privilege (as a member of the island’s ruling class) and powerlessness (as an appendage of her father), in turn provided the type for the young white women struggling to find their footing in a movement organized around the liberation of men—a movement that was yet to understand the oppression of women. The anxiety expressed by the powerful in the play regarding Caliban’s sexuality and the interracial marriage between Claribel and the King of Tunis provided another type, this of the sexual anxiety engendered in the powerful by the threat of the “Other” as a sexual being. \textit{The Tempest} once again provided the perfect matrix to explore the difficult contradictory relationship between black men and white women that emerged in postcolonialism’s \textit{Tempest} moment.

When understood in the context of the times, it is far from surprising that a generation of male postcolonial writers coming of age in such a “masculinist” moment would leave unchallenged the notion of \textit{The Tempest} as a male matrix even while exposing subaltern oppression and the resistance latent in \textit{The Tempest}. Critics like Singh reserve some of the harshest criticism for George Lamming, and particularly his novel \textit{Water with Berries}, but if we place the novel in its time and understand the reality it was addressing, it can be understood as a

\textsuperscript{53}It is important to contextualize the tolerant attitude to rape in the context of the romanticization of violence that was common in the period. This embrace of violence was all part of the typological thinking of the period that welcomed a coming apocalypse that would usher in a new age.
brave (if rather melodramatic) close examination of the very complicated relationships between women and men, particularly white women and black men. Even Cleaver, Fanon, Césaire and Jones cannot be said to be completely unconscious of the problematic nature of their embrace of a super-masculine “Caliban” type, but it is Lamming who confronts, however partially, the contradictory nature of this relationship and the problems it imposes on the postcolonial revolutionary struggle.

A close look at the relationship all three Calibans have with women reveals that Lamming directly addresses the problematic relationship between men and women and particularly the relationship between black men and white women. There are two dramatic rapes of white women by black men in the novel. Caliban’s thwarted ambition “to violate the honour” of Miranda (“O ho, O ho! Would’t had been done! / Thou didst prevent me—I had peopled else / This island with Calibans” [1.2.346–9]) is fulfilled in the midst of a San Cristobal uprising. Myra—one of the novel’s Mirandas, the daughter of a cruel San Cristobal plantation owner—is gang-raped by her father’s servants in a rage of insurrectional arson, murder and bestiality. In his interview with George Kent, Lamming explains, “the rage inflicted on her is really that intended for Prospero, for she cannot in the minds of Prospero’s victims be separated from his privilege and his history,” but in the novel itself Lamming provides no explanation or excuse for the servants’ behaviour. Instead, we learn about the incident through the voice of the rape victim herself who haunts the night, compelled, like the Ancient Mariner, to search out an audience in the pitch-black heath. However, experience has obliterated this mariner’s voice, and instead of her story she imparts syphilitic sex from “the grave of her cunt” to the men she encounters in the dark (153). Her compulsion breaks when she encounters Teeton in the anonymous darkness and she is able to put words to her story:
“I could only see the flames,” she said, “like a million tongues licking and sucking up the night. […] There was only that tearing apart, like instruments opening up my insides. They found every crack in my body; operating through every opening in my body. […] It seemed like an eternity. They would rest and return, giving the interval over to the animals: Father’s two hounds. […] Until I couldn’t tell which body was the man’s and which belonged to the beasts.” (150)

In listening to her, accepting her story and acknowledging her suffering, Teeton provides Myra with some form of peace and security. They do not touch or see each other in the dark, but the moment of love and intimacy they share—a mutual Ceremony of Souls—raises the possibility of equal, loving relationships between black men and white women. Myra, in both her suffering and momentary redemption, exists, however briefly, at the centre of the very male world of the novel at the same time as three other violated women haunt the margins.

All three are victims of the collateral damage perpetrated by the three Calibans as they struggle against the colonial/neocolonial chains that still bind them. By the end of the novel, two of these women are dead and one brutally raped in a public display of Cleaver-like rebellion when the actor Derek rejects his perpetual role as a corpse to rise up and rape the young actress that shares the stage. Lamming, using the name of their type, links two of these violated women, Myra and Randa, gesturing towards the oppression shared by women across race lines. Randa, Teeton’s black lover who saves his life by sleeping with the white enemy, is then rejected by Teeton for this infidelity, and in the end commits suicide. Miranda, in Lamming’s vision, serves as a type of the exploited woman, black or white. Lamming’s preoccupation with his male characters’ struggle for liberation does not blind him to the suffering of these young women, and as he witnesses their suffering, he affirms Freeman’s observation that feminism’s ghosts were finally “awakening from the dead.”
However this ghost would not be really and truly awake until a generation of young women insisted on telling their own story and found in *The Tempest* matrix types to explore their own experience.
Chapter 6

Postcolonial Typology in Practice: Women Take Their Turn

Just as *The Tempest* provided the perfect typological vehicle for an exploration of postcolonial experience for male writers working in the 1960s and 1970s, *The Tempest* played an invaluable role for women writers looking back on the same period. Throughout the 1960s, and into the early 1970s, young anti-imperialist Western women became increasingly uncomfortable with their second-class role in progressive movements. Their older sisters had already begun to organize. In the United States and Canada, pressure from women concerned about legal and professional rights resulted in government initiatives focusing on the social and legal limitations women faced. In Canada, a concerted campaign instigated by a coalition of women’s organizations resulted in the establishment (by Lester Pearson) of a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1967 (Anderson), which in turn paved the way for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) founded in 1971. In the United States, a similar government body laid the groundwork for the founding of the National Organization of Women (NOW) in 1966 (Freeman 2).

However, for the young, anti-imperialist activists of the 1960s and 1970s, these movements, with their “reformist” concerns about legal rights and access to the capitalist workforce, seemed hopelessly out of touch and irrelevant to the dynamic revolutionary struggle occurring among the world’s disposessed. But as disdainful as many young women activists might have been of these early stirrings of second-wave feminism, before long they too were swept up in the full force of this wave. Again, it was as if something was in the water, as young, anti-imperialist women across North America and Europe suddenly took a second look at their experiences in the movements they had built. First politely, and then with ever increasing anger,
they began to question every aspect of their relationships with their male comrades. For these women, the political was profoundly personal and, as they shared their activist experiences, their own history of exploitation and oppression became apparent, and they began to look back and reframe their understanding of the movements that marked their generational experience. Rage replaced complacent acceptance of a secondary supportive role and, with the Black Movement as model, women embraced the slogan “Sisterhood is powerful,” and set out to build an autonomous movement that, once merged with their older sisters struggle for reforms, would go on to change the face of gender relations throughout the world.

The cataclysmic shift in perception that was ushered in by the second wave of feminism forced progressive women to re-examine and reorder their understanding of that coming-of-age moment in the 1960s and early 1970s. Attitudes and behaviours that had seemed perfectly natural—such as the view of rape as a revolutionary act, the embracing of a warrior male culture with its general glorification of violence, the acceptance of a maternal nurturing role, a sexual liberation that depended on female sexual subservience, and an unquestioning adherence to male leadership—suddenly became unthinkable. As feminist attitudes towards gender became normalized and more mainstream, some chose to pretend the old attitudes and the practices they engendered never existed. Others employed their new paradigm to look back and try to understand their history and that of their generation and reframe it within this new context. For a group of creative women writers, some from the West and others from the Third World—but all part of the generational unit who saw themselves as active participants in a new postcolonial world—*The Tempest* once again provided the perfect vehicle to look back, reframe, and reinterpret the pivotal experiences of the women of their generational unit.

Postcolonial typology now broadened to a typology that included a feminist filter, and Miranda, Caliban, Ariel, and Prospero provided types to understand and come to terms with the
problematic postcolonial female experience. Now it was Miranda’s turn to take centre stage, and
Prospero’s daughter became the type with which to explore the experience of young white
women who, on the one hand, gained the benefits of white-skinned privilege and, on the other,
were simultaneously oppressed by patriarchy. Miranda, innocent and kept in ignorance (“You
have often / Begun to tell me what I am, but stopped, / And left me to a bootless inquisition”;
[1.2.34–36]), coddled by an affectionate father (“I have done nothing but in care of thee, / Of
thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter” [1.2.16-7]) who meets the slightest whiff of opposition
with violent anger (“Silence! One word more / Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee”
[1.2.477–78]), steps up to take her place in the postcolonial Tempest typological cast. She may be
Prospero’s “foot” and her chastity a commodity to be bought and sold, but she is ever so slightly
restless, a perfect type for young women coming of age in an era of revolution when change was
on the agenda for everyone but them. Miranda’s story becomes the perfect prequel to what Gayle
Greene calls the “feminist quest novels” of the early seventies:

These novels follow a pattern, even a formula: woman seeks “freedom” from
conventional roles, looks to her past for answers about the present, speculates about the
cultural and literary tradition that has formed her, and seeks a plot different from the
marriage or death that are her customary ends. (166)

Miranda becomes a type for her postcolonial antitype, the young woman brought up in relative
privilege but trapped in a patriarchal paradigm, where her role as the “foot” to Prospero’s power
seems at first to withstand the changes shaking the world around her. Miranda, the dutiful
dughter of The Tempest, might seem to be the antithesis of the bold young feminists who

54 The examples Greene cites are Margaret Laurence’s The Diviners, Erica Jong’s Fear of Flying, Gail Godwin’s Odd
Woman, Margaret Drabble’s Realms of Gold, Margaret Atwood’s Surfacing, Lisa Alther’s Kinflicks and Dorothy
Bryant’s Ella Price’s Journal; and notes she that these novels follow in the steps of Doris Lessing’s The Golden
Notebook (1962), the novel that played such a seminal role in the ideological development of a generation of
American, Canadian and British young women.
emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but her experience as privileged-but-captured object
drawn to “a brave new world” resonated with young anti-imperialist women who were struggling
to define their roles in a postcolonial world where “all that is solid” was melting “into air,” even
notions of patriarchy that seemed to be persistent and stubborn. Miranda’s postcolonial antitype is
so persistent she even makes her very polemical way into formal academic literary criticism. In
her article “The Miranda Trap,” Lorie Jerrell Leininger gives over the last part of her argument
to this “modern Miranda” and allows her to speak “a new Epilogue”:

My father is no God-figure. No one is a God-figure. [. . .] Let’s put an end to the fantasy
of infallibility. There is not such thing as a “natural slave.” [. . .] I will not benefit from
such a concept. [. . .] Neither my father, nor my husband, nor any one alive has the right
to refer to me as his foot while thinking of himself as the head—making me the obedient
mechanism of his thinking. What I do need is the opportunity to think for myself [and to
become] aware of the numerous disguises of economic exploitation and racism.

Will I succeed in creating my “brave new world” which has people in it who no longer
exploit one another? I cannot be certain. I will at least make my start by springing “the
Miranda-trap,” being forced into unwitting collusion with domination by appearing to be
a beneficiary. I need to join forces with Caliban—to join forces with all those who are
exploited or oppressed—to stand beside Caliban and say,

As we from crimes would pardon’d be, / Let’s work to set each other free. (229)

As critics like Diana Brydon and Barbara Godard have pointed out, Miranda serves not
only as a type for women breaking free of patriarchal ideology, determined to meet her Caliban
on equal ground, but also as a very special type for Canadian writers, particularly Canadian
women writers and, I would add, even more particularly for Canadian women writers coming to

55 The earliest version of her essay was presented in 1977 at the MLA Annual Convention.
terms with those pivotal postcolonial *Tempest* moments when colonialism seemed to be falling apart. Arguing that “Canadian writers have re-defined Miranda as radically as black writers have re-defined Caliban,” Diana Brydon identifies “a focus on power relationships involving dominance, subservience and rebellion” as central to this trend (76). This typological use of Miranda, in what Chantal Zabus calls this “female novelistic Canadian continuum, this *perpetuum mirandae* [that] stretches from Alice Munro to Audrey Thomas and Margaret Atwood,” finds one of its most explicit manifestations in Margaret Laurence’s 1974 novel, *The Diviners* (114).

According to Laurence herself, a major purpose of *The Diviners* is “to show how [the central character, Morag] ultimately becomes an independent person, not just in an external way but how she eventually achieves a sense of inner freedom” (qtd. in Florby 202). In her exploration of one woman’s struggle for “freedom,” Laurence was influenced not only by the experience of her generation of young women rebelling against the patriarchal constraints of their own milieu, but also by the experiences of a generation of contemporaries fighting for freedom in the colonial/postcolonial world. As a young woman she lived in Ghana and Somaliland with her then-husband, engineer Jack Laurence. Like so many of her contemporaries she developed and tested her perceptions by engaging with the typological study of colonial relationships in O. Mannoni’s *Prospero and Caliban*. In her 1963 memoir of her time in Somaliland, *The Prophet’s Camel Bell*, citing Mannoni’s observation that “what the colonial in common with Prospero lacks, is awareness of the world of Others, a world in which Others have to be respected,” she observes:

> Among the most perceptive and undeniable insights are those of Mannoni, in whose study of the psychology of colonization every European who has ever lived in Africa cannot fail to see something of himself, often much more than he would prefer to see. (227)

56. Note Laurence’s use of the masculine pronoun for the universal (including herself) in this 1963 text. Reminders like this reveal the way patriarchal paradigms were normalized in the early 1960s.
Her 1962 meeting with George Lamming, which resulted in a brief affair, had a profound and lifelong effect on her. In a letter to her friend Adele Wiseman, she describes the impact their meeting had on her: “I thought he was terrific. Not only a very talented writer, but the kind of personality that hits you like the spirit of God between the eyes” (qtd. in King 168). Shortly after meeting Lamming, Laurence left her marriage and moved to London, where she met and identified with members of the growing community of African and Caribbean writers including Wole Soyinka and Christopher Okigbo, and wrote her study of Nigerian poets and dramatists, *Long Drums and Canons*. In her memoir, *Dance on the Earth*, she recalls the impact these writers had on her and her understanding of her own writing: “I found it exciting that African writers were producing what I thought I and many Canadian writers were producing: a truly non-colonial literature” (185). The affinity that Laurence felt with Third World writers was not limited to her experience as a Canadian writer but included her experiences as a woman:

> These developing feelings (re Third World cultures) related very importantly to my growing awareness of the dilemma and powerlessness of women, the tendency of women to accept male definitions of ourselves, to be self-deprecating and uncertain, to rage

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57 In his biography, King claims Laurence “decided to follow Lamming to London, where she hoped to rekindle their very brief affair” (170), and points out that when she arrived in London she found a home in Lamming’s neighbourhood (177). King’s speculation about Laurence’s obsession with Lamming seems to owe more than one might wish to gossip; however, the appraisal of this relationship that Laurence made near the end of her life demonstrates how important it was to her. Lamming “was a crucial, if brief, part of my life. He was (is) a writer, too. I was simply one woman among dozens (hundreds probably) to him. But I am glad I made love with him those few times” (qtd. in King 168). It would be a mistake to read *The Diviners* as veiled autobiography, and Laurence herself warned against that. In an unpublished letter to her friend and fellow writer Marian Engle, complaining about a journalist who insisted on reading *The Diviners* autobiographically, she wrote: “Can one really explain . . .? I kept trying to say that of course certain things are derived from life . . . Morag Gunn in the book is both me and not me—we’re related.” However, one cannot help speculating about the contribution that Laurence’s experience of that complicated 1960s coming-together of black man/white woman made to her portrayal of the relationship between Morag and Jules Tonnerre, and the extent to which intertextual traces of *Water with Berries* (1971) can be found in *The Diviners* (1974). As John Thieme points out, “when Morag travels to England, she lives in Hampstead in the same fictional time as Lamming’s Teeton, Derek, and Roger” (149). The protagonist of her novel, Mira, shares an almost identical name with Lamming’s Myra. And of course the two novels share the postcolonial typological matrix of *The Tempest*. 
inwardly. The quest for physical and spiritual freedom . . . runs through my fiction. (qtd. in Howells 39)

Like so many young woman from the developed world who sympathized with the oppressed and were becoming aware of their own oppression as women, Laurence found a model of resistance in the anticolonial movements of the Third World. And like fellow creative writers such as Lamming, Césaire, and Ngũgĩ, Laurence also found in *The Tempest* the perfect matrix to explore the times in which she found herself.

Using *Tempest* typology in much the same way that Ngũgĩ does in *A Grain of Wheat*, Laurence’s novel signals its *Tempest* moorings explicitly with one reference: the novel that her protagonist, Morag, is working on is called *Prospero’s Child*. In a letter to her friend Ella, Morag describes her current project:

The novel progresses, slowly. It’s done in semi-allegorical form, and also it has certain parallels with *The Tempest*. [. . .] It’s called *Prospero’s Child*, she being the young woman who marries His Excellency, the Governor of some island in some ocean very far south, and who virtually worships him and then who has to go to the opposite extreme and reject nearly everything about him, at least for a time, in order to become her own person. It’s as much the story of H.E. I’ve always wondered if Prospero really would be able to give up his magical advantages once and for all, as he intends to do at the end of *The Tempest*. That incredible moving statement—“What strength I have’s my own, Which is most faint —” If only he can hang onto that knowledge, that would be true strength. And the recognition that his real enemy is despair within, and that he stands in need of grace, like everyone else—Shakespeare did know about everything. (270)

The links between the *Tempest* typology that Morag uses to explore her protagonist’s experience as a woman and the postcolonial use of *The Tempest*’s types are further emphasized when she
once again writes to her friend Ella, this time to tell her about the critics’ response to the novel:
“A revealing study of the dependence complex and its final resolution” and “Yet another updating of *The Tempest*” (272).

The architecture of *The Diviners* demands that no one section or reference in the novel remain isolated from any other. As Laurence signals in novel’s opening (the apparently impossible contradiction that “The river flowed both ways” [3]), and in its juxtaposition of past and present (with the interventions of “snapshots,” “memorybank movies,” titled sections and an album of songs by the Tonerres), divining *The Diviners* involves the reader as an active participant in piecing together the fragments that make up the narrative. As fleeting as the references to *The Tempest* are, by evoking all *The Tempest* types, the play provides a persistent subtext which reinforces the political dynamics of the novel. Morag, the novel’s Miranda, is not only motherless but fatherless as well, abandoned in a hostile world, and protected by the garbage-picker Christie, who, like Miranda’s early protector Gonzalo, incorporates both wisdom and foolishness.

Morag escapes to her Prospero, Brooke Skelton, with whom she enacts the Miranda role as dutiful daughter under the sway of her patriarchal ruler and teacher. Their “apartment in Toronto seems more than ever like a desert island, or perhaps a cave, a well-lighted and beautifully appointed cave, but a cave just the same” (208); and through his prestige as a university professor of literature, Skelton possesses both Prospero’s political power as ruler of his island and his magical power that is rooted in his books. Brooke Skelton, with his background of colonial privilege stemming from his Indian childhood, shares the scars of Mannoni’s Prospero: the need to dominate and objectify others in order to attempt to deal with the “terrible lack” that persists within.58 At first accepting but then balking at the child-wife identity imposed on her by

58 In a 1983 interview with Rosemary Sullivan, discussing her impression of colonial administrators she had met in Africa, Laurence exhibited just how much the postcolonial typological use of *The Tempest* influenced her thinking:
Skelton, Morag rebels and “[o]ne day she throws a Benares brass ashtray through the kitchen window” (180).

Eventually, through her writing (the real books of power) and through her reunion with the novel’s Caliban, Jules Tonnerre, Morag embarks on her own journey towards independence and freedom. Her union with Tonnerre is as political as it is sexual:

In her present state of mind, she doesn’t expect to be aroused, and does not even care if she isn’t, as though this joining is being done for other reasons, some debt or answer to the past, some severing of inner chains which have kept her bound and separated from part of herself. (222)

In the “severing of inner chains,” Morag not only embraces her identity as a woman fighting to be free from the chains of patriarchy, but also voluntarily rejects the pseudo-privilege of Miranda’s second-class status in Skelton’s rarefied world to throw her lot in with the oppressed. The “answer to the past” she is responding to is a shared oppression with her lover through her roots in the dispossessed Scottish diaspora, a connection she had tried to sever by escaping to Skelton’s world. Her “debt” involves an acknowledgement of the depth of her lover’s oppression as a Métis, and the responsibility that Morag’s people and history have in the evolution of that oppression. Caliban’s desire to violate Miranda is transformed. Sexual union with Jules brings with it union with that “part of her self” denied by her oppression as a woman and a minority:

Laurence clearly marks her departure from the image of Caliban as a threatening rapist:

Morag sees him as a kindred spirit, a soul sibling, and she singles him out to be the father of her child. As the sexual tension between Shakespeare’s Caliban and Miranda is acted

“I felt there was some terrible lack in them, and that they had indeed left their own culture because they felt subconsciously they really couldn’t compete in the society of their peers; they had to go like Prospero to a place in which they had a built-in, in a sense magical advantage. . . . Which is why I have always, ever since, read Shakespeare’s The Tempest in a slightly different way to that in which most people read it. To me Prospero is a very sinister character” (qtd. in Florby 222).
out in Laurence’s version, it becomes an active force in Miranda/Morag’s liberation.

(Florby 223)

Laurence’s *Tempest* matrix allows for far more optimism about the liberating possibilities of relationships between white women and men of colour than Lamming’s does, but the union of Morag and Jules is not represented as a “fairy-tale” happy ending. Jules becomes integral to but not integrated into Morag’s life, and the hope symbolized by their union is manifested not so much in their relationship with each other, but rather in the life they create together, their daughter Pique.

*The Tempest’s* magic—both Prospero’s and Caliban’s—is also an essential type in *The Diviners* and its antitype is the magic of words, of writing. At first, Morag believes words belong to Skelton/Prospero with his books of literature, but central to her liberation is discovering the magic that *she* possesses: her own writing and the novels she is able to create. Through her writing she comes to terms with her lovers, family, friends and history, as well as the very precarious nature of her magic which comes and goes without warning. Near the beginning of the book, Morag’s first-person voice breaks through to tell us “I *used to think words could do anything. Magic. Sorcery. Even miracle. But no, only occasionally*” (4, emphasis original). This magic—like the power to divine water possessed by Morag’s friend Royland, the novel’s benevolent Prospero—is not owned by an individual but is rather a “gift, or portion of grace” that could be “finally withdrawn, to be given to someone else” (369). Gayle Greene calls *The Diviners* a “‘self-begetting novel’ which ends with the protagonist ready to write the novel we have just read” (168).59 The magic of words, which seemed to be invested in Prospero’s/Skelton’s world, is actually a “gift, or portion of grace,” that is owned by no one but can, with luck, be

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59 Greene credits the term to S. Kellman and highlights Jean E. Kennard’s definition of the feminist version of the “self-begetting novel as “woman’s search for her own story, which ends in its creation” (180 n.16).
shared by all. As Barbara Godard observes in her article “Caliban’s Revolt: The Discourse of the (M)Other”;

Laurence rewrites Shakespeare’s [sic] Prospero/Miranda story to show what the relationship between parent/child, author/creator, writer/reader is like when the magician abdicates his power over the word and the knowledge it permits, ceases to be an authority and lets everyone tell or write their own story. (225)

Laurence’s utilization of *Tempest* typology in *The Divinners* is not limited to her exploration of the struggle for women’s liberation but also serves to explore the coming of age of her country, Canada. Barbara Godard points out that “[j]ust as the fable [*The Tempest*] has implications within the authoritarian structure of the family, it also has resonances in the broader political sphere in the context of nationalist liberation struggles against colonialism” (216). Just as Caliban can be a type for the new nations of the Third World fighting for a liberation from the legacy of colonialism and the new face of American imperialism in works such as Césaire’s *A Tempest*, Miranda can also serve as the perfect type for those dutiful daughters of the empire, settler colonies like Canada and Australia, coming of age in the postcolonial world. Once again *The Tempest* types prove perfect to capture a political moment confronting a generational unit caught up in changing times of the period.

Canada’s progress as a full-fledged nation was a slow one, and with the decline of the British Empire after World War II, progressive Canadians sought a national redefinition which would be based on a rejection of both the colonial legacy of Great Britain and the might of the emerging superpower, the United States. ⁶⁰ According to historian Roberta Lexier:

⁶⁰ George Grant’s *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (1965), Kari Levitt’s *Silent Surrender: The Multinational Corporation in Canada* (1970), and Mel Watkins’s *Foreign Ownership and the Structure of Canadian Industry* (1968) were all influential texts of the period. In the field of literature, Margaret Atwood’s *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972) also had an effect.
With the Quiet Revolution and a separatist movement brewing in Quebec and Canada celebrating its centennial in 1967, as well as growing concern over American imperialism both globally and in Canada, many Canadians began to adopt an increasingly nationalistic stance, questioning their relationship with their powerful neighbours to the South and seeking definitions of what it meant to be “Canadian.” [. . .] Many activists viewed American influence as a form of imperialism, and, drawing upon widespread anti-imperialist rhetoric, argued that Canada should follow in the footsteps of other countries around the world and break their bonds of colonialism. Only through national liberation, which would ensure political and economic sovereignty, they believed, could Canada become a truly democratic nation. (16)

This new spirit of Canadian nationalism found resonance throughout Canadian society, from students, trade unionists, academics and feminists, to all types of progressive anticolonial/anti-imperialist formations, and even in established political parties. On the left, an organization modelled on the strategy of the national liberation front, the Canadian Liberation Movement, with its NC Press, flourished for a time in the late 1960s and early 1970s; two professors from Carleton University, Robin Matthews and James Steele, led a fight against what they considered the Americanization of the university. At the same time, the Waffle Movement within the New Democratic Party agitated effectively but in the end unsuccessfully for “a return to the socialism of the Regina Manifesto, a rejection of Americanism defined as ‘militarism abroad and racism at home’ and women’s liberation” (17–8).

Writers, including Laurence, were not immune to this spirit, and after two years of talking and planning, the Writers’ Union of Canada was formed in 1973. Christopher Moore notes that

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61 See Robin Matthews and James Steele, The Struggle for Canadian Universities (1969). The influential struggle they waged resulted in the requirement to consider Canadian academics before hiring Americans, a practice that continues in a weakened form to the present.
“[t]he air of nationalism and social activism, along with specific crises like the sales of Ryerson Press and Gage Publishing to American interests and the near-bankruptcy of leading Canadian publisher McClelland & Stewart,” created the climate for a generation of Canadian writers, along with some older allies, to act to protect and nurture their craft (2). The initial meeting of eighty writers\(^2\) “chose the name ‘union’ to convey a sense of militancy and to stress the need for Canadian writers to unite,” and Margaret Laurence became the union’s first chair, playing a leading role for those that she always considered her “tribe,” Canadian writers (1).

With the spirit of Canadian nationalism in the air and its particular resonance in Laurence’s own practice, it is not surprising that The Tempest’s postcolonial typology proved a useful means to explore the development of Canadian identity as an emerging nation.

Morag/Miranda’s journey from the alienating small-minded world of Manawaka to her riverside home with her polyglot, hybrid family in rural Ontario serves as one of Fredric Jameson’s national allegories where the personal merges with the political. Morag’s early years as an orphan living in rootless poverty and estranged from her history “can be seen,” according to Gunilla Florby, “to represent the feeling of rootlessness and the cultural poverty of an emergent nation” (204).

Looking for identity, Morag first accepts the subservient role as Brooke Skelton’s dutiful child-wife. In this nationalist scenario, Skelton/Prospero, both through his books and his political history, stands in for British colonial ideology and American political power. This Canadian Miranda rebels, and in a Doll’s House moment, walks away from her powerless position of relative privilege to throw her lot in with Jules Tonnerre, the novel’s Caliban. In the process she comes to terms with and eventually celebrates her own Highland Scots history of oppression and resistance. The union between Morag and Tonnerre, who in spite of different origins share a

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\(^{2}\) Farley Mowat, June Callwood, Margaret Atwood, Marian Engle, Graeme Gibson, Timothy Findley, Charles Taylor, Pierre Burton and Andreas Schroeder, along with Laurence, were all among the Union’s early members.
common history of oppression and resistance, results in the birth of their daughter, Pique, who with her mixed heritage of Indian, French Canadian and Scots, is the perfect antitype to the imagined child of Caliban and Miranda’s, and Canada’s postcolonial future.

Morag [. . .] is the Gaelic for Sarah who founded a new dynasty; this biblical association is congruent with Morag’s conscious choice to have a child with Jules Tonnerre; in doing so she contributes to a new kind of Canadian dynasty which harmonizes separate ethnic (Scots-Métis) cultures. (Greta M. K. McCormick Coger qtd. in Florby 207)

Canada, imbued with the magic of its own culture, is Laurence’s “brave new world” full of promise and potential in the tradition of Tempest postcolonial typology at its most optimistic.

Neil ten Kortenaar, in his 1996 article “The Trick of Divining a Postcolonial Identity,” expresses discomfort with the national nature of Laurence’s “promised land” and argues that “Laurence’s postcolonial nationalism [. . .] establishes the nation on the same foundations as the empire she rejects” (13). By adopting without question the nation-state model, the novel, he contends, “is concerned with making a Canadian nationality that will be as stable and as inspiring as national identities in Europe are presumed to be” (20). Laurence’s embrace of nationalism as an ideology of liberation does seem misguided in an era which has seen the demise of so many “promised lands,” from Vietnam to Zimbabwe, from China to Grenada, but for her “tribe” and generation, the apocalyptic hope of new nations of liberation still seemed a real possibility.

Laurence does look to nation-states as models for the Canada she imagines, yet her models are not the established nation-states of Europe but rather the emerging nation-states of the postcolonial world that were struggling with such hope and such courage to build a new world—a new Jerusalem. And once again, The Tempest’s early seventeenth-century types, created in a world where colonialism was just beginning, proved useful, this time in sorting out what it meant to be a woman and a Canadian in a world where colonialism was falling apart.
When Laurence began writing *The Diviners* in 1971 (Laurence, *Dance* 199), the influence of the new Woman’s Liberation Movement\(^63\) was gaining strength, and the novel captures the vitality that the new perspective introduced. The present of the novel and the moment of Laurence’s writing are identical, and Morag’s evaluation of her past and interpretation of her present mirror the experience of so many young women of her generation. However, for others more time was needed to understand the ramifications of the intense moment they were experiencing, and some of the most interesting examples of women writers using *The Tempest* as a matrix to reframe the experience of postcolonial women activists in the 1960s and early 1970s were actually written in the 1980s and early 1990s. It is no accident that these fictional re-examinations were written after the fact, when the full impact of second-wave feminism had set in and a critical re-examination became imperative. And it is also no accident that, once again, *The Tempest* provided the perfect site of these explorations and reconsiderations.

Sarah Murphy’s *Measure for Miranda*, like *The Diviners*, signals its *Tempest* pedigree obliquely, simply through the name of the character who dominates the novel. Like *The Diviners*, it is a coming-of-age story of a young woman whose struggle for identity both captures the aspirations of the era’s young, anti-imperialist women and, on another level, symbolizes Canada. And again like *The Diviners*, *Measure for Miranda* is a juxtaposition of fragments that mix objects, ideas, *Tempest* archetypes, memories and events. In spite of these similarities, the books are very different. This book, set in Toronto sometime in the early 1980s, reflects the 1960s and 1970s sensibility of its narrator and most of the novel’s characters, but it is a sensibility sobered by time and experience. The narrator, Susan, rather than Miranda, is actually the protagonist of

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\(^63\) “Woman’s Liberation” was the name initially adopted by young, anti-imperialist women, rather than “feminist.” It was a way of identifying their movement with other liberation struggles, pointing to a radical solution to the oppression of women rather than a reformist one, and distinguishing their movement from the more mainstream women’s organizations. It also illustrates how the trope of national liberation was adopted by groups that did not constitute traditional nations.
the novel, and her search to piece together meaning from a young woman’s suicide—to take the measure of Miranda—frames the narrative.

Miranda is dead before the novel begins, and her housemate Susan is left with a hodgepodge of journals, photographs, found objects and memories which she obsessively shifts through looking for both questions and answers. This Miranda is true to her type. The daughter of privilege—her father is a Canadian businessman working in an unnamed Central American country—she has grown up within a cloistered expatriate community, cared for by servants and pampered by an adoring father. She escapes her cloistered family circle and, like her type, finds herself in an island of sorts, a communal house peopled with veteran 1960s radicals who introduce her to a whole new world and way of looking at that world. Jim, her Prospero-like teacher, “one of those caught between people with enough of the late sixties (which of course took place in the early seventies) to send him out hitchhiking [. . .] and enough of the panic of the late seventies to make sure he got his PhD” (16), brings her into a house that includes Amparo, a Chilean refugee and a Caliban figure; Josh, an artist; and the narrator, Susan, a 1960s radical who has become a lawyer and aspiring municipal politician. Her housemates are enchanted with Miranda: “she was young and she was beautiful and she was gracious. […] All three mixed together and then those eyes that looked at you stripped of everything but curiosity” (12).

Innocent and eager, kept ignorant about the terror behind her family’s fortune, she is a ready student for her new friends, but the “brave new world” they open up to her—a world that even Amparo, the torture survivor, has learned to live in with an uneasy complacency—proves to be more than Miranda can bear.

At first intrigued but then obsessed with the horror of the real nature of the world of colonial exploitation, Miranda withdraws from her new friends, refuses to eat, and fixates on the
picture of an unknown torture victim she names Maria de la Dignidad. Near the end of the novel, Susan attempts to sum up a coherent version of events:

Of this story of how it came to be that the girl who had been Miranda Sugar, and Miranda Please Miranda, and the adolescent who had been Miranda Fairy Princess and Miranda For God’s Sake (he didn’t mean it) Miranda ended the story that was Maria de la Dignidad in order to become the woman Miranda No who integrated the circuit that was Miranda Now Miranda. (225)

In what Coral Ann Howells calls “the paradoxical moment of unity/fragmentation, using her body to move from the private and personal to the political” (44), the circuit Miranda integrates ignites the bomb underneath her dress. With this act, she not only assassinates the Central American Major with blood on his hands, but also confronts the lie of her history with its “white skin privilege,” destroys the power of the patriarchy with the death of her father, and throws her lot in with the oppressed.

This “sweet protected Canadian” (41) is compelled to act by the atrocities portrayed in the pictures of torture and embarks on “her own mini heart of darkness” (35) that ends in what Diana Brydon calls a re-enactment of “The Tempest’s marriage masque as a consummation with death”:

Miranda dresses carefully for the assassination. [. . .] [t]he symbolism of her dress transforms The Tempest’s Eurocentric marriage masque motifs of Ceres into a tribute to the oppressed indigenous cultures of America [. . .]. Wearing this dress, Miranda approaches her transformed Ferdinand, the Major, and consummates a marriage with death, as if through this human sacrifice she might redeem five hundred years of violent history “on the usurped lands” of North and South America. (171)

By piecing together the fragments of the story that Susan provides in her disorganized fashion, the reader learns about the chaos Miranda’s act leaves behind. Her four housemates, blamed by
the media as revolutionary master-minds behind the terrorist act, are shattered. Her lover and
mentor, Jim, has “already canonized her as Miranda of the Locket” and is lost in romanticized
memories; Amparo disappears back into the struggle in her homeland; and Susan and Josh try to
find solace with each other. Susan’s conclusions are permeated with a sense of sadness, failure
and loss: “sometimes we might just wish to be that group they always accused us of being. But
not to brainwash her. To have made her part of something that had a future” (Murphy 232).
Susan’s sense of failure extends to Amparo: “we had failed her just as we had Miranda, unable to
make the world she had to have” (232). Susan’s identity—her pride in having “r[u]n in the streets
with the best of them” and her complacency (“the old yarn and I’ve been there syndrome”) (49–
50)—is shaken. The secure world she has build for herself, the radical commune and her day-to-
day left-wing practice, is shattered by Miranda’s bomb.

*The Measure of Miranda* is in many ways a difficult book. It makes demands on the
reader to engage actively with its fragmented and often obscure narrative. From the first pages
Miranda’s shattering end haunts the text—we learn soon something terrible and traumatic has
happened—but we have to wait until the book is almost over to find out what this terrible event
was. As Coral Ann Howells points out: “The story is fragmented, pieced together in a way that
Miranda’s shattered body cannot be, presenting itself as feminist counterdiscourse where
Miranda’s sabotage of social conventions parallels the text’s sabotage of syntactic and narrative
conventions” (43). This counter-discourse is a problematic one: like Morag, this Miranda rejects
her privileged but second-class status and takes control of her life. She rebels against both of her
Prosperos—her father and her teacher, Jim—and turns as an independent woman to the Calibans
of the world. But there is no welcoming Jules Tonerre there for her, only “that river of blood that
is the people’s history” (216) and a realization of her own role in perpetuating that history. Diana
Brydon notes that “for Murphy’s Miranda, violent rebellion must entail self-destruction, because
she is part of the system she rejects” (176). She appropriates her father’s magic—violence—and turns it back on his world, a world that not only keeps her in a subservient role but also oppresses the “wretched of the earth.” However, in the process of destroying his world, she destroys herself. Murphy’s Miranda answers critic Lorie Jerrell Leininger’s call to spring “the Miranda trap [. . .] to stand beside Caliban and say: As we from crimes would pardon’d be, / Let’s work to set each other free” (229) with “wait a minute, it’s not so simple.” Murphy’s Miranda, like Leininger’s, seizes her own liberation, but her liberation brings with it a loss of innocence that confronts her with a realization that these “crimes” are in many ways her own “crimes,” ongoing, and not so easily pardoned. This Miranda determines there is no healing—sexual or otherwise (the novel begins and ends with Susan telling us that “Miranda was not able to make love after she’d seen the pictures” [9, 237])—that can unite Miranda and Caliban except to work to set the Other free by “any means necessary,” including suicide. Miranda’s conclusions are not Susan’s or Murphy’s, but they insist we confront the questions Miranda’s choice raises. The legacy of the liberated young women of the sixties and early seventies brings with it some problematic baggage. The newly liberated Mirandas of the First and Second World are caught in a paradox. At the same time that the patriarchal system they want to overthrow oppresses them, it grants them incredible privilege. The Measure of Miranda does not attempt to resolve this paradox, but it does insist that it cannot be easily erased or ignored.

Just as Laurence uses Miranda as a dual type—on the one hand to depict the liberation of young women and on the other to explore the coming of age of a country—Murphy’s Miranda also serves as a type for Canada’s coming of age in the postcolonial era. But this Miranda confronts very different choices than Laurence’s. Brydon contends that “Miranda’s position [in The Tempest] is particularly appropriate for exploring the ambivalences of a settler-colony culture, attempting to create a neo-Europe in an invaded land” (166), and it is this ambivalence
that Murphy exploits in her exploration of Miranda as Canada. Like *The Diviners, The Measure of Miranda* can be read as a national allegory, but not necessarily one of liberation. In this scenario, Canada/Miranda is the “innocent” daughter of Prospero/American imperialism. Canada, the well-behaved dutiful daughter of the Empire, the peace-loving, moderate nation that prides itself in doing no wrong in the world, is in reality a nation of “gringos de segunda,” deeply implicated in the crimes of imperialism (37). In Laurence’s national scenario, once Miranda/Canada has opened her eyes to the truth, the choice of whether to reject her relative privilege as meaningless and throw her lot in with Caliban/the oppressed confronts her. In Murphy’s scenario, Miranda/Canada’s choice is not so clear and the debt incurred by privilege is not easily paid. The two novels embrace very different visions of Canada. For Laurence, Canada’s relative privilege is trumped by its position as colony, first to the British and now to the Americans; although Canada is separated from the Third World by degree, in its essence it is an oppressed nation whose future lies with the Third World. For Murphy, Canada may be a relatively small actor in the circles of imperialist power, but it is deeply integrated and involved in the “calculus of all pain” that imperialism brings; although Canada is separated by degree from the First World, in its essence it is an oppressor nation that shares the guilt and responsibility of its fathers.

*The Measure of Miranda* may be set in the 1980s, but its concerns reflect the experiences of that *Tempest* moment lived in the 1960s and 1970s and the need to make meaning in this new era without forgetting or repressing the lessons of the past. Laurence’s optimism is unavailable to Murphy’s Susan. Looking back from the bleak Reaganite 1980s, Susan is determined to withstand the counter-attack from Prospero’s world that uses

against us a new Puritanism of the psyche [that] frighten[s] us into pretensions of normalcy [. . . ] that robs us of a pain probably as necessary to us as a species as
breathing. The one that marks that period now called adolescence that was once, and better perhaps, named youth, the age of the hero that is marked by the belief in choice, or destiny, in any case in the ability to remake and to change, that may become belief in a cause, in a task worthy of a life or a lifetime. Only to despair when it sees how little impact it has, and how little possibility of lasting. Unless, with luck, it finds itself part of a shared community, and loses its solitude. (204)

In Murphy’s *Tempest* typology, the New Jerusalem is certainly not around the corner and her apocalypse is a long and bloody one, but, in spite of the grief and despair that marks every page of the novel, Susan’s determination not to turn away from the “calculus of all pain” marks her commitment to a postcolonial typological vision that refuses to accept the defeat of the oppressed.

Jamaican Michelle Cliff’s *No Telephone to Heaven*, too, places her heroine in the *Tempest* matrix, this time a matrix that encompasses versions of all *The Tempest* types and situates these characters in a plot that radically reconfigures the events of Shakespeare’s play. As Thomas Cartelli notes, “*The Tempest* operates less as a plot than as a residual presence in *No Telephone to Heaven*” (“After” 95). There is only one specific reference to *The Tempest* in the novel. In a moment of clarity, Cliff’s Jamaican Miranda, Clare Savage, embraces the name “Caliban” to define her identity (116). But as we have seen in other texts, even one reference can evoke the power of *The Tempest*’s postcolonial typology, be enough to mobilize the entire cast of types, and invest the novel as a whole with all that *The Tempest* can offer. Like all postcolonial *Tempest* manifestations, this text focuses on power and the struggle for power, and, like Laurence’s and Murphy’s novels, the struggle against colonialism is merged with the struggle against patriarchy. Cartelli observes that “[t]he patriarchal authority exercised by Prospero yields, in *No Telephone to Heaven*, to the attempt by the children of postcoloniality to negotiate an
authority of their own, grounded in the recovery of what has survived the sustained tempest of colonialism and colonial self-hatred” (96).

The novel is a coming-of-age story that describes Clare Savage’s “fragmentation as well as her movement toward homeland and wholeness” (Cliff, “Clare” 265). In her article “Clare Savage as a Crossroads Character,” Cliff explores at length the narrative and symbolic aspects of her protagonist when we first meet her:

Her name [. . .] is intended to represent her as a crossroads character, with her feet (and head) in (at least) two worlds. Her first name means, signifies, light-skinned, which she is, and light-skinnedness in the world in which Clare originates, the island of Jamaica, in the period of British hegemony, and to which she is transported, the United States in the 1960s, and to which she transports herself, Britain in the 1970s, stands for privilege, civilization, erasure, forgetting. [. . .] Her surname is self-explanatory. It is meant to evoke the wildness that has been bleached from her skin [. . .]. A knowledge of history, the past, has been bleached from her mind, just as the rapes of her grandmothers are bleached from her skin. And this bleached skin is the source of her privilege and her power too, she thinks, because she is a colonized child. (265)

The narrative, with its shifts in time and overlapping plots and characters, all in one way or another Tempest antitypes, reflects Clare’s fragmented and confusing journey from well-behaved daughter to revolutionary warrior. She rejects the option her fair skin gives her, the option of following her Prospero-like father, Boy Savage, into the white world by “passing” and suppressing her hybridity:

Clare thought of her father. Forever after her to train her hair. His visions of orderly pageboy. Coming home from work with something called Tame. She refused it; he called her Medusa. Do you intend to turn men to stone, daughter? She held to her curls, which
Characters that evoke Prospero, Ariel, and Caliban are all part of a narrative that traces Clare’s journey from relative privilege in the United States and British academia back to the Jamaica of her mother and grandmother and her decision to throw her lot in with the oppressed. The two Calibans of the novel, with their violent anger, harken back to Cleaver and Lamming’s Calibans, and although one becomes her lover and the other shares her violent fate, both are so maimed by their oppression and scarred by their anger that they are powerless to fight back in any coherent fashion. In Cliff’s matrix, the super-masculine rebel can provide neither love nor answers, and in her scenario, Caliban is displaced by the androgynous Ariel. The transsexual Harry/Harriet, from his/her liminal gendered space, provides a model for the possibility of both personal and political liberation. The brutality of his/her oppression is no less intense than that experienced by the novel’s Calibans, but Harry/Harriet’s determination to transcend that experience by forging his/her own identity and embracing a path to liberation that includes both revolutionary struggle and reconciliation indicates a way forward that escapes Leninger’s “Miranda trap.” Cliff’s Miranda resolves the contradiction between her own liberation from patriarchy and Caliban’s reclamation of manhood by turning from, but not rejecting, her male lover and finding refuge in the feminized figure of “Ariel.” As Zabus notes, the “polarization of sexual and racial issues” that was such a characteristic of the anticolonial/anti-imperialist era and its literature “is dissolved into the recognition by a creolized Miranda and a bisexual, transgender Black Ariel of their shared victimization” (138).

Like Laurence’s Morag and Murphy’s Miranda, the light-skinned Clare has options, and like them, she makes her choice to side with the oppressed. The choice is more complicated than Morag’s and not as self-destructive as Murphy’s Miranda, but it comes with its own difficulties
and compromises. It is with the fulfilment of this choice that the novel begins—we first meet Clare riding with a ragtag group of revolutionaries in the back of a broken-down truck named “No Telephone to Heaven” as it travels to its rural guerrilla base—and the rest of the novel, through its fragments and time shifts, tells us more or less how she gets there. The revolution she joins does not spontaneously welcome her:

   A light- skinned woman, daughter of landowners, native-born, slaves, émigrés, Carib, Ashanti, English, has taken her place on this truck, alongside people who easily could have hated her. (5)

But she has something valuable to offer to these disinherited Calibans: land, inherited from her grandmother and mother, to serve as a rebel base from which to launch struggles of liberation. This piece of land deep in the Jamaican jungle has been virtually forgotten by Clare, but as she embraces her indigenous side, she is drawn to the land of her dark-skinned mother and grandmother. Here, reconciliation with the land is central to her struggle towards wholeness, but as she becomes more and more aware of injustice it is not enough to embrace her heritage; she is compelled to use her relative privilege to effect real change.

   By entering into an uneasy comradeship with “the wretched of the earth,” Clare throws her lot and her land in with the guerrillas and slams the door on any privilege her class and colour can provide. Harry/Harriet, her companion and the instigator of this journey, also must make an uneasy choice. This Ariel, in spite of “a male organ [that] swung gently under her bleached and starched skirt” (171), decides to become a woman: “The choice is mine, man, is made. Harriet live and Harry be no more” (168). However, this choice, if she wants to survive, is not one she can be open about, even to those with whom she is prepared to fight and die. Critic Nada Elia argues that:
Harry/Harriet intentionally and optimally functions in the liminal spaces playing all the cards at hand. [. . .] Harry/Harriet’s “passing” is not an act of capitulation, but a strategic ruse that admits her/him into ever wider circles, allowing her/him to practice her/his healing sciences among ever greater numbers of people. (354)

The alliance forged in the newly formed rebel base is an uneasy one, but one that Cliff accepts as necessary. Her Miranda, in choosing to side with the oppressed, does not meet an idealized welcome, but unlike Murphy’s Miranda, she has a place there none the less.

The nature of the struggle that Harriet and Clare join is perplexing as well. The target of the rebels is not the neo-colonial state but a film production company, an Anglo-American joint enterprise that has occupied the Jamaican wilderness with all the accoutrements of a modern, industrialized film set. The film-makers have not only occupied the land and exploited the locals as exotic extras, but also appropriated and distorted the history of the oppressed: a heroic slave revolt has become an exotic love-story. The rebels’ assault on the cultural face of global capitalism is ultimately unsuccessful. Constance S. Richards concludes from this result that:

Cliff poses, in this novel, two directions for nationalist action. The symbolic action against capitalist co-option of a resistance myth is unsuccessful. Cliff suggests this is too narrow and simplistic a vision. The other option is the struggle around the real material conditions of real, living people. (29)

However Cliff’s own thoughts on the end of the novel, which ends in betrayal of the rebels and the death of the band, including Clare and Harriet, in an aerial bombardment, propose a more complex conclusion:

At the end of *No Telephone to Heaven*, Clare Savage has cast her lot, quietly and somewhat tentatively, but definitely. She ends her life burned into the landscape of Jamaica, literally, as one of a small band of guerrillas engaged in a symbolic act of
revolution. [...] Though essentially tragic, for her life has been so, I see it, and envisioned it, as an ending that completes the circle, or rather triangle, of the character’s life. In her death she has complete identification with her homeland; soon enough she will be indistinguishable from the ground. Her bones will turn to potash, as did her ancestors’ bones. [...] Clare Savage is burned into the landscape of Jamaica, by gunfire, but she is also enveloped in the deep green of the hills and the delicate intricacy of birdsong.

(“Clare,” 265–66)

In the world of this novel, the first steps of liberation necessitate choosing a side and taking up the struggle. The complicated road to victory remains unmapped both personally and politically, but cannot be drawn until these first steps are taken.

It is interesting that in all three novels, *The Diviners*, *The Measure of Miranda* and *No Telephone to Heaven*, Miranda serves as a type not only for the three heroines, but also for exploration of the nature of the nations in which these women find themselves. Morag’s journey mirrors the struggle of a postcolonial settler nation towards independence. Murphy’s Miranda, in her struggle to assert independence from her ruling-class father and in her choice to side with the world’s dispossessed, explores a more problematic vision of a settler nation caught between a powerful United States and the rest of the world. Clare Savage’s coming-of-age story mirrors the birth and development of Jamaica as an independent country. It is not surprising that Laurence’s 1974 novel reflects the still-fertile optimism of its era, but it is also interesting that the later two feminist reframings of the postcolonial *Tempest* stay true to the revolutionary spirit of the age they portray. However, from the vantage point of the 1980s, the hope of a New Jerusalem, so much part of postcolonial typology, has faltered to be replaced by an apocalypse of revolutionary violence without end.
A type that haunts all postcolonial *Tempest* typology, particularly the typological adaptations like these three that reach us through a feminist lens, is Caliban’s absent mother, Sycorax. In Shakespeare’s play, as Ted Hughes notes, “Sycorax, the ultimate Queen of Hell, is still everywhere, like the natural pressure of the island’s atmosphere. Prospero’s statement that she is dead is little more than a figure of speech: the island [. . .] is hers” (qtd. in Sanders, *Novel* 146). Sycorax is both Prospero’s double and opposite. As Stephan Orgel points out:

her history is curiously parallel with his. She, too, was a victim of banishment, and the island provided a new life for her [. . .]. Like Prospero, she made Ariel her servant and controlled the natural spirits of the island. Sycorax died some time before Prospero’s arrival; Prospero never saw her. [. . .]. Nevertheless, she is insistently present in his memory. (Introduction 19)

Both Prospero and Sycorax gesture to Ovid’s Medea. According to Orgel, Shakespeare based Sycorax on Medea’s portrayal in Book 7 of the *Metamorphoses* (19), and Prospero’s renounces his magic using Medea’s words (5.1.33 f.). Sycorax, in spite of her absence, is Prospero’s active antagonist. In his version of the play her magic is “perverse, irrational, violent, malicious, vindictive [and] progenitor of monsters” (Orgel 21). However once the focus is shifted by a postcolonial frame, Sycorax’s “black” magic takes on the force of suppressed history and is embedded in land which can be occupied but never conquered and in a people who can be oppressed but never broken. Her spirit dominates postcolonial *Tempest* typology. She is present in Ngũgĩ’s myths and powerful secret oaths, in Lamming’s Ceremony of Souls, and in the living earth that sustains Césaire’s Caliban.

However, in these three texts and so many other postcolonial *Tempests*, her role is to hover unseen in the background, to inspire and sustain her masculine warrior sons who are at the forefront of the struggle. It is not until the feminists bring their perspective that Sycorax takes a
central place along with the other postcolonial *Tempest* types. Sycorax becomes a type that bears witness to the centuries-long oppression and erasure of women, especially racialized women, and even more importantly, the persistence of the type affirms the strength and resilience of women in the face of overwhelming odds. May Joseph’s influential essay “Sycorax Mythology” reveals what Sycorax personifies for feminist critics and creative writers:

Sorceress, queen, slave, mother, witch, and revolutionary—Sycorax ruptures the narrative of visual modernity with her vociferous howls of dissent in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. A mythic representation [of] mother earth, virgin nature, or the maternal spirit, Sycorax offers a provocative critique of the erasure of women as political participants in the modern state. She draws our attention to the history of colonial conquest and national liberation, which has consigned women to the shadows of modern nation formation. [. . .] Sycorax impinges upon the terrain of male protagonists of nation-state formation as a disruptive presence, more often heard than seen. [. . .] Her voice evokes the obscured historic terrains through which subaltern struggles must materialize. (209–10)

In postcolonial typological interpretations, Sycorax haunts the “island”; in feminist postcolonial reframings she returns to the island and begins to reassert her sovereignty.

Although Sycorax is never named in *No Telephone to Heaven*, her antitypes dominate the pages of the novel. Clare’s journey is a movement to her mother, grandmother and the feminized motherland of Jamaica. She begins her journey home at the grave of Pocahontas—the “one grandmother who stands apart from the others in *No Telephone to Heaven*” (Cliff, “Clare” 267)—where she makes the choice that eventually leads her home. She is drawn back by the memory of her mother and grandmother who have both died, so “[t]here is nothing left at that point but the land, and it is infused with the spirit and passion of these two women” (“Caliban’s” 46). The powerful spirit of Clare’s foremothers merges not only with the land but also with the spiritual
power of all the grandmothers who have nurtured and sustained Jamaica in spite of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation.

In her essay “Caliban’s Daughter: The Tempest and the Teapot,” Cliff, while commenting in passing on her Clare Savage novels, primarily explores her understanding of her nation’s history and her political vision about the way forward. Central to her vision is embracing the power of the “grandmother,” a power she associates with both Sycorax and the landscape. The figure that embodies this spirit is Nanny, the leader of the Maroon uprising against the English in the first part of the eighteenth century. Calling her “Jamaica’s Sycorax,” Cliff sees, in this antitype of Sycorax, a path to the future:

This powerful aspect of the grandmother is apotheosized in Nanny, the African warrior and Maroon leader and “Science-woman” (as the Maroons called her), precocolial woman par excellence, whose boiling cauldron so mesmerised the Red Coats that they tumbled in and disappeared; to whom were entrusted magical pumpkin seeds, bearing huge fruit in one day to feed her starving troops; who could catch a bullet between her buttocks and fire the lead back at her attackers. [. . .] [She] is the source of knowledge, magic, ancestors, healing, food. She assists in rites of passage, protects and teaches. She is the inheritor of African belief systems, African languages. She is informed with áshe, the power-to-make-things-happen, which carries with it the responsibility to mete out justice.

(47)
The central role that “Granny Nanny” plays for Cliff in Jamaica’s liberation struggle explains why the band of rebels targets the Anglo-American film-shoot for attack. The project is not only the face of global capitalist exploitation; it is the face of cultural genocide. The film they are making is their story of Nanny—no longer a story of rebellion and victory—transformed into an exotic apolitical love-story. The actions of the rebel band, as immediately futile as they may be,
are part of an offensive to reclaim and resurrect the spirit of Nanny-Sycorax, that Cliff’s narrator— in a brief, lyrical chapter called “Magnanimous Warrior!”—insists is crucial for any movement forward:

Obeah-woman. Myal-woman. She can cure. She can kill. [. . .] She is the River Mother. Sky Mother. Old Hige. The Moon. [. . .] What has become of this warrior? [. . .] She has starved to death. She wanders the roads of the country with swollen feet. She has cancer. Her children have left her. Her powers are known no longer. [. . .] They have taken away her bag of magic. [. . .] We have forgotten her. Now we need her more than ever. [. . .]

Can you remember how to love her? (164)

For the rebels and for Clare and Harriett, the only way forward is to resurrect the spirit of Sycorax and, although their actions result in their own destruction, the novel leaves us with an understanding that their sacrifice is not futile but part of the long process of re-awakening Sycorax, and also an act that reunites her with her grandchildren.

The final text that I will look at in this project is Marina Warner’s *Indigo, or Mapping the Waters*, a novel permeated with Sycorax, this time in body as well as spirit. Warner’s novel is a perfect example of the postcolonial typological method I have discussed in this project. If, as Robert Young has argued, postcolonialism involves a reconsideration of history from the point of view of the oppressed and considers “the extent that that history has determined the configurations and power structures of the present,” *Indigo* provides a case study in this method (6). The novel incorporates the coming of colonialism to the Caribbean, the impact of colonialism, and its legacy on 1960s and then 1980s London and the West Indies. Using *The Tempest* as a frame, Warner explores the postcolonial terrain with the same attitude that characterizes Young’s approach.
As well as taking a postcolonial approach, Warner also appropriates typological methodology—one in which she provides the raw material—and casts her reader as the exegete. The novel avoids an all-encompassing narrative and instead presents a juxtaposition of narrative pieces that, placed up against each other, force the reader to evaluate, or re-evaluate, four hundred years of history. By mining her own life and ancestral history, postcolonial literary criticism, anti-imperialist politics, and popular culture, and then fitting all this material into the matrix of *The Tempest*, Warner provides a picture of imperialism operating first on the margins of empire and then in the “the belly of the beast,” the heartland of the empire as it declines, in 1960s and 1980s London.

*The Tempest* provides the types for Warner’s Caribbean island just before the arrival of the British colonizers, and she constructs a prequel that contextualizes Shakespeare’s play. *The Tempest* characters provide types for their descendants who struggle with their privilege and place in the 1960s and then in the 1980s. The narratives of the 1600s, 1960s, and 1980s all stand on their own—the novel is divided into distinct sections—and the reader is forced to make the typological links that implicitly bind the narrative together. Interestingly, the one type who does not exist in the historical section of the novel is Miranda. Although she is the central character throughout the novel, her type is glaringly absent from the historical figures (versions of Sycorax, Caliban, Ariel and Prospero all exist in Warner’s early seventeenth-century island), reminiscent of Spivak’s blind-spot or “aporia.” Although she is absent in the historical sections, *The Tempest* template never lets us forget that she is about to arrive, just beyond the narrative edge of the tale Warner provides. Is Miranda’s identity so fragile and illusive, caught between the privilege of her father and her oppression by patriarchy, that it escapes history? Is her privilege compromised by

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64 In her acknowledgements, Warner thanks Peter Hulme “whose book *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* [. . .] provided inspiring insights.”
the taint of miscegenation? Must she wait until colonialism falls apart and young women begin to stand up before her story can be told and her type becomes properly visible through her twentieth-century antitype?

Like so many of the postcolonial creative writers coming to terms with the colonial experience, Marina Warner and her Miranda, both daughters of Prospero, find in *The Tempest* the vehicle for their reckoning. Not only do all the central characters in the seventeenth-century section of the text bring to life *Tempest* types, the same types provide antitypes for all of the characters in the twentieth-century section which follows them back and forth between London and the island of Sycorax and her family. Miranda is finally united with her twentieth-century Caliban when she finds him rehearsing the role of Caliban in yet another *Tempest*, this time a modern performance in a run-down London church.

But *The Tempest* is not the only intertextual motif to run through *Indigo*. Warner, as if to validate her postcolonial typological vision, introduces layers of thinly disguised realities and allusions from outside her novel. The most obvious is her extensive use of her own family history. Warner is a direct descendant of explorer and slave-trader Sir Thomas Warner, the founder of the first British colony in the Caribbean, St. Kitts. Her family, their history and the history of St. Kitts, the model for the novel’s island of Liamuiga, are absorbed into the fabric of *Indigo*. Family history is not the only layer of “truth” from outside the novel’s boundaries that is introduced into *Indigo*. The novel’s fictional game of Flinders, a thinly disguised version of cricket, provides a hint of other borrowings and appropriations. The story of Smith and Pocahontas influences Ariel’s relationship with Kit Everard; Jane Eyre and Bertha Mason both leave their mark on Miranda; and the Paris Hotel where Miranda finds refuge is called the

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65 Caroline Cakebread’s article “Sycorax Speaks: Marina Warner’s *Indigo* and *The Tempest*” includes an extensive discussion of Marina Warner’s family history and its relationship to Warner’s novel.
Davenant after the co-writer of *The Enchanted Island*. The island’s tales intervene to provide mythic layers for the narrative. Miranda’s eventual union with her Caliban evokes fairy tales, from *Sleeping Beauty* to *Beauty and the Beast*, and the final resolution with the modern equivalent of the unifying marriage—a baby—evokes the unifying romance that ends *The Tempest*. The baby is named after Serafine, the twentieth-century antitype of Sycorax and, through her stories, the guardian of the true history of a four-hundred-year-old struggle.

All of these elements are introduced into *The Tempest* matrix with little authorial indication about where they come from, or what we are supposed to do with them. It is up to the reader to make the links and expand Warner’s created world to include the wider “real” world outside the novel. One of the most interesting elements that Warner brings into her novel—and one that critics have as yet failed to notice—is an entire film, Jean-Luc Godard’s *One Plus One* or *Sympathy for the Devil*. In one important section of the novel set in the 1960s, Miranda, now a journalist for an underground newspaper, interviews a well-known French director, Jean-Claude Meursault, on the set of his first English movie. The set she visits is unmistakable as the mirror image of Godard’s set for *One Plus One*. From the porn shop with a young woman reading Gramsci, to the wrecked car yard full of women’s bodies and Black Panthers reading Eldridge Cleaver, Warner co-opts Godard’s film and incorporates it into her *Tempest* matrix. It is among the wrecked cars and the women’s bodies that this Miranda finds her Caliban, the actor George Felix.

The appropriation of Godard’s film provides a visual and audio “soundtrack” to this section of the novel.66 No more disguised than the name Flinders disguises cricket, the novel’s

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66 Godard’s film would probably be even more forgotten than it now is if it were not for the motif that binds the difficult, wordy and in many ways offensive work together: a cinematic record of the Rolling Stones creating and building the song *Sympathy for the Devil*. The song with its championing of rebellion and “black magic” is a fitting anthem for the postcolonial Caliban. Although the film has now faded into obscurity, in the 1960s, hardly a weekend went by in my city, and I suspect many others, when someone somewhere was not showing this film.
film forces those who take the time to go back and look at Godard’s work to confront and come to term with Caliban’s and Miranda’s 1960s types. By incorporating Godard’s vision of the generational 1960s moment created in the midst of that period, Warner refuses to romanticize or “clean up” that moment, and we are given it warts and all. Again without a directing commentary, Warner presents the complicated, conflict-ridden sexually charged relationship that haunted the postcolonial black man/white woman in the 1960s. Warner, like so many others, finds in *The Tempest* the place where two moments meet. As Miranda and her Caliban negotiate the minefields of race and gender in the postcolonial 1960s and again in the 1980s, *The Tempest* provides the framework that connects the moments. Cakebread’s contends that the play “has a dual function in Miranda’s movement toward a recognition of and, ultimately, a reconciliation with her familial legacy. Janus-like, it provides a window onto the past at the same time as it contains the possibility of transformation within the new context of a postcolonial reading” (232). Cakebread’s conclusion once again illustrates the powerful role *The Tempest* plays as a seminal text in postcolonial explorations.

In an interview with Chantal Zabus, Marina Warner discussed her approach to *The Tempest* and her appropriation of it in *Indigo*:

Shakespeare was writing the father’s plot. Prospero works out the plot for his daughter. Prospero’s wife is conspicuously absent. The only woman is Miranda, the others are off-scene, but also obscene (like Sycorax). So I tried to write the daughter’s plot, to take the story from the other side and show how the daughter extricates herself from the father’s plot. (“Spinning” 524)

At the same time as Warner is writing the “daughter’s plot,” she is writing Sycorax’s. In Warner’s *Tempest* prequel, Sycorax is alive in the spirit and magic of the island, but she is also
there in her physical body. She plays the central role of surrogate mother to both Dulé (Caliban) and Ariel, and keeps alive the magic and tradition of the island as it comes more and more under attack by the advance of colonialism. Sycorax re-emerges in the twentieth-century sections of the novel as her antitype, Serafine (the aging household servant who becomes Miranda’s surrogate mother and her link with the history, magic, and myth of the island). As Julie Sanders notes, there are also elements of Sycorax in other characters, including Miranda’s absent mother, Astrid, and the radical Atala Seacole: “[e]ven in the 1960s Paris hotel room in which Miranda finds herself at one stage, the lemony scent of the maid’s scouring powder [229] recalls the lemon tree of Sycorax on Liamuiga” (146). But it is with Sycorax’s final antitype that the essence of the novel is captured. In the last section of the novel, titled “Serafine III,” we learn that Caliban has gained his adamant wish and Miranda her unspoken one, as this Miranda and her Caliban have found love with each other and produced a child. However, Caliban’s wish to “people the isle with Calibans” does not quite make it into the twentieth century. Instead, the two lovers people the isle with a little Sycorax, a daughter they name Serafine, and the isle they people is not “Prospero’s” island but the island of England. The novel’s third Sycorax antitype, the baby Serafine, gestures towards a future of hybridity and reconciliation that brings a glimmer of hope into an age when Sycorax’s voice is often stifled.

As Warner contemplates the two Tempest moments—that place where empire on the way up meets empire on the way down—and looks back from the darkness of the 1980s and 1990s, the dreams of liberation that animated the postcolonial moments of the 1960s and 1970s have faded. But Sycorax still reaches out to the new Liamuigan leader as best she can:

—What shall we do if we are trapped, again? If we fail?—
Sycorax would have liked to call back, “You must not fail! You will not fail!” But there is earth in her throat. After you, she is thinking, everything that began all those years ago will be accomplished, and the noises of the isle will be still and I—I shall at last come to silence. (376)

For the moment, Miranda and Caliban’s postcolonial 1980s antitypes gain strength from small steps of personal liberation, but the spirit of rebellion personified in Miranda’s questioning, Caliban’s anger, and Sycorax’s magic is ready for another Tempest moment to emerge. And with Sycorax’s rejuvenation in the tiny Serafine who brings together all The Tempest’s types, the future may not be as remote as it might seem.

The critical and creative practice of postcolonial Tempest typology became both a tool and a weapon for a generation to makes its mark on the past, present, and future and do their best to change the world.
Last Words: *The Tempest* Continues its Travels

In this project, I have argued that there is a *Tempest* moment, a moment that spoke very directly to a generation of writers and critics at their own twentieth-century *Tempest* moment. The mix of contesting ideas produced by the early modern English forays into a process that would give birth to Great Britain’s colonial empire had yet to be consolidated into a fixed pattern. *The Tempest* created in the context of a system that was coming into being but not yet coherent, consolidated or naturalized, provided the perfect site for a postcolonial generation to engage in re-sorting and rethinking both the past and future of the same system as it was falling apart. Peter Hulme, in defending the seminal article he wrote with Francis Barker, “Nymphs and Reapers,” claims once again “that *The Tempest* does remain in important respects unintelligible without the historical imbrication which that colonial framework clarifies” (“Stormy” 9). Too often this colonial framework has been seen to include only New World settlements. Once we understand the combination of forces that laid the foundation of English colonialism—trade, piracy, the forging of England and then Britain, as well as settlements—the colonial framework becomes more complex and inclusive. As Ania Loomba points out in *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*:

> The multiplicity of locations that can be read into the play also indicates the historical interconnections *between* different encounters—the Irish experience, according to some historians, prepared the English for their American forays, while according to others, attitudes to native Americans coloured English opinions about Moors. Thus, the multiple valences of *The Tempest* remind us of the global connections inaugurated by colonialism.

(167)

In exploring *The Tempest* and revealing the extent and influence of this “historical imbrication,” Hulme and his colleagues changed the course of early modern literary studies, and
Third World intellectuals found a language to explore their history, as well as their present and future. This historical imbrication created a matrix that writers from the Third World and the First used to explore their own experience; it also provided a cast of characters to personify that experience as the writers struggled to make sense of life in a new postcolonial era.

Although not universally accepted, the postcolonial *Tempest* has been widely adopted, especially outside academia, as *The Tempest*. It is rare to see a popular review of the play without reference to the way a particular production does or does not conform to a colonial interpretation. As Peter Hulme notes:

> For better or worse [...] the postcolonial reading of *The Tempest* is now the “orthodox” approach [Dawson 1988: 68]. The achievement in establishing the new orthodoxy should not be underestimated. Since it has hardly been welcomed by elements of the Shakespearean establishment, it must obviously owe its position to the force of its arguments. (15)

As I have pointed out in the third chapter, this “orthodoxy” does not go unchallenged. However, *The Tempest*’s travels through the postcolonial era have left in its wake new thinking about literature, the early modern era, and the postcolonial experience. Caliban has successfully pushed his way to the centre from the margins and, along the way, he has made a space for Others. If the movement to shift perceptions and claim the margins as the centre that marked the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s—sometimes called the historical turn, the imperial turn or the critical turn—has a face it would certainly be Caliban’s. This turn made room for the “feminists, socialists, people of color, and/or former colonial subjects who linked political agendas for social struggle and

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67 This comment by Hulme is from a debate in the Early Modern Culture Electronic Seminar that involved Hulme, Ania Loomba and Edward Pechter. In his contribution, Hulme discusses criticism of postcolonial work on *The Tempest*, some of it quite vitriolic, coming from critics like Brian Vickers, Jonathan Bate, Edward Pechter, Howard Felperin, William Hamlin, Russ McDonald, and Meredith Anne Skura. See [http://emc.eserver.org/1-3/issue3.html](http://emc.eserver.org/1-3/issue3.html).
transformation to academic work”68 and to novels and poetry (Burton 2). For the time being, Caliban and The Tempest types have changed how many of us see both past and present. Time will tell if Lamming’s prediction holds true; “Caliban’s history—for he has a most turbulent history—belongs entirely to the future” (Pleasures 107).

As I come to the end of this project, I am acutely aware of the many things I have left undone. A broader definition of nascent colonialism in Shakespeare’s world invites a re-examination of every aspect of The Tempest to discover colonial resonances that have gone overlooked or unrecognized. With this broader colonial framework in mind, all of the wonderful Tempest historical literary criticism, dealing with everything from witchcraft to legal terminology, cries out to be reread and reconsidered. The rich discourse undertaken by Third World intellectuals that utilizes Tempest types as a means of discussing politics, culture, philosophy, economics, literature and social relationships demands far more attention than the incomplete list I provide. The role of the play in the academic “cultural wars” demands a deeper examination. Questions such as why The Tempest engages so many creative writers from Africa, the Caribbean and even Latin America, but so few from India, remain unanswered. The rich treasure trove of literature that adopts Tempest types to explore the postcolonial world has barely been touched in this study, and I regret that time and space meant that poetry, where the Tempest cast can so often be found, has not found its way into my analysis in any profound way. Kamau Brathwaite, Lemuel Johnson, Derek Walcott, and Suniti Namjoshi are just a few of the postcolonial poets who have found a place in their poems for Caliban and his fellow islanders.

68 The practitioners of the imperial turn that Antoinette Burton gives as her examples are Edward Said, Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, Gayatri Spivak and Hazel Carby (2).
This experience of travelling with *The Tempest* has led me to a number of interesting and unexpected places, but it has also allowed me to glimpse all the very intriguing places that I have yet to travel.
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