

A CALIBANIC TEMPEST IN ANGLOPHONE & FRANCOPHONE NEW WORLD WRITING

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IN ITS NEARLY FOUR CENTURIES of existence Shakespeare's *The Tempest* has originated an analogous literature in the Old World and has provoked extensive criticism within the body of Shakespeare studies. For instance, Caliban alone is the subject of fifty-three articles from 1926 to 1976. However, the subject of this paper is not the Old World but the New World response to *The Tempest*, for the latter is the earliest work in British literature to have a continuing impact on creative and critical New World writing.

Written in a time of colonial expansion, *The Tempest* can, paradoxically, be reread as a manifesto of decolonization and a myth of imperialism. This myth is rooted in the central "colonial" metaphor provided by the relationship between Prospero and Caliban, which is taken to represent the relationship between colonizer and colonized. There resides the power of the play's latency and its appeal to a larger audience than the British-schooled public — a Calibanic audience. Consequently, most New World writers and critics have identified not with the Moor Othello or their Carib ancestor Man Friday but with the "freckled whelp," Caliban. Conversely, writers from the Western competitive cultures with some exposure to the New World have either willingly identified with Prospero or conveniently failed to do so. I will therefore duly examine selected responses to *The Tempest* from two of the greatest Prospero-like colonizing powers, Britain and France, and critical reactions to the above from the Antilles. The rest of the first section will be devoted to West Indian and Antillean writers who have recognized the contemporary relevance of the Prospero/Caliban relationship to their colonial predicament, and have touched on such issues as "language" and "rape," which are the key-notions in Act I, scene ii, lines 331-67 of *The Tempest*. In the second section I will contrast West Indian works with English-Canadian works which privilege Miranda over Caliban and, in the last section, with works from French-Canadian writers who share the Black writer's overt fascination

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with Caliban. Furthermore, I will also attempt to advance reasons for the similarities and dissimilarities among the literary ripostes to Shakespeare's text.

For convenience, lines 331-67 from Act I, scene ii, which constitute the core source of most New World adaptations of *The Tempest*, are here quoted in the brilliance of their self-sufficiency:

CALIBAN :	...	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; woudest give me Water with berries in't; ...	335
	...	and then I lov'd thee, And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle, The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile: Curs'd be I that did so! ... For I am all the subjects that you have, Which first was mine own King: and here you sty me In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me The rest o' th' island.	345
PROSPERO :	Thou most lying slave,	Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have us'd thee, Filth as thou art, with human care; and lodg'd thee In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate The honour of my child.	350
CALIBAN :		O ho, O ho! would't had been done! Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else This isle with Calibans.	
MIRANDA :	Abhorred slave,	Which any print of goodness wilt not take, Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee, Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage, Know thine own meaning, but woudest gabble like A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes With words that made them known. ...	355
CALIBAN :		You taught me language; and my profit on't Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you For learning me your language! ¹	365

THE FIRST CRITICAL STUDY of colonization to make use of the Prospero/Caliban metaphor is a psychological treatise, *La Psychologie de la colonisation* (1950), by D. O. Mannoni, the French psychologist who witnessed the 1947 uprising in Madagascar. He has the merit of expanding Caliban into a type and a complex figure, traced from the Malagasy, who presumably suffers

from a deeply rooted “dependency complex.”² This complex, in fact, suitably legitimizes political subjugation and is inimical to the spirit of the 1947 rebellion and the daily increase in nationalistic agitation. Mannoni thus erroneously asserts Caliban’s happiness in dependency and misunderstands Caliban’s ostensible submissiveness to Prospero and the slave’s *empressement* as a readiness to deify the White man.

Among the British responses *à la* Prospero, Philip Mason’s *Prospero’s Magic* (1962) and D. G. James’s *The Dream of Prospero* (1967) best illustrate the ambivalence that imbues contemporary scholarship faced with the aftermath of colonialism. Philip Mason, an English novelist and scholar in race relations, pleads guilty in *Prospero’s Magic* of being a Prospero *in esse*. After spending twenty years in India as a magistrate, he seems inclined to atone for the wrongs done to Caliban, or any suppressed race or culture. He urges the Prosperos to lay aside such colonial accoutrements as the magic book and the staff — symbols of White Western magic — in order to facilitate the “search for a new source of authority and for new values,” which will ultimately lead to the breaking of “the old chain of dependence.”³ Unlike Mason, D. G. James in his *Dream of Prospero* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) is trapped in his imperialist bias. He deliberately undermines the impact of the colonial experience on Prospero by “erasing” the authenticity of the experience and giving it a dream-like quality. *The Dream of Prospero* can therefore be read as the counterpart to Caliban’s dream of independence and freedom disavowed by such unregenerate European scholars as James and Mannoni.

Mannoni’s book provoked two immediate irate responses from the Black, i.e., Antillean, literary world: Martiniquan poet-philosopher Aimé Césaire’s exuberant response in *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1950) and the more organized attack by Césaire’s fellow-countryman, Frantz Fanon, in his first book *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952). In his *Discours*, Césaire vehemently denounces Mannoni’s over-reliance on psychological interpretation and such bourgeois “hollow notions [as] the *idea* of the dependence complex.”⁴ Fanon goes further than Césaire and accuses Mannoni in Chapter Four of *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) of “leav[ing] the Malagasy no choice safe between inferiority and dependence,” for “*it is the racist who creates his inferior.*”⁵

In the first chapter of the same book, “The Negro and Language,” Fanon tackles the issue of Caliban’s language and concludes: “What I am trying to say is that there is no reason why André Breton should say of Césaire ‘Here is a black man who handles the French language as no white man today can’.”⁶ Indeed, the twin result of the irreversible process of colonization is that the colonized speaks the language of the colonizer and, by the same token, becomes his rival in literary sophistication. This language is considered by most New World writers not only as part of Prospero’s legacy to Caliban but also as the latter’s means “to

curse” the colonizer, as exemplified in 1.ii.355-66 of *The Tempest*. This “gabble” which Miranda denigrates is Caliban’s native idiolect. This premise, elaborated upon by Nigerian John Pepper Clark in “The Legacy of Caliban,”⁷ is to be posed in order to understand the three stages in Caliban’s linguistic history: the first stage is learning his native tongue from Sycorax; the second involves Caliban’s appropriation of “your language” (1.ii.367); the third stage is one of complete transcendence that entails Prospero’s exclusion from this new language. This new-found lingo has different meanings for West Indian George Lamming in *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960) and for German Janheinz Jahn in his *History of Neo-African Literature* (1968). For Lamming, this new language obstructs Caliban’s future unless there is an “extraordinary departure which explodes all of Prospero’s premises,”⁸ whereas Jahn has unlimited faith in Caliban and sees Lamming’s hypothetical “extraordinary departure” as a future probability.⁹ Although Jahn’s optimism is characteristic of the sentimentalism of European academics with anti-colonial sympathies, the actualization of the concept of “departure” is a valid strategy of decolonization that signifies the end of the Old World as the only source of culture.

The New World responses to *The Tempest* are not only essentially critical but also creative. In fact, the above criticism, ranging from aesthetic nuance to political anger, is part of a larger body of New World writing that includes creative writing. Of those two natives from Barbados, George Lamming is both a critic and a novelist whereas Edward Brathwaite is a critic and a poet. Whatever the literary medium they chose to express their colonial and personal concerns, they both venture in the domain of language.

Brathwaite’s poem “Limbo” from *Islands* is the poetic rendition of Jahn’s concept of Caliban’s third language, that which he has “minted” from Prospero’s. To Brathwaite, this language is rooted in the authenticity of primitive African rituals. Caliban’s euphoric song in 1.ii.184-85 thus becomes for the poet an incantation initiating the return to the African folk-tradition as a new source of inspiration. After reliving the slaves’ trials during the Middle Passage, the limbo dancer is ultimately rescued from the “Limbo [of] silence” by the talking drums, the African equivalent of the “noises,/Sounds and sweet airs” (III.ii.133-34) humming in Caliban’s ears. Having released a Caribbean sensibility through the African drum, Caliban’s tongue is now “heavy with new language.” To the “rich old lady[’s]” question in another poem, “The Emigrants” — “Have you no language of your own? — Caliban can at last retort in “Beginning” that, while defending himself with polished English phrases, he is also “making / with [his] / rhythms some- / thing torn and new.” Besides affirming Caliban’s new language, Brathwaite announces the release from the fetters of the Middle Passage and the metamorphosis of the ithyphallic Caliban, the “fuck / in’ negro . . . [with] big you know / what,” into a highly sensitive artist.¹⁰

Besides considering Caliban's linguistic history, some West Indian writers also tackle the issue of rape, which, along with language, is the principal weapon of the colonizer's arsenal. Whereas Brathwaite evokes the Middle Passage and Caliban's putative sexual potency separately, Lamming subordinates both notions to that of "*rapere*," that is, the fact of "taking anything by force" (O.E.D.). The latter definition denotes not only the "taking away by force" of a woman, i.e., Miranda's honour, but also that of the Negro slaves from their native soil to the Caribbean islands. In his creative work, Lamming has the merit of connecting an isolated reference to rape in *The Tempest* (1.ii.351-53) to the dichotomies involved in Black and White sexual ethics. Thus his first novel, *In the Castle of My Skin* (London: Michael Joseph, 1953), contains alleged accusations of rape whereas his later novel *Water With Berries* deals with two actual rapes. The first involves Othello, and the second is based entirely on *The Tempest*, and, as Lamming acknowledges in an interview, on "my old Prospero-Caliban theme."¹¹ On the occasion of a party in London, foster-Britain offers its West Indian adopted children "water with berries" (1.ii.336) — "champagne" with "strawberries."¹² During the sobering-up, Derek, one of the Caribbean artists in exile, realizes that his theatrical career has declined from successfully acting Othello at Stratford-upon-Avon to acting the part of a corpse at the Circle Theatre in London. Left with only the memory of his past artistic grandeur, Derek broods over his "tragic flaw." During a *première*, he is suddenly seized by a "cannibal rage," and rapes the leading actress. Ironically, the Black man's idiosyncratic act only corroborates the White audience's secret wishes and enhances their vision of the gory apocalyptic end of European civilization.

The second rape in *Water With Berries* is much more complicated in its action and presentation, for it is re-told by the victim herself, Myra, and by the helpless observer of the scene, Fernando. Myra (Miranda) relates to Teeton, another Caribbean writer in exile, how she survived a "storm" far away from her English home and was wrecked with her father on an island at the age of three. After her father's death, fourteen years later, the servant and his men "made a bonfire to celebrate their rape of [her]," "giving the interval over to the animals." Her "Father's partner," Fernando (Ferdinand), is tied to a chair and forced to watch the collective rape. Later in the book, Fernando turns out to be Myra's father and the brother and rival to Prospero whose "experiment in ruling" on the island he regards as a "curse" (1.ii.366) that will "come back to plague my race until one of us dies." In this episode, the situation of *The Tempest* has been extravagantly modified — Ferdinand as both Prospero's brother and Miranda's father — and complicated because Miranda's rape results from Prospero's self-exile. In the former episode, Derek is presented as a highly sensitive Caliban with an artistic temperament whereas, in this episode, the Calibans populating Prospero's island are theroid monsters engaged in orgiastic activities. The second treatment

is obviously based on the myth of Caliban's monstrous sexual and copulatory potency, which Lamming had already discussed in *The Pleasures of Exile*, along with the consequences of rape, and *a fortiori* exogamy and miscegenation. The duplication of the rape motif in *Water With Berries* signals the ambivalence of Lamming's use of Caliban as well as his ambiguous fascination with both Prospero's victims, Derek and Myra, and with Prospero himself with whom Lamming identifies *pro tem* (*Pleasures*, e.g., p. 105). Thus this dual "Way of Seeing" (see Chapter IV of *Pleasures*) is also inherent in Lamming himself as it is in the artistic Caliban.

The artistic Caliban aims at transmuting the search for racial expression into art. This transmutation is legitimized by the inconsequential ending of *The Tempest* which enables such a critic as Lamming to go beyond Shakespeare's text and consider such possibilities as Caliban's journey to Milan and his release from the knotty entrails of Prospero's language and culture. Yet, unlike the Black critic, the Black creative writer operates not outside of Shakespeare's play but from *within* the possibilities of its exposition. Consequently, Miranda is being raped in Lamming's *Water With Berries* and Caliban resumes his former status, i.e., is "[his] own King" again (I.II.344) in Césaire's play *Une Tempête* (1969), which is the only extant full-scale adaptation of *The Tempest*.

More even than Lamming and Brathwaite, Aimé Césaire feels himself to be the son of uprooted African slaves and firmly believes in Caliban's "extraordinary departure," which for him started with the foundation of the Négritude movement in Paris in 1934. Césaire's purpose in adapting *The Tempest* is to dramatize the nature of colonialism. *Une Tempête* is destined, as the subtitle indicates, for a New World audience.¹³ Apart from technical changes, adjuncts, or displacements like the gathering of the five acts of *The Tempest* into three, the major "extraordinary departure" occurs in the characterization and in the ending.

The play clearly rests on the opposition between Prospero and his two slaves, Ariel and Caliban. Césaire makes Caliban into a bellicose Negro slave clamouring his African-ness whereas the sylph-like Ariel is made a Mulatto slave. Like his Shakespearean prototype, Caliban is a creature of earth but unaccompanied by its corollary: the palpable grossness of a lower nature. Although both Ariel and Caliban are slaves and share the same predicament, their methods differ. Ariel, the would-be utopist, dreams of a Land of Cockaigne whereas the rebel Caliban denounces Ariel's obsequious boot-licking and Uncle Tom-like patience. Césaire thereby anticipates the vicissitudes of new-found independence: the post-independent Black man is in effect either an Ariel, i.e., "the good native, the moderate nationalist," or a Caliban, i.e., "the nationalist, the extremist, the man who will be Prime Minister after independence" (*Magic*, 88-89). However, the principal debate in *Une Tempête* is not between Ariel and Caliban but between Caliban and Prospero. Caliban is fundamentally the revolted slave, the insurgent,

the cause of the tempest in Césaire's play. Caliban thus vehemently rejects Prospero's education, language and culture as well as his slave name. Césaire's Prospero ironically suggests to call his slave "Cannibal," thereby de-anagrammatizing Caliban's name, but Caliban asks to be called "X" after the common Afro-American practice to connote Prospero's theft of both his name and identity. He closes his discourse on freedom with the powerful interjection "Uhuru," which means "independence" in Swahili. Thus equipped with this new-found lingo and an identity of his own, Caliban is now ready to confront his old master. Prospero is here radically different from the Shakespearean original, as is best shown near the end of the play. After ten years of propinquity, Prospero offers peace to Caliban. In a tirade, the latter denounces Prospero's intoxication and his addictive need for the colonized, and envisions the collapse of the Old World at the hands of his own tempestuous violence. Unlike Shakespeare's Prospero, Césaire's does not go back to the mother-country, for, he deems, "sans moi cette île est muette" (*Une Tempête*, 90). By the end of the play, vermin, insects, and reptiles have infested the grotto. The once despotic and omnipotent Prospero looks old and wearied; his magical powers have eroded and he is left alone to suffer the effects of mental decrepitude and to ponder the sordidness of colonialism. The play concludes with Caliban proclaiming his new-found freedom: "La liberté ohé, la liberté!" Césaire's Caliban thus embraces not the illusion of a drunkard, as in Shakespeare's play (II.ii.8), but the lucid hope of a slave determined to break the bond of dependence.

Caliban is both Césaire's mouthpiece and the embodiment of the concept of "Négritude." His medium is the "Uhuru" language, the independence language of the oppressed Negro slave. That Caliban may be thought of as African has been corroborated by Nigerian Nkem Nwankwo in his poem "Caliban to Miranda." Like Césaire's Caliban, Nwankwo's Caliban affirms the hatred of the colonized and denounces Prospero's usurpation "by magic fraud." The poem ends on an apocalyptic note. The poet announces the collapse of the West, the wearing off "of your ingenuities / [which] Have toppled you back again to rubble / We Calibans will inherit the earth."¹⁴ Similarly, Kenyan Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in his collection of essays, *Homecoming*, asserts the resilience of the African Caliban, for "it is difficult, as Prospero found out, for colonial domination to completely crush the human spirit."¹⁵ Various Black writers and critics like Césaire, Lamming, and C. L. R. James have also identified Caliban with Toussaint l'Ouverture, the Negro leader of the slaves' revolt in Haiti in 1791.¹⁶ Yet Caliban is not necessarily Black. For Brathwaite in "Limbo" the rebellion ensuing on Fidel Castro's landing in Cuba in 1956 and the overthrowing of Batista are reminiscent of Caliban's revolt in *The Tempest*. Similarly, Roberto Fernandez Retamar proposes Caliban as the symbol of the "mestizos" in his essay on Latin American culture: "What is our history, what is our culture but the

history, but the culture of Caliban?"¹⁷ One could go on multiplying the examples. Caliban is not only African, West Indian or Latin American; he has become the inexhaustible symbol of the colonized insurgent.

I N THE FOREGOING WEST INDIAN TEXTS there is a notable recurrence of ripostes to *The Tempest* and to the Prospero/Caliban relationship. Such a recurrence is also verifiable in Canadian works as it is nowhere else in New World writing. Given that both Canada and the Antilles are still culturally bound by the shackles of colonialism, it is interesting to compare the response of an English-Canadian writer who has had a certain exposure to Africa such as Margaret Laurence with that of Martiniquan Frantz Fanon who worked in Algeria. Both have a strong anti-imperialist outlook; yet they respond differently to the "dependency complex" theory expounded by Mannoni in *The Psychology of Colonization*, which we mentioned at the beginning of this paper. As noted above, Fanon attacks Mannoni's Freudian dissection of the Malagasy's psyche and unmasks Prospero not only as an imperialist but also as a racist. On the other hand, in *The Prophet's Camel Bell* (1963), Margaret Laurence recounts her experience in Somaliland and her grappling with imperialism. Her simultaneous recognition of the Caliban and Prospero complexes in herself does her credit but her then mawkish understanding of Caliban, i.e., the Somali, leaves too much room for irony. In her attempt to understand the inscrutable Abdi and his unabated resentment against the English, Laurence ventures:

A possible clue to the puzzle was provided not long ago by Mannoni's description of the dependence complex in *The Psychology of Colonization*, a book which I read with the shock of recognition one sometimes feels when another's words have a specific significance in terms of one's own experiences.¹⁸

Thus Fanon rejects Mannoni's theory whereas Laurence subscribes to it. This difference in attitudes towards colonialism mirrors the difference between English Canadian and West Indian attitudes to the relevance of *The Tempest* to their "colonial" predicament.

In English Canada, Caliban is artfully relegated to the wings of the literary scene and such topics as language and rape receive no attention. Unlike the Black writer, the English-Canadian writer privileges Miranda over Caliban and appears to dwell more on the Prospero/Miranda or Miranda/Ferdinand relationships as conventional metaphors of parental and romantic relations. In Shakespeare's text, Miranda is under Prospero's despotic tutelage and the victim of his capricious will. Although English Canadian literature now experiences no such victimization at the hands of British letters, the choice of Miranda as a national symbol makes the search for an English Canadian literary identity an ironic

enterprise, for Miranda is and will always be Prospero's progeny and may never rebel against Prospero's authority.

The Tempest is used in the following English-Canadian works: Charles G. D. Roberts's *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* (1900); Robertson Davies's *Tempest-Tost* (1951); Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974), and Audrey Thomas's *Prospero on the Island* (1971). The span of time between the publication dates of Roberts's and Laurence's novels probably accounts for the difference in concluding the story of the Canadian Miranda. Roberts brings the nubile "peerless" youth and "the patient log-man" together whereas Laurence's Miranda rejects her Ferdinand in favour of the "earthy" Jules. Roberts, Davies, and Laurence all use aspects of *The Tempest* to make a statement about the Canadian situation: Roberts is concerned with the building of Canadian society; Davies with the development of Canadian culture; and Laurence with the making of the Canadian artist. This growing refinement of concern is also illustrated by the progressive development of the Caliban figure in all three novels. The bear in Roberts's novel is Caliban on all fours; the cantankerous actor with his "monkey-like physique" in Davies's novel is a degenerate rendition of the drunken Caliban of *The Tempest*; and the Calibanesque Jules in Laurence's novel is given the Ariel-like property of the singer.

If we except the anonymous *Ottawah, the Last Chief of the Red Indians of Newfoundland* (1847), which contrives a situation analogous to that of *The Tempest*, *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* is the earliest Canadian creative commentary on *The Tempest*. The action takes place in a settlement in eastern New Brunswick. Roberts's heroine, Kirstie, seeks exile, not because of adultery like her counterpart Hester Prynne in Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, but because she is unable to cope with the gossip that ensues on the sudden and unexpected departure of her restless husband. The persecuted Kirstie and her daughter Miranda seek seclusion in a deserted cabin in the clearing of the "Ancient Wood." Roberts here answers Lamming's question in the *salon* digressions of *Pleasures* — "Who was Miranda's mother?" Kirstie is also the Prospero of the novel in so far as she is responsible for Miranda's upbringing in the civilized arts. Roberts's most remarkable adaptation is to convert the Shakespearean Caliban into Kroof, the female bear, and to invest "wonderful Mirandy" with Ariel's elemental disposition as well as Caliban's fabulous insight into the workings of untamed nature. The Ferdinand of the novel, young Dave, is an unadorned trapper and the "patient logman" of *The Tempest* (III.i.67). With the termination of Dave's "logbearing" activity, the traditional *ascesis* prior to marriage and sexual consummation, and with Miranda's sacrificial slaughter of the jealous Kroof ends an era of primitive innocence. Dave rescinds the "Pax Mirandae," thereby forcing Miranda to renounce both her elfish nature and her Calibanesque sensibility.

As the two lovers in *The Tempest* bring together two formerly antagonistic families, Dave and Miranda successfully synthesize two apparently irreconcilable modes: that of the Settlement and that of the Wilderness. Their marriage thus serves as a stepping stone to the building of the Canadian Brave New World.

Of Roberts's focus on the exile of parent and child in a pastoral setting, Robertson Davies retains only the pastoral element. In his first novel, *Tempest-Tost*, the amateurs of the Salterton Little Theatre are producing *The Tempest*. Unlike any character so far considered, Gonzalo, the "honest old counsellor," is made the central figure. Hector Mackilwraith, an inveterate bachelor and teacher of mathematics, identifies with Gonzalo on his first reading of *The Tempest*, for he ascribes to him wisdom and respectability, and he cherishes the idea of wearing an impressive costume and false whiskers. In his naiveté he falls passionately in love with the Ariel of the play, nineteen-year-old Griselda Webster. Convinced that Griselda has rejected him, he attempts to commit suicide but fails, and subsequently recovers his emotional balance in the Ontario Department of Education. Among this ludicrous and ineffectual cast figure the pompous Salterton Prospero, Professor Vambrace from the Department of Classics at Waverley University; his timid fifteen-year-old daughter in life and on stage, who is secretly in love with the "beauteous" Salterton Ferdinand, an egocentric libertine; and the jovial and loquacious Salterton Caliban, one of the stewards in the liquor store.

Structural irony controls the action in *Tempest-Tost*. It is based on the discrepancy, as *eirōn* connotes, between Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the Little Theatre production of it. The Salterton group lacks the spirit to convey the essence of *The Tempest* and its futile attempt to pioneer the pastoral "in this part of the world" merely demonstrates its mediocrity all the more. Yet Davies's purpose is not to deride Salterton's parochialism and second-ratedness but to correct its artistic foibles. Davies's larger aim is to demonstrate that Canadian culture, at least at the time of the novel's publication, is still in the cradle, and that, like the bark the *Macbeth* witches have doomed, "[it] cannot be lost, / Yet it shall be tempest-tost." In spite of their apparent belittlement, the characters represent what Canadian art could possibly articulate, had it determined to delve in its own potential. Instead, the Salterton Miranda requires the "proper guidance" of the efficient American-trained theatrical director. The Little Theatre means to produce *The Tempest* are amateurish and this amateurism Davies sees as endemic to Canadian culture.

In Robertson Davies's novel *The Tempest* serves as a source of characters who are involved in a plot that bears no resemblance to the action of the play. Conversely, in Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974), there is only one reference to *The Tempest* but the action of the novel is based on Shakespeare's play. The

protagonist Morag Gunn explains in a letter to a friend that she herself is writing a novel — a novel within a novel — which is also based on Shakespeare's play:

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.¹⁹

On the generally accepted critical assumption that author and protagonist fuse in *The Diviners*, one may deal with the latter as if it were subtitled "Prospero's Child." Prospero's child is undoubtedly Miranda/Morag and His Excellency (H.E.) or "He," the paragon of the male gender, is both Ferdinand and Prospero. At a Winnipeg university Morag meets her Prospero in the person of Professor Skelton who at first acts as the promoter of her artistic talent and her "schoolmaster" (I.ii.172) but who keeps on assuming that role in their subsequent marital relationship. "In order to become her own person," Morag therefore breaks her marriage and enters a second phase marked by "the opposite extreme," through getting involved with Jules Tonnerre, the Métis who first seduced her. This painful encounter, which corresponds to Caliban's supposed rape of Miranda in *The Tempest*, establishes Jules' Calibanesque stature. By positing an independent life for Morag, the woman-writer, Laurence presents an allegory of the making of the Canadian artist, who has to abandon the sterility of British letters (here represented by Skelton) and embrace the fertility of the native land (here represented by Jules) as the only source of identity. Like the Black writer, both Laurence and Davies are concerned with the artist but, unlike him, they fail to place the artist in a recognizably colonial setting.

Prospero's literary progeny has the potential to raise a tempest of revolt and nationalistic assertion. But, whereas artists like Laurence make discriminate use of *The Tempest*, others use it only because it is part of their schooling. The result is one of utter trivialization. In Audrey Thomas's *Prospero on the Island* (1971), the protagonist, Miranda Archer, recounts in a diary-like fashion her one-year holiday on Magdalena, one of the "outer islands" in the gulf of Georgia. The highlight of her sojourn is her acquaintance with the intriguing artist-magician, Prospero Mackenzie, whom she views as both a potential lover and a father-figure. After spending one year in the Brave New World of Magdalena, enjoying the acquaintance of Ferdinand/Prospero, Miranda returns to the drudgery of her Vancouver life. The situation in Shakespeare's play has been radically simplified, apart from two inchoate extrapolations which consist in endowing Prospero with the youth and qualities of Ferdinand and in having Shakespeare's Miranda suffer from the Electra complex. Audrey Thomas's use of *The Tempest* is casual and pointless: "It'll just have to be Prospero and Miranda."²⁰

THE ENGLISH CANADIAN WRITER'S failure to recognize the relevance of the Caliban/Prospero relationship to the Canadian situation operates as a foil to the French-Canadian writer's identification with Caliban, a cultural mulatto caught between two cultures but moving towards a transcendence of rather than a rebellion against the colonial situation. The novel *Caliban* (1977) by the French-Canadian novelist Pierre Seguin is more complex than any of the English-Canadian works considered so far and vies in complexity with Lamming's *Water With Berries*. Seguin's Caliban here emerges as the *bête noire* in the Canadian cast of Mirandas, Prosperos, and Ferdinands. Seguin presents two Calibans: one of them is Jérôme Bassompierre, a Montreal avant-garde puppet-master enamoured of perfection and solitude; the second Caliban is Jérôme's puppet whose histrionic flight with the puppet Ariel constitutes the core of esoteric shows. Seguin's purpose in using *The Tempest* is identical with Jérôme's purpose in choosing *The Tempest* as a contextual device for his show. He does not aim at either "illustrating a scene from *The Tempest*, or giving a personal interpretation of it, or a parody or an allegory of it. He uses his characters only because they are convenient and recognized symbols whose universal impact exempts him from providing a long and fallacious speech."²¹ "Borrowing" is legitimate, for Jérôme/Seguin does not believe in "ideas as personal property." The conventional critic is then ridiculed for his unwillingness to explore the unspoken or the "latent" in Shakespeare's play, that which justifies the existence of all the adaptations so far considered.

Seguin conventionally uses two attributes of Caliban: his appearance and his speech. Seguin's intimation that Jérôme *alias* Caliban is a "savage" (1.ii.357); establishes from the start his kinship with Shakespeare's Caliban. So does his language; Jérôme's speech is either inarticulate or replete with platitudes. His spokesman, Gilles, acts as an interpreter and decoder; he deftly converts Jérôme's prosaic speech into a highly intellectualized language by means of which Gilles hopes to retain the capricious attention of the Saturday night audience of intellectual snobs. By stressing the discrepancy between the audience's thirst for linguistic sophistication and Jérôme's lingo, Seguin shares the Black writer's preoccupation with the "minting" of a language other than Prospero's. One recalls that, from Prospero's vantage point, language is the "profit" (1.ii.365) the colonized supposedly gains from colonization. Here Prospero's language is a "source of misapprehension" whereas rape or its possibility is far from providing the excuse for subjugation, as it does in Shakespeare's play. Jérôme painfully recalls that his first seduction of an English girl called Mira (Miranda) was a failure and mourns what might have been, had she been more lenient and he more experienced: "O oh, O ho! Would't had been done! Thou didst prevent

me; I had peopled else This isle with Calibans." Seguin maliciously pursues the question: What would Caliban have done after the failure of his attempted rape of Miranda? Jérôme temporarily becomes "Onân" (in the two "Onân" episodes) before having a stormy affair with Ginette, the Ariel-like Montreal minx (in the "Ariel and Caliban" episode). After this unwarrantable interference in his life, Jérôme deliberately curtails his sexual activities in order to recapture the forlorn solitude so indispensable to his art.

Jérôme's dismissal of the Ariel-like Ginette results in one of the two altercations between Ariel and Caliban in the novel. The second one takes place in his puppet-theatre. The key-scene in Jérôme's show is the single combat between Ariel and Caliban, which is stretched to almost one hour. The spectacle of Caliban savagely trampling Ariel to death is followed by Caliban's subservient prostration at Prospero's feet. This curious juxtaposition of scenes causes one of the initiates in the audience to ask whether, by making Caliban a boot-licker, Jérôme is implying that "all revolt is impossible, even illegitimate." Gilles, with his customary fluency, replies that Caliban's subservience is the only safe attitude the colonized can assume when confronted with the colonizer, "even if it entails working in the shadow towards his freedom." Finally, Gilles predicts that, if Caliban persists in his unlimited wicked determination, one day Jérôme will have Caliban kill Prospero. In the next scene, the enraged puppet Prospero refrains from killing the culprit, for, he ponders, like Césaire's Prospero: "On whom will [I] exert [my] unlimited powers?" Caliban is thus spared but, unlike Césaire's Caliban, converted into a kind of cultural mulatto:

After Prospero has assumed power, he is no more than a *hybrid*, too "educated" to be still able to hear the song of nature, too simple-minded to taste that of culture. . . . (my emphasis)

After the arrival of culture bearers, the puppet Caliban becomes the victim of an irreversible process of cultural contamination. He becomes a "hybrid" partaking of both Nature and Culture but unable to "taste" fully either of them. Yet this stage of helplessness can be modified not by "passive resistance," as Jérôme once advocated, but by radical and murderous insurrection.

Throughout the novel, whether it concerns the eviction of Jérôme's boisterous friend Frédéric by the Saturday night audience or the murder of his childhood friend, Dominique Verger, by the clergy, the artful controlling force has Prospero-like dimensions. In the second half of the novel, the manipulator/victim relationship becomes defined in metaphysical terms and "the champion of passive resistance" becomes Man, that puppet held by the strings of Fate and crippled by Life itself. In an attempt to affirm active resistance, Jérôme-Caliban throttles his spokesman after being reborn as "the Being, the One, the Androgyne" in his studio, the now eviscerated "womb of Sycorax." This marks the beginning of

Jérôme's fight against the Establishment, the "NORM," and ironically fulfils Gilles's prophecy that Caliban will eventually kill Prospero. This also takes the Black writer's most vehement radicalism a step further.

The explanation for the germination of Seguin's novel in the soil of Québec may lie in Haitian-born Max Dorsinville's *Caliban Without Prospero: Essay in Québec and Black Literature* (1974). Seguin's theory of hybridity and of Caliban's "active resistance" is an *ex post facto* creative rendition of Dorsinville's critical conjectures in Chapters four and nine of *Caliban Without Prospero* — "The Hybrid Québécois" and "Québec self-articulation." Dorsinville argues that the Québécois Caliban partakes of two cultures: "Abandoned by France and/ or conquered by Britain in 1760, the French Canadians therefore suffered a scission in their collective self."²² Unlike Dorsinville, Seguin does not envisage a "possible synthetical stage of reconciliation between Caliban and a re-educated Prospero" but a complete eradication of Caliban's relationship with Prospero and therefore more aptly renders the "extended metaphor" of Caliban *without* Prospero. The fact that Dorsinville used the Prospero/Caliban metaphor as the basis for the similarity between Black-American and French-Canadian literature shows two things: first, that by the time he undertook his study, the metaphor had become common currency among Black writers and critics, and, second, that Seguin's novel can be inscribed within the context of the emergence in the early sixties of "the figure of the Black man, as symbol, image, and myth . . . in the French-Canadian consciousness."

On the subject of language, Dorsinville seems to concur with Black critics and European scholars like Jahn: "Caliban has subverted the metropolitan man's language, subordinating it as a medium for the end expression of *his* sensitivity." The only distinctive Calibanic language in use for the making of a "Calibanic literature" in Québec is "joual." It is a socio-linguistic form of protest akin to Caliban's interjectory "Uhuru" in Césaire's *Une Tempête* and Jérôme's idiosyncratic, fractured language in Seguin's *Caliban*. When Seguin comments on language and insurrection, he shares the preoccupation of a Lamming or a Césaire, although his preoccupations are more metaphysical than those of the two West Indian writers. He is less concerned with his colonial predicament than he is with colonization in its largest sense: the manipulation of puppet-like Man, and the crushing of the "Mozart" part in him, as his choice of an epigraph from Saint-Exupéry's *Terre des hommes* indicates.

Seguin and the Black writer share a preoccupation with Caliban because they are both acutely aware of their "hybridity" and their linguistic and cultural subjugation. It then appears that, as the liberated Caliban they portray represents the autonomous ex-colony, Miranda represents the culturally dependent colony in English-Canadian letters. Miranda is thus bound to clash again with the Québécois Caliban, for she has clashed with him before, as Canada's painful

history of internal strife testifies. The English-Canadian writer comparatively lacks liberationist engagement, for, in his view, Canada is still "Prospero's Child." However, Davies and Laurence intimate that Canada *qua* Miranda needs to mature and stop "attend[ing]" Britain "most heedfully" (i.ii.78), and that English-Canadian literature is an outgrowth rather than an offspring of the British-literary tradition.

The degree of adaptation is, as we have seen, strongly related to the degree of engagement and the awareness of "hybridity." The degree of adaptation of Shakespeare's play fluctuates in both the Black and White literary worlds between casual derivativeness and radical transcendence. It reaches its peak in Québécois and Antillean adaptations that deal with the rape of Caliban's identity and language. In these works, "hybridity" is used to refer to Caliban's entrapment between Nature and Culture, or any opposing forces, but it also encompasses such forms as mulattism and bilingualism. More specifically, it refers to the predicament of the writing Caliban whose subject is the liberated Caliban but whose medium is Prospero's language; this is his residual enslavement but also his "curse" (i.ii.366) on Prospero. The third-level Calibanic language synthesized from the theories of Jahn, Clark, and Lamming is struggling to be born in most of the adaptations I have examined. Suffice it to say at this point that such a language is currently used in numerous West Indian and African works in its vernacular or indigenized form.²³

Transcendence in form and language will presumably engender the ultimate severance of the umbilical cord linking the progeny to the mother-country and of the "colonial" or even "neo-colonial" bond between oppressor and oppressed. The adaptation and re-interpretation of the earlier Old World literature of colonization, i.e., *The Tempest*, as literature of decolonization is, at its worst, sheer parasitism but, at its best, superior in effectiveness to an anti-colonial polemic. As an articulate literary riposte, it constitutes one of the most cogent strategies of decolonization in literature.

NOTES

- ¹ Frank Kermode, ed., *The Tempest in The Arden Shakespeare* (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 31-33. Some critics have given i.ii.355-60 to Prospero because it makes Miranda sound unduly obstreperous. All further references are to this edition.
- ² D. O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1956), p. 107. First published in French as *Psychologie de la colonisation* (Paris: Seuil, 1950).
- ³ Philip Mason, *Prospero's Magic* (London: O.U.P., 1962), pp. 124, 118.
- ⁴ Aimé Césaire, "Discourse on colonialism" in *Carifesta Forum 76, An Anthology of 20 Caribbean Voices*, ed. with an intro. by J. Hearne, p. 31. First published in French as *Discours sur le colonialisme* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1955), pp. 39-40.

- ⁵ Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Seuil, 1952). Trans. by Ch. Lam Markmann as *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 93.
- ⁶ Fanon, p. 39. See André Breton's encomiastic introduction to Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*: "Et c'est un Noir qui manie la langue française comme il n'est pas aujourd'hui un Blanc pour la manier" (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1971), p. 15.
- ⁷ John Pepper Clark, "The Legacy of Caliban," in *The Example of Shakespeare* (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1970). In "The Muse of History," West Indian Derek Walcott dwells on "language as enslavement" in *Carifesta Forum* 76, p. 112.
- ⁸ George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960), pp. 109-10.
- ⁹ Janheinz Jahn, "Caliban and Prospero," *A History of Neo-African Literature: Writing in Two Continents* (London: Faber & Faber, 1968), p. 242.
- ¹⁰ Edward Brathwaite, "Caliban," from "Limbo" in *Islands* (London: Oxford, 1969), p. 35; "Eating the Dead" from "Rebellion" in *Islands*, p. 64 "The Emigrants" from "Islands and Exiles" in *Rights of Passage*, p. 54; "Beginning" in *Islands*, p. 113; and "Folkway" from "The Spades" in *Rights of Passage*, p. 29.
- ¹¹ Ian Munro and Reinhard Sander, eds, *Interviews with Three Caribbean Writers in Texas* (Austin: African and Afro-American Research Institute, 1972), p. 18.
- ¹² George Lamming, *Water With Berries* (Trinidad: Longman Caribbean, 1973), p. 76.
- ¹³ Aimé Césaire, *Une Tempête; d'après "La tempête" de Shakespeare: une adaptation pour un théâtre nègre* (Paris: Seuil, 1960).
- ¹⁴ Nkem Nwankwo, "Caliban to Miranda," from O. R. Dathorne, ed., *African Poetry for Schools and Colleges* (London: MacMillan, 1969), pp. 44-45.
- ¹⁵ Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, "Towards a National Culture," in *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics* (New York: Lawrence Hill, 1972), p. 10.
- ¹⁶ See e.g., Césaire, *Cahier*, p. 69; Lamming, *Pleasures*, pp. 118, 151; C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (New York: Vintage, 1963).
- ¹⁷ Roberto Fernandez Retamar, "Caliban," *Carifesta Forum* 76, p. 99.
- ¹⁸ Margaret Laurence, *The Prophet's Camel Bell* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1967), p. 228.
- ¹⁹ Margaret Laurence, *The Diviners* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), p. 329.
- ²⁰ Audrey Thomas, *Munchmeyer and Prospero on the Island* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), p. 139.
- ²¹ Pierre Seguin, *Caliban* (Montréal: L'arbre HMH, 1977), p. 15. All translations are my own.
- ²² Max Dorsinville, *Caliban Without Prospero: Essay in Québec and Black Literature* (Erin, Ont.: Press Porcépic, 1974), p. 59. "Black" is here to be understood as "Black American."
- ²³ See, for instance, for Black Africa, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's statement in Wendy Davies, "1,000 African Books: Few in the Vernacular," *Africa Now* (August 1982), p. 87, and, for the West Indies, Edward Baugh, ed., "A Language of One's Own," *Critics on Caribbean Literature: Readings in Literary Criticism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), pp. 121-62.