

Power Relations in Literature of Early Modern Period

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Abstract

This paper attempts to highlight the power relations being established through either by force or by consent of these colonized people residing in the New World. The focus of the study is how these people were represented in the literary works of Early Modern period. Shakespeare's plays written in this period are reckoned representative of this age of discovery and exploration. His plays project the political, historical and religious conflicts of the time. This power struggle between European explorers and the Natives emerging in new found lands is also depicted in his plays. "The Tempest" which is now perceived as colonial text; was written in 1611 marks the beginning British attempts to settlements in America under the rule of James I. The power struggle between the settlers and the Natives in America and the Island of Prospero will be compared and discussed in this paper. The historical background of early exploration expeditions, the political and religious motivational drive that led to these journeys will be taken into account in order to understand the concept exploration in relation to Early Modern period. The power imbalance in religious domination that was prevalent in Europe between the Catholics and the Protestants is also regarded as one of the most consequential factors in formation of colonies and settlements in other parts of the world. Hadfield says that while "attempting to reconstruct the history of 16th century political debate that one cannot easily separate contemporary political works from fictional material" (Hadfield 1). These historical, political and religious factors will be taken into account before the analysis of power play presented in "The Tempest". Moreover, the study will help the students of English literature to understand the new aspects of early modern period.

Keywords: Early Modern period, Shakespeare, power relation, religious domination, Orientalism

Introduction

In "An Empire Nowhere" Jeffrey Knapp gives a reference to James Froude who considered "Renaissance exploration and Renaissance literature such correlative triumphs that he could describe the major Elizabethan collection of travel narratives, Richard Hakluyt's "Principal Navigations" as the "Prose Epic of modern English nation"(Knapp 1). The discovery of New World and the curiosity of knowing about the Natives of these new lands increased among the British think tank. With these explorations, travel writing emerged as the most successful genre of the time. The general masses were keen to learn about new places and people. Among these the most famous is "Principal Navigations".

This period Britain was ruled by the House of Tudors, House of Stewards and Oliver Cromwell. Other European states Spain, Portugal and France were prominent in expanding their rule over far off territories and were advancing by discovering New Worlds through travel and exploration. New continents were being reached through royally supported explorers leading to a change in Europeans view of the world. The world map known to them consisted only of Northern Africa, Mediterranean countries and Middle East that included India. This advancement in Geography led to the encounter of the New World inhabited by the "Other".

The discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in the year 1492 changed the perspective of Europeans towards the World that was previously limited. The Spanish were the first successful settlers in America. For Britain the success of Spanish explorations meant the rise of Catholicism in Europe. As a consequence British Protestants Monarchs feared a threat to their dominance. This religious rivalry became one of the important factors in Britain's interest in traveling and exploration. The rising interest later turned into setting up colonies and plantations in these new found lands.

Elizabethan Age is considered as the starting point of English Colonial expansion; However Queen Mary was eager to compete with Spain in colonial expansion. By the year 1603, England hadn't established any prominent colonial possessions. In 17th Century England had developed substantial

English Empire in America as consequence of Spanish colonial decline. In Hadfield's view after the discovery of America, Henry VII encouraged explorers for the sake of trade and finding new trade routes. John Cabot who was an explorer and trader by profession in an attempt to reach North West passage to the Indies landed on New found land in the year 1497. After that for the Spanish voyages Hernado Cortes (1519-1521) reached Mexico and Francisco Pizarro (1530-35) reached Peru. The circumnavigation around the globe in 1519-22 by Ferdinard Megellan was Spanish explorer's achievement.

Hadfield states that during this period of Spanish dominance in exploration and discoveries, Spanish travel writings were translated in English and Peter Martyr's work "*Decades of New World (De Orbis Novo)*" is one of the most important texts of the time in 1555 in this regard. This book described "the savage religion and cannibalism" of the Natives in America (Hadfield 26). It showed distinguishing criteria drawn by Europeans for Natives, those who resisted the settlers and those who didn't show any resistance. Europeans were portrayed as light of civilization for those uncivilized people.

According to Hadfield, "Travel and colonial were undoubtedly political genres in double sense. They possessed political content; secondly they were frequently caught up in the turbulent political history within which they were produced" (Hadfield 2). Travel writing was used as means to propagate political views and to gain support for more expeditions and colonial endeavors. In "reconstructing" the historical events in politics; it is quite difficult to "separate travel and fictional writing" (Hadfield 6). In other words travel writing was inspired by fiction, narratives contained imaginary stories about strange creatures living in those new found lands. Those creatures were defined and portrayed as "*Other*", in comparison to Europeans. The concept of "*Other*" will be discussed in detail in later section of the paper.

The representation that New World and the Natives gained from travelers and explorers was far from reality. In order to draw interest and to create a public sentiment travel writing became fictitious. Travel and Colonial writing became a platform for trying out political and religious ideas. Hadfield claims that "*the interrelationship between fictional and non fictional writing is especially significant in colonial text when one is dealing with colonial texts because it cannot be assumed that fiction is a reflection of reality, textual or otherwise it comes after the fact*" (Hadfield 6). In the year 1603, John Florio translated the Micheal de Montaigne's essay "*Of Cannibals*" arguing that the Europeans must take control of the natural resources and use them in a proper way. It advocated the idea of establishing colonies in these lands; similar representation of the Natives became common in the period.

Thomas Scanlan draws attention by making an exceptional claim about colonial writing that it started in 1583 with the publication of an "*extremely influential and significant colonial*", the translation of text of Bartolomé de las Casas' "*Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*". The English translation shows "the extent to which England's colonial project was born, out of conscious desire to compete with its Catholic rival for power and prestige on world stage" (Scanlan 1). The English were quite slow in establishing colonial enterprise in America in comparison to Spain. Their initial attempts to form colonies resulted in utter failure. Knapp suggests that English viewed Spanish settlements as "more than barbarous and savage endless cruelties" until the massacre of James town 1622 (Knapp 3). Scanlan marks this translated text as a direction determining for the English colonial course in forming an identity that is Protestant and in vision opposed to Spanish cruelties.

Edward Said's concept of the "*Orient*" and the "*Occident*" works on the same idea, in which Orient defines its identity in comparison to the Occident in colonial discourse. In his introduction, Said indicates in the distinction drawn between the all knowing Europeans and dark and ignorant rest of the world. Said discusses the biased representation of "*Orient*" in literature, arts and media which depicts the Western superiority over them. "The West" projected "the East" as uncivilized, ignorant and inferior who needs to be rescued by Western intervention.

- 1492 Columbus reaches America
- 1516 First Three Decades of Martyr's "*De Obo Novo*"
- More's "*Utopia*"



- 1519-22 Magellan's circumnavigation
- 1530-35 Pizarro conquers Peru
- 1555 Eden's "*Decades of the Newe Worlde*"
- 1558 Loss of Calais
Accession of Queen Elizabeth I
- 1577-80 Drake's circumnavigation
- 1579 Spenser's "*Shepherd's Calendar*"
- 1585-86 First Virginian Colony
- 1588 Spanish Armada defeated
- 1589 Hakluyt's "*Principal Navigations*"
- 1595 Raleigh's first voyage to Guiana
- 1596 Raleigh's "*Discoverie of Guiana*"
Spenser's "*View of the Present State of Ireland*"
- 1603 Death of Elizabeth
Accession of King James I
- 1607 Jamestown founded
- 1609 Gate's shipwrecked in Bermuda
- 1611 Shakespeare's "*Tempest*" staged

(An Empire Nowhere England, America, and Literature From Utopia to The Tempest)

Theoretical Framework

In his book "*Orientalism*" Said commented on the Asian and European relationship. How Europe treated Asia as object. He defines Orientalism as a European representation of the Orient. Orient in itself a European connotation which "refers to a romantic, idealistic exotic place that triggers haunting memories and unforgettable experiences for the European" (Said 1).

Before going in detail about the methods or devices of analysis I want to discuss the Orientalism as described by Said and the striking features of the idea of Orient. Colonial and Post-colonial theories are based and derived from Orientalism. In order to understand and analyze colonial writing, Orientalism must be explained first.

Orientalism draws a line between the West and the East, where West is superior and dominant while East is uncivilized and ignorant. It is a style of thought based on "ontological and epistemological distinction" between the Orient and the Occident (Said 2). "*The Orient*" (Eastern or Non European) is represented as the "*Other*" against "*The Occident*" (*European*). In the early travel and exploration writings produced in Britain, The Orient is depicted as the Other which has distinguishing features that are far from being civilized like the Europeans.

Said describes Orientalism in the introduction part of his book as "a corporate institution that deals with the Orient by making statements about it, authorizing views on it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it, in short Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over it." It is way of exercising dominance and superiority over the Orient. It started when the British and French colonizers came in contact with colonized people. Their representation in the literary texts of early modern period portrays and reinforces British superiority over them.

He argues that Orientalism not only defines identity of "*the Orient*" but also forms and constructs "*the Occident*" identity. The direct contrast with "*the Orient*", "*the Occident*" derives its Identity as the mighty, dominant and powerful. The colonial discourse helps in constructing the domineering Western authority. The identities are separated with dominance, power and hegemonic relationship between them. "European culture gained its strength an identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground itself"(Said 3).

According to Gramsci there are two kinds of domination, civil domination that involves voluntary affiliation as in schools, unions where culture is propagated through consent by portraying it to be right, this type of domination is termed as Hegemony. The second one is political domination which involved direct domination over the state and its institutions. Cultural leadership and superiority is controlled through hegemony. The perception of the Western superiority is implemented through Hegemony.

Culture and imperialism as a dynamic exchange between literary writers and the political interests shaped by the colonial powers predominantly British and French. It establishes Western authority over the colonized lands. The culture of colonized societies was presented according to the needs of political stance taken by the rulers of the time. It started in Early Modern period when travelers and explorers penned down their encounters in the New World which contained fantastical accounts on these lands. Edward Said comments on such colonial discourses in the following words,

“The occidental authority is formed, irradiated, it is instrumental, it is persuasive, it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value, it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas, it dignifies as true and from traditions, perceptions and judgments, it forms transmits and reproduces.” (Said 20)

Said introduces two methodological devices for the analysis of oriental discourses, *Strategic location* that refers to authors position in the text that involves type of narrative, voice of author, structures, images, themes and motifs running in the text. Said considers them as “deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the orient and finally speaking and representing on his behalf” (Said 20). The other is methodological device is *Strategic formation* that means oriental content that he writes about which is formed on some previous precedent to which writer refers and relies for his writing. This connection with previous work and audience reinforces the authority of the Occident.

The Term “Colonialism” comes from base word “Colony”. The word colony is derived from Latin “COLONIA” meaning “Settlement” which in turn derived from Latin word “COLONUS” which means “Farmer”, that Colonus is derived from Latin term “COLERE” meaning “Cultivate”. Colonialism is an act of settlement of colony away from the place of origin. It is foreign invasion in the new territory for exercising power over others. The term shows relationship of East and West. Colonialism is the process of dominating less powerful territory by means of power, politics, economy, culture, language.

Colonialism is the relationship between indigenous majority and minority of foreign invaders. Colonized people were forced to follow the policies, rules, culture and language of colonizer. Elleke Boehmer (Boehmer 2) defines ‘colonialism’ as “a settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands.

However it is different from Imperialism although at many instances the meaning is interchanged. Imperialism is defined as “the extension and expansion of trade and commerce under the protection of political, legal and military control” (Childs and Williams 227), whereas colonialism is actual control of one territory by another group of people involving settlement of colonizers in the region. Edward Said marks the difference between the terms as “imperialism means the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; Colonialism, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on a distant territory”. (Said 8)

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Hellen Tiffin explained the key concepts in Colonial and Post Colonial concepts, one of the concepts, “*Binarsim*” which indicates the tendency Western Imperial ideology to see the world in two extremes to maintain the Western dominance. These are basic distinctions like Centre/Margin; Colonizer/Colonized; Metropolis/Empire; Civilized/Primitive which reinforce the Western superiority and dominance over colonized regions. They mention a number of ways this dominance is practiced through text at various levels:

Colonizer :Colonized
White :Black
Civilized: Primitive

Advanced: Retarded

Human: Bestial

Good: Evil

Cannibalism is another way of distinguishing between civilized colonial powers and the primitive savages in the colonies. Cannibal means man eater and flesh eater, it is one of ways to enhance “*Othering*” the colonized communities. It was one of the key representations used in colonial discourse to depict the Colonizers as savior of humanity.

The concept of Interpellation was introduced by Louis Althusser which explains that how the ideology is formed in our minds and how it affects our lives. It is a process of learning and internalizing the cultural values and norms. A person starts believing these ideals are his own although these are internalized by a person. The concept is equally important to colonial and post colonial studies as it is related to colonized internalizing the colonizer’s culture and ideology.

Encouraging the subject to follow and imitate or to mimic the colonizer is termed as *Mimicry*. The cultural trends, attitudes and values of the colonizer is portrayed as the better and enlightening for the colonized to minimize any imminent resistance. It is very significant in studying colonial and post colonial discourse in order to identify the cultures that are propagated by the imperial powers to maintain their hegemony.

Native is used to describe those “who are born in the land” but in colonial context its meaning is changed “Native was used to categorize who were regarded as inferior to the colonial settlers or the colonial administrators who rules the colonies”(Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 142). Savage and uncivilized ideas were associated with the word Native. The Europeans have cultural, racial and intellectual superiority over the Natives in colonial discourse.

Other refers to someone who is different and separated from self. The Self is represented as normal and central while the *Other* is distant and variation. “The colonial subject is characterized as other through discourses such as cannibalism and primitivism as means off establishing binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of colonizing culture and world view” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 155). It was used in Orientalism by Edward Said while marking the line between “Us” and “Them”. In Lacans view the Other is *grande-autre* in whose reflection subject gains identity, which Said explained in Orientalism as the Orient gives identity to the Occident. It is very important concept in analyzing colonial discourse.

Othering was first used by Gaytri Spivak assigning a name to “the process in which Imperial power creates its others” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 155). It explains the methods that are used in colonial discourse to create the *Other* identity in direct contrast to Self .The construction of fundamental to the construction of Self.

Primitivism “a form or style of living perceived to represent early stage of human cultural endeavor” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 179). The European considered their forms of art and life style as normal, civilized and mature all the other forms were presented as primitive because of the lack of conformity with their conventions. To colonizers the culture of Africa, Pacific islands and Native America was primitive that needed modification and modernity.

Data Analysis

Sidney Lee in “*Life of William Shakespeare*” and in some of his essays concerning Indians, has indicated that “*The Tempest* reflects England’s early colonial experience and the play’s characters to epitomize colonization’s representation participants” (Ard 3rd 99). In order to analyze the colonial tension existing in the play I have divided this section in three parts. Firstly I will present the argument with reference to plot of the play. Secondly the major characters and their colonial features will be described. Lastly the significance of the Island and its relationship with various characters will be explained that support the view of existence dominant and sub ordinance in the play. The argument presented will be supported with references to the criticism that scholars have observed to the “*The Tempest*”.

The plot of the play is centered on a displaced Duke Prospero who has attained magical powers through vigorous research and has found refuge on an Island. He along with his daughter Miranda has been living on the Island alone for twelve years. Prospero through his magical powers has gained control over the Island and has made Native Caliban and spirit Ariel his slaves. They follow and obey Prospero with fear and hope of liberty one day.

The play opens with shipmen struggling to save the ship from the storm. The ship has the King of Naples Alonso, his brother Sebastian, his son Ferdinand, the current Duke of Milan Antonio (Prospero's brother) and Gonzalo an honest counsellor of the King along with some other noble men. Prospero wants to take revenge from his usurper brother and to get back his snatched Dukedom from him. Later it is revealed that he was the creator of the storm with the help of Ariel.

Prospero controls everything from the moment the shipwrecked travelers reach the shore, with his magical powers makes Ferdinand fall in love with Miranda, with his invisible spirits he causes troubles for Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian and reminds them of their wrong doing with him. At the end he gets his old status back from Antonio, arranges Miranda's wedding with Ferdinand and forgives his brother. He leaves the Island and frees the spirit Ariel.

Prospero himself is a displaced Duke who is sheltered in the Island for twelve years, he becomes the ruler of the foreign land, this approach of Prospero reflects the colonial pursuit of Europeans in the Early Modern period. He regrets the usurping of his Dukedom but he himself becomes the usurper of the Island. He rules the Natives Caliban and Ariel with magical powers. Prospero subjects Caliban to pain and suffering to make him obedient. He promises Ariel of liberty in exchange for following his orders. The scheme of governance that he has set up in the Island is based on exploitation of the Natives.

The tempest that he creates in Act I, Scene I destroys the ship, witnessing the wreckage Miranda is horrified and prays for mercy. Prospero calms her and assures her that no harm was done and he did it for his daughter's well being. This proposition of Prospero echoes the colonizer spirit that is prevalent in the travel writings of the time giving reasons for colonial exploitation of the New World.

Miranda: "Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perished
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere"
(Act I, scene II, Lines 9-11)

Prospero: "No more amazement. Tell your piteous heart
There's no harm done."
(Act I, Scene II Lines 13-14)

While narrating his past he calls his brother "Perfidious" for taking away his status and deceiving him and yet he doesn't apply the same moral criteria for usurping the Island and subjecting Caliban to oppression. (Act II, Scene I, Line 68) This difference of attitude towards himself being a European and a Native of the Island is worth noticing. The duality of moral standards is a feature of colonial ideology. Brown analyzing the narrative Prospero builds while describing his past comments:

"The second scene of the play is an extended demonstration of Prospero's powerful narration as it interpellates Miranda, Ariel and Caliban. It is recounted as something importantly rescued out of the 'dark backward and abyss of time' (I.ii.50), a remembrance of things past soon revealed as a mnemonic of power. This is to say, Prospero's narrative demands of its subjects that they should accede to his version of the past. For Miranda, Prospero's account of her origins is a tale of the neglect of office, leading to a fraternal usurpation and a banishment, followed by a miraculous landfall on the island." (Brown 59)

Ariel the powerful yet delicate spirit follows Prospero's commands throughout the action of the play in hope of the "promised liberty". The tempest that causes the shipwreck is orchestrated by Ariel but when she asks for the fulfillment of the promise Prospero exploits her by reminding how he rescued her from Sycorax.

Ariel: *"Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains
Let me remember thee what thou hast promised,
Which is not yet performed."
(Act I Scene II Line 241-243)*

Prospero replies to her question with desecration, *"Thou liest, malignant thing, hast thou forgot"* (Act I, Scene II, Lines 257). The exploitation doesn't end here it continues throughout the play, even when Ariel obeys all the commands of Prospero. This relationship between Prospero and Ariel seems to have a power imbalance having a Master and a Slave. In this Master has all the power and control who takes advantage of the Slave by promising Liberty one day.

Their conversation in the first Act ends with Ariel seeking forgiveness from her Master. This scene sets the course of the events that unfold later in the play. It foregrounds the colonial attitude that Prospero exercises on Ariel and Caliban.

Ariel: *"Pardon, Master,
I will be correspondent to command
And do my spiriting gently."
(Act I, Scene II, lines 296-298)*

In the same scene we are introduced Caliban with Prospero and Mirand's narrative describing him as *"My Slave, who never yields a kind answer"* and *"Tis a Villan I donot love to look on"*. (Act I, Scene II, Lines 206-310) The introduction is set in bias, a disobedient villainous slave whom his master dislikes. It shows binarsim defining the slave Caliban as inhuman, uncivilized and villainous by the Master narrator who is human, civilized and heroic. The characterization of Caliban is also biased and his character is analyzed in the next section.

Caliban enters cursing Prospero and Miranda in retaliation to bad names that they used for him. Prospero threatens him to follow his orders, with his magical power and obedient spirit. He scares him of cramps as punishment for retaliation to which Caliban declares him intruder to his Native land. The background of Prospero and Miranda had already been discussed here their colonial intrusion in the Island is highlighted, *"This Islands mine by Sycorax my mother, which thou takst from me"* (Act I, Scene II, lines 333-334). Caliban gives a logical argument of him being "Native" of the Island.

*"For I am all subjects that you have,
Which was first mine own King; and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest o' th' island".
(Act I, Scene II, Lines 341-344)*

He explains his condition as being a colonized subject. This is the direct evidence of colonial suppression caused by Prospero on the Native Caliban. This interaction represents the Colonial tension existing between the Colonizer and the Colonized.

As the story unfolds further Prospero along with his spirits reminds Antonio, Sebastian, and Alonso about the injustice they did to him. The conspiracy that Antonio had conceived and executed with the Duke of Milan by usurping his Dukedom is echoed through invisible voices and strange music created on stage. Ariel appears with thunder and lightning with a message:

*"But remember
That you three
From Milan did supplant good Prospero,
Exposed unto the sea, which hath requite it".
(Act III, Scene III, Lines 70-73)*

The purpose of highlighting this planned action of Prospero is to mark the difference in his approach, the way he feels betrayed when he is displaced from his land and the way he has no empathy for Caliban or Ariel. He calls them all devils for taking away what belonged to him, but he dismisses all

claims of Caliban's Native rights on the Island. It reflects the Colonizer approach towards itself as superior having rights while violating the rights of colonized people.

This difference of approach is not only limited to Prospero in the play but residents of Milan and Naples who were on the ship and who were rescued by the Island have same attitude towards the Natives. When Trinculo confronts hidden Caliban, he considers him a monster, same goes for Stephano who he considers the two of them as monster. Giving a non human attribute to all those who don't belong to normal standards set by Colonizer is termed as "Othering".

After realizing that there Trinculo and a Native, Stephano desires to take advantage of the Native. He intends to exploit the Native creature. He calls him devil and is stunned by his speaking abilities. It is kind of the same narrative and perspective that was built against the New World Natives in Early Modern Period.

*"If I can recover him and keep him tame,
And get to Naples with him,
He s present for any emperor that ever trod on neatest leather."*
(Act II, Scene II, Lines 68-69)

Trinculo and Stephano keep calling him names that define him as Monster and Slave. "Puppy Headed Monster", "Poor Monster", "Ridiculous Monster", he is addresses by these words. (Act 2, Scene 2) Trinculo and Stephano don't even ask his name, it indicates refusal of accepting his identity as a normal figure like them.

On the other had Caliban who has been subject to constant exploitation by Prospero and Miranda doesn't understand any other relation other than Master and slave. When he meets the foreigners he sees his freedom from Prospero by becoming their slave. This shows a Colonized mentality who accepts the superiority of the Colonizer and accepts it without much resistance. This attitude of Caliban can be termed as hegemonic.

*"I will show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;
I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.
A plaque upon the tyrant I serve!
I'll bear him no more sticks but follow thee,
Thou wondrous man".*
(Act I, Scene II, lines 156-160)

Caliban plans to conspire against Prospero with Trinculo and Stephano but fails as Ariel intervenes to save Prospero. Prospero gathers all the foreigners and reveals his identity and asks Antonio to give back his Dukedom, which he agrees to do. And all of them return back to Milan. The analysis of Plot concludes here. I will move on to next part that is characterization in which the attributes of characters will be discussed show the power struggle on the Island.

The major characters that I am focusing on are Prospero, Miranda, Ariel and Caliban as they are more relevant to the subject of the paper. A distinctive line can be drawn among them; the dominating and powerful masters Prospero and Miranda and the obedient server Ariel and resisting server Caliban. The Masters are the foreigners on the Island and the slaves are Natives. Prospero and Miranda one hand and Caliban on the other are binary opposites as described in the colonial and post colonial theories.

Colonizer (Prospero and Miranda) :Colonized (Caliban)
White (Prospero and Miranda) :Black (Non White) (Caliban)
Civilized (Prospero and Miranda) : Primitive (Caliban)
Advanced (Prospero and Miranda): Retarded (Caliban)
Human (Prospero and Miranda): Bestial (Caliban)
Good (Prospero and Miranda): Evil (Caliban)

The protagonist Prospero is the emperor and ruler of the Island who knows magic and uses it for controlling his subjects. When he narrates his story audience is informed about his snatched Dukedom in Milan by his brother Antonio. He is on exile from Milan with Miranda. He is like a dictator who is ruling against the wishes of Natives. One critic comments "Prospero on the enchanted Island is like god, controlling the world of Nature and Elements." (Spenser 2)

He is highly disliked by Caliban, He even plans to kill him but fails in the process. In one way he is similar to Caliban, He wants to kill his Island usurper (Prospero) and Prospero wants to take revenge from Antonio. This mutual tendency of taking revenge is shared by both of them.

Prospero gives the account of his banishment in the second scene but it is important to note that audience witnesses only his version of the past which can be biased. "Prospero figures himself as the sole retainer of the past and thus responsible for establishing the play's controlling perspective" (Tribble 151). However the character is built with reference to Miranda, Ariel and Caliban. Paul Brown describes Prospero's initial narrative in these words:

"Prospero interpellates the various listeners -calls to them, as it were, and invites them to recognise themselves as subjects of his discourse, as beneficiaries of his civil largesse. Thus for Miranda he is a strong father who educates and protects her; for Ariel he is a rescuer and taskmaster; for Caliban he is a colonizer whose refused offer of civilization forces him to strict discipline; for the shipwrecked he is a surrogate providence who corrects errant aristocrats and punishes plebeian revolt. Each of these subject positions confirms Prospero as master." (Brown 58-59)

Miranda is the only female character of the play. She had almost non-existent human contact apart from her Father Prospero. She follows her father like all his other subjects but the difference is that it is out of love for her father. She is presented as powerful figure sharing control of the Island with Prospero but a deeper analysis also realizes the fact that she has grown up only with one perspective; she doesn't have any alternate choice of behavior.

She feels sympathetic towards the victims of shipwreck and is horrified by the incident. As she expresses her feelings, Prospero gives her an explanation of the incident and changes her mind. It shows the influence Prospero has over her. She is subject to Prospero's perspective and choices.

It should also be noted that on one and she is sympathetic to the banishment of his father from Milan but on the other she doesn't accept Caliban's argument of being the owner of the Island. She also abuses him like Prospero and maltreats him. Although there is a justification provided that Caliban once tried to rape her. In Anita Loomba's view Caliban's enslavement is related to Miranda, "the racist assumption that Caliban's subordinate status will naturally lead him to desire rape Miranda. (Loomba 149) The incident that has been referred to as rape attempt on Miranda by Caliban is symbolic as according to Brown is part of colonial discourse as to identify the *Other* as Rapist and Virgin.

"The first effect is to circumvent Caliban's version of events by re-encoding his boundlessness as rapacity: his inability to discern a concept of private, bounded property concerning his own dominions is reinterpreted as a desire to violate the chaste virgin, who epitomizes courtly property. Second, the capacity to divide and order is shown to be the prerogative of the courtly ruler alone. Third, the memory legitimizes Prospero's takeover of power." (Brown 61)

Ariel's character on stage was initially played by female actors but later male actors also got to perform as Ariel. As it has been mentioned in the first part, she is an enslaved spirit who is obeying Prospero for the sake of getting Liberty one day. Prospero exploits her and uses her power to get revenge from Antonio.

She is the creator of the Tempest that brings about this shipwreck. From her past it is revealed that she was imprisoned by Sycorax and was tortured by her. Prospero freed her and now she serves him in hope of being free one day. To me she seems like a colony that was transferred from one colonizer to another and whose resources are only accessible to the colonizer. She is unable to use her power for her own well being.

The most important character in regard to the study of power relations in *The Tempest* is Caliban. Greenblatt comments “if it is the task of cultural criticism to decipher the power of Prospero, it is equally its task to hear the accents of Caliban” (Greenblatt 232). His character has been studied and researched time and again to explore the colonial implications that it casts as a Native of the Island. The treatment of Caliban has also been associated England’s attitude towards their colonial subjects in America.

“Dario in Nicaragua proclaimed that Caliban personified the United States, an American cleric scholar declared Caliban is an American” (Ard 3rd 100). “Latin American appropriators of “*The Tempest*” recast Caliban as the emblem of South and Central American peoples and substituted Prospero as the imperialist, arrogant United States” (Ard 3rd 103). “England and North American critics chastised Prospero for seizing the Natives land and enslaving their bodies (Caliban)” (Ard 3rd 105).

His physical appearance makes him like beast a non human creature. He is referred to as “Monster” by other characters. When drunken Trinculo encounters him, his description of Caliban is inhuman and abnormal. “what have we here?, a man or a fish? A fish: he smells like a fish, a very ancient and fish like smell...there would this monster make a man, legged like a man and has fins like arms! This is no fish but an islander that hath lately suffered a thunderbolt.” (Act II, Scene II, Lines 25-35)

Trinculo calls him an Indian once in Act II, apart from this there is no significant reference to Caliban being an Indian but scholars from eighteenth century have argued about him being an American Indian. But through his speech that wasn’t objected by Prospero he declares that the Island belongs to him. He is the Native of the Island and Prospero snatched his land from him and imprisoned him in a cave.

When he argues with Prospero, Prospero reminds him that he taught him how to speak otherwise the monster would have remained ignorant. He should be thankful to him for teaching him language. But Caliban exclaims that they only taught him foul words and he can only curse them for that.

Prospero: “*Thou most lying slave,
Whom stripes may move, not kindness; I have used thee
With humane care and lodged thee*”
(Act 2, Scene 2, Lines 345-346)

Miranda: “*Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
One thing or the other. When thou did’st not, savage,
Known thine meaning,*”
(Act 2, Scene 2, Lines 355-357)

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*”
(Act II, Scene II, Lines 364-366)

From this interaction, it seems like he was forced to learn this language or he was tricked into learning it for his own good. But he exclaims that it is of no use to him as he can only curse like they do. In other words he has no advantage learning colonizer’s language. Tuglu explains this argument with reference to Homi. K. Bhabha’s idea of discursive power, she raises an important question:

“*Since Caliban learns English through Prospero, his expression of his own self is bound to remain within the strict lines of the superior Subject who controls him. Bhabha (2000) asserts that one “commonly articulates [one’s] self consciousness” (Bhabha 97). Yet, if one’s language is distorted through means of discursive power, according to a Subject who seeks ultimate power of control, how can one articulate a unified self-expression?*” (Tuglu 65)

He is tired of punishments that Prospero in his authority and magical power inflicts upon him. He calls him “tyrant” when he meets Trinculo and Stephano, explains them his misery. He is so accustomed to punishment and abuse that when greets new men on the Island he is scared of them. He hides under a

log and says “Do not torment me, prithee. I ’ll bring my wood home faster”(Act II,Scene II, Line 70). This validates the argument that he is forced to follow Prospero’s commands.

He is different in nature than Ariel, he resists Prospero’s domination. He tries to challenge his authority and even plots to kill him. He wants to get freedom from Prospero by any means. In this pursuit he even risks it by offering to be slave of Trinculo and Stephano. He asks them for help and in return agrees to follow them blindly. “I ’ll kiss thy feet. I ’ll swear myself thy subject” (Act II, Scene II, Line 149). This depicts his colonized mentality at one hand and his desperation for freedom on the other.

Lastly the Island that remains unnamed throughout the play has a key role in defining characters, the power imbalance amongst them and in taking the action forward. Before explaining its relation to various characters I want to point to the fact not even once the name of the Island is mentioned, though critics consider it America or Africa because of the colonial rule that is imposed by Prospero. Prospero being a White European Duke and Caliban a non white Native slave monster signify that the Island is colonized land.

The Island remains unnamed lacking as it is purposely denied identity. It is referred to as Island even by the Native Caliban. Some critics suggest it is symbolic for Bermuda as it has some similarities with William Starchey’s “*True Reportory of the Wrecke, and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates on Bermuda*” which was written in 1609. Another travel narrative “*A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as Hath Happened in Virginia*” in the years 1608-1610 was published it had a detailed descriptions of Jamestown by Captain John Smith. It reflected “disruptive colonists, inept aristocratic leaders and resentful Natives” (Ard 3rd 43). The location of the Island suggests, “it must have been within a hundred or so miles between Naples and Tunis that gives it geographical connection with Africa”(Ard 3rd 48). However in “*The Tempest*” the Island doesn’t have any name but the features described indicate to Bermuda, Virginia or Africa.

For Prospero it is a place of refuge which he converted into his empire through power of magic. He is a foreigner invading and violating a free land full of resources. For Miranda it is some sort of confinement where she is familiar with only two faces, her father and the monster slave. She wishes to see more people and when she meets Ferdinand, she falls in love with him. To her he is a promise of future outside the Island.

However it is not mentioned whether Ariel belongs to the Island or has any ancestral linkage with it as her past is described as an imprisonment by Sycorax. She doesn’t describe any feelings for the Island, she only wishes for freedom from Prospero. But Caliban belongs to the Island and exclaims his lawful right on it. He wishes to live there as a free Native without Prospero’s exploitation. He resents the colonial oppression of Prospero and shows it at many instances.

The aim of describing the Island is to highlight the colonial implications that it has casted on the audience and readers of the play. The relation of different characters to it further testifies that it is a colonized land without the consent of Natives. Caliban’s affiliation with the Island and resistance to Prospero shows the colonized love for his usurped land and resources.

Conclusion

The power imbalance that existed in Early Modern period between the European explorers and the New World that was being explored is of utmost significance in studying the age. As mentioned in the context French, Spanish and British colonies were being established to gain more strength and to expand the rule across the globe. It seems the major reason for expansion was religious imbalance between Protestants and Catholics in Europe. The political tension between Spain and England played vital role in motivation for exploring new lands and forming colonial in those regions.



The historical, religious and political context finds representation in literature written in this age. Sometimes the writings are intended to promote political agenda of the rulers and gain consent from the masses. Most of the travel writings depict the newly found lands as savage inhabitations that require European intervention for guidance and survival.

Drama was the most famous literary genre in this age and the power imbalance taking place was also reinforced or represented in Theater. Inspired by the travel narratives and explorers accounts some playwrights drew inspiration to present the New World on stage. *The Tempest* is one such play that represented the New World to the audience, the forced intruder ruling the far off land with his magical powers. Although the colonial interpretation of *The Tempest* started in the nineteenth century as the relationship of Prospero and Caliban was studied and analyzed in depth.

The colonized Island, the idea of nativity and colonial subjugation became relevant to the plot and the characterization of the play. In this study I tried to highlight those aspects of the play that reflect the power relations existing in Early Modern period between Europeans and the people belonging to the New World. I tried to illustrate the colonial perspective by providing evidence from the text of the play. The major characters and their relation with the Island and attitude towards the Natives reinforce the notion of power imbalance created between the ruler and the subjects on the Island.

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