

# The silent power beyond the tempest play

[Literature](#), [William Shakespeare](#)



The Silent Power Beyond The Tempest Play This essay aims to discuss the postcolonial thoughts in Shakespeare's play The Tempest. I tried to explore the postcolonial features in the play according to Orientalism and Imperialism definition by Edward Said. In general, Imperialism and Orientalism are the ideas presented by European culture to continue their control over non-Western societies. I explained how the colonizer exploits the colonized people and their islands. As a matter of fact, it is not only practicing the imperialism perspectives from a civilized country controls and occupying different zones around the world but also represents the race conflict, especially the Italian conflict between the Europeans chasing themselves in order to grab the thrones in any way.

Thus, it reflects the western thoughts and the way they deal with non-western countries. The postcolonial theory has two main aspects: On the one hand, the study of ethics and the culture of the Third World, and where it represents the analysis of the European colonial stage.

On the other hand, the study of Western literature and cultures, in terms of reflecting a European colonial attitude of colonialism from a sense of superiority and a look of inferiority to other people's and their cultures. The second aspect of this theory is the analysis of a number of Western literary texts in terms of which they carry the genes of superiority, whether the writer adopts it personally or includes his work as part of the prevailing social and cultural, Which reflects a colonial or shadowing European attitude towards colonialism – A sense of superiority and the appearance of superiority towards the cultures of other people. The history of this play dates back to 1611, during the period of great discoveries, unimaginable

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dreams, and distant islands that no one could enter, when Leonardo da Vinci was looking for a way to fly like birds in the air, while Nicolaus Copernicus was stirring the prevailing ecclesiastical beliefs around the center of the universe. As rooted in his environment and his age, Shakespeare reveals to us this world attracted by poles, one dramatic and the other incredible, manifested in human suffering in moments of violence and misery, when primitive printing rivals his desire for progress and progress, making him constantly stumble in his quest to catch the causes. The Tempest heroes mortified the list after their ship was thrown on the coast of a neglected island by the waves, betrayals, sublime or arrogant spirits, love, and folly, strange and stranger, and hopes can be realized. In the five sections, the play depicts the conflict between Prospero and the Duke of Milan against each of his brothers, beginning with his brother Antonio, who removed him from his throne and the exile of his and his daughter to an abandoned island, becoming a theater of conflict and betrayal. The Tempest one of these examples, which may not be expected to study English literature, is the play itself, where we find the primitive non-European and European man who possesses the weapon of knowledge, the play reveals European complete ignorance about the place and culture, compared to what is known as primitive knowledge of the environment and regularity with it, in addition to, the “civilized” European hostility to occupy the place and enslave the Indigenous residents, primitive is not, just only in the European eyes, the character of “Caliban” represent the perspective of colonization culturally, socially and ethnically, which is a general overview in Orientalism and Colonialism chronicles, it is the Western superiority that looks down upon the

non-Europeans as a mere “ thing” and a “ non-cultural”, therefore, the non-European take secondary status, that refers to the Eurocentric concept (Western believe they are better than others), according to Octavio Paz “ We become aware that our neighbours do not speak or think as we do”(1), at that time most of the scholars and Westerns philosopher, believed that Europe or the West generally, was the center of the world, and the rest of the peoples were second class, such as Georg Hegel said “ the center and destination of the early modern world was Europe; the center of Europe was France, Germany and England”.(2) Shakespeare’s play shows an important point for European powers to occupy weak, underdeveloped countries and exploit their lands. They force their culture on them in order to establish their colony. As they are the civilized countries and the other ones uncivilized, which are shown in the role of Prospero and his magical power through which, he occupies Sycorax’s island and exploit its native people Caliban. Prospero the dethroned king of Milan control the island of his magician’s power and obliged his culture of its native people. He found this a great opportunity to use his high knowledge and authority that he could not use in his empire. Prospero enslaves Calabin and uses him as a servant to obey his orders, and liberate the airy spirit Ariel from her power and uses him as the assistant to do all his commands because he has a magic power. It also represents the European themselves exploit each other in taking control of the authority. Prospero’s struggle against his brother Antonio who betrays him while he engages with his books, studying magician, he values his books more than his throne, Antonio takes the dukedom and exile him with his daughter to an isolated island. Prospero continues practicing magic

in order to impose his power on the island and to his two servants Caliban and Ariel. The dominance of European culture and politics in other countries actually, it is not only cultural and political, but also they enforce their ideas, sociology, and religions. They used specific systems to spread their civilizations and exploitation of other island cultures, they regarded themselves as the center of the world. However, this seems to fit to the category of Eurocentrism “ Europe is the center of the globe and the rest of the world forms its periphery”(3) in exploring the world and imposing one superior culture on the others island’s culture symbolizes by Prospero the western invader, control and rule the island by his power. If Theatrical works are supposed to be full of human values and principles of freedom and justice, they are completely opposite, because ugly and terrifying aspects were represented in the Western society’s desire for imperialistic expansion, the play of The Tempest brings to light a connection between imperialism and the literature. Shakespeare was not isolated from the Western cultural context of the European civilization and inferiority to the Indigenous population of the colonial parts, as reported by European explorers. It is not just a play of a miraculous prince who has lost his empire and then recaptured, but it is a play of travel, exploration and adventurous activity in the colonial world, the character of Prospero is the focal point in it, he is “ The Duke of Milan” and preoccupied prince with his study(4), Prosper exile from his civilized kingdom into an unknown land, therefore, he no longer carries anything from his first world except the standard behavior, ethics, and public manners, that’s what makes his duty is ownership the unknown land and make it as a homeland, after arranges it according to the values

and principles that he holds for the Western pattern, this is what we can call it “ Translation as violence” using the translation as instrument of colonialism, many translation theorists such as Lawrence Venuti, Tejaswini Niranjana, and Eric Cheyfitz, “ highlighted the violence inherent in the act of translation where one culture exerts dominance over another”(5) and the translation can “ never be innocent”(6) , “ Translation is, is of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and ad such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulate, undertaken in the service of power, and its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society”(7) The transfer of values and manners needs characters, it has appeared in the play, that’s why “ Ariel” appears in The Tempest as a spirit and bound to serve the magician Prospero, and “ Caliban” son of the witch Sycorax and the original inhabitant of the island, Caliban which captured his land and became a slave after he was master, appears in the play with a savage demeanor, grotesque appearance, brutal, inferior and culturally backward, he says in anger, addressing Prospero “ This island’s mine/ by Sycorax my mother/Which thou takest from me/When thou camest first/Thou strokedst me and madest much of me,/wouldst give me Water with berries in’t/ and teach me how/To name the bigger light/and how the less/That burn by day and night: and then I loved thee”(8).” Caliban” the original inhabitant lost his land after its occupied by the civilized European “ Prospero”, the relationship between them was subordinate and indoctrination of Western cultural values, rules and language as well, that gives us two different cultures: a modern urban culture, and a culture of

inferiority represented by “ Caliban”, so the “ civilized” culture has the right to intervene in those smaller cultures, in the name of working for the good of those cultures and not in the name of working for what is good. it is the imperial vision that has become entrenched in Western thought and based on the Western side, “ Prospero ” the character of urbanization, modernization and the source of all cultural facts in this world, and the primitive character of “ Caliban”, the savage, caveman and the forest, who have to carry out all orders to enter the world of civilization, on this basis, the play represents interesting and provocative relations, where the character of “ Caliban” is important, he is the abhorrent slave, and barbarian “ Which any print of goodness wilt not take, Being capable of all ill! “(9), he is inhuman that’s why he tried to rape “ Miranda”, otherwise “ Prospero” is a master, wise man and powerful, “ Miranda” is beautiful and pure, and “ Ferdinand” “ There’s nothing ill can dwell in such a temple”(10) handsome and the noble blood and morality flowing in his veins , according to Edward Said “ the West’s knowledge of the Orient depicts the cultures of the Eastern world as an irrational, weak, which is the opposite of the West’s representations of Western cultures as a rational, strong, and masculine polity. That such an artificial binary-relation originates from the European psychological need to create a “ difference” of inequality, between the West and the East, which inequality originates from the immutable cultural essences innate to the peoples of the Oriental world”(11). Prospero sees Caliban as an awful creature “ not honour’d with a human shape”(12) He has a strange body neither like human or animal. Caliban serves Prospero but the former continue telling him that he steals the island from him and he is

the owner of it and he has the right to control it. In the beginning, the colonizer (Prospero) treated the colonized (Caliban) in a nice way and teaches him his language and cultural attitudes but Caliban resistance to learning. “ 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!”(13)

Prospero uses his language as a means of power and cultural stereotypes as they are different in their civilization to make Caliban obeys his orders and that what the colonizers or the colonial nations do they lead the colonized people to learn and speak their language. Tejaswini Nirangjana suggested that translation was an effective instrument of colonialism, part of the technological apparatus that ensured the establishment of complex political, social, aesthetic and pedagogical system in the colonized countries”(14) It demonstrates the assertion of European in spreading their language since the power of the colonizer is by carrying and forcing their language as it is pivotal of all languages, and practice all their procedures to transfer their translation methods to the conquered lands. In other words, the colonizers see the others or non-European’ have limited or they lack knowledge, education, the way they speak and behave is different and uncivilized and it must be changed and translated according to their thoughts, beliefs and reconstruct their culture by making the European culture the dominated one. Nevertheless, Prospero and Caliban are unequal they do not converse normally; they lack the sense of dialogue “ free and open conversation between equals”(15). They do not speak the same language and they are from different places, the process of power that Prospero plays upon Caliban, inevitably, will influence the relationship between the master and the slave.



It is about the racial conflict between the master and his servant with the colonial desires of domination and the commandership of the island. Prospero hated Caliban for bothering his daughter Miranda and wanting to rape her, due to that he ordered him extra work, then Prospero underestimated him and did not trust him. In return, Caliban hated him for treating him badly and thinks of taking his books with an assistant of his drunken friends Trinculo and Stephano for without them he will lose his power. “ Remember First to possess his books; for without them / He’s but a sot, as I am, nor hath not / One spirit to command: they all do hate him” (16). This explains Caliban’s attempts to get rid of Prospero and extract this force from him to regain his island. For his other servant Ariel; the airy spirit, he obeys his master at the first as he regarded him as the superior and the one who controls the island. He somehow acts like the supporter to the colonizer, Ariel demonstrates the capacity of the life of a slave and the life of the master and also; the hegemony of their different cultures, but Ariel keeps asking for his freedom from Prospero as he accomplishes all his orders. Prospero refuses to liberate him and threaten him for his misery with the witch Sycorax “ If thou more murmur’st, I will rend an oak / And peg thee in his knotty entrails till Thou hast howled away twelve winters”(17). This shows the dictatorial nature of the colonizer and the obedience of the colonized people that they accept their rules indisputably. Ariel convinced that Prospero will liberate him after finishing his tasks “ pardon, master; I will be correspondent to command, and do my spiriting gently”(18). The struggle between characters in the play, on one hand, Caliban wants to recapture his island because he is the owner of it before Prospero’s arrival and Ariel wants

his freedom, in the other hand, Prospero wants to regain his dukedom from his brother Antonio, shows their true nature. After all, when Prospero punishes his enemies, liberate both Caliban and Ariel. The characterization of the colonialism in *The Tempest* reveals how the colonial country's strategies affect the occupied ones and how they impose their values, modernity, and all the cultural facts to the real natives who are the colonized and consider them as a minority, uncivilized cultures. It also produces the message that the western provides with imperialistic movements that the island is the representation to control and predominate a new world. "If they asked us, Will you give your Indian empire or your Shakespeare?"(19) the answer could be Indian empire, because Shakespeare is a silent partner in the policy of imperialism expansion and he plays great rule through his misrepresentation of the other (non-Western), and his play *the Tempest* can be seen as full of colonialism and performing an imperial movement and strengthening the community's commitment to imperialism expansion, in same time, Literary texts can be great works of fiction and include awful political views at the same time and that's will make the others (inhuman) and under the rule of Europeans according to Western view.(20) Today, the play heroes are elevated to a mythical place where they are often cited and inspired as symbols of human behavior and feelings by works of art in music, dance, cinema, fine arts and literature of all kinds. As symbols of primitive peoples, Ariel and Caliban are often used, subjugated and enslaved by colonialism.

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