

# What do we learn about colonialism in the tempest assignment



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Ariel and Caliban can both be viewed as the colonized subjects of Prospero, and the contrasting attitudes of these subjects towards their master is indicative of the differing ways in which human nature responds to modern civilization. Both Ariel and Caliban are individuals who are clearly oppressed by Prospero, yet each develop a different kind of relationship to their master. The scenes of *The Tempest* are structured so as to emphasize the differing characterizations of Ariel and Caliban in their relationship to Prospero.

Throughout the play, interactions between Ariel and Prospero come directly before or directly after interactions between Caliban and Prospero. The contrasting nature of these interactions occurs; Shakespeare dramatically portrays the contrast between the attitudes of these central characters. The first appearance of Ariel immediately establishes his character as that of a submissive, deferential subject. His language is that of a slave who binds himself to his master without question: 'All hail great master!... To thy strong bidding task Ariel and all his quality. Ariel's willingness to serve Prospero is strongly juxtaposed with Caliban's attitude of satirical rebelliousness which is exhibited in the same scene. Whereas Ariel greets Prospero with an affirmation of his greatness, Caliban greets him with a curse: 'A southwest blow upon ye And blister you all o'er!' Caliban's blatant hatred for Prospero is evident in much of his speech, which consists mainly of curses similar to this one. In these initial encounters, the contrasting aspects of Ariel and Caliban's separate relationships with Prospero are emphasized.

Ariel is portrayed yet as a submissive servant, while Caliban is characterized as rebellious and spiteful. Caliban's first speech emphasizes the conflict that arises from his lack of gratitude towards his master. Prospero, having drawn

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Clinical away from his savagery and towards modernity, believes that Clinical owes him a debt of gratitude. In fact, Clinical did at first love Prosper, but it was autonomy that Clinical professed to want, not slavery. When he is subjugated, Clinical thus rejects everything that he has inherited from Prosper, including language.

Clinical essentially feels betrayed, and this is evident in the tone that is used to address Prosper in his first speech: "This island's mine by Scoria my mother, Which thou took'st from me. When thou came'st first, Thou stole'st me and made much of me... .. And then loved thee... Cursed be I that did so... For I am all the subjects that you have, Which first was mine own king; and here you stay me In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me The rest of the island's (I, ii, 331-44) unlike Ariel, Clinical has no future promise of freedom that will justify an await due of deference.