

# The Post-Colonial Noble Savage: An exploration into the characters of Miranda, Caliban, Ariel in The Tempest

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**Abstract:** Shakespeare's *Tempest* springs itself to plentiful dimensions of wisdom and explanation. The play is a true representation of political supremacy and social concern. The play can also be interpreted as an allegorical portrayal of the human soul. The *Tempest* discovers nuptial, love, and culture. It is representative of man's lucid instincts versus his bodily tendencies. This is a play of regret, power, retaliation and destiny that can also be seen as fantasy, vision, imagination, or magic.

The *Tempest* as a play around the hero's mind. It is the development, ripening and individuation of Prospero. Shakespeare was anticipating Freud and Jung. His domestics, Ariel and Caliban, are the go-betweens of synchronicity. "In Jung's terms, it is sturdiest when an expressive accessory exists and when there is a constituent of danger or death. When the subject is ready to learn, the insentient mind can affect carnal reality. This paper focuses on the chief female characters of *Tempest*.

Prospero's mediators of control: Ariel, of the air, the intelligent; Ariel is deliberately directed; he is cultured and ordered. Time and space are not problems for him, but he is the lucid and logical means by which Prospero effects changes in the outer world. When Ariel causes the tempest, becomes the tempest, he's Prospero's mindful retribution; his distraught and his fury. Prospero looks to be tranquil, but his purposes are not instigating composed scenario.

Caliban, the cannibal epitomizes Man's ignoble primitive natures and his physical feelings. Caliban is incessantly producing distressed, disobedient and uncontainable, yet lively and resourceful. Caliban does not conform to Prospero's spirit. If Prospero is all-knowing, utterly in control on the island, how could Caliban exist as he does? Caliban is Prospero's lifeless governor of the island. His cataleptic and synchronistic regulator of the outer world affects (and effects) synchronistic change as does Ariel's conscious control.

Prospero does not know he has an insensible, hypothetically barbaric side. And when that side goes ignored and unacknowledged, it can become ever more dangerous. Caliban is the shadow of the island and of Prospero's mind. "Dr. Jung has pointed out that the shadow cast by the conscious mind of the individual contains the hidden, repressed and unfavorable (or nefarious) aspects of the personality .... The shadow has good qualities - normal instincts and creative impulses. Ego and shadow, indeed although separate, are inextricably linked together in much the same way that thought and feeling are related to each other." (3). Jung states in *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*.

The shadow personifies everything the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly." In other words, any part of ourselves that we do not accept unconditionally, splits off and becomes more and more primitive and can be projected outward. The Self must integrate or individuate the abyss, the horror, the unpleasantness in order to be complete. If this balancing does not transpire, negative attributes will seem to attack from the outside. Projection will occur. So as with synchronicity: External events take place in space and time which are representations of the thoughts and feelings of Prospero. Some are conscious (Ariel). Some are unconscious (Caliban). The unconscious deals as easily in fantasy as in reality, just

as on Prospero's island. It is his dream, his imagery, his psyche working on some serious conflicts and failures for which he blames others. (2)

In Prospero's flawless well-ordered creation, why are disorder, scheme and revolt so widespread? Why is there an endless brawl to keep malady at bay and homicide from occurring? Caliban, Antonio, Trinculo, Stephano and Sebastian are all permitted to vigorously scheme murder and treachery. Only late in the play does Prospero appear to remember or become aware that damage is proceeding too far. Incest; the molestation and rape of one's own daughter. Miranda has grasped womanhood with herself and her father as the only two humans in their world. Prospero has measured and stopped this impulse in time, but again the dark side was possibly articulated through Caliban with Prospero demanding to entomb him even deeper in a cave.

Miranda does not function or exist when she is out of sight and mind of Prospero. He simply puts her to sleep. How convenient. There is growth and education taking place as part of some of the human beings' development, but not as deep and unscripted as the growth and education of Prospero himself. (By the way, another archetype: Trinculo the jester is, what else? 'jester', though it might be argued he lacks the wisdom in folly.) As for Prospero's growth and education, his individuation, on the surface he has learned to become a more responsible ruler, and has learned to forgive his enemies, but two more significant things have happened to him.

Prospero has investigated and acknowledged all parts of himself. A very important line which Prospero speaks near the end of the play is,

"These three have robbed me, and this demi-devil (for he's a bastard one) had plotted with him to take my life. Two of these fellows you must know and own; this thing of darkness I acknowledge mine." Prospero is saying Trinculo and Stephano are the responsibility of Alonso's court, but more importantly, Prospero is finally fully owning, acknowledging and taking responsibility for Caliban, his shadow, his unconscious. In his growth and individuation, he has taken a big step toward integrating his shadow within himself.(7)

In his final dialogue, he declares, 'Now my charms are all overthrown, And what strength

I have's my own .... Let your indulgence set me free.'  
He is releasing Ariel and the spirits; he is leaving Caliban alone with the island. He no longer needs the imaginary representations. He has taken all the necessary archetypes and integrated them within himself. We have seen the unconscious played out as fantasy and then a return to reality. The island was a place of transformation, reconciliation, education, regeneration and repentance.(5)

Prospero has not only learned how to rule and forgive. He's learned to live with others and to know, recognize and accept himself. He's resigned his two halves. He's overcome his desire to terminate and to punish. He has inculcated clemency and forgiveness. He does not avenge. He no longer has to be a dictator or coerce others to his will. He's gained the scuffle with himself. His human and righteous desires won out over his instinctive and wicked longings, when all the fragments were branded and accepted. 'The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance.'

The mindful representations of societal order and conduct, open-minded political rule, faithfulness in matrimony, chastity, understanding, goodness and traditionalism have earned the day. These things to which one seeks may not constantly flourish any more than one can yield to a first-rate age or a paradise. Every improvement is a damage. Reason, cognizance and goodness may succeed, but one may misplace a little of Caliban's regular imaginative nobleness.

#### ***Bibliography***

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