

Ishika Mehta

Professor Turula

English 1102

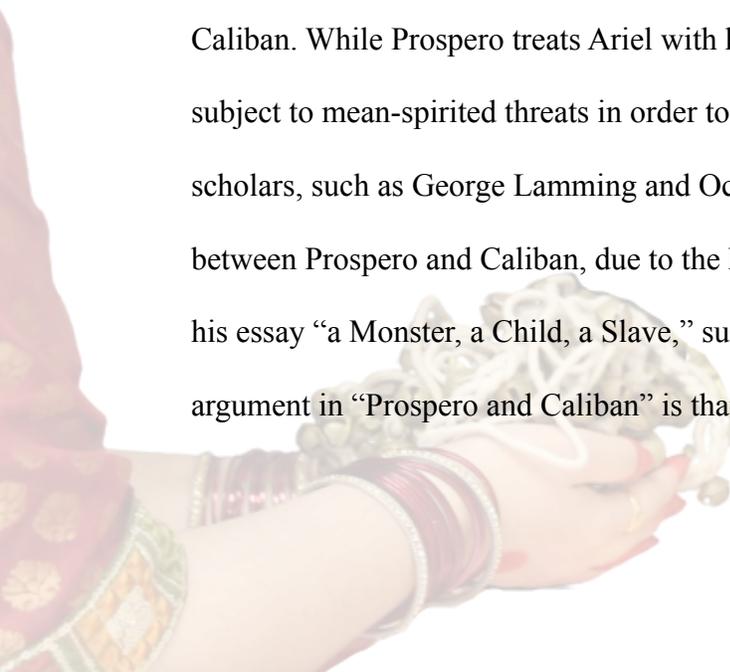
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Examining the Role of Self-Centered Motivation in the Relationships in *The Tempest*

Ariel: "All hail, great master! grave sir, hail! I come  
To answer thy best pleasure; be't to fly,  
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride  
On the curl'd clouds, to thy strong bidding task  
Ariel and all his quality"  
(Shakespeare 1.2.189-193)

"But Caliban keeps answering back, and it is his refusal to be silent which now bullies Prospero into the crucial charge" (Lamming 160).

In the play, *The Tempest*, the protagonist, Prospero, works through his goals and journey to regain his place as the Duke of Milan through the power of his two servants: Ariel and Caliban. While Prospero treats Ariel with kindness and coaxes him to use his magic, Caliban is subject to mean-spirited threats in order to force him to work under Prospero. Many educated scholars, such as George Lamming and Octave Mannoni debate on what to label the relationship between Prospero and Caliban, due to the hierarchical nature of their bond. While Lamming, in his essay "a Monster, a Child, a Slave," suggests Caliban is a slave to Prospero, Mannoni's argument in "Prospero and Caliban" is that Prospero is no less than a colonizer, who is forced to



impose his civilization on an unstable inhabitant like Caliban. Regardless of the difference between the thoughts on what to label the relationship, the fact that there are countless debates on who Caliban is to Prospero means that Prospero's harshness towards his servant must be symbolic. On the other hand, the lack of discussion about Prospero's treatment of Ariel brings up the question of why Prospero treats one servant so poorly, to the extent where one has no choice but to fixate on their relationship, and the other so gently, that no one seems to see a need to focus on their bond. Although the reader may be tempted to take an oversimplified view of Prospero as an unjust ruler with absolute control over their treatments, there is a deeper incentive within each character that acts as the foundation for their relationships: Prospero's treatment of his two servants stems from the types of mutual benefits or losses, both parties receive through their respective relationships, and these benefits guide us to the reason why each servant has differing levels of willingness to work.

Both servants carry utmost importance in the plot of *The Tempest*, and as a result, it is important to first recognize their respective roles and the benefits they provide to Prospero. Throughout the play, Ariel is seen as Prospero's right-hand man who helps him with his desires and elaborate revenge plot that requires Ariel's magic. During the spirit's entry in the play, Prospero establishes Ariel's crucial role by asking "Hast thou, spirit, performed to point the tempest that I bade thee?" (Shakespeare 1.2.194). Through this interaction, the reader realizes Ariel is the one who creates the tempest that is the foundation of the play's storyline, as suggested by the play's title, highlighting how Ariel is vital to Prospero's motives. Caliban, on the other hand, is representative of something even more important to Prospero: his survival. In fact, Prospero himself clearly explains the importance of Caliban's role during his interaction with Miranda, in which he says "we cannot miss him. He does make our fire, / fetch in our wood,

and serve in offices that profit us” (Shakespeare 1.2.311-314). Caliban’s servitude towards Prospero is essential to his ability to live and, as a result, his character can be seen as symbolic of Prospero’s proximate goal, survival, rather than his ultimate one of revenge. This idea that Caliban’s servitude must be present for Prospero to entertain any of his other desires can be clearly seen in George Lamming's argument that “Caliban is therefore, the occasion to which every situation, within the context of *The Tempest*, must be related. No Caliban no Prospero! No Prospero no Miranda! No Miranda No Marriage! And no Marriage no Tempest!” (Lamming 166). Without Caliban’s service, Prospero would not have the means to create his revenge plot, which would also eliminate Ariel’s role in realizing his plan. In essence, Caliban creates the foundation of Prospero’s world by sustaining his life, and Ariel’s servitude builds upon that foundation by executing Prospero’s revenge through his magic.

These respective roles of both servants help the reader understand how they view Prospero, and what drives them to willingly, or unwillingly, help him. To elaborate, Caliban is seen as the most essential part of Prospero’s journey in *The Tempest*, as highlighted by his role above, however, in their relationship, only Prospero gains some kind of benefit. As explained in the play, Caliban is a native of the island, who was “littered” there by his mother, Sycorax (Shakespeare 1.2.281-283). While Prospero needs Caliban to survive, Caliban only loses by being under Prospero’s care, as he was originally free on the island before he was taken in as a slave by Prospero. Octave Mannoni’s essay enhances this argument as he claims that Prospero and Caliban’s relationship is identical to that in a “colonial situation” where Prospero takes the role of a colonizer and exercises control over land and people that were originally not his, leaving the native figure, Caliban, helpless (Mannoni 150). This explains why Caliban's general attitude towards Prospero is pessimistic and why Caliban does not have any willing inclination to

work for Prospero. Unlike Caliban, Ariel has a reason to use his magic for Prospero. As described above, Ariel helps Prospero execute his goals. On the surface level, this is not an essential task, but it is very important to Prospero as it represents his survival as a Duke. Ariel, however, has his freedom to gain by helping Prospero, which is evidently a key requirement for Ariel to live a content life based on his consistent reminders to Prospero that he owes him freedom: "Let me remember thee what thou hast promised, which is not yet performed me / my liberty" (Shakespeare 1.2.243-244). As a result of Ariel's plea, Prospero reminds him that the only reason he is able to even think of freedom is because Prospero saved him from Sycroyax's prison (Shakespeare 1.2.257-258). This reminder adds to the argument that Ariel has a greater reason to work for Prospero. Ariel is not only gaining something from his servitude, but he is also in debt to Prospero. The freedom that Ariel gains and Caliban loses is the focal point from which both servants' enthusiasm to work for Prospero stems from.

The different motivations to help Prospero brings light to why Prospero approaches the treatments of each character in such drastically different manners. Prospero's objective with both servants is to have them work for him and execute the tasks that he needs to be done. Seeing how each character has a different degree of loyalty to Prospero, he realizes he must treat them differently in order to reach his objective. For example, Prospero is aware of Caliban's treacherous nature, and he knows that Caliban is very well capable of leaving Prospero because he has nothing to lose from betraying his master. Prospero, as a result, uses brute and physical force as a way to pressurize the creature. This is shown in Prospero's endless threats, where he intimidates Caliban by saying, "fetch us in fuel" and "if thou neglect'st or dost unwillingly/ what I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps" (Shakespeare 1.2.365-368). Prospero is very terse and consistent with his treatment of Caliban as that is the only way he will be of Prospero's

service, even if it is unwillingly. Since Caliban initially has nothing to lose, Prospero gives him something he would detest gaining if he betrayed his master: agony. While Prospero has to come up with a manner of provocation for Caliban, Ariel's freedom and obligation towards Prospero is enough for the spirit to willingly work. Since Ariel is already a loyal servant, Prospero does not see the need to physically threaten Ariel the way he does with Caliban. Prospero, instead, encourages Ariel's faithful service by consistently caressing and flattering the spirit so he feels eager to use his magic. Prospero describes Ariel as a "brave spirit" and during their parting, Prospero has nothing but sweet compliments to describe the delicate and dainty nature of the spirit (Shakespeare 1.2.206). Caliban's harsh demeanor and hatred for Prospero stand in direct opposition to Ariel's devotion and loyalty, therefore causing Prospero's treatment of his servants to also be extremely contrasting in nature.

Shakespeare admirably creates two unique relationships that differ in almost every aspect. In addition to their divergent roles, Ariels' character is seen to be graceful and fragile, while Caliban's demeanor is intense and simply raw in nature. From this stark contrast in character, Shakespeare develops two differing levels of loyalty, motivation, and reverence towards their master. While Ariel has an incentive to continue being faithful to Prospero, Caliban has a greater disincentive to being under Prospero's wing. As a result, Prospero has to alter his methods of persuasion to fit these distinct characteristics held by both servants. Had Shakespeare kept only one of the servants in the play, the reader would not be able to enjoy the two different sides of Prospero's character and the plot of *The Tempest* would not have the same level of complexity as it does with both characters, since their roles and separate reasons for motivation are the direct reasons why Prospero's treats each servant differently.

## Works Cited

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