

A Tempest: Based on Shakespeare's The Tempest, Adaptation for a Black Theatre Study Guide

A Tempest: Based on Shakespeare's The Tempest, Adaptation for a Black Theatre by Aimé Césaire

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Plot Summary

"A Tempest" by Aime Cesaire is a play based largely on Shakespeare's "The Tempest" with only a few changes. Cesaire's version of this play explores the original concepts in further depth by incorporating the themes of colonialism and Negritude which Cesaire studied extensively. "A Tempest" addresses modernist issues and theories through the utilization of a classic play that most modern readers are familiar with.

This book begins with an Introduction which provides a brief biography of the author, Aime Cesaire, and a synopsis of his works. In the Prologue, the Master of Ceremonies assigns the roles in the play to various actors and instructs the play to begin. In Act 1, Scene 1, a ship containing nobles, including King Alonso of Naples, sinks near magical islands far from their homeland in Europe. Act 1, Scene 2 shows Prospero, a magician and sorcerer admitting to Miranda, his daughter, that he caused the shipwreck with the help of Ariel, a sea nymph that he has enslaved. Furthermore, Prospero tells Miranda about his past and subsequent exile to the Island, which is the reason that he causes the shipwreck: to seek revenge against the nobles' treachery. Prospero instructs Ariel in how to treat their visitors and orders Caliban to gather a great quantity of wood and water. Caliban's rebellion angers Prospero. When Ferdinand meets Miranda, he willingly accepts the slavery to which Prospero subjects him. In Act 2, Scene 1, Ariel warns Caliban that Prospero will seek vengeance against him for his disobedience, but Caliban wants war with Prospero. In Act 2, Scene 2, Alonso, Gonzalo, Antonio and Sebastian wonder about the Island and its inhabitants as they admire its beauty. Prospero torments them by presenting them with food only to retract it. In the next scene, Antonio and Sebastian conspire against Alonso and Gonzalo, but Ariel wakes and warns Alonso and Gonzalo. Ariel also offers Prospero's forgiveness to all of the nobles if they repent of their crimes against him, and they all acquiesce.

In Act 3, Scene 1, Ferdinand flirts with Miranda as he works as Prospero's slave. When Prospero praises Ferdinand's hard work, he invites him back to his house before yelling at Caliban who sings of freedom and hides from approaching men he believes to be Prospero's agents. In the next scene, Trinculo and Stephano find Caliban whom they plan to sell to a carnival in Europe, but when Stephano proclaims himself king of the Island, Caliban rallies them to battle and to overthrow Prospero. In Act 3, Scene 3, Prospero hosts a celebration of Miranda and Ferdinand's engagement where the goddesses bless the upcoming nuptials. When Eshu appears uninvited, Prospero swears vengeance against Caliban. In Act 3, Scene 4, at Prospero's command, Ariel torments Caliban during the night as he plots his attack on Prospero. On their way to battle, Trinculo and Stephano grow distracted, and Prospero commands Ariel to imprison Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano. In the final scene, Alonso is reunited with his son and rejoices in the engagement between Miranda and Ferdinand. Prospero forgives his offenders and releases Ariel from slavery. Since Caliban refuses to repent for his disobedience, Prospero decides to stay on the Island. The nobles return to Naples with Miranda to celebrate the nuptials of Ferdinand and Miranda, and Prospero stays on the Island where he continues his contest of wills with Caliban who sings about freedom.



Introduction

Introduction Summary

Aime Césaire demolishes the idea that poets make terrible politicians. He is known as the progenitor of Negritude, the first black pride movement, as well as a major voice of Surrealism and a great French poet. Césaire is equally revered for his role in modern anticolonial and Pan-African movements. He uses poetry as a potent weapon in any movement whose primary goal is freedom. Césaire is born on June 25, 1913 in Basse-Pointe, Martinique where he and his five siblings are raised by their dressmaking mother and their father, a local tax inspector, and the Césaires live close to the edge of rural poverty. At age eleven, Aime Césaire is admitted to Lycee Schoelcher in Fort-de-France because he is a brilliant student, and when he graduates in 1931, he moves to Paris and enrolls in Lycee Louis-le-Grand to prepare for Ecole Normale Supérieure, a high-level teachers' training college. This is where he meets a number of like-minded intellectuals, most notably Leopold Sédar Senghor, and where he begins to study African history and culture. Césaire, Senghor and Leon-Gontran Damas, Césaire's childhood friend, launch *L'Étudiant Noir*, or *The Black Student*, a journal in which Césaire coins the term Negritude. During a vacation to Yugoslavia, Césaire pens the beginnings of "Notebook of a Return to My Native Land" which later becomes his most famous poem. Césaire returns to his native land in the early 1940s with his wife, Suzanne Roussy, and they both take teaching posts and launch a journal, *Tropiques*, in 1941, which coincides with the fall of France to the fascist Vichy regime which promotes racism and authoritarianism. Both Césaire and his wife contribute to the development of Surrealist thought and practice.

Aime Césaire works directly in politics toward the end of the war, joining the communist party which he believes will guarantee equal rights. When this is not the case, he publishes his first, and most important, nonfiction book, "Discourse on Colonialism" in 1950, which leads to the wave of anticolonial literature produced during the postwar period. In his paper "Culture and Colonization", published in September 1956, Césaire outlines his argument for the overthrow of colonialism which must be replaced with a new culture that would embrace non-Western traditions while also embracing the best that modernity has to offer. He founds the Martinican Progressive Party and serves as mayor of Fort-de-France for two and a half decades while continuing to write. Césaire sees the "future of Africa and the diaspora as a phoenix rising" (page xiii). Themes of colonialism and postcolonialism dominate Césaire's work in the 1960s, and in his final exploration of colonialism, he turns to Shakespeare for his 1969 adaptation of "The Tempest." During the next three decades, Césaire's writing moves away from the colonial problem and turns more toward Surrealism. Aime Césaire is one of the last truly great universalists of the twentieth century, and he has a hand in shaping or critiquing many major ideologies and movements of the modern world, including but not limited to Marxism, nationalism, fascism and Pan-Africanism. All of the movements that Césaire is interested in are rooted in the notions of progress, they are all products of

modernity, and they all fall short in "envisioning a genuinely emancipatory future" (page xvi).

Introduction Analysis

The Introduction to the play is entitled "Poetry and the Political Imagination: Aime Cesaire, Negritude and the Applications of Surrealism" and is written by Robin D.G. Kelley. The introduction serves as a short biography on Aime Cesaire, the author of "A Tempest" and explains the many movements in which Cesaire was involved. Among these are Marxism, Surrealism and Negritude, though his activities are definitely not limited to these spheres. Additionally, the Introduction contains many allusions to Cesaire's work as follows: "Notebook of a Return to My Native Land", "Miraculous Weapons", "Beheaded Sun", "Lost Body", "Discourse on Colonialism", "Ferremments", "Cadastre", "Toussiant L'Ouverture: The French Revolution and the Problem of Colonialism", "The Tragedy of King Christophe", "A Season in the Congo", "A Tempest", "Noira" and "Moi, Laminair", as well as the journals to which he contributed or founded, L'Etudiant Noir, Tropiques and Presence Africaine. Kelley describes Cesaire as someone who successfully contributed to both poetry and politics, which was a feat unheard of at the time. The Introduction also alludes to and contains references to many other influential writers, such as W.E.B. DuBois, Frantz Fanon, George Padmore, Albert Memmi and Richard Wright, as well as Leo Frobenius, the German ethnologist who wrote "Voice of Africa" which largely influenced Cesaire's studies. Shakespeare's "The Tempest" is the work upon which Cesaire's "A Tempest" is based; however, Cesaire incorporates themes from his own studies of Pan-Africanism as demonstrated by the slight changes in the list of characters.



Prologue

Prologue Summary

As the actors enter individually and choose masks leisurely, the Master of Ceremonies instructs them to choose their masks according to their characters because "it takes all kinds to make a world" (page 7). He states that these are not the worst characters and there is no problem with the juvenile leads or the villains, but he nearly forgets the gods. The Master of Ceremonies assigns actors to the major roles of Prospero, Ariel, Caliban, Stephano, Trinculo, Miranda, Ferdinand, Antonio, Alonso and Eshu, telling the other actors that they can decide for themselves who plays the roles of the other characters; however, he must choose one actor himself for the part of the Tempest because he needs a very large person to act as the wind. The play begins with the winds, rain and lightning as the Master of Ceremonies instructs the actors to ad-lib.

Prologue Analysis

The list of characters shows that Césaire has made two alterations from Shakespeare's "The Tempest" upon which this play is based. The first is that Ariel is a mulatto slave, and the second is that Caliban is a black slave. Additionally, Césaire includes Eshu, a black-devil-god. The Prologue includes the Master of Ceremonies who does not appear in the rest of the play. The Master of Ceremonies coordinates the actors and begins the play by ordering the beginning of the winds, rain and lightning and instructing the actors to ad-lib.



Act 1, Scene 1

Act 1, Scene 1 Summary

"A Tempest" by Aime Cesaire is a play based largely on Shakespeare's "The Tempest" with only a few changes. Cesaire's version of this play explores the original concepts in further depth by incorporating the themes of colonialism and Negritude which Cesaire studied extensively. "A Tempest" addresses modernist issues and theories through the utilization of a classic play that most modern readers are familiar with.

Gonzalo, Sebastian and Antonio worry about the raging storm and call for the captain. As the captain and the boatswain try to control the ship, Alonso questions the boatswain who tells the passengers to return to their cabins below deck. Gonzalo demands respect due to their relation to the king, but the boatswain continues to be rude and disrespectful, reiterating his command that they return below deck. Gonzalo, Alonso and Antonio complain about the boatswain's manners amongst themselves as the boatswain continues to yell at them about their appearance on deck. As the storm worsens, Gonzalo looks at the lightning and agrees that these are magic lands and very different from their home in Europe. Antonio suggests that the storm is a foretaste of the hell that awaits them, but Gonzalo chides Antonio for being so pessimistic; besides, Gonzalo is prepared to meet his maker. The sailors enter and note that the ship is sinking, and the passengers sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Ferdinand enters, claiming that hell must be empty because all of the devils are on Earth as the ship sinks.

Act 1, Scene 1 Analysis

The first scene of "A Tempest" shows the chaos on the ship as the storm rages. At the beginning of the scene, the storm is compared to a Cyclops' eye. Gonzalo, Sebastian and Alonso attempt to question the boatswain about the situation, but the boatswain disregards their questions. Alonso and the group of men with him are highly offended that they are not treated with more respect due to their high social station, but, as the boatswain points out, the sea does not care about Alonso's crown. Gonzalo's observation that these magic lands are very different than their home in Europe informs the reader of the nobles' homeland as well as the fact that there are rumors and superstitions concerning the area in which the nobles now find themselves; this foreshadows the introduction of the theme of magic in the play. Antonio's pessimism also foreshadows the events that occur on the Island while Gonzalo's proclaimed preparation to meet his maker demonstrates his piety and assurance that he has nothing to atone for. The passengers choice of song, "Nearer, My God, to Thee", and Ferdinand's declaration about all of the devils of hell creates a Christian context for the play.



Act 1, Scene 2

Act 1, Scene 2 Summary

Miranda cries out to her father to help the sinking ship, but Prospero enters with a megaphone and tells her to calm down because it is only a play. The time has come, and Prospero can no longer leave Miranda in ignorance; he tells her that she was born a princess in Milan where he was the Duke for many years. When Miranda asks how they came to be on this reclusive, deserted island, her father explains that their exile is the result of political disagreements and an ambitious, younger brother named Antonio. When they learned that Prospero had discovered these lands and was preparing to take possession of them, Antonio and Alonso, the envious King of Naples, joined forces and conspired against him, denouncing Prospero to the Holy Inquisition as a magician and a sorcerer. A flashback shows a friar of the Holy Inquisition accusing Prospero of heresy; yet, instead of killing him, they had Prospero marooned on a deserted island. Prospero tells his daughter that there was only one honorable man in this tale of treason and felony, Gonzalo, the counselor to King Alonso, who supplied Prospero with food, clothing, books and his instruments. Now, Fortune has brought these same men to the Island because greed causes them to seek the lands that Prospero's genius had discovered. Prospero's prophetic sciences informed him of this, and with Ariel's help, he brews a storm to save his possessions overseas and bring the scoundrels under his power.

Ariel enters and announces that the mission is accomplished. Prospero compliments Ariel but wonders why he does not seem pleased. Ariel is unhappy to see such a great ship go down and begs Prospero to spare him from this deed, but Prospero reminds Ariel that he freed him from Sycorax. Ariel nearly regrets his supposed freedom. Prospero promises to grant Ariel freedom when Prospero is ready, but now, he must have a word with Caliban who seems to be getting a little too emancipated lately. Prospero calls for Caliban who enters grumbling, causing Prospero to chide him. Caliban laments that he should be King of the Island given to him by his mother, Sycorax, but Prospero denounces Sycorax as a witch from whom death has delivered them. Caliban refuses to deny his mother, insisting that she is still alive because she often speaks to him and warns him in his dreams. Caliban complains that Prospero was kind to him at first before throwing him out of his house to live in a filthy cave that Caliban refers to as the ghetto. Prospero accuses Caliban of trying to rape Miranda before commanding Caliban to fetch lots of water and wood because he is expecting company today and threatening to beat Caliban when he objects. After insisting that this is the last time, Caliban informs Prospero that he will no longer answer to the name Caliban because it is not his name; he wishes to be called X because Prospero has stolen everything from him, even his identity. Caliban exits.

Ariel enters as a sea nymph, and Prospero tells him that he does not like the look in Caliban's eyes and that Caliban is the enemy. Prospero instructs Ariel to scare the people from the ship but not to harm them, and Ariel is grateful for Prospero's mercy.



Prospero decides that he will forgive his offenders if they repent of their crimes against him, especially since Alonso has a son, Ferdinand, who Prospero decides will marry Miranda. Ariel sings as Prospero exits and Ferdinand enters. Ferdinand hears Ariel singing, and when he sees Miranda, he asks if she is a goddess or a mortal. When Miranda asks who he is, Ferdinand states that he is a poor shipwrecked soul, though he is King in other surroundings since his father just died in the shipwreck. Miranda promises that Ferdinand will receive hospitality on the Island, but Prospero enters and informs Ferdinand that he will be their house servant. Ferdinand states that Miranda's appearance made him think himself lucky, but Prospero's speech helps him understand his fate better. Deciding that he prefers death to dishonor, Ferdinand states that he will defend his life with his freedom, but Prospero points out that Ferdinand is weak and Prospero could easily kill him now if he did not need the manpower. Ariel advises Ferdinand that it is better to obey Prospero since Prospero is a sorcerer and it is impossible to prevail against him. Ferdinand laments this sorcery that makes him find his imprisonment sweet, claiming that he could be imprisoned for life if only heaven will grant him a glimpse of his own sun each day. Ferdinand bids farewell to Nausicaa.

Act 1, Scene 2 Analysis

At the beginning of this scene, Prospero refers to the sinking ship as a play, and the megaphone that he carries indicates that he is the director and is thus in charge of this play. Prospero decides that he can no longer keep Miranda in ignorance and reveals his past to her. This flashback contains allusions to the Holy Inquisition and thus Christianity, as does the friar's speech denouncing Prospero for heresy. The friar's speech also contains many allusions to Biblical stories. Prospero's background story also alludes to Milan, the land over which he was Duke for many years, and Naples, where Alonso rules as king. Prospero praises Gonzalo, foreshadowing Gonzalo's honorable actions within the play. Ironically, Prospero is angry with Alonso and Antonio for denouncing him as a sorcerer when he, indeed, is a sorcerer, as evidenced by his proclamation that his prophetic sciences informed him that they would seek the lands that his genius discovered. Ariel is introduced in this scene, and his status as a slave is dictated by his mulatto race. Ariel shows more mercy than Prospero as he begs that Prospero spare him from completing this act of violence against the passengers of the ship. Next, Caliban is introduced, and like Ariel, his status as a slave is dictated by his race, though Caliban is black rather than mulatto. This racial difference may also account for the difference in the way that Prospero treats his two slaves.

During Prospero's conversations with Ariel and Caliban, there are many references to Sycorax and her death. Neither Ariel nor Caliban seems to rejoice in Sycorax's death. This is ironic since Ariel was also imprisoned by Sycorax, but he seems to find Prospero a more difficult master. Ariel's songs throughout this scene and the rest of the play parallel slave songs throughout history. During Caliban's interactions with Prospero, his insolence and resentment are evident, foreshadowing an altercation between the two men. Prospero tells Ariel that Caliban is the enemy, foreshadowing Ariel's attempt to warn Caliban to succumb to Prospero at least temporarily. Prospero demonstrates the fickleness of his temper when he decides that Ariel should scare the ship's passengers



but not harm them. Furthermore, Prospero deifies himself by claiming that he will forgive his offenders if they repent of their crimes against him. Prospero reveals his ultimate plan near the end of this scene, which is to marry Miranda to Ferdinand, the son of King Alonso of Naples. This plan foreshadows the appearance of Ferdinand and the later nuptials between Miranda and Ferdinand. Part of this foreshadowing is quickly fulfilled when Ferdinand appears and seems enraptured by Miranda. Although Prospero enslaves Ferdinand, Ferdinand cannot resent his imprisonment since it allows him to look upon Miranda daily. During this scene, Ferdinand alludes to Ulysses and Nausicaa, implying that he may enjoy his stay on the island due to Miranda's beauty.



Act 2, Scene 1

Act 2, Scene 1 Summary

Ariel enters Caliban's cave and listens to him singing about the wrath of Shango. Ariel greets Caliban, claiming that they are brothers in slavery and hope as well, though they entertain different methods for regaining their freedom. When Caliban asks if Prospero sent Ariel, Ariel warns Caliban that Prospero is plotting a terrible revenge against him, and since Prospero is stronger, it is no good to struggle. Caliban asks what obedience has gotten Ariel, and Ariel answers that Prospero has promised him freedom. Caliban claims talk is cheap, and he wants freedom now. Ariel points out that Prospero is stronger, but Caliban disagrees. Ariel does not believe in violence or submission and believes that they must change Prospero by destroying his serenity until he is forced to admit his own injustice and put an end to it. Caliban insists that Prospero has no conscience, but Ariel claims it is up to them to give him one. Caliban believes that Ariel is crazy. Ariel dreams that one day, Prospero, Caliban and himself will set out like brothers to build a wonderful world. Caliban objects that Prospero is not the collaborating type and only feels something when he has wiped someone out. Ariel reluctantly states that all that is left is war, and Caliban states that war is better than humiliation and injustice. When he feels that everything is lost, Caliban will ignite the entire island with him and Prospero on it. Ariel concedes that each of them marches to their own drum and must follow their own; he wishes Caliban courage, and Caliban wishes Ariel good luck.

Act 2, Scene 1 Analysis

In this scene, Ariel approaches Caliban to warn him of incurring Prospero's wrath and vengeance. Ariel claims that he and Caliban are brethren in slavery and in their hope of freedom, though they aspire to different means to procure that freedom. The song that Caliban is singing as Ariel enters his cave parallels slave songs sung throughout history, as well as Ariel's earlier song about freedom. Caliban's song alludes to Shango, apparently a god to whom Caliban is praying for vengeance against Prospero. Besides their different approaches to regaining their freedom, another factor distinguishes Ariel from Caliban; Ariel is mulatto while Caliban is black, which results in their receiving different treatment at the hands of their captor. Although Prospero has promised to free Ariel, Caliban states that talk is cheap because he does not trust Prospero. This foreshadows Caliban's continued rebellion and his continued imprisonment after Ariel regains his freedom.



Act 2, Scene 2

Act 2, Scene 2 Summary

Gonzalo praises the beauty of the Island, but Sebastian claims pity because it is so wild and uncultivated. When Gonzalo claims that the guano droppings make great fertilizer and everything will bloom if they irrigate the fields, Sebastian points out that they would need manpower to farm the fields, causing everyone to wonder if the Island is inhabited. Gonzalo suggests that if the Island is inhabited, "wondrous land can only contain wonderful creatures" (page 29), and Antonio agrees. Gonzalo also mentions that if the Island is inhabited, it will mean new responsibilities for them because if they colonize it, they must be careful not to import their shortcomings which they call civilization, but instead, they must keep the isle as a peaceful place where they come periodically to restore their souls. When Antonio tells Gonzalo to shut up, Gonzalo apologizes, and Alonso points out that they are all tired and hungry.

The group of men hears strange music as Prospero and Ariel enter invisible. Strange creatures appear with a table and invite the king and his company to eat before disappearing. Shocked, Alonso, Gonzalo, Sebastian and Antonio decide to eat, but elves enter and carry off the table. Alonso feels that they have fallen under Powers that are playing a game of cat and mouse with them. This feeling is reinforced when the elves return with the food, but Alonso refuses to partake of the food this time. Gonzalo urges Alonso to eat, suggesting that perhaps the Powers took pity on their disappointment, but Alonso refuses to touch the food. Prospero is offended that Alonso refuses his food and commands Ariel to harass the men until they eat. Ariel states that they can just die of hunger if they refuse to eat, but Prospero insists that he wants them to eat because they insult him by their refusal. He wants the nobles to eat out of his hand as a sign of submission. When Ariel tells Prospero that it is evil to play with their anxieties and hopes, Prospero states "That is how Power is measured. I am Power" (page 32). As the king and his company eat, Alonso worries about his son, but Gonzalo assures him that they may find Ferdinand yet. After the group eats, they sleep.

Act 2, Scene 2 Analysis

In this scene, the nobles allude to Egypt and the Nile, as well as Power, likely referring to the gods or magic. These two allusions are relevant as Egypt is often considered a place where magic is prevalent. Although Gonzalo appreciates the wild beauty of the Island, Sebastian laments the fact that it is wild and uncultivated. Gonzalo serves as Cesaire's spokesman as he claims that if they colonize it, they must be careful not to import their shortcomings which they call civilization, but instead, they must keep the isle as a peaceful place where they come periodically to restore their souls; in doing so, he is promoting the message of anti-colonialism, a movement in which Cesaire participates. Prospero torments the noblemen by offering them food only to retract his offer. His magic is evident as he watches them though he is invisible, as well as by his



command of elves and other strange creatures. Prospero demonstrates his fickleness as he decides that he wants the noblemen to eat out of his hand as a sign of submission. Ariel promotes his purpose of forcing Prospero to repent for his evil actions as he points out that it is evil to play with the noblemen's anxieties and hopes. Prospero's desire for power is evident when he proclaims "I am Power" (page 32). Alonso shows his love for his son through his worry as the noblemen eat, but Gonzalo reassures his king that the situation is not hopeless, foreshadowing Alonso's reunion with Ferdinand.



Act 2, Scene 3

Act 2, Scene 3 Summary

When Antonio and Sebastian enter and see the sleeping group, Antonio mocks the king for sleeping instead of watching over his men. He calls Sebastian a coward if he can see the sleeping king without getting any ideas. Antonio states that it is time to shake the coconut palm; he usurped his brother's place as Duke of Milan by knowing when to shake the coconut palm. Sebastian is unable to kill his own brother, so he tells Antonio to kill Alonso while he dispatches Gonzalo. As Alonso and Sebastian draw their swords, Ariel enters and causes their swords to fall from their hands. Ariel awakes Alonso and Gonzalo to tell them that Antonio and Sebastian are plotting their deaths. When Alonso praises divinity for saving him, Ariel claims that Alonso should be shocked at the aid of divinity before telling the king that he has been sent by Prospero who reigns over the Island. As Alonso falls to his knees and begs God to save him, Ariel tells the noblemen that Prospero will forgive their crimes against him if they deeply and sincerely repent. Sebastian and Antonio, realizing that their situation could be much worse, beg Prospero's forgiveness and offer thanks for his generosity. Ariel invites the noblemen to follow him in order to celebrate the engagement of Miranda and Ferdinand. Alonso is grateful and relieved to hear that his son is still alive; he is prepared to forgo his rank, throne and fortune if his son is only restored to him. Ariel instructs the noblemen to follow him.

Act 2, Scene 3 Analysis

In Act 2, Scene 3, Antonio alludes to the past and his treachery against Prospero in his attempt to goad Sebastian into slaughtering his brother and usurping the crown of Naples. He even seems to praise himself for recognizing the correct time to act against his brother. Although Sebastian cannot kill his own brother, he agrees to allow Antonio to do so while he kills Gonzalo, allowing Sebastian to usurp his brother's title. When Ariel saves Alonso and Gonzalo, he also reveals to the noblemen that Prospero is the man who reigns over the Island. Ariel reveals Prospero's agreement to forgive the noblemen if they repent of their actions against him, causing them to praise Prospero's generosity. As Gonzalo elaborates on the difference between contrition and attrition, he compares Prospero to a god. Sebastian and Antonio succumb to Prospero's demands for repentance because they realize that Prospero could be much crueler to them. Alonso shows his love for his son by the fact that he is prepared to forgo his rank, throne and fortune if his son is only restored to him. Ariel telling the noblemen to follow him foreshadows Alonso's reunion with Ferdinand and the noblemen interacting with Prospero.



Act 3, Scene 1

Act 3, Scene 1 Summary

As he hoes, Ferdinand sings about the changes in his life and the resulting weariness. Caliban pities Ferdinand but wonders what the prince would say if they switched positions. Caliban watches as Miranda approaches Ferdinand who continues to hoe and sing. Miranda offers to help Ferdinand, but he only wants to know her name; however, Prospero has forbidden Miranda to tell Ferdinand her name, so when Miranda is distracted, Caliban whispers her name to Ferdinand. Ferdinand tells Miranda that he will christen her with a name of his own and will call her Miranda. When Ferdinand compliments her, Miranda tells him to be quiet because her father will hear and be angry if he catches Ferdinand trying to sweet talk Miranda. Ferdinand goes back to work and resumes singing as Prospero enters and praises the prince's hard work. Prospero tells Caliban that he is taking Ferdinand with him, commanding Caliban to finish Ferdinand's work. When Caliban objects, Prospero demands that he obey. As Prospero moves away with Ferdinand, Caliban swears to repay Prospero some day as he starts working and singing. Caliban complains as it starts to rain and stiffens at the sound of a voice, but he says it cannot be him and must be one of Prospero's cops. Caliban decides to make himself scarce to allow Prospero and his cops to pass by.

Act 3, Scene 1 Analysis

In this scene, Ferdinand sings as he works as Prospero's slave, paralleling the slave songs sung throughout history. Ironically, Caliban pities the prince as he watches him work, though he does not fully relinquish his self pity as he wonders how Ferdinand would feel if he was Caliban. Ferdinand's flirtation with Miranda foreshadows his engagement to her. Caliban tells Ferdinand Miranda's name when she refuses to give it because her father has forbidden it. Prospero releasing Ferdinand from his work and taking him back to the house foreshadows the marriage between Ferdinand and Miranda. His continued ill treatment of Caliban and Caliban's continued rebellion foreshadows their battle of wills that continues beyond the end of the play. Caliban alludes to the seven maws of Malediction as his fear of Prospero's cops approaching foreshadows Caliban's interactions with some of the men shipwrecked on the Island.



Act 3, Scene 2

Act 3, Scene 2 Summary

Trinculo enters, singing, as he laments wandering in the rain. When he notices Caliban sleeping under the wheelbarrow, he decides to use Caliban's clothing for shelter if he is dead or, if he is alive, to take him back to Europe to sell to a carnival. Trinculo crawls under the wheelbarrow with his back to Caliban as Stephano enters singing and drinking wine. Stephano sees Caliban and also decides to take him to the carnival to show him for profit. When Stephano touches Caliban, he finds that he is cold and gives Caliban a swig of his wine. As Stephano notices Trinculo, he exclaims about his luck in finding a "Nindian" with two heads. Trinculo and Stephano recognize one another and agree to civilize Caliban in order to make a fortune by selling him to a carnival in Europe. Stephano states that he is no longer prejudiced against shipwrecks since it gets rid of the noblemen keeping the world down; he never could stand them and has been a long-time believer in the republic, exclaiming "Down with tyrants!" (page 43). Trinculo recalls that there is a crown and throne available now that the King and all of the noblemen are dead. Stephano appoints himself king, and Caliban proclaims "Long live the King!" Stephano embraces Caliban happily because Caliban talks sensically. Caliban warns Stephano about Prospero, the usurper, explaining that the Island used to belong to him, but Prospero cheated him out of it. Caliban tells Stephano that he will have to fight Prospero to rule the Island, and Stephano assures Caliban that he can get rid of Prospero. Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo drink and sing until Stephano states that there has been enough singing because they need to gather their forces and regain strength since night has fallen and tomorrow they will take the tyrant's hide. Stephano bids Caliban and Trinculo good night.

Act 3, Scene 2 Analysis

This scene begins with Trinculo singing "Oh, Susannah" as he notices Caliban under the wheelbarrow and decides that he could make a lot of money by selling the savage at a carnival in Europe. Paralleling this is Stephano's similar reaction when he sees Caliban. Furthermore, Stephano shows his ignorance by his reference to the "Nindian." When Trinculo and Stephano recognize each other, they agree to join together to make money by selling Caliban to an European carnival. They also allude to Bacchus, the god of wine, as Trinculo's savior during the shipwreck since Trinculo is a drunk. Ironically, Stephano and Trinculo want to civilize Caliban, but Caliban is actually more intelligent and civilized than either of them. Caliban convinces the two fools to rally together with him to overthrow Prospero and assume control of the Island as he sings about freedom, paralleling the slave songs sung by oppressed blacks throughout history.



Act 3, Scene 3

Act 3, Scene 3 Summary

In Prospero's cave, Prospero holds a celebration for his daughter's engagement to Ferdinand and invites the gods and goddesses. The gods and goddesses enter, and Juno and Ceres bless the couple and Prospero while Iris beckons to the nymphs to celebrate the contract of true love. The nymphs enter and dance. Prospero expresses his gratitude to the goddesses for their good wishes as the gods and goddesses continue dancing. When Ferdinand asks if this majestic vision shows him spirits, Prospero tells him that it is so. Eshu enters, and Miranda points him out, claiming that he seems more like a devil than a god. Laughing, Eshu says that she is not mistaken; he is god to his friends and devil to his enemies. Prospero chides Eshu for coming to the celebration because he was not invited and Prospero does not like such loose behavior even from gods. Eshu claims that he has come because he is offended that he was not invited, and he starts drinking. Prospero tells Eshu to leave, making a magic sign, but Eshu claims that first he must sing a song for the bride and groom. As Eshu sings an obscene song, the goddesses are offended and threaten to leave. Eshu leaves, and the gods and goddesses follow immediately. Prospero is relieved that Eshu is gone, but the harm is already done because he is perturbed and his old brain is confused. Prospero has power, but that means nothing if he cannot calm his own fears. Prospero tells Ariel that Caliban is plotting, gathering a guerrilla force and, therefore, must be punished immediately. Ariel begs Prospero to let him intercede with Caliban, but Prospero says that Caliban's insubordination calls into question the whole order of the world and Prospero cannot afford to allow Caliban to get away with it. Prospero tells Ariel to arrange glass trinkets and gaudy clothes along the side of the road because savages love gaudy things. He warns Ariel to carry out his punishment and not to question Prospero or Ariel will feel the sorcerer's wrath himself.

Act 3, Scene 3 Analysis

Act 3, Scene 3 alludes to the goddesses, Juno, Ceres and Iris as they appear at Prospero's celebration of his daughter's engagement to Ferdinand. The goddesses bless the couple. Eshu, a black devil-god, arrives and his loose, bawdy behavior offends the goddesses and causes Prospero to tell him to leave. Although Eshu leaves, Prospero's peace of mind has been destroyed, and he blames Caliban, ordering Ariel to assist in his punishment. In his command, Prospero alludes to Divinity as well, heightening himself beyond Divinity as he states that he cannot allow Caliban to disturb the natural order of things even if Divinity can.



Act 3, Scene 4

Act 3, Scene 4 Summary

As night draws to a close, two spirits yell back and forth about venomous animals in the wild. The sun rises, and Ariel's band vanishes. Caliban wakes, rubs his eyes and chases the venomous animals away, asking how any natural animal can rise against him on the day that he is setting forth to conquer Prospero who is the Anti-Nature. A porcupine smooths his bristles down, and Caliban marches forward, singing a battle song. As the roar of the sea is heard, Stephano and Trinculo enter and ask Caliban about the noises, complaining that even the mud on the Island is muddier than in Europe. Caliban claims that it is not mud at all but something that Prospero dreamed up. When Trinculo complains about the mosquitoes, Caliban states that it is a gas that stings the nose and throat and makes one itch; it is another of Prospero's tricks and part of his arsenal. Trinculo complains about slipping and decides to sit down, but Stephano threatens him, commanding him to have more courage. Caliban tells Stephano and Trinculo not to underestimate or overestimate Prospero who is showing his power mainly to impress them. They see colorful clothing hanging from a rope, and Trinculo sees the clothes as a foretaste of the loot from the victory which urges him on to battle, but first he wants to put on the britches. Stephano claims that he will get first choice of the clothes since he is the King of the Island. When Trinculo claims that is tyranny, they fight as Caliban tells them to leave the clothes alone and laments being stuck with such idiots. Caliban yells "It's you and me, Prospero!" (page 55), as he advances with weapon in hand on Prospero who has just appeared. Prospero bares his chest and tells Caliban to strike his benefactor, but Caliban hesitates because he is not a murderer and tells Prospero to defend himself. Prospero calmly tells Caliban that he has lost his chance and summons Ariel to imprison Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano.

Act 3, Scene 4 Analysis

At Prospero's command, Ariel sends animals to harass Caliban during the night. When Caliban wakes, he chides the animals for rising against him on the day he goes against Prospero, who he refers to as the anti-nature. The porcupine smoothing down his bristles seems to agree with Caliban. Caliban marches forward, leading Trinculo and Stephano and singing a battle song which again alludes to Shango. Caliban recognizes the use of Prospero's magic and warns his soldiers who complain nonetheless. The colorful clothing that distracts Stephano and Trinculo fulfills the earlier foreshadowing that occurred when Prospero ordered Ariel to place it there to distract the savages; ironically, it does not distract Caliban who orders Stephano and Trinculo to focus and laments his attempt to defeat Prospero with such idiots. Caliban challenges Prospero, who bares his chest and mocks Caliban for being an animal who does not know how to kill. This is also ironic as animals are usually equated with blind killing whereas Caliban refuses to be a murderer and wants Prospero to defend himself. This, in fact,

demonstrates that Caliban is not an animal. Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano are taken prisoner, foreshadowing their judgment by Prospero in the next scene.



Act 3, Scene 5

Act 3, Scene 5 Summary

As Miranda and Ferdinand play chess in Prospero's cave, Miranda accuses Ferdinand of cheating, and he admits to cheating, relieved that she could tell that he was cheating since it makes him less worried about her leaving the innocence of the Island. Miranda claims that she would brave the demons of hell if she was with Ferdinand. The nobles enter, and Alonso is thrilled to be reunited with his son. Alonso and Gonzalo are overjoyed to see the love and happiness between Miranda and Ferdinand. Alonso gives them his blessing as Prospero enters and welcomes the gentlemen to the family party with assurances that they will recover their undamaged vessel tomorrow when he will return to Europe with them. Gonzalo delights in the happy ending to their unhappy shipwreck.

Prospero turns to Ariel and frees him with the hope that he will not be bored. Ariel, overjoyed, sings about what he will do now, and Prospero tells him to go before he changes his mind. Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano enter. Stephano throws himself at Prospero's feet to beg for mercy, explaining to Alonso about the clothes and claiming that they were mistaken for thieves. Since it is a day to be benevolent, Prospero tells Trinculo and Stephano to sleep off their drunkenness because they will be setting sail in the morning. Alonso indicates Caliban as the strangest creature that he has ever seen, and Prospero elaborates that he is also the most devilish. Gonzalo recommends Caliban based on his obedience and suggests that he be exorcized, but when Caliban laughs at him, Gonzalo agrees with Prospero's description of Caliban, telling Caliban that he tried to save him but must now leave him to the secular arm.

Prospero summons Caliban and asks him if he has anything to say in his defense since Prospero is in a forgiving mood today, but Caliban has nothing to defend; he only regrets failing in his attempt to regain his Island and his freedom and getting rid of Prospero. Prospero claims that he is fond of Caliban in spite of everything and offers peace between them, but Caliban is not interested in peace and only wants his freedom. Nothing that Caliban says will convince Prospero that he is a tyrant. Caliban claims that Prospero has degraded him for years, but he does not care about Prospero's powers because he will impale Prospero in the end. Prospero has lied to Caliban about everything, and Caliban knows that Prospero will never leave the Island because he is addicted to hassling Caliban. Prospero warns Caliban that he is stronger and his generosity has its limits when Caliban says that he hates Prospero. Caliban shouts a song to Shango, and Prospero laments that he has done much yet failed to find the path to Caliban's heart. Prospero tells Caliban that he hates him as well because he makes Prospero doubt himself for the first time.

Prospero tells the nobles that he will stay on the Island instead of returning to Europe with them because "the isle is mute without me. My duty, thus, is here, and here I shall stay" (page 64). Prospero tells Antonio to make use of his goods until Ferdinand and



Miranda can take effective possession of them and states that Ferdinand and Miranda must be married at Naples with all royal splendor, asking Gonzalo to stand as Miranda's father during the ceremony. Prospero bids the gentlemen farewell, and everyone exits except Prospero and Caliban. Prospero tells Caliban that he tried to save him from himself but will now answer his violence with violence. Time passes, and Prospero reappears, aged and weary in semi-darkness. His gestures are jerky and automatic, and his speech is weak and toneless. Prospero laments that the Island is being overrun with opossums, but he will protect civilization. Prospero fires in all directions so that he will finally be able to have some peace and quiet. He tells Caliban that it is just the two of them on the Island and shouts for him, wondering what Caliban is up to. In the distance, above the sound of the surf and the chirping birds, Caliban sings about freedom.

Act 3, Scene 5 Analysis

Ferdinand's pleasure that Miranda is not too innocent to be unaware of treachery and deceit shows that he cares about her and that he knows the potential for treachery in his homeland. Alonso's reunion with his son fulfills the earlier foreshadowing, and his joy at Ferdinand's engagement shows his repentance for his crimes against Prospero. Miranda claiming that she would brave the demons of hell with Ferdinand, Alonso's prayer that the Lord bless the young couple, and Gonzalo's agreement by saying "Amen," are all allusions to Christianity in the text.

Prospero welcomes the noblemen to his home, showing that he has truly forgiven them. By releasing Ariel from servitude, Prospero shows that he is true to his word and willing to uphold his bargain, which also foreshadows his continued torment of Caliban who is unrepentant. Prospero judges his prisoners, deciding to be merciful to the two fools who beg for his forgiveness and fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing. He also personifies Temperance and Sobriety in his speech to Trinculo and Stephano, chiding them for their drunkenness.

Gonzalo alludes to the Holy Trinity, another reference to Christianity, in his suggestion to attempt an exorcism on Caliban, but Caliban mocks the counselor who immediately tells him that he is a fool and must be relinquished to Prospero's judgment now. Caliban is unable to convince Prospero of his tyranny, and his challenge to Prospero foreshadows Prospero continuing to torment Caliban. Caliban again alludes to Shango as he shouts his challenge at Prospero. The foreshadowing is fulfilled as Prospero accepts Caliban's challenge and decides to stay on the Island to torment Caliban. The nobles return to Europe while Prospero and Caliban remain on the Island to continue their battle of wills. The play ends with Caliban singing of freedom, paralleling slave songs throughout history. Ironically, Caliban perpetuates his own continued slavery by his refusal to apologize to Prospero for his rebellion, and Prospero demonstrates how important power is to him by his refusal to leave the Island and return to his native land because Caliban will not acknowledge his power.



Characters

Aime Cesaire

Aime Cesaire is the author of "A Tempest", and the Introduction offers a brief biography on him. He is born on June 25, 1915 in Basse-Pointe, Martinique to a dressmaker mother and a father who works as a local tax inspector. The Cesaires live close to the edge of rural poverty, and Aime attends Lycee Schoelcher in Fort-de-France at age eleven. He graduates in 1931 and enrolls in Lycee Louis-le-Grand to prepare for the exams to Ecole Normale Superieure. Cesaire, with Leo Frobenius and Leon-Gontran Damas, launches the journal L'Etudiant Noir, or The Black Student. In the early 1940s, he marries Suzanne Roussy and returns to his native land where he, his wife, Rene Menil, Lucie Thesee and Aristide Maugee launch a journal called Tropiques in 1941.

Cesaire promotes a vision of freedom that depends on modernism, a deep appreciation for the pre-colonial African modes of thought and practice, as well as Surrealism. He coins the term Negritude, the first diasporic black pride movement and contributes profoundly to the development of Surrealist thought and practice. Cesaire outlines an argument that colonialism needs to be overthrown and replaced with a new culture that embraces non-Western traditions while also embracing the best that modernity has to offer. He is convinced that only a Third World revolt can pave the way for a new society.

Cesaire founds the Martinican Progressive Party and serves as mayor of Fort-de-France for two and a half decades. He publishes Ferrements in 1960, and his writings in the 1960s are dominated by themes of colonialism and postcolonialism. In 1969, Cesaire turns to Shakespeare in his final exploration of colonialism when he publishes "A Tempest." During the next three decades, he turns away from the epic hero and the problems of the colonial encounter. Aime Cesaire is one of the last truly great universalists of the twentieth century and has a hand in shaping Marxism, nationalism, Pan-Africanism and fascism, among other movements.

Prospero

Prospero is the main character of "A Tempest", though his actions do not quite allow him to be considered the protagonist. He is the rightful Duke of Milan but is usurped when his brother, Antonio, and Alonso, King of Naples, conspire against him, denouncing him to the Holy Inquisition for sorcery. As punishment for his heresy, Prospero is exiled to the Island with his daughter, Miranda. Gonzalo provides Prospero with food, clothing, books and his instruments.

On the Island, Prospero kills Sycorax and assumes control of the Island and its inhabitants, Ariel and Caliban, whom he treats as slaves. When his prophetic sciences inform him that the nobles' greed will cause them to search for the magical islands that his research discovered, the magician and sorcerer conspires with Ariel to cause a



shipwreck, stranding his offenders on his Island. Prospero enslaves Ferdinand, the prince of Naples, as he plots for a marriage between Ferdinand and Miranda. After having Ariel torment the noblemen, Prospero promises forgiveness if they repent of their crimes against him. After arranging for Miranda's marriage to Ferdinand, Prospero releases Ariel from his servitude and allows the noblemen to return to Europe with Miranda, but he stays on the island alone with Caliban who refuses to repent for his disobedience.

Miranda

Miranda is Prospero's daughter who learns of her birthright and her father's past exile at the beginning of the play as the nobles' ship sinks. She is kind to Ferdinand when he is shipwrecked on the Island, and the pair fall in love. Miranda becomes engaged to Ferdinand, and they are to be married upon their return to Naples.

Ariel

Ariel is a mulatto sea nymph that Prospero enslaves after he frees her from Sycorax. He tries to dissuade Caliban from violence against Prospero, urging Caliban to act to create a conscience in Prospero to make him repent of his deeds instead. Ariel aids Prospero in causing the nobles' ship to sink and tormenting the nobles when they arrive on the Island. Prospero frees Ariel the day before the noblemen set sail to Europe as a reward for Ariel's services.

Caliban

Caliban is Sycorax's black son whom Prospero enslaves after he kills Sycorax. Caliban laments his captivity and rebels against Prospero, swearing to destroy his captor. He conspires with Trinculo and Stephano to overthrow and kill Prospero, but the three are captured and imprisoned. Caliban refuses to repent for his disobedience to Prospero, causing Prospero to stay on the Island to continue his battle of wills with Caliban who still yearns for his freedom.

Alonso

Alonso is the King of Naples who conspired with Antonio against Prospero, causing Prospero's exile to the Island. Due to the shipwreck caused by Prospero, Alonso is stranded on the Island where Prospero torments him before offering forgiveness if Alonso repents of his crimes against Prospero. Alonso repents accordingly and also consents to his son's betrothal to Miranda, Prospero's daughter.



Sebastian

Sebastian is King Alonso's brother who conspires with Antonio to kill Alonso and usurp his place as King while they are stranded on the Island.

Antonio

Antonio is Prospero's brother and the usurping Duke of Milan after he conspires with Alonso to denounce Prospero to the Holy Inquisition for sorcery. After being shipwrecked on the Island, he repents of his crimes against his brother, earning Prospero's forgiveness.

Ferdinand

Ferdinand is the son of Alonso and the prince of Naples. He is enslaved by Prospero when he is shipwrecked on the Island, but his hard work during his enslavement earns him Miranda's hand in marriage.

Trinculo

Trinculo is one of the shipwrecked fools who conspire with Caliban against Prospero in order to gain control of the Island.

Stephano

Stephano is one of the shipwrecked fools who conspire with Caliban against Prospero in order to gain control of the Island.

Gonzalo

Gonzalo is Alonso's counselor who aids Prospero when they are exiled to the Island by providing them with food, clothes, books and Prospero's instruments. He is shipwrecked on the Island and praises Prospero's generosity in offering forgiveness to the nobles if they repent of their crimes against him.

Iris

Iris is one of the goddesses whom Prospero invites to celebrate the engagement of Miranda and Ferdinand and bless the couple.



Juno

Juno is one of the goddesses whom Prospero invites to celebrate the engagement of Miranda and Ferdinand and bless the couple.

Ceres

Ceres is one of the goddesses whom Prospero invites to celebrate the engagement of Miranda and Ferdinand and bless the couple.

Master of Ceremonies

The Master of Ceremonies assigns roles to the actors in the Prologue.

Eshu

Eshu is the black devil-god who comes to Prospero's cave to celebrate the engagement of Miranda and Ferdinand because he is offended that he was not invited. He sings a bawdy song which offends Iris, Ceres and Juno, and Prospero commands Eshu to leave.



Objects/Places

Island

The Island is the main setting of "A Tempest". The Island was formerly bequeathed to Caliban by Sycorax, his mother, but Prospero tricks Caliban into relinquishing control of the Island before the action of the play begins. At the end of the play, Prospero decides to stay on the Island with Caliban alone, instead of returning to Europe with his daughter and the noblemen.

Shipwreck

Prospero causes a shipwreck of the ship that Antonio and Alonso are on. This occurs near the Island, and Prospero causes this in order to seek vengeance against Alonso and Antonio for denouncing him to the Holy Inquisition as a sorcerer and causing his exile to the Island.

Caliban's Cave

Caliban's cave is the cave that Prospero forces Caliban to move to as punishment for his attempt to rape Miranda. Caliban refers to his cave as the "ghetto."

Milan

Milan is the city where Miranda was born and where Prospero was duke for many years.

Prospero's Cave

Prospero's cave is the cave where Prospero and Miranda live on the Island. This is where the celebrations are held to recognize the betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda.

Naples

Naples is the land over which Alonso rules as king. Miranda and Ferdinand are to be married in Naples upon their return to Europe from the Island.

Wedding Celebration

Prospero holds a wedding celebration at his cave in honor of his daughter's engagement to Ferdinand, the son of the king of Naples. Prospero invites the gods and



goddesses to attend in order to procure their blessings. Although he is not invited, Eshu attends, causing Prospero to banish him.

Prospero's Exile

When Antonio and Alonso form an alliance, they conspire against Prospero, denouncing him to the Holy Inquisition as a sorcerer. As punishment for his heresy, Prospero is banished to the Island where he kills Sycorax and enslaves her son, Caliban.

Ariel's Servitude

Ariel is forced to act as Prospero's servant after he releases him from Sycorax's bondage. Ariel mourns his servitude but refuses to act violently against Prospero. Prospero releases Ariel from his servitude the day before everyone departs the Island, leaving Prospero and Caliban alone together.

Prospero's Possessions

When Prospero decides to stay on the Island with Caliban, he yields his possessions to Antonio, his brother, until Ferdinand and Miranda are able to effectively take their rightful possession after their marriage.



Themes

Magic

One of the most important themes in Aime Cesaire's "A Tempest" is the theme of magic. Prospero is a magician and a sorcerer. Alonso and Antonio conspire against Prospero, as the reader learns when Prospero explains his exile to Miranda, by denouncing him to the Holy Inquisition for heresy because he dabbles in magic. As vengeance, Prospero conspires with Ariel to cause the nobles' ship to sink near the Island. Ariel is a sea nymph who is enslaved by Prospero after Prospero kills Sycorax, the witch who previously ruled the Island. Prospero is able to cause the shipwreck because his knowledge of prophetic sciences informs him that the nobles' greed will cause them to seek the magical lands that Prospero's genius discovered.

In Act 2, Scene 2, Prospero and Ariel enter the scene invisibly in order to watch the nobles' reactions as strange creatures and elves bring and take food to torment the nobles at Prospero's command. Alonso believes that they have fallen prey to Powers that are playing a game of cat and mouse with them. Later, in order to prepare Trinculo and Stephano to battle with and overthrow Prospero, Caliban warns them of Prospero's magical abilities. Prospero summons the gods and goddesses to a celebration that he hosts in honor of Miranda and Ferdinand's engagement. At the celebration, Juno, Ceres and Iris bless the couple; however, Eshu arrives, though uninvited, and behaves lewdly, causing Prospero to ban him from the festivities. After forgiving the nobles, Prospero frees Ariel from captivity, but Prospero remains on the Island because Caliban will not repent of his disobedience. Power is important to Prospero because "[he] is Power" (page 32).

Racism

One of the major themes of Cesaire's "A Tempest" is racism. Aime Cesaire studies African history and is the progenitor of Negritude, the first diasporic black pride movement. He is also revered for his role in modern anti-colonial and Pan-African movements. As a result, a lot of his writing focuses on the themes of anti-colonialism and the Pan-African movement. Cesaire publishes "A Tempest" in 1969 as his last study in anti-colonialism, turning to Shakespeare for inspiration in his quest to put an end to anti-colonialism.

Within the play, Prospero's slaves are Caliban and Ariel. Caliban is black and Ariel is mulatto, which signifies their social status as slaves. Ariel claims kinship to Caliban when he begs Caliban to reevaluate his disobedience to Prospero since it is not the best way to regain their freedom. Although Caliban and Ariel are both Prospero's slaves, he treats them differently, likely due to the difference in their races. The songs that Caliban and Ariel sing throughout the play parallel the slave songs sung throughout history by oppressed blacks. Also, Caliban's rebellion results in his continued slavery as



Prospero remains on the Island because Caliban will not admit his superiority and Power. All of the free characters are European, signifying that they are white. Prospero is displeased when Eshu arrives uninvited to the celebration of Miranda and Ferdinand's engagement. It is indicated that his displeasure is caused by the fact that Eshu is a black devil-god, in addition to Eshu's lewd behavior.

Treachery and Vengeance

Treachery and vengeance fuel the action of Aime Cesaire's "A Tempest." Antonio and Alonso act treacherously in their conspiracy to usurp Prospero's place as Duke of Milan by denouncing him to the Holy Inquisition on charges of heresy for his role as a magician and sorcerer. As a result, Prospero is exiled to the Island where he causes the nobles' ship to sink in order to seek vengeance against their treachery. Once the nobles are on the Island, Prospero enlists Ariel's aid in order to torment them, before offering them forgiveness if they repent of their crimes against him.

Additionally, Caliban desires vengeance against Prospero for killing his mother, usurping his rightful role as the ruler of the Island and enslaving Caliban. He manages to enlist the aid of Trinculo and Stephano in his plots against Prospero as well. Although Ariel also desires his freedom, he urges Caliban to seek vengeance by creating a conscience in Prospero to make him regret his wrongdoings against Caliban and Ariel. Prospero avenges himself against Caliban's conspiracies by remaining on the Island to continue tormenting Caliban after the nobles have returned to Europe with Miranda. While on the Island, Antonio and Sebastian conspire against Alonso and Gonzalo to enable Sebastian to usurp his brother's throne; however, Ariel wakes the King and his counselor, saving their lives.

Style

Point of View

This play utilizes several points of view in order to accommodate the format in which the story is written. Most frequently, the characters speak from a first person point of view; however, occasionally, they vary the point of view, speaking from a third person point of view as they discuss other characters. Also, the stage directions that are incorporated into the play are given in third person. The point of view of Aime Cesaire's "A Tempest" is mostly limited; however, this seems to change when the viewpoint of the play is given to Prospero. Due to Prospero's powers and knowledge of the prophetic sciences, the point of view seems to be omniscient, or nearly so, when the play is told from Prospero's viewpoint. Additionally, the point of view of this play is fairly reliable, though sometimes, it is intentionally unreliable. One example of this is when Caliban attempts to recruit Stephano and Trinculo to help him overthrow Prospero. At this point, Caliban obviously lies about his loyalty to Stephano as King of the Island in order to enlist their services.

The point of view is important because the format of the story is a play which makes a different point of view difficult. The play contains very little exposition; in fact, the only exposition appears in the form of the stage directions which appear sporadically throughout the text. "A Tempest" consists primarily of dialogue with an occasional monologue by the characters, used to convey their thoughts. The distribution of exposition and dialogue is important because the format of a play makes it very difficult to include a large amount of exposition without becoming tedious through the utilization of a narrator. Since "A Tempest" is written in the format of a play, the author relies primarily on dialogue to convey his plot. The viewpoint of the play varies. The viewpoint given is mostly that of Prospero or Caliban; however, the viewpoint occasionally veers to include the viewpoints of Alonso, Ariel and Antonio.

Setting

The play is set in a slightly fictionalized version of the real world, which includes a group of magical islands that Prospero discovers using his magical talents. The play is set in the past, likely sometime between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The majority of the characters in "A Tempest" are European in descent, but two of the characters, Caliban and Ariel, are natives of the Island. This indicates that the other characters are white while Caliban is black and Ariel is mulatto. This is also the reason for their enslavement by the white Prospero. The play is set on the Island where Prospero has been stranded after his exile from his homeland, as part of a scheme by his brother, Antonio, and Alonso, King of Naples, to usurp his place as Duke of Milan. Although the Island is the only physical setting of the play, Alonso and Ferdinand are originally from Naples, and Prospero and his family are originally from Milan, making Italy an invisible setting of the play.



When Prospero is stranded on the Island, he kills Sycorax, a witch, and assumes control of the Island, though it is meant to be Caliban's inheritance from his mother. The events of the play occur mainly on the Island which is the main setting. Specifically, Caliban complains about his cave, which he refers to as the ghetto, and Prospero hosts a celebration of Miranda's engagement to Ferdinand in his cave. At the celebration, Eshu arrives uninvited; it is indicated that his exclusion is due to his race as a black devil-god. The first scene shows the nobles on their ship, which sinks due to Prospero's interference, and the Prologue occurs on stage as part of the preparation for the play but not part of the action of the actual play itself. "A Tempest" also contains several allusions to a past and future for all of the characters in Europe, specifically in the cities of Naples and Milan in Italy.

Language and Meaning

The language of this play tends to be somewhat stiff and formal as it emulates Shakespeare's "The Tempest", after which Aime Cesaire modeled his play, and, therefore, the time period in which Shakespeare wrote. Cesaire imitates Shakespeare's writing style throughout the play; however, "A Tempest" is riddled with vulgarity not found in the original version. The sentences are constructed appropriately for Shakespeare's time period, however. The language of the play does not hinder understanding because it is modernized enough to be familiar to modern readers.

The language characterizes the social classes and cultures of the characters within the text. For example, there is a notable distinction in the dialogue of the nobility compared to the sailors and the savages. The language aids the writing style as it associates the language with the time period and distinguishes the characters. The play is comprised mostly of dialogue and monologue with a small amount of exposition, used solely in the author's stage directions. The overall effect of the language is generally easy to read and comprehend, especially as it aids in distinguishing the social classes of the characters.

Structure

This play is comprised of eighty-six pages and is divided into an Introduction, a Prologue and three acts. The Introduction, a short biography on the author, Aime Cesaire, is ten pages long. The first act contains two scenes, the second act is composed of three scenes, and the third act consists of five scenes. The scenes range from one to thirteen pages long, averaging about five pages each. The scenes are fairly short, and they are numbered, rather than titled. The scenes are fairly vague as they focus on one aspect of the plot while disregarding the others, and the entire play occurs within two or three days with background information about Prospero's exile included in the second scene.

The plot of the play is somewhat complex as it incorporates the subplot of Caliban's scheming against Prospero. Prospero causes the nobles' ship to sink near his Island in



retaliation for Antonio and Alonso's conspiracy to usurp his title as Duke of Milan approximately ten years earlier. Meanwhile, as Prospero schemes against the nobles and demands their repentance in return for his forgiveness, Caliban, the rightful heir to the Island, conspires against Prospero to regain his freedom. At the end of the play, Prospero remains on the Island to continue tormenting the unrepentant Caliban after sending the nobles back to Europe with Miranda, Prospero's daughter, who is to marry Ferdinand, the prince and heir of Naples.

The play is quick-paced due to the passage of a short amount of time and the use of mostly dialogue. The fact that it is mostly dialogue also makes "A Tempest" very easy to read. The story is mostly linear with a short flashback near the beginning of the play where Prospero explains his exile to Miranda. The play is easy to read and very entertaining.



Quotes

"Aime Cesaire demolishes the old maxim that poets make terrible politicians. Known in the world of letters as the progenitor of Negritude (the first diasporic 'black pride' movement), a major voice of Surrealism, and one of the great French poets, Cesaire is equally revered for his role in modern anti-colonial and Pan-African movements. While it might appear that the poet and politician operated in separate spheres, Cesaire's life and work demonstrate that poetry can be the motor of political imagination, a potent weapon in any movement that claims freedom as its primary goal." Robin D.G. Kelley, Introduction, page vii.

"In fine Hegelian fashion, Cesaire argues that colonialism works to 'decivilize' the colonizer: torture, violence, race hatred and immorality constitute a dead weight on the so-called civilized, pulling the master class deeper and deeper into the abyss of barbarism. The instruments of colonial power rely on barbaric, brutal violence and intimidation, and the end result is the degradation of Europe itself." Robin D.G. Kelley, Introduction, page xi.

"Poetic knowledge is born in the great silence of scientific knowledge." Aime Cesaire, Introduction, page xvi.

"It takes all kinds to make a world." Master of Ceremonies, Prologue, page 7.

"King! King! Well, there's someone who doesn't give a fuck more about the king than he does about you or me, and he's called the Gale. His Majesty the Gale! And right now, he's in control and we're all his subjects." Boatswain, Act 1, Scene 1, page 10.

"But you are a princess... for how else does one address the daughter of a prince? I cannot leave you in ignorance any longer. Milan is the city of your birth, and the city where for many years I was the duke." Prospero, Act 1, Scene 2, page 13.

"Rape! Rape! Listen, you old goat, you're the one that put those dirty thoughts in my head. Let me tell you something: I couldn't care less about your daughter, or about your cave, for that matter. If I gripe, it's on principle, because I didn't like living with you at all, as a matter of fact. Your feet stink!" Caliban, Act 1, Scene 2, page 19.

"Seeing the young lady, more beautiful than any wood-nymph, I might have been Ulysses on Nausicaa's isle. But hearing you, sir, I now understand my fate a little better... I see I have come ashore on the Barbary Coast and am in the hands of a cruel pirate. However, a gentleman prefers death to dishonor! I shall defend my life with my freedom!" Ferdinand, Act 1, Scene 2, page 23.



"Talk's cheap! He'll promise you a thousand times and take it back a thousand times. Anyway, tomorrow doesn't interest me. What I want is Freedom Now!" Caliban, Act 2, Scene 1, page 26.

"Weakness always has a thousand ways and cowardice is all that keeps us from listing them." Caliban, Act 2, Scene 1, page 26.

"Each of us marches to his own drum. You follow yours. I follow the beat of mine. I wish you courage, brother." Ariel, Act 2, Scene 1, page 28.

"It's obvious: a wondrous land can only contain wonderful creatures." Gonzalo, Act 2, Scene 2, page 29.

"That is how power is measured. I am Power." Prospero, Act 2, Scene 2, page 32.

"Consider my position: I'm Duke of Milan. Well, I wasn't always... I had an older brother. That was Duke Prospero. And if I'm now Duke Antonio, it's because I knew when to shake the coconut palm." Antonio, Act 2, Scene 3, page 33.

"Oh, how ignoble! How good of you to just wipe the slate clean! No surface repentance... not only do you want attrition, you want contrition as well! Why look at me as though you didn't know what I was talking about? Attrition: a selfish regret for offending God, caused by a fear of punishment. Contrition: an unselfish regret growing out of sorrow at displeasing God." Gonzalo, Act 2, Scene 3, page 35.

"One word from you would be more help to me than anything in the world." Ferdinand, Act 3, Scene 1, page 38.

"Do you hear that, boy? That voice through the storm. Bah! It's Ariel. No, that's not his voice. Whose, then? With an old coot like Prospero... One of his cops, probably. Oh, fine! Now, I'm for it. Men and the elements both against me. Well, the hell with it... I'm used to it. Patience! I'll get them yet. In the meantime better make myself scarce! Let Prospero and his storm and his cops go by... let the seven maws of Malediction bay!" Caliban, Act 3, Scene 1, pages 39-40.

"STEPHANO: So, Trinculo, you were saved too... It almost makes you believe God looks after drunks... TRINCULO: Huh! God... Bacchus, maybe. As a matter of fact, I



reached these welcoming shores by floating on a barrel..." Stephano and Trinculo, Act 3, Scene 2, page 42.

"My enthusiasm has restored my speech. Long live the king! But beware the usurper!... Prospero!" Caliban, Act 3, Scene 2, page 44.

"MIRANDA: But who is that? He doesn't look very benevolent! If I weren't afraid of blaspheming, I'd say he was a devil rather than a god. ESHU: You are not mistaken fair lady. God to my friends, the Devil to my enemies! And lots of laughs for all!" Miranda and Eshu, Act 3, Scene 3, page 47.

"Power! Power! Alas! All this will one day fade, like foam, like a cloud, like all the world. And what is power, if I cannot calm my own fears? But come! My power has gone cold." Prospero, Act 3, Scene 3, page 50.

"How can any animal—any natural animal, if I may put it that way—go against me on the day I'm setting forth to conquer Prospero! Unimaginable! Prospero is the Anti-Nature!" Caliban, Act 3, Scene 4, page 52.

"Let it alone, fool. I tell you about winning your dignity, and you start fighting over hand-me-downs! To think I'm stuck with these jokers! What an idiot I am! How could I ever have thought I could create the Revolution with swollen guts and fat faces! Oh well! History won't blame me for not having been able to win my freedom all by myself." Caliban, Act 3, Scene 4, page 55.

"Oh, you know that, hitched to your star, I would brave the demons of hell!" Miranda, Act 3, Scene 5, page 56.

"However, in spite of everything I'm fond of you, Caliban. Come, let's make peace. We've lived together for ten years and worked side by side! Ten years count for something after all! We've ended up becoming compatriots!" Prospero, Act 3, Scene 5, page 61.

"I have uprooted the oak and raised the sea, I have caused the mountain to tremble and have bared my chest to adversity. With Jove I have traded thunderbolt for thunderbolt. Better yet—from a brutish monster I have made man! But ah! To have failed to find the path to man's heart... if that be where man is." Prospero, Act 3, Scene 5, page 63.



"Well, I hate you as well! For it is you who have made me doubt myself for the first time." Prospero, Act 3, Scene 5, page 63.

"And now, Caliban, it's you and me! What I have to tell you will be brief: ten times, a hundred times, I've tried to save you, above all from yourself. But you have always answered me with wrath and venom, like the opossum that pulls itself up by its own tail the better to bite the hand that tears it from the darkness. Well, my boy, I shall set aside my indulgent nature And henceforth I will answer your violence with violence!" Prospero, Act 3, Scene 5, page 65.

Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast Caliban and Ariel's responses to their servitude.

What is the moral of this play? Defend your position.

Why is Caliban so angry? Is his anger justified, and why?

Why is the ship of nobles shipwrecked near Caliban's island? What is the result of this shipwreck?

Compare and contrast Aime Cesaire's "A Tempest" with William Shakespeare's "The Tempest".

What role does race play in Cesaire's "A Tempest"?

Why does Eshu appear in "A Tempest"? What is his purpose?

Which character do you believe is the most justified in their actions? Defend your position.