

'GO BRING THE RABBLE': THE SUBALTERN IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *THE TEMPEST**

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William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* has proved to be an invaluable source of critical controversy in regard to race, gender, and class inequalities. Expanding the common scholarly view that treats these issues in isolation, this essay scrutinises those characters subordinated to a hegemonic power under the unifying concept of the *subaltern*, as developed by Antonio Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks*. The present analysis of the circumstances, attitude, and resistance of all individuals in the "brave new world" of the island reveals subjection to be mostly inescapable, power to function through repression, and subversion to be generally doomed to failure, hence establishing subalternity as an almost permanent position.

Keywords: Subaltern, William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Antonio Gramsci.

La tempestad, de William Shakespeare, se ha consolidado como fuente de debate académico en lo relativo a desigualdades de raza, género y clase social. Más allá del acercamiento crítico habitual, que trata dichos temas por separado, este ensayo agrupa bajo el concepto de *subalterno* (desarrollado por Antonio Gramsci en sus *Cuadernos de la cárcel*) a aquellos personajes de la obra cuya posición está subordinada a un poder hegemónico. Este estudio de las circunstancias y actitudes de los personajes de la isla, así como de las resistencias que ejercen, demuestra que la subordinación es casi ineludible, que el poder funciona a través de la represión, y que la subversión suele estar abocada al

fracaso, validando de ese modo la idea de que la posición subalterna es prácticamente irreversible.

Palabras clave: Subalterno, William Shakespeare, *La tempestad*, Antonio Gramsci.

1. INTRODUCTION

An outstanding virtue among those attributed to the work of William Shakespeare is its capacity to speak to future audiences, since its treatment of contemporary debates has been thoroughly addressed, adapted and re-evaluated by virtually every generation from the late English Renaissance to our present time. Sometimes focusing on what traditional literary criticism would describe as universal issues –love, friendship, government, ambition–, his oeuvre has also anticipated trending critical debates of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In the case of *The Tempest* (1611)¹, allegedly his last play as single author, the Bard of Avon arranged a varied tasting which seemed specifically devised for our modern palates. Besides addressing the themes of freedom, legitimacy, friendship, discovery of new lands, and family relations, this play constitutes an appropriate source of discussion for feminist and post-colonialist critics, as attested by the huge body of work that has explored the play in the last decades.

The Tempest's main concern is power. Twelve years before the action takes place, Prospero was deposed of the dukedom of Milan by his brother Antonio. Exiled to a forgotten island along with his infant daughter Miranda, his magic abilities allowed him to take control of the place and submit its inhabitants to his rule. Antonio and his party being stranded on the island due to the tempest the magician summons, the play beholds the latter taking control of various instances of subordination occurring in the physical setting. The chain of events leads him to regain his political power on the continent. Much scholarly attention has been placed on the figures of Caliban and Miranda as representatives of oppression from postcolonial and gender critical views, respectively². However, as Kunat explains:

The play's oppositions—between nature and civility, master and slave, African and European, man and woman— all appear to be validated by natural law and political right, but the chiasmic exchange between superior and inferior terms reveals the fault lines of a signifying system predicated on suppressing alternative, subaltern forms of desire. (2014: 313)

The present article will widen the usual critical scope, taking a close look at those characters appearing in a subaltern position, be it because of their race, gender or social class. I will also delve into the resistance to subalternity offered in various parts of the play. In order to establish a theoretical background, the very concept of the subaltern must be defined.

2. DEFINING THE SUBALTERN

Ten years after having brought the concept of the *subaltern* to the fore in her acclaimed article “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1994), Indian postcolonial critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak defined subalterns as people “removed from all lines of social mobility” (2005: 475), since these lines, “being elsewhere, do not permit the formation of a recognisable basis of action” (476). As she had previously acknowledged (1994: 78), the concept was already in use thanks to the work of the Subaltern Studies group, formed in the late 1970s by some Indian academics who sought “to rewrite the history of Indian nationalism from the perspective of ‘the people’” (Afzal-Khan, 552). Ranajit Guha, leader of the group, defined the subaltern as “a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way” (1982: vii).

Prior to the term's modern circumscription to postcolonial subjects, Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci –an inspiration for the aforementioned Indian scholars– had extensively used the expression in the notebooks he wrote while imprisoned by Benito Mussolini's fascist regime from 1926 to his death eleven years later. Originally meaning “subordinate” or regarding “someone of ‘lower

rank” (Afzal-Khan 522), Gramsci uses the word *subaltern* to refer to social groups on the margins of the hegemonic position of those in power: “The historical unity of the ruling classes takes place in the State . . . The subaltern classes, by definition, are not united and cannot unite unless they become a ‘State’” (Gramsci, 1975: 182)3. Green explains that the alleged censorship of the prison guards, who would not allow Gramsci to write if his ideas were explicitly Marxist, has led many scholars to believe that in the notebooks *subaltern* is an euphemism standing for *proletariat* (2011: 390). Green thoroughly criticises this hypothesis because it lacks evidence, and claims that a detailed reading of Gramsci’s texts shows that “subalternity is not simply reducible to class or confined to the concerns of the proletariat, as the censorship thesis suggests” (2011: 399). He also accuses Guha and Spivak of accepting a concept of the subaltern which is “limited in scope,” since their research does not rely on the whole *Prison Notebooks*, but on the *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* edition (“Gramsci” 16). Based on Green, Smith even accuses the Indian scholars of appropriating the term (44).

Besides reporting on alleged misuses of the subaltern concept, Green elaborates on the complexity of the idea: “Gramsci’s notion of subaltern social groups does not immediately appear in the prison notebooks as a clearly defined concept; Gramsci develops the concept over a period of time” (1). However, Green finally narrows the scope down to suggest an inclusive approach: “In Notebook 25, Gramsci identifies slaves, peasants, religious groups, women, different races, and the proletariat as subaltern social groups” (2). Throughout the present article I will use the term *subaltern* in this wider sense, including all beings or social groups of lower rank than that of the hegemonic elite, whether the latter is socially organised or formed by a single individual.

3. SUBALTERN BY RACE: CALIBAN

Introduced in the list of characters as “a savage and deformed slave,” Caliban is defined by Prospero as a “[d]ull thing” (1.2.285), “freckled whelp, hag-born” (1.2.283), “poisonous slave” (1.2.320), “a born devil” (4.1.188), and “this thing of darkness” (5.1.273). Miranda

calls him “villain” (1.2.310), “thing most brutish” (1.2.357), and “[a]bhorred slave” (1.2.320). For Stephano he is a “moon-calf” (2.2.91), for Trinculo a “very weak monster” (2.2.123), and for Antonio “a plain fish” (4.1.265). As Caliban was the only human inhabitant on the island when Prospero and Miranda arrived, his enslavement and the newcomers’ exploitation of the place’s natural resources have led scholars to understand colonialism as an outstanding theme in *The Tempest*. Caliban stands for what Europeans are not; he is the result of the Western “project to constitute the colonial subject as Other” (Spivak, “Subaltern” 76). If we resort to Gramsci, the epithets aimed at him are by no means surprising: “for a social elite, the elements of subaltern groups always have a barbarian and pathological side” (*Cuadernos* 6 175). As a colonial subaltern, Caliban is even denied the ability to improve: Miranda speaks of his “vile race” (1.2.358) and claims that “any print of goodness wilt not take” (1.2.352) in him; Prospero terms him a “devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick” (4.1.188-9). First embraced as the guide of the island, later enslaved and demonised, Caliban was used by Shakespeare to forestall the story of the first American Thanksgiving and its bloody aftermath by more than a decade⁴.

However there are scholars who highlight Caliban’s purity and nobility, contrasting it with the thirst for power of the European nobles. After having analysed the slave’s diction, Raffel claims that “it cannot be accidental that Shakespeare consistently gives lines of such loveliness to a ‘savage and deformed slave,’ as it cannot be accidental that, while other ‘low’ characters in the play speak in prose, Caliban is regularly poetic” (xx)⁵. Regarding his name as an anagram of *cannibal*, Skura explains that “Caliban is no cannibal – he barely touches meat, confining himself more delicately to roots, berries, and an occasional fish; indeed, his symbiotic harmony with the island’s natural food resources is one of his most attractive traits” (364). Caliban is the epitome of the subaltern. He can be analysed the typical colonial subject obliged to do forced labour, as he must work for Prospero under threat of being punished with physical pain – “cramps, / Side-stitches ...; urchins” (1.2.327-8). His master justifies Caliban’s enslavement by the latter’s attempt to rape Miranda, but the former Duke of Milan is also aware of how beneficial the arrangement is: “We cannot miss him. He does make our fire, / Fetch in our wood, and

serves in offices / That profit us” (1.2.311-3). This profit generated by colonial exploitation is later hinted at by Antonio, who terms Caliban “a plain fish, and no doubt marketable” (5.1.265).

Receiving such harsh treatment and being unable to rebel against Prospero on his own, Caliban finds the opportunity to overthrow the magician when meeting Stephano and Trinculo, but instead of joining forces with the butler and the jester by association, the slave peacefully lets himself be subdued to Stephano’s command. Paradoxically enough, Caliban sings “freedom” not at the prospect of being completely liberated, but at that of having “a new master” (2.2.161). The slave lacks individual initiative and strength; he needs a hegemonic power on which to rely. French philosopher Louis Althusser claimed that “*all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*, by the functioning of the category of the subject” (190), calling attention to the following definition of the term *subject*: “a subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission” (269). Caliban’s subjectification is, thus, an instance of interpellation, and not an isolated one: once the rebellion against Prospero fails, the slave obligingly and unconditionally accepts the magician’s rule: “Do that good mischief which may make this island / Thine own for ever, and I, thy Caliban, / For aye thy foot-licker” (4.1.216-8).

Controversy does not end here. At the end of the play order is restored, Ariel is liberated and the treacherous nobles are not punished. Caliban is the only character whose fate remains uncertain. Prospero’s ambiguous sentence –“this thing of darkness, I / Acknowledge mine” (5.1.274)– does not clarify whether the slave will continue at his master’s service back in Milan or if the latter is only claiming Caliban as his property, although he will be left alone on the island when the European party returns to the continent –achieving, therefore, his freedom. Caliban’s being a key character in *The Tempest* contrasts with his disposability when it comes to giving the text narrative closure. The fact that such a relevant part of his story is not expressly stated, unlike that of almost any other character in the play, highlights his subaltern condition.

4. SUBALTERN BY CLASS: ARIEL AND HIS "MEANER FELLOWS"

An airy spirit, Ariel's nonhuman condition has always been a source of critical problems. However, the fact that he is a rational being, and his unwillingly subordinate position on the island legitimise both postcolonial and class approaches to his figure. Through a powerful spell, Ariel had been confined to a cloven tree by Sycorax, not having been released by the time of her death. Prospero undid the spell, but kept the spirit under his dominion. The magician did not play the role of civiliser –the spirit was already learned–, but that of colonial liberator –“Dost thou forget / From what a torment I did free thee?” (1.2.251)–, untying Ariel from the absolutist power of Sycorax only to have him inserted into another hegemonic system. Under the promise of future freedom, the spirit becomes an indentured servant, although Kunat raises attention to how he apparently describes himself in the play:

Ariel represents himself as a “slave” not a servant: “Thou, my slave, / As thou report'st thyself, was then her servant” [1.2.270-1] ... “Slave” was a term of abuse in Shakespeare's England; it is possible that Ariel refers to himself as a “slave” primarily to indicate the harsh treatment that he receives at Prospero's hands. (326)

Nevertheless, the following definition of the term –already in use in Shakespeare's time– should not be overlooked: “One who submits in a servile manner to the authority or dictation of another or others; a submissive or devoted servant.” However it is that Ariel sees himself with regard to Prospero, both he and Caliban are the wizard's “others” in a Spivakian sense –“the persistent constitution of Other as the Self's shadow” (Spivak, “Subaltern” 75). The slave represents the lack of culture, refinement, and nobility the magician despises; the spirit stains his hands performing the work his master avoids. Ariel is Prospero's hitman, which the latter gracefully acknowledges through constant laudatory addresses –“My brave spirit” (1.2.206), “Fine apparition! My quaint Ariel” (1.2.318), “Delicate Ariel” (1.2.440), “My industrious servant Ariel!” (4.1.33). The spirit's first intervention in the play shows that he knows his place:

All hail, great master, grave sir, hail! I come
 To answer thy best pleasure; be't to fly,
 To swim, to dive in to the fire, to ride
 On the curled clouds. To thy strong bidding task
 Ariel, and all his quality. (1.2.187-93)

This harmonious relationship is circumscribed to the workings of power. French thinker Michel Foucault claimed that “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together” (*History* 100). Prospero has both the knowledge –of magic, from his books– and the power –of ruling the island and its beings. His eloquent discourse –he is the character with most lines in the play (Vaughan and Vaughan 24)– conjoins both elements, as shown in his addresses to Ariel: the magician knows of his servant’s story as well as of the strong power his charms have over the spirit. Since Ariel accepts his subordinate position, his master acknowledges the servant’s loyalty with words of gratitude. However, if reaffirming control is necessary, this praising discourse can quickly become authoritarian: when Ariel complains about his workload and demands his liberty, Prospero denies him praise –“Thou liest, malignant thing” (1.2.257)– and, as he had already done with Caliban, resorts to threats: “If thou more murmur’st, I will rend an oak / And peg thee in his knotty entrails till / Thou hast howled away twelve winters” (1.2.293-5). A colonised subject, and also an inferior in the labour hierarchy, Ariel is not only interpellated by the effect of Prospero’s discourse, but also subdued by his threats. According to Althusser, “the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly *by repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology” (244). Foucault is more explicit: “[I]t is in the nature of power ... to be repressive” (9).

Although it is possible to infer whole social structures from the events of the play, *The Tempest* is more concerned with the portrayal of individuals than with organised groups, save for the case of the Neapolitan nobles. Nevertheless, Prospero’s following address to the spirit constitutes an often overlooked instance of group organisation:

Thou and thy meaner fellows your last service
 Did worthily perform; and I must use you

In such another trick. Go bring the rabble –
O'er whom I give thee power. (4.1.35-8)

The spirits working under Ariel's command are his "meaner fellows," derogatorily referred to as "the rabble." They are the lower classes, they constitute the proletariat, and Prospero uses the divide-and-conquer technique to split them. Ariel is a subaltern in the eyes of Prospero, but he has been given power over his own inferiors. His spirits are the subaltern of the subaltern.

5. SUBALTERN BY GENDER: MIRANDA, CLARIBEL, AND SYCORAX

Miranda constitutes an excellent point of departure to study the literary construction of gender. Taken to the island when still an infant, she never had any contact with a female figure thereafter. Socially separated from Caliban since his rape attempt, her education as a woman is exclusively based on Prospero's teachings and on her own –usually naïve– conceptions. Her father assumes a commanding position, addressing her with imperatives: "Obey, and be attentive" (1.2.38). This way Prospero gives his daughter the same rank as his slaves, Caliban and Ariel. To this hierarchical imposition the magician adds a patronising tone: "I have done nothing but in care of thee" (1.2.16). This attitude is made more evident in the following speech:

Here in this island we arrived, and here
Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit
Than other princes can, that have more time
For vainer hours, and tutors not so careful. (1.2.171-4)

Miranda admits her subaltern role by acknowledging her ignorance –"More to know / Did never meddle with my thoughts" (1.2.22)– and by identifying with those in pain: "O, I have suffered / With those that I saw suffer!" (1.2.5-6). Nonetheless, her subjection under her father's hegemony is not fully achieved. When Prospero freezes Ferdinand with a spell, she intercedes in favour of the Neapolitan heir; the magician starkly interrupts his daughter, claiming her as a possession: "What, I say, / My foot my tutor?" (1.2.467-8).

Such a harsh reprimand is not enough to control Miranda's free will. As Kunat duly notes, it is she who takes the initiative in her relationship with the prince:

Raised outside the traditional social order, she has not absorbed its conceits and thus does not move naturally into the subject position prescribed for her. Instead, she places herself on equal terms with Ferdinand, ignoring or ignorant of the power dynamic that structures the relationship between men and women. (309)

Miranda is a complex and sometimes contradictory character. Although a subaltern by gender, she exerts racial superiority over Caliban, the other male on the island; since he performs forced labour for her, she profits from colonial exploitation. As shown above, her addresses to him are dominant and cruel –this attitude could be justified by the slave's rape attempt. Her complexity is further evidenced by a certain resistance to her subaltern condition. When she finally finds happiness with Ferdinand, the couple is discovered playing chess, “not only in a state of love but in a state of symbolic war;” besides, she “accuses Ferdinand of cheating” (Greenblatt 396). Her having been “kept at a distance” –borrowing H  l  ne Cixous' term (68) – has allowed her to think for herself. Although she has been cast as a submissive woman, her absence from a larger social structure has caused her not to assimilate the dictates of patriarchy in full. As Green, based on Gramsci, explains, “[i]n historical or literary documents, the subaltern may be presented as humble, passive, or ignorant, but their actual lived experiences may prove the contrary” (“Gramsci” 15).

Another gender-related issue the play explores is the contemporary treatment of women as property. Both Miranda and Claribel are used as currency in political transactions from which their respective fathers expect some profit –power over the kingdom of Naples in the case of Prospero; an alliance with that of Tunis in that of the Neapolitan king Alonso. “I ratify this my rich gift” (4.1.8), says Prospero to Ferdinand when consenting to their marriage. “That a woman was the property of the father to bestow in marriage was standard legal thinking at the time, embodied in the Minister's

question in the marriage service, 'Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?'" (Lindley). Sebastian's address to Alonso on the wedding of the latter's daughter to the King of Tunis is rather explicit: "Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss, / That would not bless our Europe with your daughter, / But rather lose her to an African" (2.1.118-20).

The reification of women as property goes beyond the merely legal. Their body is also managed by men, as virginity is crucial to any binding agreement. Ferdinand not only makes this point clear to his beloved, but he also emphasises the fact that it is men who make something out of women: "O, if a virgin, / And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you / The Queen of Naples" (1.2.446-8). Prospero is even more explicit when informing Ferdinand of the conditions of the marriage, also acknowledging the collaboration of another hegemonic power –the religious institution:

Then, as my gift, and thine own acquisition
Worthily purchased, take my daughter. But
If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be ministered,
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow. (4.1.13-9)

Virginity becomes an obsession for the men on the island. When counsellor Gonzalo describes his ideal commonwealth devoid of hierarchical structures, he remarks the following: "No occupation, all men idle, all; / And women too, but innocent and pure" (2.1.151-2). Under this light, Caliban's attempt at raping Miranda becomes a chief element in the story. Although the brutality inherent in the ravishing of a woman is undeniable, Kunat raises attention to Renaissance views of "rape as an assault upon patriarchal authority" (310), rape having been defined at the time "as a crime against the male to whom the woman belonged—father, husband, brother, or guardian" (321). Sexual tension is emphasised by Vaughan and Vaughan, who claim that, although Prospero is usually represented as elderly, according to the time span of the background story he might be conceived as middle aged, for which reason "an underlying motive for his urgency for the

match with Ferdinand may be incestuous feelings for his own daughter” (25).

A notorious absence from the play, due to her earlier death, is that of Caliban’s mother Sycorax, the Algerian enchanter. What we learn about her is mostly told by Prospero, who defines her as a “damned witch” (1.2.263) and a “blue-eyed hag” (1.2.268), claiming that Ariel had been imprisoned in a cloven tree because he did not want to perform “her earthly and abhorred commands” (1.2.272). The history of the subaltern on the island is partly told by Prospero, partly obscured by him. Based on Gramsci, Fontana states the following: “[T]he language used to characterize the group or its activity will reinforce the distinction between hegemonic and subordinate” (85). Prospero shows himself as a white magician with legitimate political power, while introducing Sycorax as a dark magus capable of achieving horrid spells. However, they may not be so different. The Vaughans trace parallels between both wizards: “Like Prospero, [Sycorax] arrived with a child, though hers (Caliban) was still in the womb; like him, she used her magic (witchcraft) to control the elements. But Sycorax’s powers are presented as demonic” (25-6). They conclude: “Prospero’s darker side ... is emphasized by his being the mirror image to Sycorax” (25). Since the Algerian magician fulfils both conditions, in her representation we find a double instance of the subaltern: by race and by gender.

6. SUBALTERN RESISTANCE: STEPHANO, TRINCULO, CALIBAN, THE MASTER, AND THE BOATSWAIN

“[T]here are no relations of power without resistances” (Foucault, *Power* 142). Caliban, Ariel, and Miranda are not the only subalterns in the play, and certainly not the only characters that face up to Prospero. Stranded on the island, butler Stephano and jester Trinculo delude themselves at the prospect of ruling over the place, if only they were its sole inhabitants: “Trin- / culo, the king and all our company else being drowned, we will / inherit here” (2.2.150-2). When Caliban tells them about Prospero’s rule, Stephano plans on murdering the magician in order to establish a new hegemony on the island: “Monster, I will kill this man. His daughter and I will be / king and

queen – ‘save our graces! – and Trinculo and thyself shall / be viceroys. Dost thou like the plot, Trinculo?’ (3.2.99-101). This association of subalterns led by Stephano thanks to Caliban’s knowledge of the setting fulfils a role already defined by Gramsci: “Among the subaltern groups, one will exert or tend to exert a certain hegemony via a party” (*Cuadernos 6* 183). However, holding power is not an easy task. In a brilliant intervention, Trinculo plays the part of the fool referring to the rebels’ drunken state; what his words suggest is a serious doubt about their ability to govern effectively: “They say / there’s but five upon this isle; we are three of them – if th’other / two be brained like us, the state totters” (3.2.5-6). The jester’s words validate Green’s statement –based on Gramsci– that the “subaltern is characterized by fragmentation, disaggregation, incoherence, and disorganization” (“Rethinking” 85).

The Tempest being a Renaissance comedy, a final restoration of the social order is expected. On their way to Prospero’s cell, Ariel mocks the “confederates,” leads them to a stinking pond, and finally chases them with dogs. As Gramsci explains: “Subaltern groups always suffer the initiative of dominant groups, even when the former rebel and revolt” (*Cuadernos 6* 178). Prospero decrees the end of the rebellion by addressing Stephano with irony: “You’d be king o’ the isle, sirrah?” (5.1.285).

Despite the reinforcement of hegemony depicted in the play, there is an instance of role reversal right in its very origin: the tempest. Aboard the ship, the Master and the Boatswain invert the chain of command by yelling at the Neapolitan nobles. Barker and Hulme note that “[t]he boatswain’s preemptory dismissal of the nobles to their cabins, while not, according to the custom of the sea, strictly a mutinous act, none the less represents a disturbance in the normal hierarchy of power relations” (300). At the height of the storm, the Boatswain boldly shouts: “What cares these roarers for the / name of king? To cabin. Silence! Trouble us not” (1.1.14-5). Of course these comments would have brought great trouble for the seaman had he uttered them in a different context. Resistance, in this case, is exercised for the sake of professional efficiency –with the only objective of survival and devoid of rebellious power aspirations–, but certainly causing a shocking effect.

CONCLUSIONS

A play mainly concerned with power, *The Tempest* constitutes a very convenient vehicle to channel present critical controversy in regard to the concept of the subaltern. The evolution of characters occupying this position either by race, class, or gender validates Althusser's and Foucault's assumptions that subjection is inescapable – "[t]here are no subjects except by and for their subjection" (Althusser 269); "[w]e should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects" (Foucault, *Power* 97)– and that power works essentially by repression –mostly enforced by Prospero in the play. Even when the subalterns try to exert some form of resistance, as in the case of Caliban, the politics of alliances that they seek subject them to a new form of hegemonic power which they cannot escape. All rebellious acts on the island being ruthlessly repressed, nonhuman Ariel is the only character who ends up finding freedom after his long ordeal. At the end of the play Caliban is not explicitly liberated; Miranda and Claribel have fulfilled their function as political currency; the memory of Sycorax remains stained and devoid of counterarguments; Stephano and Trinculo return to their previous posts after having been humiliated; and the hierarchical reversal of power enjoyed by the seamen is only momentary. The power flows in the "brave new world" of *The Tempest* exemplify Gramsci's remarks that subaltern resistances are futile –"even when they seem victorious, the subaltern groups are only in a state of active defense" (Gramsci, *Cuaderno 6* 178-9)–, subalternity becoming, in most cases, a permanent position.

Notes

- ¹ All references to *The Tempest* belong to: Shakespeare, W. 2013 *The Tempest*. D. Lindley, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- ² On Caliban and postcolonialism, see Mannoni, Brown, Griffiths, Cartelli, and Barker. On Miranda and gender, see Loomba, Orgel, and A. Thompson.
- ³ All translations from Gramsci's *Cuadernos de la cárcel* are mine.
- ⁴ The events following the First Thanksgiving are described in Carnes and Garraty (36).

⁵ A custom in Shakespeare's oeuvre consists in assigning poetry verses to courtiers and aristocratic characters, while low class characters speak in prose. In act 2 scene 2 of *The Tempest*, Caliban's blank verse contrasts with Stephano's and Trinculo's plain prose.

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