The SPL Journal of Literary Hermeneutics

A Biannual International Journal of Independent Critical Thinking

Double-blind, Peer-reviewed, and Open Access Journal in English

Vol. 5 Issue 2 Monsoon Edition 2025 e-ISSN 2583-1674 Page no. 380-397

www.literaryhrm.org

www.cavemarkpublications.com

Refracting *The Tempest* through the postcolonial lens: George Lamming's water with Berries and Pleasures of Exile

Huma Javed Subzposh

ORCID https://orcid.org/0009-0001-4632-4970

Corresponding Author: Huma Javed Subzposh, Professor, Department of English, DDU Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur, huma.subzposh@outlook.com

Article

Keywords:
Postcolonialism, The Tempest, George Lamming, Caliban, Colonial Discourse, Language and Power, Caribbean Literature

Article History
Received:
June 10, 2025
Revised:
June 25, 2025
Accepted:
July 1, 2025

Abstract

Aims: *This paper aims to critically examine the postcolonial reinterpretation of Shakespeare's The Tempest through the works of George Lamming, particularly Water with Berries and The Pleasures of Exile. It seeks to explore how the canonical text is reconfigured to interrogate colonial power structures, identity formation, and the enduring psychological impact of empire.*

Methodology and Approaches: *The study adopts a postcolonial theoretical framework, drawing on the insights of Frantz Fanon and Octave Mannoni to analyse the transformation of the Prospero–Caliban relationship.*

Outcome: *The analysis reveals that The Tempest operates both as a text that historically legitimises colonial discourse and as a fertile site for its subversion. Lamming's rewriting foregrounds Caliban as a figure of resistance, while exposing the complexities of linguistic inheritance and psychological dependency. The reversal of colonial trajectories—from colony to metropolis—highlights the persistence of imperial power in altered forms within postcolonial realities.*

Conclusion and Suggestions: *The paper concludes that Lamming's engagement with The Tempest extends beyond mere adaptation, offering a profound critique of colonial legacies that continue to shape cultural and intellectual identities. It suggests the need for further interdisciplinary studies that examine literary rewritings as dynamic sites of resistance and re-articulation, particularly in relation to language, memory, and postcolonial subjectivity.*

***Correspondence:** Huma Javed Subzposh, huma.subzposh@outlook.com

Postcolonial writers have been continuously trying to redefine and reinterpret their position in, and their experience of, the process of colonisation with reference to the dominant European canon. Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* interpreted by many critics as a fable of the colonial experience, has proved a popular text for fictional re-writings of that experience. Early postcolonial critics began to identify connections between the works of Shakespeare andd colonialism, patriarchy, and issues of power and subversion. The definite historical and political links between *The Tempest* and the British imperial project, not only serve to strengthen the dominant discourse of colonialism through a process of legitimisation, naturalisation and the demonising of the Other, but also indirectly reinforce the logic of imperialism. Thomas Cartelli, in his 'Prospero in Africa: The Tempest as Postcolonial Text and Pretext', argues that Shakespeare's play is "complicit in the history of its successive misreading" (112); we can't see *The Tempest* as 'historically innocent', he argues, given its history as a paradigm of colonialism. Those who read *The Tempest* with a radical political orientation tend to champion Caliban as the first rebel to question and re-write what he has learned under Prospero's instruction: he adopts Prospero's language as his own, using it to interrogate Prospero's narrative of reality and to subvert Prospero's rule.

The Tempest has become a ground on which the postcolonial writers meet, not only because of Shakespeare's 'universality' but also because writers before them have made Shakespeare's play a site for thinking about colonialism through literature (Shohat 99-100). When Césaire makes Caliban refuse his name and insist on being called "X" in his 1967 play *Une Tempête* or when he gives Caliban the Swahili word "Uhuru" as his first line, he is participating in the cross-cultural project of rethinking colonialism that links independence struggles in the erstwhile Colonies of the Empire with the black nationalist movement in other countries. In her *Tempests After Shakespeare* (2002), a text which locates a range of rewritings of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* over the last decades of the twentieth century in various geographical and cultural locations, Chantal Zabus identifies *The Tempest* as the "the interpellative dream-text" of the seventeenth century, and suggests that its impact, which persists nearly four hundred years

after its inception, far surpasses that of later "dream-texts". The significant list of the rewritings of *The Tempest* contained in *Tempests after Shakespeare* certainly attests to the enduring nature of the play, and Zabus succeeds in identifying the ways in which the rewritings of *The Tempest* can be used to trace the development of the movements of postcoloniality, feminism and postmodernism. Zabus suggests that the text's popularity as pre-text can be attributed to the emergence of a more pluralistic approach to hierarchical structures in the twenty-first century:

> In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare meant Prospero, Caliban, and Miranda to be unequal partners locked in a power relationship…Possibly because the outset of the twenty-first century holds that every voice should be heard, (re)writers have dismantled this hierarchy and given equal importance to these Tempest-protagonists, who have thus become contestants disputing a territorial niche in the larger critiques of representation. (Zabus 2)

It is evident that rewriters respond to the inequality of the power dynamics present in the play that can easily serve as metaphors for the oppressive systems of colonialism and patriarchy. The play is a text which strengthens and supports the dominant discourse of colonialism on one hand, and also marks the ambivalence in the the logic of imperialism, as it becomes evident that there is an element of subversion at the centre of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which allows for a return in the form of rewriting or revision. Fernandez Retamar had traced by 1971 a century-long history of using *The Tempest* as a metaphor for colonialism in his essay "Caliban" (translated in English in 1974) but it was not until the publication of Rob Nixon's "Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest*" and Thomas Cartelli's "Prospero in Africa: *The Tempest* as Postcolonial Text and Pretext" in 1987, that the appropriations of the play gained currency among Anglo-American Shakespeare scholars. Written around 1611, *The Tempest* may have been influenced by the increasing public interest in the voyages of discovery and expansion and its support for Britain's imperial projects. There had been many reports of colonial ships that had been shipwrecked on deserted islands enroute to colonies as well that might have lent their echo to the play. According to the historical background provided in the

introduction to the Penguin Popular Classics edition of the play, *The Tempest* was intended for presentation at the royal court (15). One of the first performances of *The Tempest* (1st November, 1611) was before the king at Whitehall. The play was again performed at Whitehall as part of the celebrations at Princess Elizabeth's wedding to the Elector Palatine in 1613. These royal performances seemingly suggest that the play was intended as a tribute to the English royal court and its colonial endeavours and it also found favour with the Royal family. Paul Brown wrote in 1985 that:

> It has long been recognized that *The Tempest* bears traces of the contemporary British investment in colonial expansion. Attention has been drawn to Shakespeare's patronal relations with prominent members of the Virginia Company and to the circumstances of the play's initial production at the expansionist Jacobean court in 1611 and 1612.-13. …. However, a sustained historical and theoretical analysis of the play's involvement in the colonialist project has yet to be undertaken. (Brown 48)

When the text is read from the viewpoint of 'New World' colonialism it has to be conceded that Shakespeare's magical island can indeed be read as the backdrop against which the ultimate colonial conquest is played out. Prospero, when read as coloniser and patriarch of the island, is seemingly exceptionally successful in his civilising mission. The attitude towards the play from the contemporary public of taking *The Tempest* as an official document on colonialism is the reason why so many writers feel the urge to interrogate the text over and over again. The attempt to find a way into the crevices of the play has resulted in various rewritings and reinterpretations of the play especially from the former colonies of the Empire. The Caribbean writers have focussed mainly on the character of Caliban, the displaced native as a symbol of the colonized, namely George Lamming's *The Pleasures of the Exile* (1960) and *Water with Berries* (1971), Aime Cesaire's *Une Tempete* (1969), Marina Warner's *Indigo* (1992) and Margaret Atwood's *Hag Seed* (2016). All of these writers have tried to reconfigure their own intimate relationships to language and offer ways of perception that break the closed epistemological structures necessary to

colonialism. The critics and writers who view *The Tempest* from a radical postcolonial angle tend to uphold Caliban as the first rebel to misinterpret and re-write what he has been taught by Prospero. He learns Prospero's language and uses it to refute Prospero's version of reality and to subvert Prospero's authority. Ever since Octave Mannoni identified the settler mentality and the dependence complex with Prospero and Caliban in his *Psychologie de la Colonisation* (1950)—published in English under the title *Prospero and Caliban* (1956)—several writers have expanded on this identification, often rejecting Mannoni's conclusions in the process.

The crucial moment in the Calibanic tradition was Frantz Fanon's critique of the treatise on colonisation by Octave Mannoni. Writing as a French settler in Madagascar, and rereading *The Tempest* against the Madagascan uprising of 1947-48, Mannoni used Shakespeare's characters to name what he saw as the psychologies of colonisation. Mannoni was not the first to appropriate *The Tempest* for an analysis of colonisation—he was alluding to Latin American and French works of forty years before—but he was original in identifying Prospero with the coloniser and Caliban with the colonised. By assigning the role of coloniser to Prospero and colonised to Caliban Mannoni was reversing a pattern of reading the play that seems almost impossible to us now, so firmly has the identification of Caliban with the colonised been fixed. Behind the Fanonian tradition of the last forty years is another one, a series of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century versions of *The Tempest* that aligned themselves with Prospero and identified Caliban as the oppressor. His *Psychologie de la Colonisation* (1950), translated as *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (1956), in some ways anticipates postmodernism's emphasis on the ethnographer's creation of the society he describes, yet it advances a wholly psychoanalytic theory of colonialism that obscures the politics of race and imperialism. After a reading of *The Tempest* against *Robinson Crusoe* Mannoni elaborates a "Prospero- complex" and a "Caliban complex": "complexes formed ... in infancy" (98), they dictate that the European man longing for what he sees as "a world without men" (101) will be drawn to colonial administration, and that

the colonised man, accustomed to "a dependence relationship" (129), will accept, in fact welcome, colonisation.

Frantz Fanon dismisses Mannoni's argument in *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952). Although Fanon acknowledged Mannoni's attempt to come to grips with the psychologies of colonisation, his scathing critique of Mannoni in *Black Skins, White Masks* alerted a generation of Caribbean writers to the possibility of reclaiming Shakespeare's play for an examination of the intimate terrain of colonisation. When Fanon repudiated what he terms "the so-called dependency complex of colonised peoples", saying "it is the racist who creates his inferior" (97)—he opened the way for the black diasporic writers of his generation to undo Prospero's reading of Caliban and radically re-imagine the play.

In his oft quoted essay "Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest"* Rob Nixon refers to "a rush of newly articulated anticolonial sentiment" (Nixon 557) which has produced the numerous texts that have attempted to rewrite *The Tempest*. As Nixon attests, from 1959 onwards *The Tempest* "was mobilised in defence of Caliban's right to the land and to cultural autonomy" (Nixon 566) in the imminent national liberation in the Caribbean. Referring to the adoption of Caliban as the representative and totem figure of the colonised people, Bill Ashcroft, in his 2001 study of postcolonial literatures *On Postcolonial Futures*, says:

> Caliban is the prototype of the colonised subject, whose baseness, as constructed by the coloniser, is the justifying pre requisite of colonisation. This is why Caliban has been so consistently fascinating to writers trying to understand their own colonial condition. (Ashcroft, *Postcolonial Futures* 84)

The theme of Caliban has touched Caribbean intellectuals in a surprising way: Fanon, Lamming, Cesaire, Fernandez Ratamar. The fact is that Caliban has become a symbol of rebellion and subversion of the colonised under the oppressive colonial rule. The first Caribbean writer to celebrate Caliban as the incarnation of the Caribbean hero was George Lamming. Lamming's *The Pleasures of Exile* does not refer directly to Mannoni or Fanon, but he too reads the play as a metaphor for the psychological aspects of colonisation. On the surface the "exile" of the title refers

to that of the Caribbean migrant to post-war England, but exile is also seen as a psychological consequence of colonialism, as the text discusses the forces that have motivated the West Indian writers' migration to the metropolis. The exile of the colonial is primarily Caliban's exile but Lamming insists on the interdependence of Caliban and Prospero, seeing himself as a descendant of both figures:

> I am a direct descendant of slaves, too near the actual enterprise to believe that its echoes are over with the reign of emancipation. Moreover, I am a direct descendant of Prospero worshipping in the same temple of endeavour, using his legacy—not to curse our meeting—but to push it further. (15)

In *The Pleasures of Exile*, Lamming embarks upon a textual criticism of *The Tempest*. In the chapter entitled 'A Monster, a Child, a Slave' his anti-colonialist reading of the play, Lamming retrieves the island from the hands of Prospero. Lamming's emphasis is on two issues: the 'gift' of language, and the similarity between Caliban and Miranda. For Lamming, Caliban specifically symbolises the intellectuals in the Caribbean, marginalised and ostracised from the majority of the people by their colonial education. Lamming calls language both "Prospero's gift" to Caliban and also the "imprisonment" which is very difficult to break free of. "There is no escape from Prospero's gift" (Lamming, *Pleasures of Exile* 109). He "ascribes to Prospero's colonising language more discursive power than it deserves" (Ashcroft, 97). Lamming remains convinced that language is Caliban's prison, "the very prison in which Caliban's achievements will be realised and restricted" (*Pleasures of Exile* 109). This is a ubiquitous argument about the function of colonising language that for those for whom it is not the mother tongue, language is inevitably and essentially limiting. Language will not allow Caliban's expansion beyond a certain point, says Lamming. He adds, "Caliban can never be regarded as the heir to that language, since his use of the language is no more than his way of serving Prospero" (*Pleasures of Exile* 110).

Lamming accepts his double ancestry, from both Caliban and Prospero, but revises the account of the legacy each has left him. He re-writes Prospero's historic role as well as Caliban's. He takes up Prospero's weapons to challenge

Prospero's assumptions. He has chosen to push Prospero's language to its own extremes, as the most effective way of challenging Prospero's thinking.

Eleven years later Lamming returns to the question of Caliban in *The Pleasures of Exile*, and embarks upon a full rewriting of *The Tempest* in *Water with Berries*, published in 1970. The title of the novel comes from Caliban's famous confrontation with Prospero where he accuses his master of deviously using kindness to disarm him and steal his island birth right:

> This island's mine by Sycorax my mother,
> Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,
> Thou strok'st me and made much of me; wouldst give me
> Water with berries in't…
> (I.ii.331–35)

Water with Berries takes its own specific place in his five novels and one book of essays that Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has called Lamming's "grand epic of the decolonisation process" ('In the Name of the Mother' 141). Lamming indicates that this episode of his epic will explore the "benevolent" face of colonialism. Shakespeare's Caliban in 1611 is initially conquered by kindness just as Lamming's Calibans in 1970, as they emerge from their origins as colonial subjects, are seduced by the initial embrace of "mother" England. The erstwhile slaves have now come to London in a kind of reverse journey from the colonies to the metropolis. Together they present a composite picture of a Caliban who has mastered Prospero's art and returned to haunt his master. The novel is about three Calibans who have to flee to England from the fictitious island of San Cristobel—Teeton, Roger and Derek who are members of the Secret Gathering, a revolutionary group aiming to overthrow the government in San Cristobel. After their imprisonment they have to go into exile and leave the island for England. As Caliban represented the Caribbean intellectuals in *The Pleasures of Exile*, these three represent the Caribbean artists and intelligentsia that fled to England from political instability and unrest in their country.

Lamming reverses, the situation in *The Tempest* by taking Caliban into Prospero's country which allows him to depict the ambivalence of these artists caught between two worlds. In *Water with Berries*, Lamming uses the plot and

character elements from Shakespeare's The Tempest as metaphors of the colonial experience, reversing the movement from the centre to the colony. As Lamming observed in a 1973 interview with George Kent 'In Conversation with George Lamming' in the journal 'Black World' 22.5:

> What is happening here is that I am in a way attempting to reverse the journeys. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, it was Prospero in the role of visitor to Caliban's island. In *Water with Berries*, it's reversed. The three characters really represent three aspects of Caliban making his journey to Prospero's ancestral home…. They then discovered the reality of Prospero's home—not from a distance, not filtered through Prospero's explanation or record of his home, but through their own immediate and direct experience. (Kent 89)

In the novel, three artists, Derek, Roger, and Teeton, leave the West Indies and travel to England as a kind of "reverse colonisation". In their reverse journey, Derek the actor, Roger the musician and Teeton the artist, like Caliban, are first made much of. Derek is chosen to play Othello at Stratford, and his two companions are hired to compose music and design sets for the production: "These were halcyon days. Derek was paraded like a hit song with Roger and Teeton as his chorus. Stratford was like a dream that would never end" (*Water with Berries* 75). But the dream certainly does end. Roger, the gifted composer, is reduced to writing jingles, and Derek can find acting work only as a corpse. Teeton's relative success as a painter brings him no satisfaction, as he obsessively prepares to leave the refuge of his London life and return to face the demons that wait for him at home in San Cristobal. What makes Teeton's task most difficult is his concern about leaving his landlady, the Old Dowager, Mrs Gore-Brittain, who shelters and protects him. At first the relationship between Teeton and his benefactor seems mutually nurturing but, as the narrative develops, it becomes clearer and clearer that the Old Dowager is Prospero, hiding behind the face of maternal kindness. The inherent trust that the colonisers place in the coloniser gives them a false sense of security and affinity which leads to their downfall. This is a world that values Derek, Roger and Teeton as curious objects to be used and then discarded once their novelty is lost.

Through the depiction of Teeton's relationship with his landlady Mrs Gore-Brittain (Old Dowager), Lamming explores Manning's dependency complex. Teeton considers Old Dowager his surrogate mother but ends up killing her. The killing of Old Dowager is inevitable as she seems to incarnate both Britain and Prospero. On the other hand, Teeton is attracted to Myra, a prostitute and Old Dowager's daughter. Teeton's attraction and identification towards her is further evidence of Lamming's attempt to link Miranda and Caliban. Also, the linking of Caliban and Miranda is represented in Teeton's wife Randa who sacrifices herself and sleeps with the American ambassador to save Teeton's life and later commits suicide when he abandons her and leaves San Cristobel.

The persona of Prospero himself is also divided. He can be seen as the Old Dowager's necrophiliac husband, supposedly Myra's father, who assumes responsibility for administering the family estate on San Cristobal taking Myra with him to share his bed. Prospero is also represented by his brother Ferdinand, the Old Dowager's lover and Myra's real father, to whom she applies the brave new world speech when he visits them on their island before he murders his brother and ultimately Prospero takes the form of the Old Dowager herself, who sees her husband resurrected in Teeton and murders Ferdinand to save him, only to be killed by Teeton himself. This intricately complicated pattern of multiple representations and repetitions makes Lamming's point that "Prospero is afraid of Caliban. He is afraid because he knows that his encounter with Caliban is, largely, his encounter with himself" (*Pleasures of Exile* 15).

George Lamming's typological approach to *The Tempest* is quite different from Césaire's in his play *A Tempest*. Whereas Césaire reframes *The Tempest* to infuse it with postcolonial politics, Lamming uses the play to emphasise the postcolonial political context of his psychological novel, *Water with Berries*. Like Césaire, Lamming explicitly digs into *The Tempest* for characters that he uses in his novel as types, but the relationship between his con-text *Water with Berries*, and its pre-text is much more complex than Césaire's rewriting of *The Tempest*. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* provides a past for Lamming's cast of London characters, all of whom in one way or another are antitypes harking back to Caliban, Prospero, Ariel and Miranda. The play also provides a context for the

legacy of exploitation that haunts these characters and the new stifling form of oppression that faces them in the emerging postcolonial era. Lamming takes *The Tempest*, fills in the gaps, shifts, alters and then elaborates to continue the plot. For every type, Lamming creates multiple antitypes: there are three Calibans, three Prosperos (one a woman) and at least three Mirandas. Sometimes the antitypes acknowledge their types explicitly, sometimes more subtly, and in one dramatic instance, the antitype's type is concealed until the very end when the benevolent Old Dowager is revealed as the new face of a ruthless postcolonial Prospero. With his typological use of *The Tempest*, Lamming is able to imbue his characters and the choices they make with historical resonance and, in this way, embeds within his story of the postcolonial experience almost four hundred years of oppression and resistance. Lamming's story reveals and emphasises the dynamics inherent in *The Tempest*, as one text invests meanings in the other and *The Tempest* in turn invests layers of meaning in the characters and events of *Water with Berries*.

The message delivered in this novel is a dark one: the struggle to defeat colonialism is complex and difficult, and "the colonial experience is a live experience in the consciousness of these people…. The experience is a continuing psychic experience that has to be dealt with and will have to be dealt with long after the actual colonial situation formally 'ends'" (Lamming qtd. in Hulme "Profit of Language" 120). All the Calibans, Mirandas, and Prosperos in this novel are damaged survivors of colonialism carrying the scars and open wounds of their experience into a postcolonial era where new names and new formations often mask the same old power dynamics and relationships. Lamming's implication, as Peter Hulme points out, is that "the psychic experience of colonialism is as present in postcolonial culture as the word colonialism is in the term postcolonial" (Hulme 121).

While the psychic struggle to break colonialism's "mind forg'd manacles" is the central preoccupation of *Water with Berries*, the typological power of *The Tempest* is mobilised to provide a political context to that psychological struggle. There is not a lot of explicit politics in *Water with Berries*. We do learn that the central character, Teeton, participated in a "minor revolt" in his birthplace, the

Caribbean Island of San Cristobel, that he deserted his comrades after the failure of this revolt and escaped to England, and that after seven years he and the other members of a secret organization called 'the Gathering' plan to return to San Cristobel and launch an insurrection.

The plans of the Gathering provide a frame for the narrative—all the action of the novel takes place in the two weeks between the decision to return to San Cristobal and the date of that planned return but it is *The Tempest* that provides a political prequel to the novel and sets in context Teeton, Roger and Derek's Calibanistic struggle to be free. Even though these three friends have first-hand experience of colonial oppression yet, conditioned by their colonial education, they accept the myth of freedom and inclusivity offered by Britain. *Water with Berries* traces Caliban's discovery of colonialism's true nature yet again— this time in a different era and in a different context.

More than four hundred years later Caliban has finally gotten to England and, as Helen Tiffin points out, "for Lamming, unless individuals are truly freed from the sinister legacies of slavery and colonialism, political freedom is a Pyrrhic victory" (Tiffin, "Freedom after the Fall" 90). The legacy is the pathological dependency reinforced by colonialism's maternal nurturing face: Prospero's postcolonial antitype, the Old Dowager. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o observes:

> Lamming works in Symbols. *Water with Berries* . . . is dealing with the colonially nurtured image of the colonising country, Prospero's country, as mother: the Mother Country. The clue to the author's symbolic intentions in *Water*, then, lies in the Old Dowager's name: Mrs. Gore-Brittain. Teeton is breaking the psychological contract with the colonisers' country. His independence is dependent on his cutting himself loose from the dependency complex implied in the colony's accepting the coloniser's view of himself as the Mother. (WaThiango139)

Shakespeare's Caliban, with his defiance, rage and masculine arrogance, provides a perfect type for the three postcolonial Calibans. Roger, Derek and Teeton, motivated by the same anger and violent rage that incites Caliban to curse his master and threaten rape and murder, go about shattering the contract that has ensured their dependent state in a parade of horrors marked by rape, arson,

suicide and murder. *Water with Berries* is not a novel filled with revolutionary optimism. As Helen Tiffin observes, "Lamming seems to find the past shackling the future in a repetitive cycle, empty of any possibility of resurrection" (Tiffin, "Tyranny of History" 51). While it is true that this "fraught meditation on *The Tempest"* (Hulme, 'Profit of Language' 124) hardly promises imminent liberation—the last chapter lets us know that the three Calibans are all in jail awaiting trial, two of them for murder—Caliban's antitypes do not end the novel's journey in the same place as they began. As futile and self-destructive as their actions may be, they have begun the task of 'smashing" the chains of their dependence. Teeton and his Gathering comrades have learned a new definition of "this island's mine." Their relationship to the "motherland" has been altered forever. As Lamming explains, "[they] are not going to return. What they will have to deal with now is the new reality in the experience—that is, the world—the increasing world of Blacks in England, rather than what they propose to do about the world on the island" (qtd.in Kent 95).

As bleak as *Water with Berries* world is, we are left with a hint that future reconciliation is not impossible. Like almost all of Lamming's work, this novel opens up a place for a version of Haiti's "Ceremony of Souls". In his interview with George Kent, Lamming discusses the impact of witnessing this ceremony in the late fifties, and why it emerges as a persistent motif in his work:

> It's a ceremony in which the dead returned to speak to the living about important events in their lives . . . and I interpret it as an example of the themes of redemption, the themes of coming to terms with the past. . .. (qtd.in Kent 94).

This novel's "Ceremony of Souls" occurs at the heart of the novel in a nocturnal encounter between Teeton and Myra, one of the novel's Mirandas. In the darkness of the night where they can't even see each other's faces Myra tells her story. Her account of her time on the island reads like a summary of *The Tempest:*

> "I was hardly three when we arrived on that island", she said. "Five thousand miles from home and not a face that resembled our own. No native of intelligence to keep him company. Just the two of us…. He

> taught me everything", she went on. "Nature was familiar as my own hands. The island had become my only home. I could name every plant, every flower. Not a single bird or beast could escape father's curiosity. (*Water with Berries* 150)

Myra is a double victim, abused by her father, Prospero, an alien both in San Cristobal and in Great Britain, and victim of terrible sexual violation at the hands of Prospero's servants during the island's uprising:

> "I could only see the flames" she said, "like a million tongues licking and sucking up the night. That's how it was. They'd made a bonfire to celebrate their rape of me. Right there, in the open field, with the flames sizzling and spraying everything with heat…. How many I don't know, nor how long. It seemed like eternity. (*Water with Berries* 150)

According to Lamming, the "rage inflicted on her is really that intended for Prospero, for she cannot in the minds of Prospero's victims be separated from his privilege and his history" (Kent 91). Towards the end of the novel we are told the bestial practices inflicted on Myra are the ones her father used to punish his slaves with, male or female. Myra, a wounded shell who haunts the heath, offers syphilitic sex to any man who passes by. It is so dark that Myra and Teeton are unable to see each other and they never touch or learn each other's names, but their anonymous interactions become a common medium for each of them to begin a dialogue with the past. Teeton becomes Myra's means to bear witness to the horror of her abuse and, with Myra, he finds "a presence which had been waiting to be known" bringing him a "curious solace" (*Water with Berries* 118–9). In these moments of connection, they each begin their own "Ceremony of Souls" that may in the future bring some form of redemption and reconciliation. *Water with Berries* seems to end in failure for the West Indian protagonists but the promise is there, as in Lamming's other works, for it to prefigure "some other movement in life" (Kent 88). Peter Hulme suggests that the novel itself can be seen as a Ceremony of Souls:

> It serves as a reminder, if any such is necessary, that Britain too is a postcolonial country and that the heritage of colonialism is not renounced quite so easily as Prospero's example at the end of *The Tempest* might

suggest. The souls of the colonial dead are not yet at peace. (Hulme, "Profit of Language" 135)

Works Cited and Consulted

Brown, Paul. "This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine: *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism". *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism.* Eds. J. Dollimore and A. Sinfield. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985. 48-71.

Cartelli, Thomas. *Repositioning Shakespeare: National Formations, Postcolonial Appropriation.* London: Routledge, 1999.

---. "Prospero in Africa: *The Tempest* as Colonialist Text and Pre-Text" *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*. Eds. J.E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor. London: Methuen, 1987.

Cesaire, Aime. *A Tempest.* Trans. Richard Miller. New York: TCG Translations, 2002.

Hulme, Peter. "Prospero and Caliban". *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797.* London: Methuen, 1986.

---. "The Profit of Language: George Lamming's *Water with Berries*". *Recasting the World Literature After Colonialism.* Ed. Jonathan White. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1993. 38-52.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skins, White Masks: The Experiences of a Black Man in a White World.* 1952. Trans. Charles S. Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1967.

Kent, George E.. "A Conversation with George Lamming". *Blackworld* 22.5: 4-14: 88-97. Rptd. "A Future They Must Learn: An Interview by George Kent". *Conversations: George Lamming, Essays, Addresses and Interviews 1953-1990.* Eds. Richard Drayton and Andaiye. London: Karia Press, 1992. 86-105

Lamming, George. *The Pleasures of Exile.* 1960. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

---. *Water with Berries.* London: Longman, 1971.

Mannoni, Octave. *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization.*Trans. P. Powesland. 1956. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1990.

Nixon, Rob. "Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest*" *Critical Enquiry* 13 (Spring, 1982): 557-578.

Retamar, Roberto Fernandez. "Caliban: Notes Towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America". *Caliban and Other Essays.* Trans. Edward Baker. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1989. 3-45.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. 1610-11. London: Penguin Classics, 2005.

Shohat, Ella. 'Notes on the 'Postcolonial''. *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 99-113.

Tiffin, Helen. "The Tyranny of History: George Lamming's *Natives of My Person* and *Water with Berries"*. *Ariel*, Vol. 10. No.4,(October, 1979): 37-52.

Wa Thiong'o, Ngugi. 'In the Name of the Mother: George Lamming and the Cultural Significance of 'Mother Country' in the Decolonizing Process'. *Sisyphus and El Dorado: Magical and Other Realisms in Caribbean Literature.* Trenton NJ: African World Press, 2002. 127-42.

Zabus, Chantal. *Tempests After Shakespeare.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Prof. Huma Javed Subzposh

Born on 28 January 1966, Dr. Huma Javed Subzposh is a senior academic in English literature with long teaching and research experience. She completed her graduation in 1983 and post-graduation in 1985 from Kanpur University, and qualified for the Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) in 1986. She joined Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University in April 1987 and has continued her association with the institution ever since, moving through the ranks from Lecturer to Professor, a position she has held since 2009. She was awarded her Ph.D. in 2001 and later the D.Litt. degree in 2015 from Lucknow University under the supervision of Prof. S.Z.H. Abidi. Her academic interests include postcolonialism, feminism, and the rewriting of classical texts, areas in which she has consistently worked through teaching, research, and publication. Dr. Subzposh is the author of The Disintegrating Psyche (2003), a study of Jean Rhys's marginalised heroines, and has edited Literatures of South Asia (2016). In addition, she has published several research papers in journals and edited volumes, dealing with themes such as diaspora, postcolonial discourse, and

feminist readings of literature. Over the years, she has supervised doctoral research and participated in a number of national and international seminars, where she has presented papers on contemporary literary issues. She has also contributed to university life through her involvement in academic and administrative bodies and by organising academic programmes and seminars. Her work reflects a steady engagement with literary studies, particularly in relation to South Asian writing and postcolonial criticism.