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## Essay One

### **Introduction**

In Act One, the audience is introduced to Prospero, the former King of Naples, and his servant, Caliban. Caliban repeatedly rebels against his servitude, but Prospero puts him firmly back into his place when he asks for his freedom. However, Caliban has not always been a servant. His mother, Sycorax, ruled the island and Caliban has more of claim to the island as the rightful heir than Prospero, who ran away to the island after being usurped. Prospero justifies Caliban's enslavement and his own usurpation of Caliban's heritage based on Caliban's misuse of his own hereditary power in his attempted sexual assault of Prospero's daughter Miranda. Caliban's efforts to argue for his freedom and Prospero's grounds for refusal illustrate the inherent tensions of the relationship between a master and servant and allow Shakespeare to explore an underlying theme of trust between these roles.

Caliban lived on the island with his mother, Sycorax, long before Prospero and Miranda arrived and took it from him. The island native was initially kind and welcoming to the newcomers, and taught them how to survive on the island. Caliban says that when they first arrived, they "wouldst give me / Water with berries in't, and teach me how / To name the bigger light, and how the less, / That burn by day and night..." (1.2.336-340) Essentially, Miranda taught him English, and about the world, and gave him water flavored with berries. In the

beginning, Miranda and Prospero clearly felt comfortable around Caliban. As a result of this initial camaraderie, trust was developed between them.

However, their kindness and trust in Caliban didn't last. They eventually took the island from him and forced him to live in a prison cell and into a life of servitude. Caliban thinks this is unjust, as shown in act one, scene two, when he angrily states that,

“This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,

Which thou takest from me....

For I am all the subjects that you have,

Which first was mine own king: and here you sty me

In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me

The rest o' the island. ” (1.2.335-336, 1.2.343-347)

According to Caliban, he and Sycorax had a valid claim to the island, which was taken from them by Prospero when he arrived to escape his usurpation. There was trust between them for a while, but in the end, their trust in Caliban ceased, along with his freedom. He was enslaved by the newcomers and locked away, unable to travel around the island he once essentially ruled. From the way Caliban tells it, his imprisonment and enslavement was completely unjust, but this leaves out Prospero's perspective. (INSERT ANALYSIS)

Prospero was the King of Naples before his brother usurped the throne from him and he was forced to flee Naples with his daughter, Miranda. They arrived on the island and were met by Caliban, an island native whom they initially trusted. It's not clear at first what changed, but ironically, Prospero eventually usurped Caliban as his own brother had done to him, and imprisoned and enslaved him. From Caliban's arguments, the actions seem unjust, up until Prospero delivers a damning statement of Caliban's character:

Prospero: "Thou most lying slave,  
Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have used thee,  
Filtth as thou art, with humane care, and lodged thee  
In mine own cell till thou didst seek to violate  
The honor of my child. " (1.2.348-351)

In these lines, Prospero berates Caliban for betraying his trust after Prospero and Miranda took him in and showed him kindness. These lines take place right after Caliban protests that Prospero and Miranda have treated him unfairly by taking his island from him, and forcing him to be their slave, despite the fact that Caliban initially sympathized with them and supported them by teaching them how to survive on the island. Prospero rebuffs him, angrily saying that he lost the trust they had in him when he tried to rape Miranda. He claims that whips make a better motivator for Caliban than kindness, saying that he is an individual "Whom stripes may move, not kindness" (1.2.349) and so he must be treated harshly and cannot be trusted.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that Miranda and Prospero once trusted Caliban is that they once shared a home with him, until he attempted to assault Miranda.

(INSERT QUOTE)

At this point it became clear to both Prospero and Miranda that Caliban was undeserving of their sympathy and needed to be locked away and treated as a slave instead of an equal.

#### **Body 4**

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Conclusion

## Works Cited

Graff, Gerald, and James Phelan. *William Shakespeare, the tempest: a case study in critical controversy*. Palgrave Macmillan., 2009.