



Postcolonial Theory in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Gerlinde Didea

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Seminar paper from the year 2007 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 2, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, course: Oberseminar Theories of American Studies, 4 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: Postcolonial theory results from a network of political and cultural tensions between colonizers and colonized. This approach will de-construct Eurocentrism showing that European values and standards are not universal. Highlighting that the same historical event can be interpreted in radically different ways depending on perspective, norms and values, accepted values will be destabilized and marked as constructs. Further, this paper will question the reasons given for colonialism and deconstructs them in order to reveal the economic or political interests they are based on.

I will critically examine the representations of Caliban's culture in Western discourse. In *The Tempest*, cultural ideology provides the ideological network for the colonial endeavours which could be theorized as bringing progress to an archaic world. A striking example for the strategy deconstructing "othering" is revealed in Chapter 1 where Caliban is presented as a completely inhuman being revealing strong racism. Therefore, Shakespeare implicitly legitimizes the colonial endeavor, because people like Caliban deprived of full humanity can be regarded as people without history, culture and they have therefore no logical claim to sovereignty. Shakespeare also produces a symptomatic reading of western discourse by psychoanalyzing to reveal western fear of the "other".

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