

Study Questions: “The White Man’s Burden”; *Caliban* (excerpt); *A Tempest* (excerpt)

1. What is the white man’s burden, according to Kipling? Who is Kipling’s audience and does it seem to change over the course of the poem? Since people are not inclined to shoulder burdens, what techniques does Kipling use to persuade his audience to do so? Where and how does Kipling reference *The Tempest* in this poem? What binary oppositions can you find in this poem? How are the terms in each opposition (e.g., kings and serfs) related to each other? Like Shakespeare, Kipling is interested in parent/child relationships and especially in growing up and becoming a man. What does this process involve? What does Kipling mean by “fluttered folk”?
2. In his essay “Caliban,” the Cuban intellectual Roberto Retamar asks “what is our history, what is our culture, if not the history and culture of Caliban?” (p. 14). What does Retamar mean by “our”? And what makes Caliban’s history and culture like his? How does he see Caliban? Does his image of Caliban fit with the one you thought Shakespeare had created? How is history related to culture in Retamar’s essay? Who is “our” and “we”? Who is Retamar’s audience?
3. Retamar presents his essay as “notes toward a discussion.” Yet he makes a forceful argument about the relationship between contemporary Latin Americans and Caliban. Why does Retamar characterize his essay in such tentative terms?
4. Retamar’s essay is held together with quotations from a variety of sources—not just *The Tempest* but Columbus’s notebooks, Bolivar’s speeches, and the essays and plays of many writers who have written about Shakespeare’s Caliban. Why does Retamar devote so much of his essay to what others have said? Note too the image of the “copy” that recurs in his essay. Why does Retamar pay so much attention to copies instead of originals?
5. Retamar’s essay depends on a number of binary oppositions: left/right, colonizing centers/colonies; intellectuals/artists; utopia/dystopia. He also seems to assume that history is progressive, changing in linear time for the better. These are both perspectives inculcated in the European Enlightenment. What does it mean for Retamar to embrace them while also speaking for a non-European culture?
6. A standard critical interpretation of Aimé Césaire’s *A Tempest* likens Caliban and Ariel to the American civil rights leaders Malcolm X and Martin Luther King respectively. These leaders took diametrically opposite approaches to the question of what role violence should play in effecting social change. How does this distinction apply to Ariel’s and Caliban’s very different attitudes toward Prospero?
7. How is Caliban’s language in Césaire’s play similar to what it is in Shakespeare’s play? How is it different? Why are words so important to him?
8. What are the most important differences between the end of Césaire’s play and the end of Shakespeare’s?
9. Why does Césaire call his play *A Tempest* instead of *The Tempest*?

10. Why did Césaire's Prospero lose his power in Milan and how does this loss support Césaire's critique of European colonial expansion? How does Césaire's Prospero lose his power on the island?
11. What are Césaire's Caliban's last words and why are they significant? Do they mark a victory over Prospero or Césaire's dependence on Shakespeare's original vocabulary?