

Central Question: What does it take to deserve to be free and, at that point, is that actually freedom?

### Deserving Freedom (from the Oppressor's Perspective)

- In order to be deserving of freedom in these texts, a person must be both white and civilized
  - o Ariel/Zoe, the two characters deemed deserving of freedom, are both of these
  - o This civility is often portrayed in a Christian context
    - § i.e. the civilizing mission is a Christian mission
  - o Additionally, whiteness and civility are determined by the language of the person
    - § Zoe speaks the language (her speech pattern is very different than someone like Paul/Dido)
    - § Ariel and Caliban speak the same language as their colonizer
      - Ariel, however, uses the word “Master” and awaits freedom
        - o Adherence to a social dynamic that favors whiteness
      - Caliban uses African words at first and refuses to call Prospero master
        - o He does not speak “the language”
    - § The Indian does not speak the language (almost unintelligible hybrid language—p.143)
- Why can't Zoe be free despite being deserving of it?
  - o For Boucicault, this question is the point of his work: How can slavery exist when it is possible for a white person to be enslaved?
    - § This just shows the absurdity of the system
  - o For Césaire, the system is absurd
    - § But the absurdity is not that a white person could be enslaved, but that freedom is something that can be given to a person
      - The system does not give freedom (does not restore it)
        - o Rather it is *a fuller participation in whiteness*
        - o Attaining freedom requires one to buy into the system that oppresses them
- For Caliban, freedom does not equal civilization or whiteness
  - o In fact, his freedom is based on destroying both of these and the power dynamic that stems from them
    - § Which is achieved at the end of the play
  - o Caliban is rejecting the notion that his freedom can be given to him—note that he never asks Caliban for his freedom
    - § Instead, he has Prospero stay—freedom at the end because it was not given
      - Prospero says, “I shall protect civilization.”
        - o Protecting this power dynamic
      - If Prospero leaves, whiteness leaves—but freedom is restored rather than given
  - o Prospero: “By his insubordination, he is calling into question the whole order of the world”

- Ariel's freedom shows this fuller participation into whiteness perfectly
  - o Ariel seeks to dominate—to mock the African-American
    - § Even uses the n-word, showing this internalization of the racist language of white colonizer
      - Caliban talks about how he fell into the trap, but no more
- The Indian is actually free
  - o Even though he is not deserving of freedom (as McCloskey notes on 143), he is free because he is allowed to retain his cultural practices (not forced into whiteness)
    - § Thus, we seem him at the end, freely chasing his revenge outside of white oversight and the white law
      - § Who is he beholden to?
- Zoe is freer in death than in marriage
  - o As she says, her Master grants her freedom in death
    - § Master is God and God is the only one who grants freedom since God granted it before birth
- Freedom is not exchanged—not a 1-to-1 agreement—not holding onto something until you are ready to have it back
  - o I am taking something from you and giving you back something that doesn't threaten me and my power
  - o Freedom is taken away retroactively
    - § Look at the criteria and then determine that a person is not free
- These works represent this tension with freedom
  - o Boucicault, through minstrelsy, takes the image of African-Americans and makes it into something that re-affirms whiteness
  - o Césaire, on the other hand, takes something from the white world and uses it to re-affirm blackness—this is Caliban's language
    - § This is what Walcott does (or what Heaney says Walcott does)