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Title
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Permalink
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Journal
Shakespeare Quarterly, 51(1)

ISSN
0037-3222

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Publication Date
2014-08-18

DOI
10.2307/2902320

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Creature Caliban

JULIA REINHARD LUPTON

WHAT IS A CREATURE? Derived from the future-active participle of the Latin verb *creare* ("to create"), *creature* indicates a made or fashioned thing but with the sense of continued or potential process, action, or emergence built into the future thrust of its active verbal form. Its tense forever imperfect, *creatura* resembles those parallel constructions *natura* and *figura*, in which the determinations conferred by nativity and facticity are nonetheless opened to the possibility of further metamorphosis by the forward drive of the suffix *-ura* ("that which is about to occur").[1] The *creatura* is a thing always in the process of undergoing creation; the creature is actively passive or, better, *passionate*, perpetually becoming created, subject to transformation at the behest of the arbitrary commands of an Other. The creature presents above all a theological conceptualization of natural phenomena. In Judaism and Christianity (and indeed it is only via the Latin of late antiquity that the word enters the modern languages), *creature* marks the radical separation of creation and Creator.[2] This separation can in turn articulate any number of cuts or divisions: between world and God; between all living things and those that are inert, inanimate, or elemental; between human beings and the "other creatures" over which they have been given rule; or, in more figurative uses, between anyone or anything that is produced or controlled by an agent, author, master, or tyrant.[3] In modern usage *creature* borders on the monstrous and unnatural, increasingly applied to those created things that warp the proper canons of creation. It can even come to characterize the difference between male and female or between

[1] See Erich Auerbach on *figura*: "this peculiar formation expresses something living and dynamic, incomplete and playful. . . . the notion of the new manifestation, the changing aspect, of the permanent runs through the whole history of the word" (*Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* [Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984], 11–76, esp. 12).

[2] *Creatura* does not appear in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. In Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (New York: Oxford UP, 1980), the following entry traces the first uses of the word to the patristic period: "*creatura, ae*, f. [creo], only concr., a creature, thing created (late Lat.); Tertullian, Apologeticum 30; Prudentius, Ham. [*?*] 508: omnes creaturae tuae, Vulg. Tob. 8,7.—II. The creation: Deus caelorum et Dominus totius creaturae, Vulg. Jud. 9,17: Dei, id. Apoc. 3,14 al."

[3] In *The Tempest* Prospero activates this sense when he tells Miranda that Antonio "new created / The creatures that were mine" (1.2.81–82). Quotations of *The Tempest* follow Stephen Orgel's 1987 edition of the play for the Oxford Shakespeare. See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., J. A. Simpson and E.S.C Weiner, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), s.v. *creature*, 1b, 2a, and 4 (fig.); cf. Romans 1:25.

majority and minority: as a term of endearment *creature* is generally used of women and children, and *creatura* itself might be said to break into formed and formless segments, with *creat-* indicating the ordered composition of humanity and the *-ura* signaling its risky capacities for increase and change, foison and fusion. At various points in the theological imagination of the West, creatureliness has served to localize a moment of passionate passivity, of an abjected, thinglike (non)being, a being of subjected becoming, that precipitates out of the divine Logos as its material remnant.

The word *creature* appears in one of *The Tempest*'s most famous passages:

> O wonder!
> How many goodly creatures are there here!
> How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world
> That has such people in't!
>
> (5.1.183–86)

Miranda's exclamation begins under the sign of wonder, her signature affect, by including the approaching Italians within the expansive world of creatures: "How many goodly creatures are there here!" She then narrows the global copia of the creaturely to its exemplary consummation in humanity: "How beauteous mankind is!" Her apostrophe ends by containing the multitude of creatures within the unity of a "brave new world," referring at once to the cosmos in its totality, ever renewed and maintained by God's ongoing creative will, and to the particular world of Italian citizens, new to her, which she will soon rejoin.

Caliban, I argue here, takes shape beneath the arc of wonder that moves throughout the play between "creatures" and "mankind," between animate beings in general and their realization in the form of humanity. Is he man or fish? creature or person? This indeterminacy at the heart of Caliban also sets him adrift between the cosmos in its vast totality—the brave new world of primal Creation—and the particular worlds defined by culture and nation: Bermuda, Algiers, Milan, Naples. Although in *The Tempest* the word *creature* appears nowhere in conjunction with Caliban himself, his character is everywhere hedged in and held up by the politico-theological category of the creaturely. As a solitary Adam on an island to which he is native but not natural, Caliban first stood apart from the rest of creation as his "own king" (1.1.342). Now enslaved to a Master-Maker, he finds himself locked within the swarming ranks of scamels, filberts, and the nimble marmoset, a natural wonder in a world of wonders. As such, he becomes an emblem of what Giorgio Agamben has called "bare life," pure vitality denuded of its symbolic significance and political capacity and then sequestered within the domain of civilization as its disavowed core.[4]

[4] "*The originary relation of law to life is not application but Abandonment.* The matchless potential of the *nomos, its originary 'force of law,'* is that it holds life in its ban by abandoning it" (Giorgio Agamben,

In the discourse of the creaturely, the image of cosmos—the totality that subsumes the singularity of the Creature in the register of a limited or general Creation—is never distant. The arc of wonder leaps from the sublime variety of creatures to the synthetic unity conferred by a world, cosmos, or order. Hence Miranda's "wonder" at such "goodly creatures" finds rest in the empyrean clarity of the "brave new world" they surely represent. A similar reflex has characterized critical responses to Caliban, which tend to naturalize his strangeness either within the macrocosmic synthesis of a general humanity (as either its exemplum or its exception) or—following the strain of much recent criticism—within the smaller worlds defined by race, nation, or culture. The political theology of the Creature avoids the traps presented by humanist/universalizing readings on the one hand and culturalist/particularizing readings of the play on the other.[5] As part of Creation, Caliban shares the universe of Adam, thwarting attempts by both characters and readers to exclude him from the common lot of humanity. At the same time, his creaturely monstrosity foils any normative reading of this humanity which would raise Caliban into an exemplar of basic drives. The play includes him within the cosmos of Adam but only as its chaotic exception.

If the creature Caliban both invites and resists universalizing readings, the same is true for the drive to particularize him. As a monstrous exception to the human norm, Caliban's creatureliness propels him into the conceptual space occupied by ideas of national and racial difference, eliciting a long line of culturalist readings of his oppression. Yet Caliban's exceptionality, both deeply singular and highly indeterminate, also prevents him from becoming the articulate representative of a single race or culture, be it Atlantic or Mediterranean. He subsists within an unredeemed Creation not yet divided into nations, forming the forgotten ground of a heterogeneous universalism

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HomoSacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen [Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1998], 29). Agamben's prime example of humanity reduced to mere life is the inmate of the concentration camp.

[5] For a sensitive and eloquent rendering of the universalist approach, see Harry Berger Jr.'s assessment of Caliban: "he *stands for* the world; a handy and compact symbol of human nature, not as we know it, but as we might have found it at the beginning of time" ("Miraculous Harp: A Reading of Shakespeare's *Tempest*" (1969) *Shakespeare Studies* 5 (1970): 253–83, esp. 260. Psychoanalysis comprises the most vital current strain of the universalist approach, as Meredith Anne Skura's psychoanalytic critique of culturalist readings demonstrates; see "Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1989): 42–74. Skura's essay explicitly thematizes the polarization between universalizing and particularizing interpretations. The culturalist view is perhaps best represented in Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Paul Brown, "'This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine': *The Tempest* and the discourse of colonialism" in *Political Shakespeare: New essays in cultural materialism*, Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, eds. (London: Manchester UP, 1985), 48–71; and Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London: Methuen, 1986).

irreducible to either the economies of a normative humanity or the semiotic coherence of individual cultures. At once monstrous and human, brutely slavish and poignantly subjective, the creature Caliban takes shape at the negative intersection between (general) Humanity and (specific) Culture. As such, Caliban's creatureliness *precedes* secular humanism, since the universe of creatures is measured neither by the totality of humanity nor the authenticity of a culture but rather by the infinity of life forms that burgeon around the human as its limit points. Caliban's creatureliness may also *exceed* the increasingly troubled solutions of secular humanism in its historicist variants, pointing to a new universalism defined by a cosmopolitical community of differences rather than by an exclusive set of national markers. Such a reclaimed universalism just might offer an antidote to the impasses of culturalism, whose investment in identities conferred by national belonging uncannily links the progressive goals of liberal antiracism to the reactionary impulses of ethnic cleansing.[6]

Approaching the Creature

The German-Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig initiated twentieth-century discussion of Creation as a category of critical reflection rather than as scientific or religious controversy. His magnum opus, *The Star of Redemption* (1921), locates Creation as one point in a triad completed by Revelation and Redemption. Creation, Rosenzweig insists, is an ongoing process: "For the world, its required relationship to the creator was . . . not its having been created once and for all, but its continuing to manifest itself as creature."[7] The creature, writes Rosenzweig, is the subject of a special consciousness: "being created would mean for it manifesting itself as creature. This is creature-consciousness, the consciousness not of having once been created but of being everlastingly creature."[8] *Everlastingly creature*: in this phrase Rosenzweig unfolds the philosophical consequences of the *-ura*, finding in it the expression of a continuously subjected subjectivity in relation to a Creator who remains sublimely other from it.

In *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama* (1927), Walter Benjamin read Rosenzweig's existential analysis of the Creature as a political category embedded

[6] Etienne Balibar analyzes the paradox of the current situation, in which the idea of cultural identity, the mainstay of traditional antiracism, has become the banner for new forms of racism: "Anthropological culturalism, which is entirely orientated towards the recognition of the diversity and equality of cultures . . . had provided the humanist and cosmopolitan anti-racism of the post-war period with most of its arguments" ("Is There a Neo-Racism?" in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., trans. Chris Turner [London: Verso, 1991], 17–28, esp. 21–22). Precisely the same arguments, he points out, are used to defend ethnic cleansing and the rhetoric of anti-immigration, mounted in the name of the purity of cultures.

[7] Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. William W. Hallo (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 120.

[8] Rosenzweig, 120.

in the absolutisms of Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe.[9] Benjamin identifies the creaturely with the peculiarly baroque perception of human finitude, everywhere infused with the sense of both the *necessity* and the *evacuation* of theological frameworks:

> the baroque . . . had . . . a clear vision of the misery of mankind in its creaturely estate. If melancholy emerges from the depths of the creaturely realm to which the speculative thought of the age felt itself bound by the bonds of the church itself, then this explained its omnipotence. In fact it is the most genuinely creaturely of the contemplative impulses, and it has always been noticed that its power need be no less in the gaze of a dog than in the attitude of a pensive genius.[10]

Following Rosenzweig, Benjamin identifies the creaturely with a peculiar form of consciousness, impelled by idealism yet forever earthbound by the weight of corporeality, at once sullen angel and pensive dog. From one point of view the Creature is *too much body*, collecting in its leaden limbs the earthenness and passionate intensity of mere life uninspired by form. From another the Creature suffers from *too much soul*, taking flight as "speculation," as reason soaring beyond its own self-regulating parameters toward a second-order materiality of signifiers unfixed to signifieds. In Benjamin's analysis, melancholy identifies the psychosomatic foundations of this creaturely consciousness, its violent yoking of an excessive, even symptomatic mental production to the dejected gravity of an unredeemed body. Benjamin encounters this creaturely melancholy in "the gaze of a dog" precisely because the Creature, caught between mud and mind, dust and dream, measures the difference between the human and the inhuman while refusing to take up residence in either category.

In Benjamin's discourse—and here he builds explicitly on the work of the conservative jurist Carl Schmitt—the Creature represents the flip side of the political theology of absolute sovereignty developed in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. In Schmitt's analysis the king is like God in the creative-destructive potential of his decisive word, his juris-diction.[11] By extension, his subjects are his creatures, the objects of his continual sovereign activity, which is a power that comes to the forefront during states of emergency, when the normal functioning of positive law is lifted in favor of the king's executive decisions. In English *emergency* is defined by the state of *emerging*, a condition in which forms are no longer fixed,

[9] See Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: New Left Books, 1977).

[10] Benjamin, 146.

[11] See Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 31–32 and 46–47.

when new—potentially dangerous, revolutionary, or counterrevolutionary—forms of political life can arise.[12] In German, the *Ausnahmezustand*—literally, "state of exception"—is ruled by the idea of exception. The *Ausnahmezustand* is that condition in which what is outside the law—the exception to the rule—comes to define the very essence of the law through the cut of the sovereign's de-cision. In the state of emergency the sovereign stands outside a legal order that includes him as the necessity of its own suspension.

In Benjamin's resolutely materialist analysis of political theology, the sovereign, unlike God, is himself a creature: "however highly he is enthroned over subject and state, his status is confined to the world of creation; he is the lord of creatures, but he remains a creature."[13] The Creature is finally both sovereign and subject, mind and matter, tyrant and martyr, but he suffers the two modalities in a wildly disjunct form that refuses to resolve into a reciprocal or homogeneous economy. The creature is never simply sovereign over himself, in a condition of stable autonomy in which the terms would balance each other in a just distribution: his self-rule is tyrannous, and he suffers that rule as mere creature. His reason takes flight as speculation; his law is that of the state of emergency, not the state of nature; and his body forever speaks in the hagiographics of dismemberment, torture, deformity, and symptom.

The Genesis of Caliban

Almost all the geographical indicators of *The Tempest* mark Caliban as an Old World figure, born from an Algerian mother and an unnamed father on an unnamed island between Tunis and Naples, perhaps somewhere off the coast of Sicily.[14] In this mapping Caliban might appear to be a sorry cousin of Othello, a

[12] *Emergency* derives from the Latin preposition *ē-*, "out of," and *mergere*, "to dip," with the sense of "To rise by virtue of buoyancy, *from* or *out of* a liquid" (*OED*, s.v. *emerge*, v. 1). Its fluid associations are resonant with liquefactional theories of creation and creatures as "emergent" from a primal slime or soup. *Emergency* initially appeared in English as a substantive of this process and a simple variant of *emergence*: "The rising of a submerged body above the surface of water" (1646; *OED* 1). But around the same time, the word appears to accrue its modern sense of historic urgency, as "The arising, sudden or unexpected occurrence (of a state of things, an event, etc.)" (1665; *OED* 3); "A juncture that arises or 'turns up'; *esp.* a state of things unexpectedly arising, and urgently demanding immediate action" (1663; *OED* 4).

[13] Benjamin, 85.

[14] Although New World readings of Caliban have become commonplace in current criticism, the Old World markers are the more insistent and self-evident in the play and indeed have yielded some of the most promising strains in recent interpretation; see, for example, Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1995). Ralph Hexter's analysis of the "Sidonian Dido" would also usefully illumine the Semitic (Punic and Arab) shadings of the play's Mediterranean world; see "Sidonian Dido" in *Innovations of Antiquity*, Ralph Hexter and Daniel Selden, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1992), 332–84. For a summary of the

young man of North African descent and Punic features who finds himself the unwilling inhabitant of a Mediterranean island newly under Italian control. In this reading "Cannibal" rhymes with "Hannibal," deriving Caliban from a long line of Semitic ancestors, from Sidonian Dido to Algerian Sycorax. Yet the language of Old World Moorishness rolls off the tempest-tested gabardine of Caliban, who insistently emerges in the world of the play and its criticism as more a New World than an Old World figure. Part of this effect surely arises from the sheer force and power of the play's creative re-appropriations by anticolonial writers beginning in the nineteenth century as well as the renaissance of historicism in our own moment.[15] It is not only an accident of the play's reception, however, that leads to this critical disabling of Caliban's Mediterranean genealogy. I would argue that it is also a function of the biblical typing that silhouettes Caliban as creature, exiled to an island of Edenic nature (caught in the register of mere life, of purely animate being) and forever exiled from it, insofar as his melancholic capacity for both depressive pain and poetic speculation separates him from the natural world he emblematizes.

Caliban thus enters the play under the sign of the creature:

> 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, and teach me how
> To name the bigger light and how the less,
> That burn by day and night; and then I loved thee,
> And showed thee all the qualities o'th' isle,
> The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile—
> Cursed be that I did so! All the charms
> Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats light on you!
> 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'th' island.
>
> (1.2.331–44)

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possible geographical coordinates of Caliban, see Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 23–55. I suggest a Sicilian locale because of the literary kinship between Caliban and Polyphemos, that island's Homeric inhabitant, as well as the later history of contestation and communication between Muslim and Christian forces in that region. Sicily was conquered by the Arabs between 827 and 902 but was reclaimed by Christian invaders later in the tenth century. Sicily'sNorman rulers exercised some tolerance toward the island's Muslim population. A major geographical work, *The Book of Roger*, was written by a Muslim geographer in Sicily under the patronage of the Norman king Roger II in 1154. See Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 18, 20, 22, and 147.

[15] On the history of anti- and postcolonial readings of *The Tempest*, see Trevor Griffith, "'This Island's Mine': Caliban and Colonialism," *Yearbook of English Studies*, 13 (1983): 159–80.

As the proof text of Caliban's language lesson, Stephen Orgel cites Genesis 1:16: "God then made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the less light to rule the night."[16] The allusion places Caliban in the order not of history but of creation, the pristine landscape of the world's birthday. In learning to name "the bigger light and . . . the less," Caliban becomes a type of Adam, naming the elements of God's creation in a childlike, naively concrete language.[17] Caliban and Adam's shared connection to the earth marks their creaturely status: these primal men are made from dust, fashioned by a divine potter-sculptor, forever emerging (*creat-ura*, "about-to-be-created") from the base matter of the elements into the more fixed forms of animate life. "Thou earth, thou" (1.2.314), "A thing most brutish" (1.2.356), "this thing of darkness" (5.1.275): throughout the play, Caliban appears as a *thing* made of *earth*, a characteristic that marks the elemental quality of the Adamic creature. Caliban's earthen core recalls the first fashioning of conscious life out of an inert yet infinitely malleable substance, as if the very plasticity of mud prompted the idea of conscious life in the Creator. In this scenario, as in so many creation myths involving an originary pottery, the Golem precedes and informs the Human; the manikin is father to the man.[18]

In his history of the island, Caliban, like Adam, names the objects of creation, yet, unlike his antitype, he must be taught this language rather than discovering it within himself.[19] Whereas Adam's naming project places him at the head of creation, Caliban's language lesson places him *within* creation, as one creature among others, a creature who bears no obvious resemblance to his Creator. Caliban is Mere Creature, a creature separate (like Adam) from the Creator but (unlike Adam) not reflected back to the Creator as His image. The uncertainty throughout the play as to Caliban's shape—"a man or a fish?—dead or alive?" (2.2.25–26)—reflects this fundamental lack of reflection, this inchoate muddiness at the heart of Caliban's oddly faceless and featureless being, caught at the perpetually flooded border between metamorphic mud and mere life, without the solidifying breath of an instilled form.[20] Naming, language, serves to bring some order to this emergent

[16] Orgel, ed., 119n. My own quotations of Genesis and references to the Pentateuch follow the *Soncino Chumash: The Five Books of Moses with Haphtaroth* (Hebrew and English with English commentary), ed. Dr. A. Cohen (London: Soncino Press, 1983); subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text.

[17] The name *Adam* is etymologically linked to the Hebrew word *'ădâmâh*, "country, earth, ground, husband [-man], . . . land"; see James Strong, ed., *Strong's New Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Iowa Falls: World Bible Publishers, 1980), Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary, items 119–28, esp. item 127.

[18] For classical *midrashin* on the Golem, an animate clay figure who is the subject of various Kabbalistic legends, see Hayim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshna Hana Ravnitzky, *The Book of Legends / Sefer Ha-Aggadah*, trans. William G. Braude (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), 15.

[19] See Genesis 2:19–20.

[20] For the play's systematic association of Caliban with muddy "bogs, fens, [and] flats" (2.2.60–61), see John Gillies, "Shakespeare's Virginian Masque," *ELH* (1986): 673–707, esp. 684–85.

world, this state of emerg-ency; and it is perhaps in search of such clarity that Caliban is taught to name not "every living creature" (Genesis 1:29), as Adam does, but rather the "bigger light and . . . the less," placing the swarming dominions of bird and beast beneath his rational gaze.

Yet sun and moon, purveyors of light and models of Logos, also install within the scene of education the possibility of inveterate rivalry. Rashi, one of the great medieval Rabbinic commentators on the Bible, adduced the following midrash from the passage: "'They were created of equal size, but that of the moon was diminished because she complained and said, 'It is impossible for two kings to make use of one crown.'"[21] Abhorring equality, the moon suffers diminishment at the hands of her Maker. Sun and moon, Prospero and Caliban, Creator and Creature, king and subject: the image of the two lights inserts an unequal couple within the apparent innocence of the recollected lesson, an incipient movement toward rivalry and protest that structures the entire speech. The moon's lessened light glimmers in Caliban's closing reminder that Prospero's sovereignty depends on its reflection back to him in the form of his subject's unwilling recognition: "For I am all the subjects that you have, / Which first was mine own king" (1.2.341–42). In the place of divine similitude, the special stamp of Adam, Caliban is left with the baser mimesis born from rivalry and the quest for recognition. The language lesson lessens the "mooncalf" Caliban (2.2.129), indicating his demotion within Prospero's sovereign remapping of the island.

Symptoms Taken for Wonder

Caliban is thus left with resentment, the creaturely passion that flares up from the hinge of the hierarchical coupling between sun and moon. It is, of course, a passion previously tapped and tested by Shakespeare: resentment describes the chip on the ugly shoulder of Richard III, the incalculable debt of Shylock, and the motiveless malignancy of Iago. And close behind each of these figures is Lucifer, clothed in the secular garments of the stage Vice and Machiavel. Lucifer, the Morning Star, reflectively intensifies Rashi's eclipsed moon in his hatred of subordination and in his sudden fall from originary brightness to darkness visible. In his earlier plays Shakespeare had consistently fashioned Luciferian resentment as an emblem of market modernity, predicting Nietzsche's analysis of *ressentiment*, in which culture itself in its higher forms reworks an essentially economic relation: "the feeling of

[21] Rashi, *Chumash with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Rashi's Commentary*, ed. A. M. Silberman, 5 vols. (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 1934), 1:16. For a narrative amplification of Rashi, see Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, trans. Henrietta Szold, 5 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1998), 1:23–24. For a contemporary analysis of Rashi's parable, see Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *Genesis: The Beginning of Desire* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1995), 13–14.

guilt, of personal obligation, had its origin, as we saw, in the oldest and most primitive personal relationship, that between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor."[22] In Shakespearean drama resentment is a mark of villainy under the law, the sign of a soulless legalism, a kind of second-order secularized Judaism that separates the modern ethos of markets, contracts, and Realpolitik from the (nostalgically reconstructed) civility of dying feudal institutions of life and love. To restore grace, in its theological and aesthetic registers, to the legalized, economized world of a dispersed and generalized resentment is a dream that animates any number of Shakespeare's plays, from *The Merchant of Venice* to *The Winter's Tale*.

The Tempest changes tack by locating resentment not within but prior to the law, as the passion of a prehistoric world that takes shape at the shores of the economic as such. In *The Tempest* resentment belongs to the protosocial world of the creature, a (living) thing but not yet an object of exchange, subsisting at the threshold of commerce and conversion. The creature does not respond to the exigencies of exchange so much as it functions as a first quantity of subjected, "created" value that sets the possibility of exchange into motion. In *The Tempest* power requires a moment of enforced inequality in order to mobilize. The name of this originary expropriation is slavery, which maintains a creaturely preserve of bare life within a system of sovereignty and covenant, the latter represented in the play by Prospero's contractual relation to Ariel. Prospero defends the necessity of maintaining Caliban within the *oikos*, the household, of the master: "He does make our fire, / Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices / That profit us" (1.2.311–13). This reduction of Caliban to his labor places the creature at the heart of an economy governed by the necessities of life. At the same time, Prospero's enslavement of Caliban, founded on the very purity of that reduction, implies the possibility of an economy of exchange, of "offices / That profit us."

Caliban's counternarrative recounts this originary expropriation: he who was once "mine own king" is now "all the subjects that you have." His own self-rule, his prior self-possession, can be conceived only in the terms of sovereignty that he experiences under Prospero, in which the latter's kingship depends on the former's exacted recognition. The institution of sovereignty through the enforced establishment of difference creates the conditions for resentment, a passion that looks forward to the possibility of usurpation and backward to the positing of a self-kingship that would be free from (and yet remains fundamentally modeled on) the dialectic of recognition within a hierarchical couple. Resentment brings Caliban to speech at the level of the symptom, a psychosomatic phenomenon that articulates and inflames the creaturely edges of his being. The pinches and cramps that Prospero

[22] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967), 70.

visits upon Caliban need have no magical or physical source at all; they may simply manifest the passion born of enforced service, the stinging nettles of resentment as it flowers on the body of the creature inhabiting the edge of symbolization. The aches and pains caused by Prospero's commands are the bodily registration and primitive equivalent of Hamlet's "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune": they are a passionate inscription on the body of Caliban of his master's rule, the moon's continued hatred of the sun. "Thou shalt have cramps, / Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up" (1.2.325–26): the phenomenology of the cramp that pens up breath with its suturing side-stitches describes the suffocating, claustrophobic response, the oppressive sense of internal constraint, that occurs in reaction to Prospero's archaic, noncontractual rule over Caliban. Caliban's pains also materialize in the form of the symptom, the protosymbolic dimension of a constraint that as yet bears no epochal force because neither master nor slave is partner to an agreement. Shylock's resentment emblematizes morality under the law—he is the arch-accountant of slights and grudges—and thus takes shape as bonds, contracts, and scriptural commentary. Caliban's resentment is fundamentally preliterate: he can speak but not read; he suffers not under the law but rather outside the law. Lacking access to legal types of accounting, the Creature keeps track of servitude in the only writing available to him: the cramped script, the tatooing side-stitches of the symptom.

Caliban's bodily suffering of resentment comes to speech in two more articulate forms of discourse: as curse and as counternarrative. The punctual, invective quality of the curse as well as its nagging, repetitive strain and its capacity for vivid if profoundly localized expression place it one step away from the symptom, as an act of minimal verbalization of the hieroglyphs of pain, a first gesture toward an act of imaginative creation around the insistent *nihil* of bodily distress. Caliban's counternarrative represents a more coherently symbolized articulation of bodily resentment into rational speech; in counternarrative the abrupt, pointed, explosive trajectory of the curse unfolds in the fuller form of story and history. Yet counternarrative also remains a limited form of political discourse in the play. Part of the pathos of Caliban's position vis-à-vis Trinculo and Stephano is his inability to communicate his counternarrative to them:

CALIBAN . . . Wilt thou be pleased to hearken once again to the suit I made to thee?

STEPHANO Marry, will I. Kneel and repeat it. I will stand, and so shall Trinculo.

Enter Ariel, invisible.

CALIBAN As I told thee before, I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer that by his cunning hath cheated me of the island.

ARIEL Thou liest.

CALIBAN (*to Trinculo*) Thou liest, thou jesting monkey, thou! I would my valiant master would destroy thee! I do not lie. (3.2.36–46)

In a pattern repeated throughout the scene, Caliban attempts to relate his counternarrative, only to be interrupted by the sound of the invisible Ariel mimicking the skeptical voice of Trinculo. The result is inarticulate fist-fighting rather than the creation of a new political community around a shared narrative and set of values. If the symptom instantiates Caliban's bodily transcription of Prospero's law, the voice of Ariel represents the phantasmatic dematerialization of that same law, its ghostly dissemination into every cove and corner of the island, its effective disabling of any counterhegemonic movement.

Symptom, curse, and counternarrative: these are the oppositional forms that the passion of resentment takes in Caliban's discourse. Although they cover a full range of articulate speech and open up the possibility of the creature's own creativity, they share the structure of reaction-formation and do not lead Caliban into successful conspiracy, let alone toward a genuine political program or philosophy. Yet there is a more positive dimension to Caliban's speech: the passion of wonder that characterizes the creature's response to Creation. Caliban (not unlike Miranda) is a *wonder who wonders*, a creature capable of an affective response to the world around him.[23] The key passage here is Caliban's fullest poetic response to the island:

> Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,
> Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
> Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
> Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,
> That if I then had waked after long sleep,
> Will make me sleep again, and then in dreaming
> The clouds methought would open and show riches
> Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked
> I cried to dream again.
>
> (3.2.133–41)

Caliban imagines a rain that would be the fructifying antidote to the violence of Prospero's storm.[24] In its positive evocation of place, Caliban's wonder also corrects the negative animus behind the passion of resentment. The passage thus opposes Caliban both to Prospero and to a version or aspect of Caliban himself, and it does so through crafting a response to the island's physical attributes. The passion of

[23] Critics have often commented on Caliban's special relation to the beauty of the island. Cf. Berger, 259; and Gillies, 702.

[24] If "hurricane" is indeed the unspoken New World coinage behind the play's opening storm, as Peter Hulme has suggested (108), its transcription of "Huracan," Mayan god of storms, opens onto a world in which rain took both creative and destructive forms, and played a major role in the successive creation and decreation of the orders of the world. See the Mayan epic *Popol Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life*, trans. Dennis Tedlock (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996). A fascinating project would involve comparing concepts of creation in *The Tempest* and the *Popol Vuh*.

wonder affectively relates the Creature to the rest of Creation, finding a home for him there through the re-creative resources of poetic language. An emergent historical dimension structures Caliban's poetry of wonder, since the register of dream introduces an element of linguistic mediation and temporal recollection into the ekphrastic presencing that tends to characterize the poetry of place. When Caliban declares "when I waked, / I cried to dream again," he represents the island's beauty as a fundamentally lost dimension of his relation to it, a relation interrupted by Prospero's expropriative entry onto the scene but also made available to language by that same emergency. Wonder, that is, occurs across the divide articulated by resentment; it does not precede it as its lost ground but rather succeeds it as its refraction and aftermath, an imaginative arch thrown across the tempest's destructive breach.

Caliban's poetry thus indicates, in a more elaborated, world-making form, the creative potentials of the Creature himself: the *creat-ura* is a created thing who is himself on the verge of creating. This creativity is still, however, only an incipient one (the emergence or potential marked by the *-ura*), located at the origins of civilization, at the border of the real and the symbolic. The lovely yet random sound of a "thousand twangling instruments" evokes the classical motif of the Aeolian harp, in which the wind blows through chimes or strings in order to make a natural music; in this it is the primitive antetype of the "miraculous harp" of Amphion (2.1.94), whose more reasoned music had raised the walls of Thebes. The two harps echo each other but in different keys: whereas Amphion's harp is tuned to the political sphere, the Aeolian harp remains within the natural world it passively indexes. So, too, Caliban's *poetry of place* is not yet a *politics of the polis*. If Aristotle defines man as the *zoon politikon*, the Creature lives at the fold of this formula, between the zoo and the polis, at home in the taxonomy of neither. Here Caliban's wonder differs from that of Miranda, who marvels—first at Ferdinand, then at the other Italians—in response to the possibility of intersubjective relations, whether in the form of marital union or of integration in a larger community. It is an established determinant of her character that she is a *human* creature, and her wonder links her to the brave new world of both a universal and a particular humanity reconstituted in the wake of Prospero's tempest. Caliban's humanity, on the other hand, remains a question rather than a given in the play. This question is raised by the limited vector of Caliban's wonder: he is a mere creature who wonders at creation—without a reflex toward the Creator and also without recourse to a subjective or sexual relation. However full the island is to him, he remains alone on it. The island's plenitude masks its fundamental emptiness for him, its lack of a subjective partner for him within its natural abundance. Caliban's loneliness is a further sign of his imprisonment, of his exile *from* the island *on* the island, but it may also represent the possibility of another type of subjectivization, another model of humanity resident in the motif of the creature, that exists somewhere just beyond the conceptual limits of the play.

Man or Fish?

In the epochs of Christian history, the Creature lies before or outside the law. In *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* the dominant types of ethnic alterity are identified with the epoch *sub lege*, under the law, their contracts marked by the Judeo-Islamic signature of circumcision.[25] The floating world of *The Tempest* reaches back to the epoch of the Flood, *ante legem*, in which unredeemed Creation suffers a sea change on the road to law and grace. Like the Flood, the tempest creates a state of emergency in which primitive instincts emerge in a clarified form, leading to the reassertion of positive law and the reinclusion of the sovereign within its normative order.[26] Caliban's island is postlapsarian, faulted by sin and potential monstrosity and not yet brought into the higher significations of Revelation and Redemption.[27] The Creature, existing before the law yet in desperate need of its discipline, offered a fitting emblem for the new peoples discovered across the Atlantic, since the *figura* of the *creatura* includes within its swampy matrix the possibility for both noble savagery and incorrigible drives, for prelapsarian innocence and postlapsarian lawlessness.[28]

Prospero's storm threatens Creation much as God's flood does, and the rainbow announcing the marriage masque evokes among other motifs the contract of

[25] See Lupton, "*Othello* Circumcised: Shakespeare and the Pauline Discourse of Nations," *Representations* 57 (1997): 73–89; and Lupton, "*Ethnos* and Circumcision in the Pauline Tradition: A Psychoanalytic Exegesis" in *The Psychoanalysis of Race*, Christopher Lane, ed. (New York: Columbia UP, 1998), 193–210.

[26] This is the emphasis given the story of the Flood in the Renaissance's greatest treatment of it, Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel fresco, in which salvation on the ark unfolds far in the background, and the state of emergency brought about by natural disaster dominates the foreground. As Howard Hibbard remarks, "We see brother attacking brother in order to survive, and elsewhere we see examples of what Michelangelo thought of primitive life and instincts—an interest that was common in Florence around 1500. Mothers and children, fathers and sons, husbands and wives are shown *in extremis*, saving and clutching, fighting and pushing. Yet one woman calmly saves her belongings amidst the rout. Noah, the chosen man, is seated up in his ark in the far distance: what we witness is the effect of God's wrath" (*Michelangelo* [London: Allen Lane, 1975], 132). On the history of Noah iconography, including Michelangelo's humanist treatment of the theme, see Don Cameron Allen, *The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1949).

[27] The rabbis imagined the world before the Flood as an Eden spoiled by its own plenty: "The wantonness of this generation was in a measure due to the ideal conditions under which mankind lived before the flood. They knew neither toil nor care, and as a consequence of their extraordinary prosperity they grew insolent" (Ginzberg, I:152).

[28] For example, the *Requerimiento*, the document recited by the Spaniards before each battle with the Indians, begins with a statement of common humanity: "the Lord our God, living and eternal, created the heaven and the earth, and one man and one woman, of whom you and we, and all the men of the world, were and are descendants, as well as those who come after us" (quoted here from *The Spanish Tradition in America*, ed. and trans. Charles Gibson [Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1968], 58–60, esp. 58).

reconciliation sent by God when the Flood ended. As Northrop Frye noted long ago, "The masque has about it the freshness of Noah's new world, after the tempest had receded and the rainbow promised that seedtime and harvest should not cease."[29] The rainbow, harmonious mixture of sun and rain in the aftermath of a violent storm, announces "A contract of true love" (4.1.84), the union between Ferdinand and Miranda taking on a cosmic significance in the masque's celebration of "Earth's *increase*" (l. 110, emphasis added), its promise of plenty etymologically linked to creation.

In Genesis, God uses the rainbow to sign a contract, a marriage *ketubah*, not only with all humanity but with all creatures: "And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and *every living creature of all flesh* that is upon the earth" (Genesis 9:16, emphasis added). Accompanying this broader promise are the Noachide commandments, a set of seven laws addressed to all humanity that locate mankind within the order of living creation.[30] In this they differ significantly from the Ten Commandments, at once greater in number, more comprehensive in scope, yet more limited in their address, pertaining initially only to the nation of Israel.[31] Re-signing the work of Creation itself (of which the Ark, with its encyclopedic collection of animals, is a kind of summa), God's rainbow covenant with all creatures provides an enduring and comprehensive basis for Jewish, Christian, and Islamic universalisms.

Yet even within the biblical text itself, as well as in the traditions it has spawned, God's covenant with a universe of creatures almost immediately gives way to the first division of the world into the primeval branches of the nations, or *ethne*. From Noah's three sons, Shem, Japheth, and Cham, stem the subsequent genealogies of mankind, the so-called Table of Nations, a roll of generations marked for the first time by national difference: "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations [*hagoyim*]; and of these were the nations divided in the

[29] *The Tempest* ed. Northrop Frye (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), 15–26, esp. 18.

[30] See Genesis 9:1–7. The Noachide commandments reiterate the commandment "Be fruitful and multiply"; give humanity sovereignty over all living things (who had taken over the world in the aftermath of the Flood); extend this sovereignty to the right to eat meat; forbid, however, eating meat from any living animal or consuming the blood of any animal; prohibit murder (including perhaps suicide); and institute capital punishment. Unlike the Decalogue, the Noachide Laws concern humanity's relation to other creatures, both the rights and responsibilities that accrue to human beings as sovereigns of the earth within the context of renewed creation. In the Noachide setting, the prohibition against murder might be seen as regulating man's relation to other men *qua* creatures. See commentary to Genesis 9:1–7 in the *Soncino Chumash* and the *JPS Torah Commentary*, ed. Nahum S. Sarna, 5 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 1:60–62.

[31] See Exodus 20:1–14 and Deuteronomy 6:1–18.

earth after the flood" (Genesis 10:32).[32] Moreover, this Table is divided into three unequal parts: the progeny of Cham, whose sins may have included intercourse with his wife on the ark, was cursed by his father with slavery: "Cursed be Canaan [son of Cham]; A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (Genesis 9:25).[33] In all three monotheisms Cham's curse provided an etiology of blackness as well as a proof text for slavery based on descent; taken together, the two uses of the story would provide a powerful rationale for race-based slavery.[34] If the arc of the rainbow embraces the Creature as the constitutive element of an everlasting covenant, the institution of slavery identifies the Creature as mere life, as pure labor deprived of rights within a system of national division. The Flood thus represents a watery dividing line between the shifting shores of universalism and particularism as they have been variously imagined, reconfigured, and reduced in the ethnopolitical legacies of monotheism.

From the broadest of universalisms—a covenant with all creatures—to the narrowest of particularisms—the establishment of slavery based on descent—via a sexual crime: this mapping of the Flood and the successive waves of its exegesis also describes the history of Caliban on his island. "[F]irst mine own king" and now decried as a "savage and deformed slave" of "vile race" by his masters, Caliban passes from freedom to bondage as the result of a sexual crime, the attempted rape of Miranda. Shakespeare had explored some of this typological territory earlier. Several critics have linked Othello to Cham via his "monstrous" sexuality, reading him as a positive instantiation of Cham's slavish blackness. As I have argued elsewhere, however, Othello is as much the typological negation and redemption as the inveterate repetition of Cham.[35] For example, Othello and Desdemona arrive in

[32] The Hebrew *goyim* is translated as *ethne* in Greek and *gentes* in Latin. The original Hebrew word does not have pejorative connotations (unlike its modern Yiddish equivalent), but in the plural it does tend to be used of "other nations"—nations other than Israel. In the Christian tradition (e.g., Paul) *ethne* generally refers to the nations of the world united in Christ. The Table of Nations introduces the word *goyim* into the discourse of the Bible; as the *JPS Torah Commentary* notes, "Hitherto, all such accounts in Genesis have related to individuals. Now we are given a genealogy of nations" (1:67). This newly divided world is "of one language and one speech" (Genesis 11:1), but Babel will be built and destroyed shortly after. On the relation between the Table of Nations and the story of Babel that follows it (with reference to the passages' conflicted legacy of universalism), see Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 42–45.

[33] In Ginzberg's synthetic redaction of the midrashic tradition, the curse of blackness is tied to Cham's intercourse on the ark, while the enslavement of his progeny occurs as a consequence of viewing his father naked (1:166–67).

[34] On the role of Cham's curse in the Judaic, Christian, and Islamic rationalizations of African slavery, see Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800* (London: Verso, 1997), 64–76.

[35] For Othello as the typological overturning of Cham, see Lupton, "*Othello* Circumcised," 77.

Cyprus, across the "enchafèd flood" (2.1.17) of a tempest-riled sea, *in separate ships*, a decision that, in delaying the consummation of their marriage, may also in the play's typological register prevent Othello from repeating Cham's blackening crime of intercourse on the ark. From this perspective Othello's sexual restraint reverses and redeems Cham's promiscuity, marking his probationary entrance into the universe of Christian brotherhood and its promise of freedom.

Whether understood as the typological redemption of Cham's curse or as its incorrigible replay, the Cham-like face of Othello binds his fate with that of Africa and its peoples, and hence with the history of the postdiluvian world.[36] Unlike Othello, Caliban appears to like sex in the rain; at the very least, his attempt on Miranda's honor occurred in the environs of a cave, linked since the *Aeneid* with tempestuous passions of a Sidonian savor.[37] Yet, whereas Othello's links to Cham place him within the order of law and history, Caliban resides just outside the rainbow world of ethnic groups, as primal cause rather than historic symptom or typological redemption of the continental divides brought about by Cham's transgressions. As creature, Caliban straddles the universalist and particularist faces of the Flood, at once included in God's contract with the infinitude of life (but as the measure of difference between the human and the inhuman) and deposited at the scandalous origin of national differentiation (but without clear identification with any racial stem or continent). In the epochal mapping of the play, the creature Caliban exists somewhere over the rainbow, on the far side of the law, an emblem of mere life who treads water in a flooded Eden, fallen from grace and not yet healed by covenant.

Caliban's enslavement, like that of Cham's progeny, is the consequence of a sexual act; in Prospero's account Caliban sought "to violate the honour of Miranda" (1.2.346–47). Caliban's response is ambiguous, neither a denial nor a confession, since his terms for understanding sexuality are at odds with those of Prospero:

> O ho, O ho! Would't had been done!
> Thou didst prevent me—I had peopled else
> This isle with Calibans.
> (1.2.348–50)

For Prospero and Miranda this response reinforces their view of his unregenerate nature, his status as Mere Creature, outside the borders of the human community.

[36] For identifications of Othello with the negative and monstrous legacy of Cham, see for example, Karen Newman, "'And wash the Ethiop white': femininity and the monstrous in *Othello*" in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor, eds., (New York: Methuen, 1987), 143–62, esp. 147; and Arthur Little, "'An essence that's not seen': The Primal Scene of Racism in *Othello*," *SQ* 44 (1993): 304–24, esp. 306–8.

[37] On *The Tempest*'s extensive borrowing from the *Aeneid*, see, for example, Donna B. Hamilton, *Virgil and* The Tempest: *The Politics of Imitation* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1990).

His desire to reproduce links him to the animals, to whom God grants the blessing of increase: "And God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful, and multiply'" (Genesis 1:22). Yet Caliban's morphological proximity to the human makes his advances on Miranda all the more heinous, placing him below even the bestial, in the category of the monstrous. According to Prospero, Caliban is

> A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
> Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,
> Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;
> And as with age his body uglier grows,
> So his mind cankers.
>
> (4.1.188–92)

Caliban's physical deformity mirrors his moral limitations, which, in Prospero's analysis, are inborn and native to him. In this respect he resembles not so much the "swarms of living creatures" (Genesis 1:20) who are characterized by their buzzing multiplicity, their dizzying embodiment of pure increase, as the sublime singularity of Leviathan.[38] Leviathan, the rabbis suggested, was first created as part of a couple ("the great sea-monsters," in the plural, of Genesis 1:21); the female was later slain in order to prevent their disastrous reproduction.[39] From this perspective, Caliban's enforced celibacy is designed to prevent him as singular Leviathan from begetting a whole swarm of monsters.

Yet Caliban's desire to have "peopled . . . / This isle with Calibans" also evokes the Adamic dimensions of a more recuperative typological reading. After all, Caliban's turn to Miranda is not unlike Adam's desire for a mate. Having named "every living creature"—having brought into discourse the fullness of Creation—Adam nonetheless finds himself alone, the very copia of other creatures pointing to his own isolation.[40] So, too, Caliban, unique in his ability to apprehend the island's beauties, is not only *at one* with the island, a part of Creation, but also, like Adam, *alone* on the island, apart from Creation. To "people" the island with Calibans is to find himself in another, to realize his potential humanity by entering into the sexual couple of man and woman. It is significant here that Caliban does not speak of mere "increase" (with its etymological link to *creature*) but rather of *peopling*, rhetorically linking himself to the human kindness from which Prospero and Miranda would exclude him.

Genesis likewise distinguishes creaturely increase from human coupling. Although the phrase "Be fruitful and multiply" occurs in connection with both ani-

[38] On the swarming quality of mere creatures, see Zornberg, 7–14.
[39] See Rashi, 1:5.
[40] See Genesis 2:19.

mals and humans, the rabbis noted that God simply "blessed" the animals with this dictum; whereas he directly addressed Adam and Eve in the form of a command: "God blessed them *and God said unto them*, 'Be fruitful and multiply'" (Genesis 1:28). This apparently minor variation emphasizes the fact of God's linguistic utterance, a scene of heteronomous command that forever reorients and displaces the sexual act it mandates by removing it from the realm of the merely creaturely. What is in effect *descriptive* in the animal context (though it is an inaugural or creative description) becomes *legislative* in the human context, a demand from the Other that forever separates human being from biological *jouissance*.[41]

Caliban's urge toward Miranda links him to Adam's blessing and identifies him with Adam's sin. In both cases the turn toward woman is a move not only toward fuller humanity but also toward humanity defined as creatureliness, as marked by material urges and base passions. Woman represents the creatureliness of man; in her capacity for increase she separates out the *-ura* of the *creat-ura*, its capacity for generation and metamorphosis. In Genesis the urge toward woman marks the beginning of the fall into a secondary creatureliness defined by its growing distance from the Creator: Genesis moves from the order of mere creatures (swarming beasts and single monsters) to the human creature created in God's image, to the epoch of fallen creatures who frantically increase and multiply between Eden and Flood. In the typological imagination such a fall in turn implies the hope of redemption, and this chance distinguishes Adam from Leviathan, the human creature from the monstrous one, the rule from its exception.

Read in this light, Caliban's desire to "people . . . / This isle with Calibans" aligns rather than separates Caliban and Adam, inviting Shakespeare's creature into the fold of "people" as such, into a common humanity marked by both passion and possibility. The arc of such a reading animates Caliban's final lines in the play, "I'll be wise hereafter, / And seek for grace" (5.1.294–95); it also echoes in Prospero's grudging recognition of Caliban, "This thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine" (5.1.276–77), in which Prospero accepts both commonality with and responsibility for his creature. Yet, like Shylock's conversion, Caliban's passage from a position *ante legem* to a position *sub gratia* feels rushed, forced, and dramatically unprepared for; in both plays the typological reading remains somehow incomplete and imperfect, bearing the continued mark of the *-ura*. In both cases it is a *forced* conversion, in which entrance into the totality of humankind (conceived in Pauline terms as the potential unity of all nations, or *ethne*, in Christ) occurs at the cost of a felt singularity.

[41] So, too, in Genesis only humanity is specifically created as "male and female"; sexual difference appears to be a dimension of *human* being that separates man and woman from other creatures. The *JPS Torah Commentary* notes: "No such sexual differentiation is noted in regard to animals. Human sexuality is of a wholly different order from that of the beast" (1:13).

The universalism implied by such a conversion, that is, fails to account for the particularism implied by Caliban's desire to have "*peopled* / This isle with Calibans." "People" implies not only people as such—humanity taken as a whole—but also *a* people, an *ethnos*, *gens*, or nation of Calibans that would take its place among other *ethne*. Caliban, born on one side of the rainbow (before the law and before the ethnic divisions instituted by Noah's sons), desires through his Cham-like actions to cross over to the other side of the rainbow: to a world of covenant and contract but also to a world of peoples, in which his language and *bios*, or in Miranda's phrase his "vile race," would take on a historical identity. It is perhaps in this space of an imagined particularism that the order of the circumcised, called up in the play through the various markers of Semitism (Algiers, Tunis, Carthage), might finally take root. In the speculative space of an island peopled by Calibans—a national homeland called Calibania—the potential kinship between Othello and Caliban might finally gain some dramatic currency, some mimetic viability. This particularism is the endpoint of Stephen Greenblatt's analysis, where it takes the name of "culture."[42]

It is precisely the particularism of culture, set against a universalism presumed bankrupt, that neohistoricist readers of Shakespeare have attempted to salvage, whether in the guise of Othello's blackness, Shylock's Judaism, or Caliban's indigenous claims. In the process, however, the religious foundations of the plays' conceptions of these positions are necessarily occluded, reduced, or secularized. Yet, just as Caliban never crosses over into grace but merely sues for it, so, too, Caliban desires to found a people of Calibans but remains radically singular. As with Frankenstein's monster, no female Leviathan joins him at the end of the play, and no brave new world springs from their loins. Shakespeare is interested in Caliban precisely insofar as he embodies the antediluvian moment before *ethnos*, insofar as he does not and cannot cross over into the post-Noachide Table of Nations. If, in Miranda's vocabulary, Caliban is of "vile race," his moral and physical deformities marking him for slavery, in conception and composition he remains one of a kind, a lonely monster rather than the representative of a nation or a race, a strange exception born in a state of emerg-ency. But it is here, in this singularity, at once Adamic and monstrous, that another universalism might accrue, one that would acknowledge the creature's difference without resolving that difference into an identity, whether subsumed in the macrocosmic totality of "humanity" or the local habitation of "culture."

Conceiving of Caliban as creature, Shakespeare manages to isolate within the idea of the human, forever divided between universalist and particularist strains, an elemental category of bare sentience which refuses to resolve into the homogenizing

[42] Citing Vico, Greenblatt writes: "Each language reflects and substantiates the specific character of the culture out of which it springs" (32).

ideal of the one pole or the identitarian tendency of the other. That is, in response to the forced choice between universalism and particularism, the Creature takes shape as their negative intersection. As an Adamic figure, the Creature resides in a concertedly prenational, universal scheme; by definition, the Creature belongs to Creation, not to Nation. Thus the Creature would appear to belong in the general field of universal humanity. At the same time, however, he/it is not equal to Adam. The creature Caliban partakes of Adam's earthenness but is deprived of the *imago dei*. The creature Caliban shares Adam's sexual passion but, like Leviathan, never finds a mate. The creature Caliban takes up the burden of Adam's labor, the curse of the fall, but as slave, as pure labor separated from human freedom, who does not partake in Sabbath rest. In the chronologic of Creation, we could say that Caliban lives in a perpetual five-day week, created on the fifth day along with the "great sea-monsters" (Genesis 1:21) but living fundamentally unpartnered by the human-defining help-meet created on the sixth day, and finding his burden never alleviated by the suspension of labor instituted on the seventh. This fifth-day Creature cannot become a model or paradigm for the humanity of other creatures; he does not represent the genetic origin or primal design of either a universal or a particular stem. He is forever undergoing creation, forever *creatura creaturans;* he falls within the field of general humanity but only as the exception to its rule. This exceptionality in turn exiles him to the particularism of *ethnos*, yet the lack of a sexual relation, of a means of peopling—his both originary and enforced singularity—denies the Creature permanent residence there as well.

The world of Creatures constitutes an infinity rather than a totality since it is made up of a series of singularities that do not congeal into a single set. It is here, in this singularity, at once Adamic and monstrous, that another universalism, a universalism after culturalism, might accrue, one that would acknowledge the creature's difference without resolving that difference into the identity of an *ethnos.* By preserving Caliban as creature, Shakespeare manages to isolate within the category of the human, with its potential for both universalist and particularist determinations, a permanent state of emergency, of exemplarity in crisis. The creature thus isolates a profane moment within the idealism of theology and defines in its very primitivism a possible face of modernity, understood not as the negation but as the remainder of a theological vision. If we want to find a new universalism in the play (as I believe, urgently, we must), we will do so not by simply reasserting that "Caliban is human" but rather by saying that "all humans are creatures," that all humans constitute an exception to their own humanity, whether understood in general or particular terms.

If we were to look to the visual tradition for a comparable engagement with the discourse of the creaturely—perhaps in search of dramaturgic cues that might help us to stage Caliban as Creature in the theater—we would do well to situate

Shakespeare's Caliban in the dialectical space between the two great Renaissance artists of Creation, Hieronymus Bosch and Michelangelo Buonarroti. The Flemish painter's zoological imagination continuously turns on the exceptionality of the Creature, be it human or inhuman, black or white, hybrid or pure, plant or animal; his is a liquid world in which ponds, streams, and fountains teem with the swarming marginalia of mere life, with animated gargoyles set free to wander the pages of natural history. Bosch's God is the God of creatures, in love and hate with the obscene and wonderful variety of desiring, fornicating, breeding, and crossbreeding life. Michelangelo, on the other hand, endlessly seeks the exemplary—the statue behind the painting, the idea behind the statue, the logos behind the idea—while keeping each template of significance in luminous touch with the next, like God's finger on Adam's. The Sistine Chapel ceiling, which sets forth the history of the world from Creation to Flood, strives to equate the creativity of God with the *disegno* of the artist, mediated by the great human types of the classical tradition. Such an enterprise takes place on a stage largely devoid of flora and fauna, of creatures in their extrahuman dimension. The separation of light from dark (the primal act of drawing) and the creation of sun and moon (conditions for visibility) stand in for God's creation of the world before humanity, as if Michelangelo had strategically avoided representing nature in its promiscuous plenty in order to focus on the beauty and promise of the human form.

One can imagine Caliban struggling to pass from Bosch's world to Michelangelo's, striving to abandon the Flemish painter's botanical bestiary of mystical symbols for the clarity and dignity of the Italian's anti-landscape. At the same time, in trying to make that crossing, perhaps he stumbles on and, in the process, articulates the necessity of each field to the other, but only as its excluded term. As Ernesto Laclau has argued in his attempt to reclaim universalism within a post-foundationalist paradigm,

> Totality is impossible, and, at the same time, is required by the particular as that which is absent, as a constitutive lack which constantly forces the particular to be more than itself, to assume a universal role that can only be precarious and unsutured. It is because of this that we can have democratic politics: a succession of finite and particular identities which attempt to assume universal tasks surpassing them; but that, as a result, are never able to entirely conceal the distance between task and identity, and can always be substituted by alternative groups.[43]

Or, in the terms developed here, the very intensity of Caliban's incarnation of the creaturely position, itself a kind of particularism-before-all-particularisms, a nondifferential specificity awash in a primal universe, allows him to begin to repre-

[43] Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso, 1996), 15–16.

sent a universal function of political liberation into full humanity for the Trinculos, Stephanos, and Ariels who struggle alongside yet apart from him. That universe toward which he strives, however, remains intrinsically empty, the placeholder that enables but also renders unstable the flux of a democracy always to come.

The universe of liberated humanity is always just beyond the horizon—the horizon of Caliban's world but also of Shakespeare's. The full elaboration of its economy would require recourse to later moments in the articulation of typology and its heritage, not only in the works of Rosenzweig and Benjamin but also in the fundamental rethinking of Rosenzweig's paradigms by Emanuel Levinas. (While Shakespeare did not, of course, read Rosenzweig or Benjamin or Levinas, they surely read him). Caliban's final suit for grace reveals the playwright still caught in the stranglehold of humanism's forced choice. Yet Shakespeare's play is part of the conversation about universals and particulars that grips us still. His decisive crystallization of a certain material moment within the theology of the Creature might help us find a postsecular solution to the predicament of modern humanity, trapped in the increasingly catastrophic choice between the false universalism of global capitalism on the one hand and the crippling particularisms of apartheid, separatism, and segregation on the other.