Shakespeare’s Caliban has received an impressive amount of scholarly attention for a character who speaks relatively few lines, though admittedly the lines he does speak are quite memorable. In Shakespeare’s Caliban, Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan document his “eventful odyssey from Shakespeare’s time to the present,” showing “how and, wherever possibly, why each age has appropriated and reshaped him to suit its needs and assumptions” (ix). Harold Bloom, who sees Caliban as “the grotesque and pathetic slave” of Prospero (xiv), edited a collection devoted to the character and rather regretfully states that “we are now in the age of Caliban, rather than the Time of Ariel or the Era of Prospero” (1). And in Constellation Caliban, Nadia Lie and Theo D’haen explore “Caliban as a cultural icon conveniently allowing for the most varied kinds of research and reflection” (i). These broad studies of Caliban, which examine the uses to which he has been put in many times and places, are undeniably valuable scholarship; however, much can also be gained from a narrower examination of Caliban’s uses and adaptations in a single place and a short span of time, such as in Cuba during the few decades between Roberto Fernandez Retamar’s landmark 1971 essay, Caliban and Raquel Carrió and Flora Lauten’s 1997 play, Otra Tempestad. In Constellation Caliban, Lie and D’haen note that Retamar’s Caliban started a whole new discipline, “Calibanology” (i). Retamar and others have attempted to redeem and reclaim Caliban, and have called for an examination of literature and culture from Caliban’s perspective. They have pointed out that the cannibalism associated with Caliban is a fiction and, at the same time, they have embraced the idea of the cannibal, choosing to devour their source text and the colonial and imperial powers with which it is associated. Indeed, Caliban has proven such a compelling character that Retamar himself has been devoured by him. Though he tried to write a “Farewell to Caliban,” he found that Caliban would not let him go, and in the wake of Caliban’s emergence from the background of Shakespeare’s play, other, even more marginal, suppressed, or external characters have begun to surface. As these new characters have taken their seats at the table, a complicated and cacophonous dialogue between the cannibals and the cannibalized has begun, which sometimes makes it difficult to determine who is the cannibal and who is the meal. However, in Cuban texts that use Caliban and Shakespeare’s The
Tempest as their source or inspiration, an interesting evolution occurs. In Cuba, Caliban has transformed from the “savage and deformed slave” of Shakespeare’s play, to a valiant symbol of Latin America, to a symbol of the language that can finally allow everyone at the table to join in the conversation.

It might seem surprising that Cuban writers would seat themselves at a table at which Shakespeare is the main dish. Cuba does differ from post-colonial countries such as India, which were British colonies for a long period and which saw Shakespeare used as a tool for instilling British colonial values. Cuba was only a British colony for eleven months between 1762 and 1763, and Shakespeare never seems to have been used as an instrument of colonial propaganda. However, Cuba has endured a long history of both colonization and foreign influence, and since the Cuban revolution in 1959 its independence from foreign influence, and particularly its ability to resist the influence of its powerful near neighbor, the United States, have been points of national pride. It might seem surprising, then, to see Cuban scholars and poets using Shakespearean characters as symbols, or to see Cuban theatrical companies writing and performing Cuban adaptations of Shakespeare. While Shakespeare is not American, he is foreign, and he could easily be perceived as a dubious foreign influence. But if independence is a point of national pride, so is the high level of education and cultural literacy enjoyed in post-revolutionary Cuba, and Shakespeare is seen by many Cubans as an example of the sort of cultural knowledge they prize. His position in Cuba is thus primarily positive, if somewhat ambivalent.

The first course: Retamar’s cannibalization of and by Shakespeare

Roberto Fernandez Retamar exemplifies this ambivalence. A poet, essayist, and fervent supporter of the Cuban revolution, Retamar has written dozens of books since the early fifties, and he continues to be a leading cultural figure in Cuba, serving as the president of the prestigious Casa de Las Americas, a center for the study and preservation of art and culture. In his 1970 essay, Caliban, Retamar embraced the figure of Caliban. Though he was not the first Caribbean or Latin American writer to adapt or appropriate The Tempest, he distinguishes himself from the others, critiquing those whom he feels were too influenced by European thought. He praises the Barbadian author, George Lamming, as the first Latin American or Caribbean writer to assume the identity of Caliban, but then he mourns the fact that Lamming “no lograr romper el círculo que trazara Mannoni” [did not succeed in breaking the
circle traced by Mannoni] (29). This criticism is sharper following as it does a paragraph condemning Octave Mannoni, the French psychoanalyst whose *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, first published in 1950, was, Retamar notes, the first work to identify Caliban as a colonial, but which he sees as a flawed, paternalistic interpretation that portrays Caliban as suffering from a “Prospero complex” and wanting to be colonized and dependent. In stating that Lamming was unable to escape Mannoni’s influence, Retamar is both accusing Lamming of a similar paternalistic theory and, ironically, placing him in a dependent relationship to Mannoni. Likewise Retamar acknowledges his indebtedness to the Uruguayan writer, José Enrique Rodó, and his 1900 manifesto, *Ariel*, but criticizes Rodó both for choosing Ariel, rather than Caliban, as the symbol of Latin America and for being overly influenced by the French writer Ernest Renan.

However, Retamar himself is guilty of a similar crime, as he himself admits when he recalls that his symbol is also “una elaboración extraña” (36) [a foreign elaboration]. Though he is critical of other Latin American and Caribbean authors for being influenced by European writers, he acknowledges that it is necessary to speak in the language of the colonizer, in the language that Prospero taught to Caliban, and he also seems to place Shakespeare, who he says is possibly “el más extraordinario escritor de ficción que haya existido” (15) [the most extraordinary writer of fiction that ever existed], in a separate category from foreign influences such as Renan or Mannoni. Jonathan Goldberg notes, Retamar’s symbol, “like Rodó’s, comes from elsewhere – indeed, from the same place, Shakespeare, an author whom Fernández Retamar adores […] precisely because he somehow knows ‘us’ better than we do ourselves” (9–10). Goldberg further claims that Retamar “misreads” Shakespeare’s text as revolutionary (10), but he is not the only Cuban to interpret Shakespeare in this manner. Cuban scholar Beatriz Maggi has interpreted Shakespeare’s texts as revolutionary, and in 1964 the Consejo Nacional de Cultura (National Counsel of Culture) produced a pamphlet, *Shakespeare, Un Contemporáneo Nuestro*, which suggested that Shakespeare was only nominally bourgeois and that he would have been sympathetic

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3 Retamar’s criticism of Mannoni is actually much sharper in his original version of *Caliban*, published in 1971 in the *Casa de Las Americas*. The version included in *Todo Caliban*, published in 2000, to which I have referred, takes into account Lamming’s later works and his favorable comments on the Cuban revolution, and so offers him more praise than criticism. Nevertheless, even in this later version of his essay, Retamar still states “Aunque algún pasaje de su enérgico libro […] podría hacer creer que no logra romper el círculo que trazara Mannoni” (29) [Although some passages of his forceful novel […] could make one believe that he didn’t succeed in breaking the circle traced by Mannoni] The implication is still that Lamming couldn’t quite free himself from Mannoni’s influence.
with the Cuban revolution had he been alive at that time. Retamar’s text thus illustrates the ambivalent view of Shakespeare in Cuba. He is both a foreign influence, and a great writer who somehow understood and portrayed a people and a land he never encountered.

Retamar begins “Caliban” by responding to a well-intentioned, leftist, European journalist, who asked him if there was such a thing as a Latin American culture. In Retamar’s mind he might just as well have asked “do you people exist?” since to question the existence of a Latin American culture is to question the existence of Latin Americans as human beings. Retamar goes on to discuss the “mestiza” culture of Latin America, which blends native, African, and European influences, and the “mestiza” people who speak in European languages, but speak from the point of view of those colonized by the Europeans. He enters into an argument with “these colonizers,” but admits that he, like Caliban in Shakespeare’s The Tempest, must do so in a language learned from Prospero, and he invokes Caliban’s famous cry: “You taught me language, and my profit on’t / Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you / For learning me your language” (1.2.364–66).

Retamar then gives a brief etymology of Caliban, noting that the name is an anagram for Cannibal, and that that word came from the word “Caribe,” or Carib, the name of a native tribe who, according to Retamar, “were the most valiant, the most warlike inhabitants” of what is now Latin America “before the arrival of the Europeans, against whom they made a heroic resistance” (15–16). The Caribs became associated with cannibalism because Columbus claimed to have heard that they ate human flesh. In his diary entry for the 15th of February, 1493, Columbus noted:

We have not encountered monsters here, nor news of them, except in one island (of Caribs) […] that is populated by a people that are held by all the islanders to be very ferocious, and that eat human flesh. (Retamar 17)

Notable in this diary entry are the fact that this instance of cannibalism is actually only “heard second hand by Columbus”, and that it seems to be offered, apologetically, to make up for the lack of monsters. Of course, Retamar points out, Columbus also wrote in his diary about how he was told that “far from there were men with one eye, and others with the heads of dogs” (Sunday, 4 of Nov. 1492; Retamar 16), and yet while nobody today believes that the native Caribbeans were Cyclops or dog-headed people, the belief that they were cannibals persists, and continues to provide moral justification for a brutal conquest. Since the Caribbeans were so fierce and bestial,  

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4 See, for example, Beatriz Maggi and Consejo Nacional de Cultura. I have also discussed the Cuban view of Shakespeare as a revolutionary in “In Fair Havana, Where We Lay Our Scene: Romeo and Juliet in Cuba.”

5 All translations from Spanish to English are mine.
goes the argument, their violent conquest, enslavement, and extermination was warranted.

Though Retamar asserts that the cannibals from which Caliban draws his name were fictional, a convenient ideological tool in the project of colonization, he nevertheless embraces the symbol of the cannibal, and specifically of Shakespeare’s Caliban. Responding to Rodó’s Ariel, in which Rodó identifies Caliban as a symbol of the corrupt United States and Ariel as a symbol of Latin America, Retamar asserts that Caliban is actually a more appropriate symbol of Latin America than the passive, docile Ariel:

Nuestro símbolo no es pues Ariel, como pensó Rodó, sino Caliban. […] Próspero invadió las islas, mató a nuestros ancestros, esclavizó a Caliban y le enseñó su idioma para entenderse con él: ¿Qué otra cosa puede hacer Caliban sino utilizar ese mismo idioma para maldecir, para desear que caiga sobre ella “roja plaga”? No conozco otra metáfora más acertada de nuestra situación cultural, de nuestra realidad. ¿qué es nuestra historia, qué es nuestra cultura, sino la cultura de Caliban? (31–32).

[Our symbol is not Ariel, as Rodó thought, but Caliban […] . Prospero invaded the islands, killed our ancestors, enslaved Caliban, and taught him his language to make himself understood. What else could Caliban do but use the same language to curse, to hope that the red plague falls on him? I know of no other metaphor closer to our cultural situation, to our reality […]. What is our history, what is our culture, if not the history and culture of Caliban?]

Of course, in taking the part of the cannibal, Caliban, Retamar in a sense cannibalizes Shakespeare. He takes the play of Shakespeare and uses that play as a starting point. But from that point he diverges, looking at the play, and the world, from the point of view of Caliban, rather than of Prospero.

Ironically, however, if Retamar was cannibalizing Shakespeare, Caliban has in turn cannibalized Retamar. In 1993, having seen his 1971 essay translated into many different languages, Retamar wrote an afterword to a Japanese translation of his essay. He called it “Farewell to Caliban,” 6 and he later explained that he wrote it not because he thought there was no more to say about the subject, but to signal his desire to turn, and return, to other topics. Caliban, he said, had become his Prospero, his master (87), and he could not always be certain which ideas were his, and which Caliban’s, what he, Retamar, had written, and what were the words of Caliban. However, his efforts to free Caliban, and so to free himself, were unsuccessful. The character would not let him go. In 1999 he wrote “Caliban before the Anthropophagy” and noted that a writer doesn’t always choose his themes – sometimes the themes choose him, and in this case he had been chosen by a

6 Or „Adiós a Calibán.” This and all of Retamar’s Caliban related essays are collected in Todo Caliban.
Shakespearean character who continued to make demands of Retamar. Playing with Cannibals can be a dangerous business.

The second course: Teatro Buendía’s Shakespeare buffet

If Retamar has cannibalized and been cannibalized by Shakespeare and Caliban, the food chain does not stop there. Later Cuban writers have cannibalized both Shakespeare and Retamar. Raquel Carrió and Flora Lauten’s Otra Tempestad devours not just The Tempest but also many other Shakespeare plays, and blends them together and flavors them with Afro-Cuban ritual and other aspects of Cuban literature and culture, including Retamar’s Caliban, which they list among their influences. Lauten, the director and founder of Teatro Buendía, and Carrió, its dramaturge, are not new to adapting classic texts in new and experimental ways. Carrió has written on the topic in her Dramaturgia Cubana Contemporánea, and their repertoire includes adaptations of ancient Greek plays, such as The Bacchae, and classic Cuban Plays. Nevertheless, in “Otra Tempestad: de la investigación de Fuentes a la escritura escénica” Carrió admits that Otra Tempestad might at first appear to be “un cruzamiento forzoso de cosas que poco o nada tendrían que ver” (3) (a forced cross of things that have little or nothing to do with each other). Wanting, however, to explore Shakespeare’s The Tempest and the cultural encounter between old and new worlds, they embarked on a year and a half long process in which teams of actors worked to imagine and interpret different scenes, and Carrió wrote and rewrote those scenes, as the story developed into “una ‘tempestad’ más real, más nuestra” (4) [a ‘tempest’ more real, more ours].

In addition to combining Caliban, Miranda, and Prospero with characters from other Shakespearean works, Carrió and Lauten add some of the Afro-Cuban pantheon of orishas into the cast of their play. The orishas have their origins in the gods brought over by the African slaves transported to the new world. Once in the new world, these gods were combined with Catholic saints to whom they bore some resemblance. The result was the orishas, dual personality deities worshiped in the syncretistic Afro-Cuban religion, Santería or Regla de Ocha. In Otra Tempestad these deities are the daughters of Sycorax, and they have additional personalities projected onto them by the old world, Shakespearean characters, so that they themselves become the embodiment of the syncretistic, mestiza culture created by the merging of cultures.

Otra Tempestad, created and performed by Carrió, Lauten, and the actors of their theatrical company, Teatro Buendía, is a very loose adaptation of Shakespeare’s The Tempest. At the beginning of the play Prospero, Miranda, Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, and Shylock set sail in search of a new land on
which they can found a Utopia. They shipwreck on the coast of Cuba and
discover that the island is inhabited by Sycorax, Caliban, and the daughters
of Sycorax, who are also orishas. The play depicts the encounters between the
old world Shakespearean characters, and the new world figures onto whom
they project the desires, fears, and regrets that they tried to leave in the old
world. Hamlet believes the orisha Oshún, river goddess, to be Ophelia;
Macbeth is seduced by the orisha Oya, the queen of the dead, who he
believes to be Lady Macbeth. Prospero sees this new land as the perfect place
to establish his Utopia, but he is so absorbed in his Utopian dreams that he
fails to see that his daughter Miranda does not want the marriage he has
arranged with Othello and instead loves Caliban. Miranda, who contrary to
her father’s wishes wants to marry Caliban, dies at the end. Prospero dies
having realized that he has destroyed his new world utopia, and Caliban
becomes king. The plot does contain a shipwreck and some of the same
characters, but otherwise it is quite different from the plot of Shakespeare’s
play.

It is a Cuban tempest, which pays tribute to Shakespeare, but retells the
story from the other side of the world, and from the point of view of different
characters. One critic, having seen the play performed at The Globe in
London, noted that “Shakespeare’s final play has been hijacked as
thoroughly as Prospero’s dukedom” (Palmer 2), but in her program notes
Carrió explains that they are not hijacking the play, nor is Teatro Buendía,
like Retamar, borrowing the language of the colonizer but placing it in the
mouth of the colonized. Carrió writes:

Pero en los finales del siglo la fábula se vuelve más compleja. No se trata ya de
negar el lenguaje del conquistador, sino de investigar en qué medida del cruce de
etnias y culturas resulta una cultura otra, un tercer lenguaje que ya no es del
donador ni del vencido sino un producto cuya naturaleza tiene un carácter

\[\text{sicrético}\] […] ¿Qué hacer, desde este lado del mundo, que no reitere las imágenes
ya hechas de un dramaturgo que ha sido miles de veces llevado a la escena?
¿Cómo lograr un lenguaje que respete la belleza y profundidad de los referentes
pero no resulte una simple traslación de los temas y las formas de representación?

(59-60)

[at the end of the century the story has become more complex. It isn’t a matter of
trying to negate the language of the conqueror but of investigating in what way
the mixture of ethnicities and cultures results in another culture, a third language
that is neither that of the conqueror nor that of the conquered but a product whose
nature has a syncretic character […]. What can we do, from this side of the world,
that wouldn’t simply repeat the images already created by a playwright whose
works have been performed thousands of times? How can we achieve a language
that respects the beauty and profundity of the original but that does not result in a
simple translation of the themes and forms of representation?]
Carrió and Lauten’s play can, like Retamar’s essays, be seen as a cannibalization of Shakespeare’s work, but they also go beyond what Retamar did. They are not simply speaking back to the conquerer; they are creating a new language in which to discuss Shakespeare, Caliban, Sycorax, and the encounter between two very different worlds.

The multiple levels of translation (linguistic, cultural, temporal) mean that there are relatively few times when language from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, even in Spanish translation, is used, but as Peter Hulme has noted, this makes those Shakespearean citations especially powerful when they do appear, and the fact that the borrowed words are often put into the mouths of different characters also allows for new interpretations of these familiar words (157). It is, for instance, Miranda, and not Caliban, who wants to “people the island with Calibans” (41), making the comment not a threat of rape but a declaration of passion. Ariel still sings the same song from *The Tempest*:

A cinco brazos de aquí
Yace el cuerpo de tu padre.
Corales son sus huesos
Perlas son sus ojos tristes
Y todo el mar se ha transformada
En algo Hermosa y extraño. (31-2)

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange. (1.2.397–402)

But in *Otra Tempestad* he is singing it not to Ferdinand but to Hamlet. Rather than serving to soothe Ferdinand’s grief over his supposedly dead father, as the song does in *The Tempest*, in *Otra Tempestad* it stirs Hamlet’s grief and helps to drive him towards madness. Indeed, the one, minor change to the song, the addition of the word “triste” or “sad” to the description of the dead father’s eyes, adds to the son’s grief and guilt. Additionally, while Hulme is correct in noting that there are far fewer citations from *The Tempest* than in Aimé Césaire’s *Une Tempête*, there are many citations from other Shakespeare plays, and again, the placing of these borrowed words in different mouths and the combination of seemingly different plots adds rich, new meaning to *Otra Tempestad*. If they have cannibalized Shakespeare, they have done it with the end result of creating a Shakespeare buffet.

Flora Lauten has noted,

We thought all the most important themes of Shakespeare should be on that boat [...]. Macbeth is there as a symbol of treason and ambition, Shylock as avarice, and
so forth. All of them are eager to go to this new world and leave their pasts behind, but everything they left keeps coming again and again, full circle. These things are all aspects of the human soul and you cannot escape them. (Palmer 1)

The play suggests that the Shakespearean immigrants to the new world bring their own fates or destinies with them. They find in the new world exactly what they had hoped to leave behind in the old, and the cultural and psychological baggage that they bring with them often prevents them from truly seeing the new world, from truly speaking its language or hearing what it might have to say to them. As Greenblatt has famously noted, that communication has been lost. In “Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century”, he notes:

It is precisely to validate such high-sounding principles — “Eloquence brought men from barbarism to civility” or “all men are descended from one man and one woman” — that the Indian languages are peeled away and discarded like rubbish by so many of the early [European] writers. But as we are now beginning fully to understand, reality for each society is constructed to a significant degree out of the specific qualities of its language and symbols. Discard the particular words and you have discarded the particular men. And so most of the people of the New World will never speak to us. That communication, with all that we might have learned, is lost to us forever. (576)

The old world Shakespearean characters of Otra Tempestad likewise miss out on their opportunity for communication with the new world inhabitants, since they are unable to truly see them without projecting their own desires and regrets onto them. This miscommunication illustrates the need for the third language of Otra Tempestad. Retamar’s reclaiming of Caliban’s lost voice was an important first step; however, Carrió notes, it is now necessary to move beyond that. It is no longer acceptable to give speech only to Prospero, but it is also not satisfactory to listen only to Caliban’s angry cursing. Either solution, Carrió suggests, would involve a loss. Instead she suggests that a third language must be created to allow communication between the two cultures.

Otra Tempestad is the attempt of Carrió and Lauten to create this language. Carrió notes that “en el cruce de referentes, sonoridades e imagines europeos y africanos no hay ‘vencedores’ ni ‘vencidos’ sino el intercambio de ritos y acciones que caracterizan el sincretismo cultural propio de América Latina y el Caribe” (18) [in the mix of African and European references, dreams, and images, there are neither ‘conquerors’ nor ‘conquered,’ but rather the interchange of rituals and acts that characterize the cultural syncretism unique to Latin America and the Caribbean].

The translation of the play into Spanish and into another culture combined with the free adaptation and the incorporation of other Shakespeare plays, of Cuban literature, and of Afro-Cuban ritual has left some playgoers
puzzled, particularly when the play was performed in England. Carole Woddis, though generally pleased by the performance, acknowledged her own confusion after seeing the play at The Globe Theatre in 1998 when she wrote, “one may not always understand what is going on, but this hundred-minute version is wonderfully physical and imaginative” (1998). Reviewer Ian Shuttleworth also saw the play performed at London’s Globe, but had a far less favorable response. He asserted that:

Without the programme’s scene-by-scene synopsis, I would have had little or no idea what was going on from moment to moment; even with it, there is no indication of why what is happening, is happening. There is, of course, no reason to treat Shakespeare with ossifying reverence – but this particular gallimaufry seems to have been put together simply for its own sake. It is constantly eye-catching [...] but to no apparent end. There may be a parabolic subtext commenting upon the state of their native Cuba [...] but if so it lurks, along with any palpable significance of any kind, full fathom five below the surface. (1998)

But though these critics may not always have been able to discern it, the play is full of significance, and the confusion of non-Cuban audiences does not negate Carrió’s idea of a third language. It indeed illustrates the need for that language since the languages of conquered and conqueror do not allow for cross-cultural communication. What Carrió and Lauten have borrowed and imported from Shakespeare as well as what they have changed reveal the complexities of cross cultural communication and of cannibalizing another culture or text. There are some things that can be translated and consumed, but there are some things that prove indigestible for the cannibal.

The third course: varieties of literary cannibalism

Raquel Carrió, in her essay on the process of creating the play, “Otra Tempestad: de la investigación de Fuentes a la escritura escénica” notes that there are two different types of theatre:

Una es representacional y se corresponde con la noción de “teatro” que conocemos en la tradición occidental. Desde esta tradición [...] el actor “hace” – representa – al personaje. Sin embargo en la otra tradición no es así [...]. En los rituals el propósito no es representacional (no se representa para otros) sino participativo, iniciático [...] Se trata de un dialogo del actante con la divinidad, no con los espectadores. (4)

[One is representational and corresponds to the notion of “theatre” that we know in the Western tradition. According to this tradition [...] the actor “acts” – represents – the character. However in the other tradition it isn’t like that [...] in the rituals the process is not representational (one doesn’t represent for others) but participative, initiatory [...] it is about the actor having a dialogue with the divine, not with the audience.]
This latter school of acting requires the actor to both allow himself or herself to be consumed by a role and at the same time to take the role into oneself as one might consume a meal. It is, in other words, similar to cannibalism, but a sort of mutual cannibalism that blurs the line between the cannibal and the cannibalized. According to Paul Yachnin in “Eating Montaigne,” Shakespeare himself engaged in a similar type of cannibalism when he consumed Montaigne’s essays so thoroughly that they became his own and appeared, almost word for word, in The Tempest. As Yachnin notes “appropriating, owning, and making a profit from the words of another are thus strange but close kin to eating those works and becoming one with the other” (159). Taking another’s words into oneself, or allowing a character to possess one during a play is not so different from the act of cannibalism. Indeed, the two schools of acting that Carrió describes could be likened to two different perceptions of cannibalism. The cannibalism that Columbus described in his diaries, and which Retamar both denies as a fact and embraces as a metaphor, sees the cannibal as a ruthless aggressor who consumes his victim. But the cannibalism described by both Yachnin and Carrió involves being in dialogue. It involves both consuming and being consumed. This, however, is what many of the characters of Otra Tempestad fail to understand.

The Shakespearean characters who sail from the old world to the new do not realize that they are becoming actors and cannibals in the ritualistic tradition described by Carrió. They expect that they can control who they are or how they act in the New World; however, they find repeatedly that they cannot leave behind the people that they were, and because they merely project their own desires, fears, and ambitions onto the new world divinities, they fail to truly enter into a dialogue either with the divine or with the new world characters. Otra Tempestad may be a “cannibalization” of Shakespeare, but it also depicts Shakespearean, old world characters attempting to cannibalize the new world, and often biting off more than they can chew.

Frequently the old world Shakespearean characters of Otra Tempestad attempt, unsuccessfully, to cannibalize the new world without being changed by it. They think they can remain in control of their own identities and of the new world characters they encounter. They do not realize that they can neither easily leave behind their old world identities nor can they truly communicate with the new world inhabitants if they merely project their own assumptions onto the people they encounter.

When Hamlet, for instance, first appears at the beginning of Otra Tempestad, he appears to have put on an antic disposition. He is dressed as a “bufón” or jester and appears to be a sort of comic master of ceremonies: “¡Pasen, señores, pasen! ¡Por primera vez, los cómicos de Elsinor representando [...]!”(21) [Enter, gentlemen, enter. For the first time, the comedians of Elsinor, representing […]]”. His speech in this first scene is
characterized by a strained jocularity and punctuated by bursts of song and laughter. He echoes the song of the gravediggers in Hamlet, who speak the few comic lines in a generally tragic play: “¡Cuando yo era joven, y amaba y amaba [...] muy dulce [...] todo me [...] parecía!” (21) [“In youth when I did love, did love, / Methought it was very sweet” (Shakespeare 2008, 5.1.57–8)]. Even when he speaks lines that belong to Hamlet in Shakespeare’s play, he recalls his comic conversation with the Gravediggers: “Esta calavera [...] ¡hum! [...] tenía lengua. Y en otro tiempo, solía cantar” (ibid.) [“That skull had a tongue in it and could sing once” (Shakespeare 2008, 5.1.70)]. His behavior is slapstick and exaggerated, and he seems to be desperately trying to leave tragedy behind in the old world and to be a jester or comedian in the new world.

By the fourth scene of the play, however, he is in the new world, and his tragic nature seems to have caught up with him. Rather than echoing the speech of the comic gravediggers, his lines, though not an exact translation, are reminiscent of the lines spoken by his father’s ghost. “¡Mi alma vaga en una explanada del Castillo condenada a andar errante!” (31) [My soul wanders on the terrace of the castle, condemned to roam].

He then encounters three different orishas. The first is Ellegguá, a trickster god who Prospero has already mistaken for Ariel. Ellegguá/Ariel sings a song to Hamlet, stirring his grief over his father, and tells him a patakin, or a traditional story about the orishas in Cuba. The story bears some resemblance to the mousetrap play in Hamlet, and at first it serves to remind Hamlet of his father’s death, but then Ellegguá/Ariel mentions lovers and Hamlet, reminded of Ophelia, sees her “¡Muerta no, dormida [...]! ¡ [...] flotando como un ángel sobre el agua!” (32–3) [Not dead, asleep! Floating like an angel over the water!]. The orisha Oshún appears. She is the combination of the Catholic saint and patron saint of Cuba, Caridad de Cobre, and the Yoruban goddess of rivers, beauty, and love. She is the Afro-Cuban equivalent of the Greek Aphrodite. Onto all of these layers of personalities and symbolism, however, Hamlet projects another layer of meaning. He sees her as Ophelia. He is at first delighted to see her alive, but he becomes frustrated when he cannot get her to stop singing her mad songs. They become entangled in a conversation in which most of her lines are from Ophelia’s mad songs and most of his lines are from Hamlet 3.1. She asks how she should know her true love, and he tells her to get herself to a nunnery. She sings about her love’s hat of shells and his sandals, and he tells her not to be a mother of sinners. She says that the owl was a baker’s daughter and he asks if she is fair. At this point, however, she takes on both sides of the conversation, alternatively embodying Hamlet and Ophelia. Hamlet becomes upset and tries to end this conversation, but then Oya, the orisha of the graveyards,
appears as his mother, and Hamlet is first driven insane and then driven to vengeance.

Oshún/Ophelia: Soy doncellita! (Lo Incorpora.) ¿Eres honesta? Soy doncellita; Eres Hermosa? (Con ira) Soy Doncellita!

Hamlet: ¡Basta!

Oshún: Yo te amaba, Ofelia

Oyá/Madre: ¡Yo no te amaba!

Hamlet: ¡Madre! (Con la espada, como el Rey.) ¡Gertrudis, por Dios, vete allá, vete allá […]! ¡Ese muchacho está loco!

Prospero: ¡Loco!

Voces de la Isla: ¡Loco! ¡Loco! ¡Loco! ¡Loco!

Hamlet: (Enloquecido por las voces, tapándose los oídos.) ¡Pero de astucia!

Oyá/Madre: [...] ¡Venganza! ¡Venganza!

Hamlet: (Con la espada) ¡Venganza! (33–4)

[Oshún/Ophelia: I am a maid! (She embodies him.) Are you honest? I am a maid! Are you fair? (angrily) I am a maid! / Hamlet: Enough! / Oshún: I loved you, Ophelia! / Oyá/Madre: I didn’t love you! / Hamlet: Mother! (With the sword, as the king.) Gertrude, for God’s sake, get away from there, get away from there! That boy is crazy! / Prospero: Crazy! / Voices of the Island: Crazy! Crazy! Crazy! Crazy! / Hamlet: (crazed by the voices, covering his ears) But with cunning! / Oyá/Mother: […] Vengeance! Vengeance! / Hamlet: (with the sword) Vengeance!]

Though Hamlet begins the play thinking that he can cannibalize the island, he becomes consumed by it and consumed by the past he attempted to leave behind. Though he sails to the new world as a comedian, he cannot escape the tragedy he brings with him. He cannot withstand the influence of the orishas, but neither can he see them for what they are. He projects the issues he has tried to escape onto the inhabitants of the Island and finds in the new world exactly what he left behind.

Macbeth is similarly unable to escape his Shakespearean/old world fate. He begins the play shouting “¡fidelidad al rey!” (23) [fidelity to the King], but once he is in the new world his ambition overtakes him and in an ironic appropriation of the idealistic Gonzalo’s lines in The Tempest he starts to imagine himself as king of the Island: “¡Si yo fuera rey de esta plantación!” (29) [If I were king of this plantation]. But unlike Gonzolo he is not imagining a utopia (that role will be performed by Prospero). He is imagining a kingdom in which he has glory and power. He conjures the spirits of the Island and they begin to chant his name in answer to his questions about who will conquer more lands for the kingdom and gain more slaves for the King. Later in the play two of the orishas, Echu Eleggúá, who is the messenger of the orishas and a guarider of pathways, and Oyá, who is the goddess of graveyards, appear to Macbeth. Echu Eleggúá wears the mask of death and recites many of the lines of the weird sisters in Macbeth, and Oyá transforms into Lady Macbeth. Together Echu and Oyá/Lady Macbeth spur Macbeth on to
acts of murder and treason. Sometimes Oyá recites Lady Macbeth’s lines from *Macbeth*, and sometimes Macbeth himself recites these lines, illustrating that the desire for blood and power really comes from within him. Oyá is a convenient hook for his projection of Lady Macbeth, and Lady Macbeth was a convenient excuse for his ambition and bloody acts in the old world of his own play. But even voyaging to the new world without Lady Macbeth or the weird sisters does not free him from his destiny, since he brings them with him and projects them onto the new world orishas. Though he thinks he can cannibalize the island, using it to create a kingdom he can rule, he is consumed by the orishas. In both plays Macbeth’s death is inevitable.

Unlike Hamlet and Macbeth, Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban do not end up experiencing the same destiny they encountered in their Shakespearean text. Their endings in *Otra Tempestad* are quite different from those in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. While Prospero ends Shakespeare’s play by abjuring his magic only after having recovered his kingdom, inflicted vengeance on his brother, and ensured that his daughter will marry Ferdinand and be the next Queen of Milan, the Prospero in *Otra Tempestad* abjures his magic as he dies, having just seen that his single-minded focus on establishing a utopia in this new world paradise has led to the death of his daughter and of his ideals. He dies vowing that he will not see the island soaked in blood. Whereas Shakespeare’s Miranda is, at the end of *The Tempest*, married to Ferdinand and prepared to set sail for the old world where she will be queen, the Miranda in *Otra Tempestad* dies in the forest after fleeing from the marriage her father had arranged for her and Othello, preferring to “people the island with Calibans” (41). And Caliban, who at the end of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* is acknowledged as Prospero’s “thing of darkness” (5.1.275) and whose ultimate fate is uncertain, is, at the end if *Otra Tempestad*, crowned king of the island. But while these characters do not seem stuck in their Shakespearean destinies like Hamlet and Macbeth, they still engage in a sort of cannibalism. Carrió and Lauten’s Prospero, for instance, leaves the old world where “nuestras ciudades son estrechas, pero también son las mentes de su gente” (22) [“our cities are straight and narrow, but so are the minds of their people”] to a land that he hopes will be a “paraíso” or paradise (23). He confesses to Ariel/Elleguá that he came to the new world with the idealistic goal of creating a Utopia: “Te confesaré un secreto, amigo mío: ¡no he venido a conquistar, sino a fundar un Mundo Nuevo de donde nazcan hombres libres capaces de realizar mi Utopia!” (37) [“I’ll confess a secret to you, my friend. I didn’t come here to conquer, but to found a New World where men are born free, capable of realizing my Utopia!”]. But even seemingly benevolent cannibals can be dangerous, particularly if they are unaware of the reflexive nature of cannibalism. The ‘friend’ Prospero is speaking to refers to him as ‘master’ and does Prospero’s bidding as though he is a slave. And
though Ariel/Ellegguá tells Prospero early on that Caliban will be king after Sycorax’s death, Prospero seems incapable of absorbing this piece of information that is contrary to his vision of the new world. He is determined that Miranda will be queen, but that she will not marry Caliban. And while he is happy to teach Caliban his language before he has seen him with Miranda, after seeing the couple together he calls Caliban a Cannibal and threatens to destroy the island and curse his daughter if she marries him.

Miranda first comes to the island willing to obey her father and marry Othello, but once on the island she falls in love with Caliban and believes the promises of the orisha, Oshún: “Paracerá que has muerto. Te dormirás en dulces suenos […] Tu cuerpo sera nave, océano, viento, pero cuando despiertes, el alma del amor estará en ti” (41). [It will appear that you have died. You will sleep in sweet dreams […] your body will be, ship, ocean, wind, but when you awake, the soul of love will be in you]. She does not fully understand the ambiguous prophecies of the orisha and it is this naïve acceptance of a new world she doesn’t understand that leads to her death. These characters show how cannibalism can be dangerous when the cannibal doesn’t understand that it will involve a dialogue, both consuming and being consumed. It is dangerous for Prospero and Miranda since they die in the new world, and it is dangerous for the new world since even the love of Miranda and the desire of Prospero to establish a utopia can lead to the land being soaked in blood. Caliban’s story, however, reveals something different.

Dessert: the transformation of Caliban

At the end of the published text of Otra Tempestad, Carrió and Lauten list the texts consulted in creating this adaptation. They list, of course, Shakespeare’s Complete Works, but they also list several Cuban texts, including Retamar’s “Calibán.” By incorporating both Shakespeare and Retamar into Otra Tempestad Carrió and Lauten complicate the portrayal of cannibalism and of Caliban. Is their Caliban the monster so often mentioned in The Tempest? Is he the child-like Caliban who Prospero and Miranda teach to read? Is he Retamar’s triumphant, powerful Caliban? Teatro Buendía’s Caliban is all of these. He is first introduced as the son that Sycorax gave birth to because she violated a commandment and conceived a child with the god of fire, Changó. Ariel/Ellegguá tells Prospero that when Sycorax dies, Caliban will be king, but Prospero, already fantasizing about his Utopia and about making Miranda queen, seems incapable of understanding this. We later see Prospero in a paternal role, teaching a child-like Caliban to speak and write the words “Agua” [water] and “Isla” [Island] (38). In spite of what Ariel/Ellegguá has told him, he sees Caliban as an innocent and powerless native or as a noble savage. Miranda in Otra Tempestad finds Caliban beauti-
ful and wants to “people the island with Calibans” (41) and once Prospero discovers them together, he suddenly sees Caliban as a monster and a “Canibal” [Cannibal].

Like his sisters, the orishas, Caliban provides a hook for the projections of the old world inhabitants. They see in him what they want to see. The projections, however, are of a different nature. While the old world immigrants see in the orishas aspects of the old world they tried to leave behind, Caliban, whether he is seen as a god, a monster, or a child, is always seen as a native of the new world. In the world of *Otra Tempestad*, Caliban is unique. He is the only Shakespearean character who is neither an immigrant from the old world nor a new world orisha with a Shakespearean character projected onto him. He comes from Shakespeare’s play, but not from Shakespeare’s world. Unlike Prospero, Miranda, Hamlet, Shylock, Macbeth, and Othello, Caliban does not sail from the Old World to Cuba. And unlike Ellegguá, Oshún, and Oyá, he is not an Afro-Cuban orisha. There is no Caliban in the pantheon of Santería. He is a polyvalent sign, being both a native of Shakespeare’s text and a native of Cuba. Retamar has previously claimed Caliban as a symbol of the new world and of Latin America in particular, but in *Otra Tempestad* he becomes something more. He becomes a symbol of the third language that Carrió referred to in her program notes on the play, “a third language that is neither that of the conqueror nor that of the conquered but a product whose nature has a syncretic character” (59). This is clear in the final scenes of *Otra Tempestad*. In the penultimate scene the coronation and death of Macbeth are merged with Yoruban ritual dances. Masked figures, including the orishas, crown Macbeth with a mask and then actors wearing branches advance and kill him. In the final scene, “Caliban Rex,” all of the masked figures remove their masks and Caliban appears crowned with an intricate headdress that includes all of the masks. These masks are linked to the Afro-Cuban ritual that has just occurred, but some of them have also been worn by Shakespearean characters and by the orishas when they were embodying Shakespearean projections. Ophelia/Oshún has worn the flower mask. Oya/Lady Macbeth has worn the mask of death. Prospero wore a mask when he told Ariel “todos esconden bajo el disfraz alguna passion o algún crimen” (28) [Everyone hides some passion or crime behind a disguise]. In this final scene, Caliban, the king, takes on the masks of the old world and the new and becomes the embodiment of this multi-layered, syncretistic culture that is neither the conquered nor the conqueror, but a compilation of the two. Caliban is not the only cannibal in *Otra Tempestad*, but he is the most successful one since he is the one who is willing to be changed by the process, to both consume and be consumed.

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7 Sycorax could perhaps be placed in this category as well, but in Shakespeare’s play she is a mere reference, not a fully realized character like Caliban.
But of course, Caliban can only be this sort of cannibal because Carrió and Lauten have created him by cannibalizing both Retamar and Shakespeare, and in doing so they may have created a solution to the apparent contradiction of Retamar rejecting foreign influence while embracing Shakespeare. Through this cannibalization, Shakespeare’s works have travelled to a country that Shakespeare never set foot in, and Shakespeare has been welcomed and embraced there. Retamar may have been correct when he saw in Shakespeare a sympathy for the revolution or for the mestizo culture of Cuba. While Shakespeare might not have spoken or written in Spanish, there is something in his characters that does speak to Cubans today. These characters do not, however, speak in contemporary Cuba exactly as they would have in early modern England, which may account for the critical resistance to Otra Tempestad in London. They have been cannibalized, and they have been changed in the process. When Shakespeare’s works and characters are cannibalized in this way, they bring much that is valued and embraced by the Cubans, but one should not expect them to be treated with “ossifying reverence” (Shuttleworth, s.a.) or to remain unchanged. As the works are reinterpreted by Cuban artists, and as the actors, working in the tradition of ritual, become possessed by these characters and enter into a sort of dialogue with Shakespeare, transformation will occur. Some things cannot be left behind. Hamlet will remain a tragic figure, agonizing over his relationship with his mother and Ophelia. Macbeth will continue to embody the archetype of ruthless ambition. But some transformations will occur. On this side of the world, Caliban is not seen as a monster. In Cuba, even a benevolent Prospero with Utopian ideals may be seen as dangerous if he refuses to understand and enter into a dialogue with the culture he is consuming and being consumed by. Shakespeare’s text, adapted, appropriated, or ‘hijacked’ will not remain the same, but if the dialogue is allowed to proceed, this communication might not be lost. It might result in a “sea-change / Into something rich and strange” (1.2.401-02).
Works Cited
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