Landscape and Hybridity in *Prospero’s Daughter*

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Elizabeth Nunez’s *Prospero’s Daughter* is set in Chacachacare, a small island off the coast of Trinidad, in the early 1960s. This geographical location is significant as Nunez exploits the physical landscape of the island to thematic effect specifically in relation to hybridity. The setting informs a structural reading of the novel as counter-discursive to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, as it transposes the colonial conflict inherent in the play to the tropics in an attempt to address issues of language, culture, proprietorship, resistance and domination. By situating the Prospero-Caliban conflict on Chacachacare, Nunez’s novel highlights the applicability and relevance of recent postcolonial criticism of the Shakespearean play to the postcolonial Caribbean. The text itself, as a revisioning of *The Tempest*, therefore becomes a hybridized discourse.

The novel also specifically uses the landscape of Chacachacare to address the issue of biological hybridity. The Englishman, Dr Gardner, who escapes incarceration to the island, experiments with the local flora, cross-breeding plants on the islands to create a landscape that is fascinating but also frighteningly uncanny. The irony of the situation lies, however, in his abhorrence of the idea of miscegenation between the local boy of mixed race and his daughter whom he views as an innocent English rose, even as he continuously sexually violates the young ‘douglia’ servant girl.

The dangerous and convoluted physical terrain of Chacachacare, also a leper colony, not only provides the backdrop for but also contributes to the unveiling of the tempestuous—and often unhealthy—relationships impelled by the colonial situation that Dr Gardner tries to replicate on the island.

**BIO**

Giselle Rampaul is a Lecturer in Literatures in English at the St Augustine campus of The University of the West Indies. She is interested in the intersections between British and Caribbean Literatures, and representations of the child in Caribbean Literature.