CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

The crux of this dissertation is to observe the different varieties of wisdom discovered in *The Tempest*. It also examines the different forms of wisdom through the voices of three characters in the play, which are Prospero, Gonzalo and Caliban. Each of these voices carries forth its conviction, predisposition and integrity. Prospero is a firm believer in the Ancient Western Wisdom, Caliban the proponent of the New World Wisdom, and Gonzalo who follows the Renaissance Wisdom adamantly; which is the intermediary of both worlds as his Renaissance world is a merge of both ancient and new.

The concern of such study is to procure critical analysis on the derivation of wisdom, its aspect as well as how it is assessed; and the conflict that exists in the three voices due to the distinctions found in wisdom. The result of such analysis
would then be applied to determine if Shakespeare had intended such discord to transpire due to his own discrepancy.

1.1 Objective of the study

This study will take up only one primary text, which is a play by Shakespeare, entitled *The Tempest*. The purpose of this dissertation is to make out the abstraction of wisdom, identify the conflict of wisdom through the three selected voices in the play: Prospero, Gonzalo and Caliban; in addition to determining Shakespeare’s purpose in producing such consequence.

This study raises a vital point – the need to recognise our own ability as at par with our mental colonisers. We should gauge our world by our own standards and not be bound by the standards of the ancient western world.

This research also proposes; to identify why our contemporaries have a fixation on the concept of wisdom as that which has been defined by the philosophers of the Classics or the Ancients. Specifically in the new post-colonial era where there still exist Calibans who decipher wisdom rigidly according to the interpretation specified by Prosperoes of the Western world. Ultimately, it is hoped that this dissertation will also be able to shed a light on how the Calibans need not be constrained to the definitions ordained by the Prosperoes, and more importantly,
the Calibans' New World Wisdom is as acknowledged and ratified as the Ancient
world's.

1.1.1 The Tempest in received wisdom

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is a play of wonder and magic. The whole play is
located on an island inhabited by elemental spirits and the people found here are
merely visitors on transit. The play opens fittingly enough with a tempest
constructed by Ariel, an airy spirit, and orchestrated by Prospero, a powerful
magician who was marooned on the enchanted island with his daughter, Miranda.
The tempest struck a ship, which was part of a fleet that was en route to Italy from
a royal wedding ceremony in Tunis. The ship sank, though not before discharging
its mates and precious cargo which comprises of Alonso, King of Naples;
Ferdinand, his prince; Sebastian, his brother, Gonzalo, his courtier; and Antonio,
Duke of Milan. Since this play is a comedy, those who are shipwrecked succeeded
in reaching the magical island unscathed though not quite simultaneously.
Meanwhile on the island, Miranda observed the shipwreck with horror and was
deply distressed on account of contemplating the fate of those men.

In the immediate scene, Prospero explains to his daughter how twelve years ago he
had been the rightful Duke of Milan and was usurped by his own brother, Antonio
who had some assistance from Alonso, The King of Naples. The expulsion was
due to Prospero's deep preoccupation in his art and lack of involvement in his
government. Both of them condemned Prospero and his then infant Miranda, aged
three, to drown at sea in a leaky boat. Gonzalo, however, had pitied them and
stocked meagre provisions along with his precious books. They disembarked on
the island and discovered its sole heir, Caliban whose mother, Sycorax, was a
banished witch from Algiers. Prospero, in the beginning, had tried to educate
Caliban but the effort halted when Caliban attempted to defile Miranda. Enraged
by such conduct, Prospero condemned Caliban as his domestic slave.

During this period Prospero befriended another islander, a spirit named Ariel who
was imprisoned in a pine tree by Sycorax. Prospero’s magic was able to liberate
Ariel, however not without a pact. Ariel is to render her services to Prospero.

Now that he has his entire adversary on the enchanted island, Prospero wasted no
time in executing his revenge; of course with the assistance of Ariel. Elsewhere on
the same island Caliban encountered Trinculo, the court jester, and Stephano, the
drunk butler; both whom have swum safely ashore from the shipwreck. Stephano
shares his alcohol with Caliban and is immediately worshipped as a god, as he
possesses such divine elixir. Caliban volunteers to make Stephano his lord of the
island if both of them assist him in assassinating his archenemy Prospero. All the
while Ariel is listening to the three conspirators and hastens to alert her master.

The play concludes with Prospero triumphant in accomplishing his design. His
rightful title is restored. The King and his devious courtiers have repented.
Reconciliation is established with the marriage of the children, Ferdinand and
Miranda. In the poignant Epilogue, the grand theurgist renounces all his powers
and magical spells to return to his natural world. Ariel and the rest of the elemental spirits of the isle are liberated except for the recalcitrant Caliban.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Conquests of the New World by the Old affected more than just the physical and political domination. In conquering a nation, the conqueror is also able to depart its version of the history, culture, religion, language and manner of thought to be deemed as more prominent, substantial and authentic than what the native land could offer.

The conqueror of the New World, especially those in the first decades after Columbus’s major discovery, had profound advantages over the natives – efficient navigational device, vicious dogs, horses for attacks, effective body armour, extremely lethal artillery including powerful explosives and gunpowder. However, none of these could compare to their *literall advantage*, which is the advantage of writing – a technology of preservation and reproduction. As Samuel Purchas in the early 17th century forthrightly rationalises, other than the two sacrosanct gifts ascertained to distinguish man from animals – speech and reason – there is another divine endowment with another distinction:

> God hath added herein a further grace, that as Men by the former exceed Beasts, so hereby one man may excel another; and amongst Men, some are accounted Civill, and more both Sociable and Religious, by the Use of letters and Writing, which others wanting are esteemed Brutish, Savage, Barbarous.
Tzvetan Todorov does not share Purchas’s enthusiasm that the power of writing is a moral advantage; nonetheless, he also maintained that the existence and non-existence of writing was the critical cultural distinction particularly between the European conquerors and American natives. He asserts that the illiterate New World natives suffer from conceptual incompetence that severely inhibited and consequently precluded a focussed perception of their conniving intruders. On the other hand, a culture that retained the proficiency of writing could not only precisely represent, to itself, the whole culture that is without writing but could explicitly and strategically manipulate it too.

The British Empire is a very real exemplar of such condition. The British conquered nearly three-quarter of the world, from the west to the east and from the Northern right down to Southern Hemisphere. Though they started quite late, as compared to the rest of their European counterparts, they employed an impeccable strategy. The British took to educating the defeated nation in their system just enough so the locals are able to function in the civil service satisfactorily with a minimal salary but would still be better off than their uneducated counterparts. Many educated locals adopt and adapt the British prefabricated arrangement including its beliefs, values and philosophy. Such predicament is heightened if the conquered nation does not have its own firmly established history, culture, philosophy, religion and manner of thoughts. A nation, whose existence of cultural, social, political and historical accounts are observed through oral tradition will suffer from insignificance because speech is unsubstantial and defective.
Whereas a nation that exercises written tradition will have records that can be cited systematically if any form of certification or confirmation is required. New discoveries can be transcribed for posterity, immaterial of truth, for the power of the written form is that in time even the fancy can be revered and held as fact until proven otherwise. Hence, even when the colonised countries have arrived at their physical independence, many of these post-colonial nations are still subdued mentally.

Through education, the intellectuals of these post-colonial nations suffer from a form of cultural cringe effect. Their interpretations of their humanity and their new writings of their past are bound and stemmed by the cultivated disciplines, conceptions and theories of their past coloniser cum educator. As T.S. Eliot aptly wrote in his *Four Quartets*: *Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future, / And time future contained in time past.* In the sphere of terminology, the ancient western world still holds precedence. Any form of intellectual abstractions or philosophy will need to cite the ancient Greeks or Romans, if endorsement is desired. There are, however, some major developments especially in the realm of practical sciences, but in the domain of humanities the transformation is tardy and the classics or the ancients are still venerated.

Shakespeare’s world was a realm of intense discord. English Renaissance was at a crossroad between the ancient approaches and modern discoveries, between philosophical truth and reality of experience. His world observed the
understanding of the medievalist’s Ancient Wisdom (as derived from the Classic Western Philosophy) and Christianity though there was a gradual formulation of scientific data on explorations of the New World and other worlds. Shakespeare’s era was not quite sure what ‘Indians of the New World’ were. The Europeans then practiced a culture that embodied immeasurable confidence in its own centrality and was furthermore endorsed by a political organisation that practised domination and submission. It was standard practice to perceive themselves as more tremendously exceptional than the New World natives they encountered. Such practice led to various biased and fallacious reports of the new worlds.

Nevertheless Shakespeare was not of his own era. He was a genius in being able to recognise the oppressed voice of the new worlds. His play *The Tempest* attempts to confront issues such as authority, power, miscegenation, usurpation, colonisation, and oppression. He devised consequential conflicts within and amidst his characters so as to exhibit an equitable representation – a princely monster slave that speaks in verse, an omnipotent usurped usurper, and an assemblage of civilised yet immoral and unethical courtiers. Each character retains flaws and merits – elements of iniquity contained in a wise figure and elements of wisdom in a barbaric other.

For centuries, Caliban had to endure misrepresentation, misconception consequently oppression merely because his nation did not have the benefit of *literall advantage*. Alas, when his nation finally possesses such advantage, many
of his early intellectuals assumed the same stance as the colonisers thus generating a nation that is inferior. This study will demonstrate that *The Tempest*, through the three conflicting voices, holds elements that escape the coloniser’s prefabricated values. It will illustrate that the savage Caliban possesses wisdom and his version of wisdom is as valid as Prospero’s or Gonzalo’s.

**1.3 Theoretical Framework**

...discourse is not simply that which manifest (or hides) desire – it is also the object of desire; and since, as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of dominations, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized.

Approximately a couple of decades ago, the realm of literary criticism experienced a new critical force that enthused attitudes of resistance or contestation. The drastically altered socio-political conditions in the late 1970s through 1990s provoked *balanced* dominant culture hence pressing the critics to act in response to these radical changes. Other than the escalating feminist’s movement seeking to establish acceptance, the fresh resurgence of concern towards the historical, social and political questions in literary and cultural studies launches the advent of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism.

By the late eighties and nineties, most practitioners of cultural studies have agreed to the post-Structuralist rejection of origin, presence and coherence and have broken away from approaches that consider a culture in authentic and organic
terms. They have now taken on views that are formidable influenced by Derrida and predominantly Foucault. Presently, Culture is extensively perceived as artificial for it is always contrived, somewhat subjective and the transient end product of a never-ending chains of interactions and communications. Culture can neither preserve authenticity nor provide access to truths that exist out of itself or beyond its own discourse.

One of the fundamental interests of New Historicists and Cultural Materialists is to emphasise that history is always fore grounded. History is more than what is in the past, we reside in history and the shape and force of history are made evident in our culturally bound subjective thoughts and actions, as well as in our beliefs and desires.

> Literature is not simply a product of history, it also actively makes history.⁴

### 1.3.1 New Historicism and Cultural Materialism

New Historicism originates from America and Cultural Materialism from Britain and mutually owe their essence to a hybrid of theories by diverse figures such as Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Mikhail Bakhtin, Terry Eagleton, Hayden White, Clifford Geertz, Frederic Jameson and Gadamer. Both theories sustain the post-Structuralist ideas of the self, of discourse and especially of power.
New Historicism’s inclination is more towards post-Structuralism as its application is on power, on the discourse that operate as vehicles for power and on the development of identity. Whilst Cultural Materialism’s preference is more towards the Marxism of Raymond Williams and primarily concentrates on the philosophy, on the responsibility of institutions and on the potential for subversion – also labelled *dissidence* by the cultural materialists.

Both regard literary text as completely inseparable from their historical context. The author’s task is fundamentally established by historical conditions. By also accepting that there is neither stable nor fixed meaning in a discourse, they determine that there can never be one singular, absolute or true interpretation. Greenblatt states:

...the work of art is the product of a negotiation between a creator or class or creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society...

Literature is simultaneously socially produced and socially productive. Studied texts are constantly made up and redrawn by artists, audiences and readers. Yet, these artists, audiences and readers are themselves constantly made up and redrawn. The self is always a construction; the result of an interaction between the ways we want to signify our real presentations and ourselves – between the power relations we are part of and the stories that we tell.

New Historicists and Cultural Materialists also aspire to efface the borders between separate disciplines especially in history, culture, politics and literature. Hence
literary and non-literary texts are given similar treatment for their specific objectives are to trace and disclose relations of power and processes of ideological and cultural formation.

The literary text is continuously an essential part of a much extensive cultural, political, social and economic dispensation. It is absolutely contained in history. New Historicism and Cultural Materialism view history as accessible only in the construct of narratives, never in pure form. Hence, if history is never objective for it is prejudiced by the chronicler’s culture, inspirations and discourse limitations then neither is each text – providing opportunity for political distortion and manipulation. Greenblatt asserts that every from of writing is loaded with invisible bullets – it is time and place-bound verbal construction that is always politically inclined – thus having the ability of the dominant order to generate subversion so as to be able to influence and dominate. Similarly, Louise Montrose declares that every single text is ideologically patented, however inconsistent that writing may be. As a consequence, due to its alliance with a discourse or an ideology, literary text exists predominantly as a vehicle of power. Just as any other non-literature text, it dynamically participates in the synthesis of discourses, ideologies and identities; not only at the individual level but also at the level of the nation.

Greenblatt, in his 1991 *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, deals with the functions that wonder contributes in the responses of European explorers and travellers to the New World. He observes that the representations of
wonder found particularly in the written responses serve as an instrument of power
– a record of the colonisation of the marvellous or as he calls it: an agent of
appropriation.

Hence, via New Historicism Greenblatt is able to rehistoricise Shakespeare’s plays.
The shift from History to histories, as prudently formulated by Montrose, enables
*The Tempest* to be juxtaposed with other forms of writings found in various other
fields – political, historical, sociological and cultural. Such mode of criticism
allows the exploration and determination of Caliban’s marginalized, suppressed
and ventriloquised voice, Prospero’s origin of superiority complex and Gonzalo’s
resolute quest for utopia.

Where New Historicism exposes covert power relations in *The Tempest* and other
Renaissance texts, Cultural Materialism will reveal examples of dissidence,
subversion and transgression that are pertinent in our present-day culture. Through
Cultural Materialism this study will analyse the foundation of wisdom that Caliban
is constrained to harmonise with. It will also support the conflicts established in
the three voices in *The Tempest* as identical discords experienced by those of the
Renaissance era and the effect it has in our contemporary struggles.
1.4 Background of the Study

1.4.1 History of The Tempest

Love Labour's Lost and The Tempest are probably the only two of Shakespeare’s plays that have original plots. Though there are no known sources for the plot of The Tempest, there are however, documents pertinent to it. Shakespeare used such documents to refer specifically for speeches, names, plots and themes in his play. The similarities found between the plot and theme of The Tempest and to some of the documents are so faithful so as to suggest a direct influence.

Shakespeare generated the names of his characters in The Tempest from Thomas’ History of Italy (1549). He acquired the name Setebos from History of Travaile (1577) by Robert Eden, which includes an account of a Patagonian tribe, which worshiped the ‘great devill Setebos’111. The Tempest’s plot and theme owe their distinction and excellence to three other main source-materials.

The first of such works is from John Florio’s translation of Michel de Montaigne’s ‘Of the Caniballes’, Book 1 Chapter XXXI, part of a greater work called Essais (1595). The translation was accessible in 1603, six years before the Virginia expedition. Montaigne had procured information on America through one of his servants who had spent a few years there. Moreover, literatures on the New World were comfortablly purchasable such as that by Sebastian Münster’s Cosmographia Universalis12, describing Amerigo Vespucci’s encounters with the natives of the
Virgin land. Hence, Montaigne's essay indicated his remarkable interest in the notion of founding a new colony in *wild* America. His essay, *Of the Caniballes*, contrasts the New World's natural, free, 'wild' and innocent society with the artificial, plagued, controlled and corrupt civilisation of the Old.

These people are wild in the same way as we say that fruits are wild, when nature has produced them by herself and in her ordinary way, whereas in fact, it is those that we have artificially modified, and removed from the common order, that we ought to call wild. In the former, the true, most useful, and natural virtues and properties are alive and vigorous; in the latter we have bastardised them, and adapted them only to the gratification of our corrupt taste.¹³

He revealed that the habits and customs of the cannibals are deemed barbaric only by the European's own over-sophisticated and coloured standards, but to an equitable and objective observer, they represent an ideal of pure simplicity even finer than that of the legendary Golden Age.

They [cannibals] are in such a state of purity that is sometimes saddens me to think we did not learn of them earlier. At a time when there were men who were better able to appreciate them than we. I am sorry that Lycurgus and Plato did not know them, for I think that what we have seen of these people with our own eyes surpasses not only the pictures with which poets have illustrated the golden age, and all their attempts to draw mankind in the state of happiness, but the ideas and the very aspirations of philosophers as well. They could not imagine an innocence as pure and simple as we have actually seen; nor could they believe that our society might be maintained with so little artificiality and human organisation.¹⁴

Indirectly, Shakespeare paraphrased his view through Gonzalo's celebrated 'commonwealth' speech in *The Tempest*, Act II scene i.
I’ th’ commonwealth I would contraries
Execute all things, for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tithe, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation, all men idle, all,
And women too, but innocence and pure;
No sovereignty -

Shakespeare, through the second part of Gonzalo’s speech, subsequently stretches the notion of commonwealth, producing a noticeably idealised vision than Montaigne’s original perception.

All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour. Treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
Would I not have, but nature should bring forth
Of it own kind all poison, all abundance
To feed my innocent people.

The inhabitants of Gonzalo’s utopia are barely similar to Montaigne’s Indian cannibals. The Indians, though portrayed as living their life dancing and drinking, did not lead such an effortless or leisurely existence. They were often at war with their neighbouring tribes. Though they did not have the assistance of sword, pike, knife, gun or engine; wooden sword, bows and arrows were extensively used.

They have their wars against the people who live further inland, on the other side of the mountains; and they go to them quite naked, with no other arms but their bows or their wooden swords, pointed at one end like the heads of our boar-spears. It is remarkable with what obstinacy they fight their battles, which never end without great slaughter and bloodshed. As for flight and terror, they do not know what they are.15
Hence, the virtuous Gonzalo's speech produces a significant perspective in the play. The speech is meant to cheer King Alonso who fears the loss of his only prince. Nevertheless it was Sebastian and Antonio; the villainous courtiers in the play, with their cynical witticism and corrupt demeanour, who point out the absurdity of his Utopian imagining. Though they are devious and deceitful, they are surely not daft. All of these including Caliban, the local savage whose name is an anagram of Cannibal – often spelt Canibal by Elizethans, substantiate that Shakespeare adopted Montaigne's beliefs especially in the relationship of civilisation versus nature. However, Shakespeare unlike Montaigne does not judge. The arrangement of the play is neither an endorsement of Montaigne's conviction nor a rejection of it. *The Tempest* presents to us, equally, the bestial and mulish native Caliban, who stubbornly rejects Prospero attempts of civilising him, along with the degradation and immorality of the Neapolitan courtiers and their servants who supposedly have benefited from the advantages of civilised nation. Such ability of exposing a complex dilemma in so complete and open style seems to be Shakespeare's speciality.

Shakespeare was also inspired by the reports of a tempest and a shipwreck that took place in the Bermudas in 1609. The collection of these reports is also known as the Bermuda pamphlets.

These pamphlets as a group are such a significant source for *The Tempest* that it is hard to deal with them separately; verbal links are evident only with Strachey's pamphlet, but it is clearly the subject matter and moral ideas behind the pamphlets which influence *The*
On June 2, 1609 The Virginia Company, led by Shakespeare’s associates Earl of Southampton and Pembroke, sponsored an expedition to the New World. The fleet consisted of nine ships embarking from Plymouth to Virginia transporting 500 colonists. Unfortunately on 24th July the fleet met with an unmerciful tempest at the Bermudas, commonly known among the seafarers as the Ile of Divels. The flagship, Sea Venture, was driven off course from the rest. Among its distinguished cargo was none other than the Admiral Sir George Somers, Sylvester Jourdain who was with the Admiral, the governor of the new colony Sir Thomas Gates and William Strachey whom Shakespeare may have known personally. Gradually within the next few weeks the rest of the vessels managed to dock at Jamestown but the castaways in the flagship did not arrive until nearly a year later in two small boats. Such miraculous news reached London by September.

The initial report to appear was by Sylvester Jourdain, A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels. Around a month later the report from the Virginia Company, The True Declaration of the estate of the Colonie in Virginia, became available. However, the most important of the Bermudas pamphlets is a long letter by William Strachey, A true repertory of the wracke, and redemption of Sir Thomas Gates Knight; upon and from the Ilands of the Bermudas: his comming to Virginia, and the estate of that Colonie then, and after, which is dated 15th July 1610. Though the letter was not published until
fifteen years later in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, its manuscript seems to have been circulating among the leaders of the Virginia Company. There is a great chance that Shakespeare had read the manuscript before writing *The Tempest* because of his acquaintance with Strachey as well as the leaders of the Virginia Company. Moreover, compared to the other reports in the collection, Strachey’s bears most faithful.

The description of the tempest in the play owes its origin to Strachey who wrote in his report:

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\text{A dreadful storm and hideous began to blow from out the northeast, which swelling and roaring as it were by fits, some hours with more violence than others, at length did beat all light from heaven... Prayers might well be in the heart and lips, but drowned in the outcries of the officers. Nothing heard that could give comfort, nothing seen that might encourage hope... This, imparting no less terror than danger, ran through the whole ship with much fright and amazement, startled and turned the blood, and took down the braves of the most hardy mariner of them all, insomuch as he that before happily felt not the sorrow of others, now began to sorrow for himself...}^{18}
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In the Act I scene i of the play, the mariners were busy trying to rescue the vessel and the courtiers were not much of assistance when they keep interfering with the mariners duty.

\[
\text{Boatswain. None that I love more than myself. You are a councillor; if you can command these elements to silence, and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a rope more – use your authority. If you cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of}
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hour, if it so hap.... A plague upon this howling! They are louder than the weather or our office.

Further evidence that Shakespeare uses Strachey's letter is in the scene when the ship in the play was hit by a large wave and rapidly sinking.

Mariners. All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost!

... A confused noise within: 'Mercy on us!' – 'We split, we split!' – 'Farewell, my wife and children!' – 'Farewell, brother!' – 'We split! We split! We split!' Once, so huge a sea brake upon the poop and quarter upon us, as it covered our ship from stem to stern, like a garment or a vast cloud, it filled her brim full for a while within, for the hatches up to the spar deck... with much clamour encourage and called upon others; who gave her now up, ran in pieces and absolutely lost. 19

Shakespeare also used the letter to conceive Ariel's flamed amazement (I.i.196-200), description of the edenic island and Caliban, on whose nature/ Nurture can never stick (IV.i.188-9).

1.4.2 The Critical Reception of The Tempest

Whole books have been written to prove that The Tempest is really an account of the purification and redemption of the souls as conceived of by Christian mystics, or in the mystery cults of the pagan world. It has been proclaimed as an allegory of Shakespeare's own development as an artist, or of the political situation in Europe at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Explanations of its peculiarities have been sought in a supposed dependence upon Neo-platonism, gnostic thought, the lore of the cabbala, the Old Testament, or the dramatist's private religious theories... At various times the play has been said to be about almost everything... 20
I have always felt that Shakespeare’s last complete play has always been his most enigmatic composition. *The Tempest* has always been appealing to a variety of different people as well as offering different interpretations to the same individual at different periods of his life. Some, like Samuel Pepys, state that it was the most innocent play they ever saw. Well, on the surface *The Tempest* does contain fairy-tale like elements. Miranda is the enchanted and enchanting princess, Prospero the somewhat wise magician, Ariel the obedient fairy; Ferdinand is only a white steed away from completing his romantic image and Caliban the mischief. All the crimes committed earlier or in the play seemed to be rectified in the end.

Yet there are others like Victor Hugo who senses that there is a more trenchant perspective in the play. Shakespeare used dramatic time and language to create a strange, dreamlike ambience that suggests a greater meaning, a deeper significance than that accomplished in a fairy-tale.

...the play intrigues, puzzles, enchants and infuriates. Its ‘magic’ is more pervading, less ‘tricksy’ than that of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the intellectual thought and argument it can incite is apt to start from even less common ground than is true of *Hamlet*, its moral and ‘spiritual’ preoccupations are less amenable to analysis than those of *Measure for Measure*.21

Moreover the play’s stage history is so diverse that it is difficult to achieve a concordance about the play. Prospero has produced different kinds of reactions as middle-aged, very old, mild, irascible, snoopy, overbearing bully, magician, and guardian angel. Caliban has been depicted in ways ranging from a dehumanised brute to pathetically deformed beast22. A recent production by the Royal
Shakespeare company had Caliban crawled out of a large seashell, depicting a contemptible creature who was incarcerated to the bottom of the sea or whose wretched origin is aptly from the deep mysterious sea bed. As for the other native on the isle, Ariel has been practically unclothed, almost all clothed; with wings, flying on wires and, appearing from holes in the ground.

Though it is one of the shortest plays in the Shakespearean canon, I consider *The Tempest* as very loaded. Each reading offers various themes. Issues of religion, magic and art; theurgy and necromancy, the old and the new world, marriages, encounters, colonisation - the usurped usurper - have been deliberated and debated incessantly in the academic world. It was probably Ben Jonson, through his mouthpiece Scrivener, who did the initial piece of criticism on *The Tempest*. He condemns Shakespeare’s late plays for their deep emphasis on fantasy and romance; and their lack of realistic and satiric elements - which he views as fundamental elements to comedy – implying Shakespeare’s gross attraction to crude popular taste. Jonson’s criticism forecasted disinclination to the romances from neo-classical critics of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, *The Tempest* was found consistently to be more preferred than Shakespeare’s other late plays. Dryden, advocate of The Unities, declares that *Pericles* and *The Winter’s Tales* both have lame plots and incoherent narratives but he takes delight in *The Tempest*, and he awards exceptional approval for the servant monster Caliban, as a work of genius in poetic invention\textsuperscript{23}. Critics and editors of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century consistently revere the poetic
fancy of *The Tempest*. Dr. Johnson commended its *regular* plot and also complimented the unlimited ingenuity of character and action.

With the rising of the Romantic Movement, *The Tempest* began to be valued for other qualities. Joseph Watson in the *Adventurer* (1753) admired its amazing extravagance of fancy.

Of all the plays of Shakespeare, The Tempest is the most striking instance of his creative power. He has there given the reins to his boundless imagination, and has carried the romantic, the wonderful, and the wild, to the most pleasing extravagance.²⁴

The play continued to find favour through the 19th century. If Jonson was the first to criticise *The Tempest* then it was Coleridge who was one of the first to interpret the play in a manner that has significantly shaped our received wisdom or opinion of the play. He perceived it as a pursuit of ideas about man -the moral being - and the conditioning effects of civilisation. He identified Shakespeare’s approach as a ‘philosophical aristocrat’ who delights in hereditary institution and discriminations of rank as advantages to society holistically; though he would never promulgate any political viewpoint. Coleridge’s approach anticipated the 20th century preoccupations with the ideas of nature and nurture in the play and its contrast of nature and society.

### 1.4.3 The Shakespearean Milieu

The Elizabethan age has been deemed as the true English Renaissance, a time of expanding horizons, of a flowering of the imagination, of development and
achievement in various different domains. However, Shakespeare's world was a sphere of violent contrasts and seeming paradoxes and contradictions. The same men, whose elegant sensibility welcomed Shakespeare at the Globe, crowded the bear and bull-baiting next door. Ears that appreciated the refined strains in a madrigal were not jarred by the howls of publicly branded or even disembowelled convicts.

Elaborate clothes delighted the eye, but the wearers offended the nostrils; no one washed much, and the 'stinking mob' was not the plebs alone. The Queen's black teeth contrast with her pearls; dentistry and sanitation were alike non-existent, and the first water closet was invented...at the end of the century. Shakespeare's father, like every other citizen, threw the family garbage out into the street, and was only fined for it because he let the heap grow so large that it obstructed passers-by.25

No one, nobility or plebeian could escape violence. No way of life could be considered peaceful or safe; many men of letters came to brutal ends. Marlowe was stabbed in a tavern and apparently died swearing, Sidney died of war wounds, Southwell was racked and publicly disembowelled, and Raleigh was beheaded. Of course they died not from being poets, but as government spy, soldier, Catholic missionary and 'traitor'.

The ideal man was an all-rounder. To quote Spenser, Sidney was glorified not due to him being from a noble birth, courteous, musician, poet, lover, hunter, soldier but because he was *Well made to strike, to throw, to leap, to lift... / In every one he vanquished everyone*26
Perhaps the epitome of the ‘Elizabethan’ is Sir Walter Raleigh. He was a famed poet, explorer, seafarer, courtier, politician, economist, historian, scientist and an accomplished businessman. These mixed characters lived in a mixed world – a world where ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ commingled.

In the late 16th and early 17th century, there was no other more diverse place than London. Shakespeare’s London was already a magnet to people of all description. The Elizabethan age had seen its gradual growth from a leading riverside town to a metropolitan comparable to almost any capital in Europe. Its size, bustle, close-packed dwellings and its rush of traffic on roads and river alike - industriously bringing in and disseminating the wealth of the British Empire - would overwhelm first timers. Londoners had all the advantages a great capital could offer. Streets were wholly occupied by banks; inns and shops selling products that were created, from the raw materials of the Empire, by London’s own craftsmen.

Wealth and talent were concentrated there [London] – all the wit and wisdom of the Elizabethan age.27

In his London, Shakespeare could come across all that he needed in order to be the prominent playwright – insightful and enthusiastic audience, inspiring characters, brilliant talented actors, a profusion of encouragements and even fierce competition.

The Elizabethan’s faith in learning is more fervent than the so-called age of Enlightenment which came a century later. Proof of such enthusiasm exists in profusion. There were State papers, sermons, account books, letters, social and
religious criticisms, and even handbooks for self-improvements, all of which is prevalent especially in London. The eminent Tudor humanists – Colet, More, Elyot and Ascham (Queen Elizabeth’s tutor) – had excelled in furnishing their countrymen their deep devotion in the power of learning to transform men and society.

Walking through the streets of London gave an awesome experience for the senses. There were not only sights from the jewel’s glitter in the goldsmith shops, the strong smell of mixed aroma from the spice shops but one could also hear many tongues mingled. In its taverns journeymen from all over described other worlds, the alien cultures and customs, and needless to say gossip ran unrestrained. Such knowledge, then, produced an intense impact on London’s community.

In the Renaissance period, England like the rest of Europe, acquired modern-styled maps. In addition, there were business contracts made with Turkey, the Middle East, India and Russia. Moreover there were visitations of Red Indians from the plantations of the New World, Eskimos, Negroes and other refugees from Europe. All this might seem to give the average Englishman of early seventeenth century almost as much expertise in geography as his modern counterpart. Unfortunately, what was on the map was merely a physical position used by sailors. Though there was a gradual construction of scientific information on the New World and other worlds, Elizabethan perceived all of these developments through the realisation of The Medievalist Ancient Wisdom and Christianity. They upheld Ptolemaic view
of the ‘threefold world’ which saw the continents as populated by the sons of Noah: Africa by the descendants of Ham – their black skin is a mark of God’s disfavour on them, Asia by those of Shem and Europe by those of Japheth.  

The European history of the area [West Indies] consists of four often intertwined strands. There are the ‘first-hand’ reports of colonists, missionaries and travellers, from Columbus onwards, who have written accounts of the native Caribbean inevitably coloured by their own purposes and predispositions.28 The learned did not come clearly to the aid of the practical traveller, by establishing rational boundaries to assumptions about foreigners; neither did the practical man use his experience to correct his frame of reference about what might be expected.29

Many of the Renaissance’s earlier travellers and geographers were learned but they were ‘careless’ in recording their scientific information. They did not, and probably could not, acknowledge the culture and custom of the New World in its own paradigm. They judged the New World natives according to their own social criterion –firmly established by the Ancient and Christian World. Such superficial accounts were then fed into ideologies and became an established basis for social belief.

Ideally they would have realised that the Ancient World with all their wisdom never had the fortune to encounter the New World. If they did, as Montaigne had expressed in his Essays, they would have written and thought differently.

They are in such a state of purity that is sometimes saddens me to think we did not learn of them earlier. At a time when there were men who were better able to appreciate them than we. I am sorry that Lycurgus and Plato did not know them, for I think that what we have
seen of these people with our own eyes surpasses not only the pictures with which poets have illustrated the golden age, and all their attempts to draw mankind in the state of happiness, but the ideas and the very aspirations of philosophers as well. They could not imagine an innocence as pure and simple as we have actually seen; nor could they believe that our society might be maintained with so little artificiality and human organisation.\textsuperscript{30}

It is unfortunate that Aristotle, Cicero, Socrates and Plutarch also never had the opportunity of meeting the Caribs because the impact of foreigners on a community or a culture is affected, obviously enough, both by the opportunities for contact and knowledge that exists, and by the framework of assumptions within which information about foreign lands and customs is presented and received.\textsuperscript{31}

Due to the above reason their writings cannot be incorporated as the Weltanschauung of universal philosophy.

Shakespeare's concern in man, the microcosm, is paralleled by his interest in the macrocosm of which man is the model. Such concept was raised from encountering Macrobius who wrote "The physicists said that the world is a great man, and man a little world".\textsuperscript{32} According to every creditable theorist of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, the ideal man is he who has a certain function in the universe, nature, the state and a fated relation to God, the rest of creation and the society but all of these are not without inconsistencies. A man living in Shakespeare's era was living in almost the last generation that could unquestioningly accept the Ancient Western Wisdom – the old, over-orderly scheme - even with all the flourishing contrary scientific evidences that lay before him. He could embrace the combination of
Galileo and Newton in one way, and Bacon and Locke in another, equally. If our present age is endeavouring to translate chaos into order, Shakespeare’s era was crumbling towards chaos. As Donne has fittingly phrased:

And new philosophy calls all indoubt,
The elements of fire is quite put out;
The sun is lost, and th'earth, and no man's wit
Can well direct him, where to look for it. \(^{33}\)

Shakespeare himself was the epitome of his contradictory yet harmonious and fabulous epoch – a disowned son of the middle class, a natural middle class trader who distrusted trade, directly sustained by the public yet completely in need of royal protection.

**1.4.4 Discovery of The New World**

The typical travellers of the Middle Ages are the pilgrim and the crusader who often brought back information. The contemporary geographer readily sees this to be of scientific value though they realised that the essence of the information is based and perceived on Christian moral grounds and not of scientific impartial analysis. In the Christian Middle Ages, according to Greenblatt (1990) who quotes Hayden White, the *Wild Man* is the

...distillation of the specific anxieties underlying the three securities supposedly provided by the specifically Christian institution of civilised life: the securities of sex (as organised by the institution of the family), sustenance (as provided by the political, social, and economic institutions), and salvation (as provided by the Church)\(^{39}\).

Based on these domains that the early observers find it most disturbing of the Indian community structure and culture. To them, the Caribs Indians looked as if
to have no stable family life and were governed by their animalistic lust and sexual perversions\textsuperscript{35}. They were considered as incapable of political organisation or recognised social life. In addition, they were interpreted as idol worshippers for they had no Christian god and this, in the eyes of the Europeans, resembles the images of devils available freely in Christian art.

They say there are certeyne wyld men which lyve in the caues and dennes of the montaynes, contented onely with wilde fruiites. These men neuer vsed the companye of any other, nor wyll by any meanes become tame. They lyue without any certaine dwelynge places, and with owte tylage or culturynge of the grousenge, as wee reade of them whiche in oulde tyme lyued in the golden age. They say also these men are withowte any certaine language. They are sumtymes seene. But owre men haue yet layde handes on none of them\textsuperscript{36}.

Martyr's work as translated by Arber (1885), also explicitly demonstrates that the \textit{wilde man}'s society have no king, lord or even God. Hence, they go around naked and all possessions are shared communally like animals - \textit{These folke lyven lyke bestes witout any resonablenes and the wymen be also as comon}. The ultimate outrageousness of these Carib Indians is that they are man-eaters, an idea that is repulsive and horrific for the Middle up to the Elizabethan Ages - \textit{And they ete also onfey a nother. The man eteth his wyfe his chyldeberne.} The name \textit{Carib} in itself – including \textit{cannibal} – has been predominantly propagated in the minds of Europeans as a form of denigration.

In the \textit{Diario de Navigación} of Columbus appeared the first European accounts of such abhorrent savage men. His entry on the 4\textsuperscript{th} of November 1492, less than a
month after he landed on a continent that was to be called America, inscribed men with only one eye, others with dogs' muzzles and they ate human beings. Parallel entries were found repeated in the same logbook emphasizing the consistent repulsive perception. Therefore, if these Carib Indians characteristics are not of human or Christian's culture (at this age they are one and the same); then they can only be of Satan's.

Similar cannibalistic description is also accounted by Montaigne in his essay *On Cannibals*. Nevertheless, he felt that one should not be horrified of such exploit or even contemptuously judge the Indians because the so-called ethical European Christians indulged in worse barbarous acts in dealing with their enemies – at least the cannibals only consume dead enemies.

I consider it more barbarous to eat a man alive than to eat him dead; to tear by rack and torture a body still full of feeling, to roast it by degrees, and then give it to be trampled and eaten by dogs and swine – a practice which we have not only read about but seen within recent memory, not between ancient enemies, but between neighbours and fellow-citizens and, what is worse, under the cloak of piety and religion – than to roast and eat a man after he is dead.

In contrast to his earlier entries Columbus announces, in a letter dated 15th February 1493, yet another striking discovery of the New World. He describes the natives from the Greater Antilles – primarily the Taino Indians – who are neither ferocious monsters nor cannibals but passive, docile, timorous and cowardly.

Both distinct visions of the American aborigine will spread entirely throughout
Europe; each will convert into its own particular development. The Taino Indians are transformed, by Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia* (1516), into the edenic denizens of a utopian world. The Carib Indians on the other hand, become cannibals – anthropophagus – bestial men situated on the outskirts of civilisation who must be opposed to the very death.

Sadly however, such contradiction between the two visions is merely superficial. As Retamar (1989:7) clarifies: *they constitute, simply, options in the ideological arsenal of a vigorous emerging bourgeoisie.* He further demonstrates that if Francisco de Quevedo translated *utopia as there is no such place* then one can include, relating to the two aforementioned visions, *there is no such man.* The flourishing bourgeoisie easily embraces the concept of paradisiacal natives in a utopian world merely because it offers an ideal paradigm of the perfect society liberated from the harsh constrictions of their feudal world. The utopic vision upon these lands provides the bourgeois left with projects opportunities for political reforms, which were unattainable in their own countries of origin. Obviously, the guardians of *there is no such place* are infuriated by this impudent fact for such a place *does* exist and possesses all the merits as well as flaws, not of a mere project, but of genuine reality.

Similarly, the vision of the ferocious and inhuman Carib cannibal also belongs to the ideological arsenal of politicians. Retamar considers such vision to correspond to the right wing of the same bourgeoisie, those who carry out the dirty work and
evenly distribute their yield with the dreamers of utopia. It is the typically degraded vision presented by the coloniser of the man he is colonising. Hence, due to the Caribs’ irreversible monstrosity, the colonisers appeared to be left with no other alternatives but to justifiably regulate for their extermination.

Such is the origin of the inhabitants of Shakespeare’s enchanted island: Sycorax - a foul witch whose origin is from Africa (I.ii: 256); Caliban - her ill-begotten son and a poisonous slave, got by the devil himself / Upon thy wicked dam (I.ii:319-20) and Ariel - an airy spirit, Prospero’s fine spirit (I.ii: 421); are not considered by the European as worthy to be acknowledged. They, Sycorax, Caliban and Ariel, are considered as part of the flora and fauna or strange noises, / Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not (III.ii: 133-4). Hence Shakespeare has realistically created, according to the conventional view of his contemporary, an uninhabited island.

Shakespeare probably derived the name Caliban from an anagram of Canibal (Cannibal) which is a derivative of Carib the first tribal Indian, of the New World, name made known to Europe. Hence, Caliban is a by-product of Shakespeare’s imaginativeness, Columbus’s first New World Savages, Montaigne’s Brazilians, Somer’s native Barmudans and those Patagonian giants encountered by Pigafetta at some point in his expedition around the world with Magellan: strange creatures whose chief god was called, like Caliban’s mother’s, ‘Setebos’.

41
Kermode (1954) in his Introduction to *The Tempest* cited that Caliban is a salvage (savage) man, and the West Indians were salvage men of a tropical kind; hence the Indian element in this natural man\(^{42}\). However in the play though referred to as a savage, it is not made clear that he is Indian. Shakespeare’s era was not quite sure what Indians of the New World were. However, there is much scientific information about the world entering Renaissance England\(^{43}\), which helps Shakespeare to solve the problem of Caliban’s features. Hence, Shakespeare made Caliban part fish and part human - a creature of the mudflats who has managed to climb onto land at long last, but has not yet acclimatised himself to the higher elements of air and fire\(^{44}\) - an antithesis to Ariel. Caliban, however, describes himself as above\(^{45}\) apes / With foreheads villainous low (IV.i: 249-50). His physical deformity is depicted relentlessly, as the play coming to an end, and exclusively as a monster - servant monster, howling monster, drunken monster, ridiculous monster, puppy-headed monster, brave-monster, ignorant monster or man-monster.

The Elizabethan Age was given the privileged chance to view these natives Indian of the New World through lucrative and popular *freak-show* exhibitions. Sir Martin Frobisher in 1576 and 1577 captured, brought back and exhibited live Indians.

\(^{46}\) Such exhibitions were profitable investments, and were a regular feature of colonial policy under James I. The exhibits rarely survived the experience...
If Aristotle was legitimate in his reasoning that men...who are as much inferior to others as the body is to the soul...are slaves by nature, and it is advantageous for them always to be under government, subsequently to find our governor we should...examine into a man who is most perfectly formed in soul and body... for in the depraved and vicious the body seems to rule rather then the soul, on account of their being corrupt and contrary to nature. Meaning, the coloured – black, yellow, red – and deformed cannibals can only be the natural slaves of the white men. Hence, Prospero’s and Miranda’s contemptuous expressions towards Caliban is deemed permissible: Thou poisonous slave,...(I.ii: 319), most lying slave, / Whom stripes may move, not kindness,...(I.ii: 345-6) and Abhorrèd slave, / Which any print of goodness wilt not take, / Being capable of all ill!(I.ii: 350-2).

Kermode (1954) concluded that Caliban is perfectly characterised in the Dramatis Personae found in the Folio. His heritage and identity are wild and natural therefore they do not encompass western grace, civility and art.

He exists at the simplest level of sensual pain and pleasure fit for lechery because love is beyond his nature, and a natural slave of demons. He hears music with pleasure, as music can appeal to the beast who lacks reason...Unlike the incontinent man, whose appetites subdue his will, and the malicious man, whose will is perverted to evil ends, the bestial man has no sense of right and wrong, and therefore sees no difference between good and evil. Caliban’s pedigree, deformed body subsequently his distorted psyche is naturally associated to pernicious pagan magic, grounding him to be an ineffectual and ineligible ruler.
The discovery of the New World had brought about several impressions to Shakespeare's Renaissance world. The contact between the New and the Old World helped to positively expand the Elizabethan's awareness, information and self-construct. Nevertheless, such contact of two different cultures, religions and way of life had also influenced the Elizabethan's construct of the Other.